

# THE SPIRITUAL CORE OF THE *INSAN SEJAHTERA* PERSONALITY

(Written by M. Kamal Hassan as a chapter in a book  
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## 1. Introduction

The concept of *Insan Sejahtera* (the *Sejahtera* Human Being) was introduced in IIUM by the current Rector, Tan Sri Prof. Emeritus Dzulkifli, since he assumed the rectorship in 2018, in order to familiarize the IIUM community with an important Malay vision of holistic, integrated, balanced and peaceful human being and development. He emphasised in his session with the IIUM Academy of Graduates and Professional Studies (ACADEMY) on 9 September 2020 the importance of being *Insan Sejahtera* whereby achieving peace of mind and happiness was essential to human beings. Tan Sri Dzulkifli explained in 2019 that:

*sejahtera* as a balanced and harmonious way of life ... is underpinned by the promotion and preservation of life, intellect, lineage, wealth and faith as its ultimate outcome. Together it could be expanded into at least 10 different elements neatly woven in the acronym SPICES, covering the spiritual, physico-psychological, intellectual, cognitive, cultural, ethical, emotional, ecological, economic, and societal dimensions. Not only must each aspect be in a balance in itself, but each must be balanced with respect to the rest to achieve an overall state of *sejahtera* that lasts (sustainable) over generations. (Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, "Introduce 'sejahtera' values in education" in <https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters/2019/05/493104/introduce-sejahtera-values-education>. Accessed on 26 July 2021).

In order to make the international Muslim community in IIUM understand the concept of *sejahtera* from an Islamic perspective, I decided to come out with a small book in 2021 explaining the Qur'anic equivalent of the concept from an Islamic perspective (M. Kamal Hassan, 2021). I have argued in the book that the most suitable equivalent of *sejahtera* in the idiom of the Qur'an is *al-falāḥ* (true success, holistic wellbeing, happiness, bliss and prosperity in this world and in the Hereafter) whose antonym is *al-khusrān* (true loss, failure, diminution, suffering in this world and punishment in Hellfire in the Hereafter). The *sejahtera*

human being then is equivalent to the *Mufliḥ* (the truly successful and happy person, the plural being *Mufliḥūn*) in the Qur'an, just as the miserable human being is equivalent to the *Khāsir* (the true loser, miserable person, the plural being *Khāsirūn*) in the Qur'an. Since the quality of *sejahtera* is associated with the Qur'anic concept of *al-falāḥ*, it is crucial that we perceive and understand the *Insan Sejahtera* concept within the framework of the concept of the *Mufliḥūn*. The *Mufliḥūn* are the ones who attain true and permanent success in the Hereafter while the *Khāsirūn* are the true losers and the truly miserable in the Hereafter. The characteristics of the *Mufliḥūn* as described in many verses of the Qur'an can be summarised as follows:

They are the obedient and God-fearing servants and true believers of Allah and His Messengers (s.a.w.); they lead their lives in the light of the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah; they are truly and sincerely committed to Allah's cause and would readily sacrifice their lives and their properties in struggling for His cause; they enjoin all that which is *al-ma'rūf* (good, right, virtuous or beneficial), and prohibit all that which is *al-munkar* (bad, wrong, evil or despicable); they seek the pleasure of Allah SWT in all their worldly struggles and sacrifices; they do not fail to perform all their religious obligations to the best of their abilities; they avoid vain things and keep their lawful desires under control and spend their wealth in charitable and philanthropic activities; they fulfil all their obligations, promises, covenants or trusts conscientiously and uphold a high degree of moral and spiritual integrity; they look forward to gain the pleasure of Allah and dwelling in his Paradise in the Hereafter.

There is another highly noble moral and spiritual quality that the *Mufliḥūn* possess which is necessary for Muslims to know, i.e. their ability to suppress their covetousness or stinginess with the help of Allah SWT, in preference for others in need, even when they themselves are in dire need. The Ansar in al-Madinah were an example of this lofty virtue and the following verse refers to this quality of the *Mufliḥūn*:

***...They (the Ansar) love those who have migrated to them and do not covet what has been given them; they even prefer them above themselves though poverty be their own lot. And whosoever are preserved from their own greed (shuḥḥ), such are the ones that will prosper (al-Mufliḥūn). (Q. al-Ḥashr 59: 9)***

This verse highlights the spiritual virtue of self-sacrifice in preference (*īthār*) for the needs of others and the ability to overcome one's *shuḥḥ* (stinginess, miserliness, greed and covetousness) with the help of Allah SWT. Abu'l A`la Mawdudi explains the meaning of the word *shuḥḥ* in the verse as follows:

[It is] synonymous with narrow-mindedness, niggardliness, mean spiritedness and small-heartedness, and not mere stinginess: it is rather the root cause of stinginess itself. Because of this very quality man avoids acknowledging even the good qualities of another, not to speak of recognizing his rights and discharging them. He wants that he alone should gather up everything in the world, and no one else should have anything of it. He never feels content with his own right, but usurps the rights of others, or at least wants to have for himself all that is good in the world and should not leave anything for others. On this very basis one's being saved from this evil has been described in the Quran as a guarantee for success. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has counted it among the most evil qualities of man which are the root cause of corruption and mischief. Jabir bin Abdullah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Avoid *shuhha* for it was *shuhha* which ruined the people before you. It incited them to shed each other's blood and make the sacred and forbidden things of others lawful for themselves. (Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Baihaqi, al-Bukhari in *Al-Adab*). (Mawdudi, 2016).

The *Mufliḥūn* characteristics of *Insan Sejahtera* individuals as explained above are qualities that should be in possession of all true believers. If we bear in mind that Allah SWT created human beings with the most perfect spiritual and moral nature that makes possible the attainment of *falāḥī* virtues in earthly existence, it is imperative that we pay special attention to the proper development of that God-given nature, so that we can nurture the sound growth of that Divine gifts within us. Therefore I propose to discuss in this chapter the core spiritual constituents of the *Insan Sejahtera*, namely the *Rūḥ* (Spirit), *Fiṭrah* (primordial nature), *Nafs* (Soul), *Qalb* (Spiritual Heart), *`Aql* (Intellect) which together with Divine revelation in the Qur'an will lead the *Insan Sejahtera*

personality or individuals to play his/her roles simultaneously as a) Servant of Allah SWT, b) Vicegerent of Allah SWT, c) Believer in Allah SWT and d) a member of the Allah-designated Community of Justice, Excellence and Balance (*Ummatan Wasaṭan*) in the best possible manner.

## 2. *Rūh, Fitrah, Nafs, Qalb, `Aql* as Spiritual Core Constituents of *Insan Sejahtera*

Let me start, first of all, with the conception of human being as expounded in the Qur'an because its conception of human beings is unique and distinctly different from the conceptions of human being in other worldviews, religious scriptures or ideologies. It is evident from the Qur'an that human beings did not appear on planet Earth as a result of Darwinian natural evolution, or by a long series of genetic adaptations in time, or by the accident of nature. The Qur'an states most emphatically that the human being in the form of Adam (on whom be peace) was, in fact, the direct result of the deliberate intention and creation of Allah SWT. Allah SWT says in the Qur'an that He created the first human being out of clay "with both My hands" (Q. Sad 38: 75) which indicates the special position of the progeny of Adam (peace be upon him), then He breathed into it the *Rūḥ* of His creation (Q. *al-Hijr* 15: 26-28), thus elevating human being's status to a spiritual creature with a Divine element in him/her, namely the Spirit which will not perish with the physical death of man.

The highest dignity was conferred on mankind by Allah SWT when He declares that "Truly, We have honoured the children of Adam (peace be upon him) and have preferred them above many of those We created with a marked preferment." (Q. *al-Isrā'* 17: 70) and when He designated human beings as Servants of Allah SWT and entrusted them with the responsibility of developing the world as His *Khalīfahs* (vicegerents, stewards, representatives). With regard to the responsibility and trust of vicegerency, it should not be forgotten that Allah SWT had created human beings to worship Him and serve His cause (*`ubūdiyyah*) and not to be an independent master or developer of the world in according with their own whims and fancies. Too often the Muslim celebration of the *Khalīfah* status is done without tying it and connecting it with the fundamental identity of human beings as Servants of Allah SWT and with all the responsibilities of Believers (*Mu'minūn*) within the context of the Muslim *Ummah* (the special religious community and brotherhood under the leadership of the Prophet (s.a.w.)). As believing and practicing Muslims, all the *Khalīfahs* have to operate within the value system of the religion and civilisation of Islam

and in accordance with the vision, mission, objectives and values that Allah SWT had laid down in the Qur'an and elaborated in the Sunnah of the Prophet (s.a.w.).

It is important that Muslims as well as non-Muslims understand that in the worldview of Islam, human beings are essentially, i.e. at core, spiritual-moral beings who have been given that special privilege of vicegerency in carrying out their Allah-given responsibilities, with His Books as infallible guides and the examples of the Prophets and Messengers as role models to be emulated. This special privilege and status given to mankind is by virtue of the fact that human beings are the only creatures of Allah SWT who are inherently and primordially endowed with a Divinely-created *Rūḥ*, *Nafs* (with its essentially three stages of growth), *Fiṭrah*, *Qalb* and *`Aql* (the Intellect as the rational and cognitive faculty of the *Qalb*). One of the important verses in the Qur'an which expounds the concept of mankind's primordial nature upon which Allah SWT created all human beings is the following (in translation):

*(O Prophet and believers) Set your face steadfastly to the [ever true] religion as a Hanif (monotheistic man) and adhere to the true natural disposition (Fiṭrah) upon which Allah has made mankind. The mould (i.e. the original disposition) fashioned by Allah cannot be altered. That is the true religion, but most mankind do not know. (Q. al-Rūm 30: 30).*

Abdullah Yusuf Ali offers the following commentary:

As turned out from the creative hand of Allah, man is innocent, pure, true, free, inclined to right and virtue and endowed with true understanding about his own position in the universe and about Allah's goodness, wisdom, and power. That is his true nature, just as the nature of a lamb is to be gentle and of is to be swift. But man is caught in the meshes of customs, superstitions, selfish desires, and false teachings. This may make him pugnacious, unclean, false, slavish, hankering after what is wrong or forbidden.....(Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1974:1186)

Abu'l A`la Mawdudi comments as follows:

That is, all human beings have been created on the nature that none but One Allah is their Creator and Lord and Deity. You should be steadfast on this nature. If you adopt the attitude of independence, you will be following a way opposed to your nature, and if you serve and worship another besides Allah, then you will be working against your nature.

This subject has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a number of Ahadith. According to Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Every child who is born, is born on the (original) human nature [*Fitrah*]. It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian, etc. afterwards. Its example is that of an animal which gives birth to complete and sound young ones, none is born with torn and cut off ears, but the *Mushriks* tear their ears afterwards on account of their superstitions of ignorance.....

That is, God has made man His servant and created him only for his own service. This natural disposition of man (*Fitrah*) cannot be altered, however hard one may try. Neither can man effect a change in his position of a servant, nor can anything other than God become his God in the real sense. Man may make for himself as many gods as he may please, but the fact remains that he is the servant of none but One God alone. Man by his own folly and ignorance may regard anyone as holder of divine attributes and powers and take any one as the maker and un-maker of his destiny, but the fact of the matter is that neither does anyone other than Allah possess divine attributes nor His authority, nor has anyone else the power to make or mar the destiny of man. (Abu'l A`la Mawdudi, 2016).

### 3.The Primordial Covenant of Man and Allah SWT and His Primordial Nature

To get a deeper understanding of the primordial nature of *insān* in the worldview of the Qur'an, we need to refer to the verse in the Qur'an which describes the Day of the Primordial Covenant (*al-Mīthāq*) between all human beings in their pre-earthly spiritual state and Allah SWT thus (in translation):

***And recall (O Prophet) when your Lord brought forth descendants from the loins of the Children of Adam, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes, we do testify.' We did so lest you claim on the Day of Resurrection: 'We were unaware of this.'* (Q. al-A`rāf 7:172)**

In the above passage Allah SWT reveals to mankind that a covenant between Allah SWT and human beings occurred during the time of Adam (peace be on him). The Covenant with Allah SWT was not the exclusive privilege of Israel; in fact, all human beings in their primordial spiritual state are bound in a covenant with Allah SWT in a special way. They are being reminded in the verse that a day will come when they will be made to answer how well they were able to observe that primordial covenant. Muhammad Asad explains the above verse as follows:

According to the Qur'an, the ability to perceive the existence of the Supreme Power is inborn in human nature (*fiṭrah*): and it is this instinctive cognition – which may or may not be subsequently blurred by self-indulgence or adverse environmental influences – that makes every sane human being “bear witness about himself” before God. As so often in the Qur'an, God's “speaking” and man's “answering” is a metonym for the creative act of God and man's existential response to it. (Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, 1980: 276).

We need to refer to a more detailed commentary by Mawdudi on this enigmatic verse regarding the primordial covenant of human beings. He explains:

This event, according to several traditions, took place at the time of the creation of Adam. Apart from the prostration of the angels before Adam and the proclamation that man would be God's vicegerent on earth, all the future progeny of Adam were gathered, and were endowed with both existence and consciousness in order to bear witness to God's lordship. The best interpretation of this event is found in a statement by, 'Ubayy b. Ka'b, who has probably given the substance of what he had heard from the Prophet (peace

be on him):  
God gathered all human beings, divided them into different groups, granted them human form and the faculty of speech, made them enter into a covenant, and then making them witnesses about themselves He asked them: 'Am I not your Lord?' They replied: 'Assuredly you are Our Lord.' Then God told them: 'I call upon the sky and the earth and your own progenitor, Adam, to be witness against you lest you should say on the Day of Judgement that you were ignorant of this. Know well that no one other than Me deserves to be worshipped and no one other than Me is your Lord. So do not ascribe any partner to Me. I shall send to you My Messengers who will remind you of this covenant which you made with Me. I shall send down to you My Books.' In reply all said: 'We witness that You are Our Lord and our Deity. We have no lord or deity other than You.' (Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 5, p. 135 - Ed.)

This event has also been interpreted by some commentators in a purely allegorical sense. They are of the opinion that the purpose of the Qur'an is merely to emphasize that the acceptance of God's lordship is innate in human nature. However, this was narrated in such a way as to suggest that the event did actually take place. We do not subscribe to this allegorical interpretation of the primordial covenant of man with God. For both the Qur'an and Hadith recount it not only as an actual happening, but also affirm that the covenant would be adduced as an argument against man on the Day of Judgement. There remains, therefore, no ground whatsoever to interpret the event in terms of mere allegory.

In our own view the event did take place. God caused all human beings whom He intended to create until the Last Day to come into existence. He endowed upon them life, consciousness and the faculty of speech, and brought home to them that there is no god or lord besides Him, and that Islam alone is the right way to serve Him.



If someone considers calling all human beings together in one assembly impossible, that shows, more than anything else the woeful paucity of his imagination. For if someone accepts that God has the power to create countless human beings in succession, there is no reason to suppose that He did not have the power to create them all at some given moment prior to the creation of the universe, or that He will be unable to resurrect them all at some given moment in the future. Again, it stands to reason that at a time when God wanted to designate man as His vicegerent on earth after endowing him with reason and understanding, He took from him an oath of allegiance. All this is so reasonable that the actual occurrence of the covenant should not cause any wonder. On the contrary, one should wonder if the event did not take place. (Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi,2016)

With the understanding of the primordial covenant between human beings in their spiritual state, the existence of the sublime spirit, the transcendent soul and the spiritual heart as the centre of human personality, we can get a deeper insight into why Allah SWT put so much emphasis on the necessity for human beings to keep their hearts and souls in a purified and sound condition (such as “*qalb salīm*” (sound heart) and “*al-nafs al-muṭma`innah*” (the soul in a purified state with tranquility and satisfaction). Allah SWT says (in translation) in the following very important verses:

***And by the Soul and by Him Who perfectly proportioned it,  
And imbued it with (the consciousness of) its evil (fujūr) and its  
piety (taqwā),  
The one who purified it (the Soul) shall truly succeed,  
The one who corrupted it shall surely be ruined. (Q. al-Shams 91: 7-10)***

As these verses deal with our soul and clearly offers the Divine formula of our spiritual success and failure, it is crucial that the verses be fully understood. We find the commentaries given by Abul A`la Mawdudi very detail but very useful and enlightening. As the he commentary is long, we shall quote only the most

relevant parts of the commentary as given by Mawdudi. On verse S. 91: 7, he explains:

“Proportioned it”: [God] Gave man such a body which by virtue of its erect stature, its hands and feet, and its brain was most appropriate for him to live as man in the world. He blessed him with the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell which on account of their combination and their characteristics could become the best means of obtaining knowledge for him.... In addition, proportioning also means that man was not created a sinner by birth and a criminal by instinct but on right and sound nature, and was not characterized with any inborn crookedness because of which he may be unable to adopt the right path even if he wanted to do so.

On verse S. 91: 8, Mawdudi explains:

According to this very basic meaning, the word *ilham* is used terminologically for Allah’s inspiring a man with a concept or idea unconsciously. Inspiring the human self with its wickedness and its piety and virtue has two meanings: (1) That the Creator has placed in it tendencies to both good and evil, and this is the thing that every man feels in himself. (2) That Allah has endowed every man’s unconscious mind with the concept that there is a moral good and there is a moral evil, that good morals and acts and evil morals and acts are not equal and alike. *Fujur* (immorality) is an evil thing and *taqwa* (abstention from evils) a good thing. These concepts are not new to man; he is conscious of these by nature, and the Creator has endowed him with the ability to distinguish between good and evil naturally.....

Besides these two, another position of man is that he is a moral being. In this position too Allah has blessed him by inspiration with discrimination between good and evil and of the realization of the good to be good and of the evil to be evil. This sense of discrimination and realization is a universal truth on account of

which no human society in the world has ever been without the concepts of good and evil;

On verse S. 91: 10, Mawdudi elucidates:

...[T]he real judgment [of what is really good and what is really bad] does not lie with man; it lies with the Creator, Who has inspired man with his *fujur* and *taqwa*. The *fujur* is that which is *fujur* in the sight of the Creator and the *taqwa* is that which is *taqwa* in His sight. And both have separate results in the sight of the Creator. The result of the one is that he who purifies his self, should attain to eternal success, and the result of the other is that he who suppresses his self, should be a failure. [emphasis added]

The one who purifies his self of *fujur* and develops it to the level of *taqwa* and cultivates in it the good, will attain to eternal success. As against this, the word *dassaha* has been used, the infinitive of which is *tadsiyah*, which means to suppress, conceal, seduce and lead astray. The meaning of this also becomes clear from the context; i.e. the one who suppresses the tendency in his self towards good instead of developing and cultivating it, who seduces it into doing evil, and makes *fujur* dominate over *taqwa* so as to cover it up completely, like the dead body which is buried and covered with earth, will be a failure..... In Surah Al-Aala, Allah says: **Truly successful was he who adopted purity. (verse 14)**. In Surah Abasa, Allah has addressed His Messenger (peace be upon him), saying: **And you would not be responsible if he did not adopt purity**. In both these verses, adoption of purity has been regarded as an act of man..... However, the Hadith which Imam Ahmad, Muslim, Nasai and Ibn Abi Shaibah have related on the authority of Zaid bin Arqam, is correct which says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray: **O Allah, grant my self its taqwa and purify it; You alone are the best to purify it; You alone are its Guardian and Master**. [This] means that man can only desire and seek *taqwa* and *tazkiyah*; as for its attainment, it depends in any case on Allah's grace and favor alone. And the

same is also true of *tadsiyah*: Allah does not suppress a self forcibly, but when a man is resolved on iniquity, Allah deprives him of the grace of *taqwa* and *tazkiyah*, and leaves him alone to suppress and bury his self under any heap of filth he likes. (Abul A`la Mawdudi,2016)

#### 4. The Necessity of Purification of the Spiritual Heart (*Tazkiyah al-Nafs, Tathīr al-Qalb*) of *Insan Sejahtera*

We need to understand why it is absolutely necessary for all human beings to purify the soul (*nafs*) or cleanse the spiritual heart (*qalb*) from becoming rusted, corrupted or hardened as a result of being infected by psycho-spiritual diseases, or from becoming hard (*qast*). The process of purification (*tazkiyah*) and development on a regular basis, is to prevent the heart from being polluted by the carnal desires or deceived by Satan and worldly delusions, by aiming to reach the level of the “sound heart” (*qalb salīm*, in Q. 26: 89, Q. 37: 84), the “contrite heart” (*qalb munīb*, in Q. 50: 33) or, better yet, the state of “the peaceful, tranquil and satisfied soul” (*al-nafs al-muṭma’innah*, in Q. 89: 27-30). Muslims have to be conscious of the fact that the lowest state of their souls is called *al-nafs al-ammārah bi’s-sū’* (the lower soul that incites to evil) which, if not controlled or suppressed by the purification process, will lead them to the true loss and misery of *al-Khusrān*, instead of the true success and happiness of *al-Falāḥ*.

It is obvious that the conception of the *qalb* in the Qur’an is unique and extremely important. Thus the central place of the *qalb* in Islam and its indispensability in Islamic spiritual and moral development of believers and Islamic leadership have to be fully appreciated. The expected outcome of the spiritual-moral purification and cleansing process in higher education institutions is the production of the new breed of leaders of society with high moral integrity. First and foremost, both the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* assert that the fundamental religious values of *īmān*, *taqwā*, *iḥsān*, and *maḥabbah* (love) of Allah SWT, *ibtighā’ marḍāti’LLāh* (seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT) all proceed from the *qalb* of the believers. The ability to resist the temptations of worldly pleasures and enjoyments (*matā` al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*) or the pressures of passion, base desires or the whisperings, devilish insinuations of Satan or the selfish inclinations of the ego via the negative and reprehensible emotions of

envy, jealousy, ostentation or desire for human appreciation or praise (among what the Muslim spiritual doctors call *amrāḍ al-qalb*, diseases of the spiritual heart) – depends upon the spiritual-moral purity and health of the *qalb* at the centre of the human soul, personality and identity. It is for this reason that the focus of Allah’s attention upon human beings is to the *qalb*, not the brain, or the physical appearances of His servants, as is stated in the *ḥadīth*:

***Indeed, Allah does not look at your appearances and your wealth. But He looks at your hearts and your actions.***  
**[emphasis added]**\_(Muslim)

The *qalb* is therefore the most critical organ and core of human personality and *Insan Sejahtera*. If the *qalb* is purified and cleansed on a regular basis and becomes healthy and sound, it can attract and receive the light of Divine knowledge, guidance and wisdom, and -- with those spiritual resources - - lead human personalities to *al-Falāḥ*, Paradise and goodly pleasure of Allah SWT. But if it is diseased, corrupted, hardened or afflicted with all kinds of spiritual and moral viruses, then it will lead the human personality and to all kinds of immoral, unethical or criminal acts which constitute true loss and true misery (*al-Khusrān*) in this world and in the Hereafter. The *Insan* cannot be *Sejahtera* any more when that happens.

For that reason, the task of cleansing, purifying, polishing, protecting and elevating the *qalb* has been made a fundamental religious duty (*farḍ `ain*) by Islamic spiritual doctors and savants upon all Muslims. Muslims should know that the inner struggle to control and dominate the passion (*hawā*) and the *al-nafs al-ammārah bi’s-sū’* is known as “struggle against the base soul” (*jihād al-nafs*) which is regarded by most Islamic scholars as “The Greater *Jihād*” (*al-jihād al-akbar*). They should be made to understand via spiritual transformation programmes and training at the hands of the experienced spiritual doctors that the *qalb* that is obedient, sincere, God-fearing, purified and truly loves Allah S.W.T., the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), and is ready to sacrifice for humanitarian causes, purely for gaining the favours and goodly pleasure of Allah SWT, is the strongest shield and protector of the believer against all kinds of wrong ideas or self-destructive motivations which are bound to lead to unethical behaviour in political or economic activities, such as lying, cheating, corruption, bribery,

nepotism, cronyism, treachery and collusion with immoral forces of contemporary society.

The Qur'an explains that when the *qalb* is enlightened by the light of Divine guidance, knowledge and wisdom, and attains the qualities of spiritual-ethical integrity, *ihsān* and *taqwā*, it becomes highly resistant, resilient and effective to withstand and overcome all the subtle means, impulses and devices used by several agencies --Satanic, capitalistic, materialistic, political or business forces or agents in the country to corrupt the Muslim leaders, politicians, bureaucrats or law-enforcement officers.

The positive and desirable qualities of the believers' hearts have to be nourished, developed and refined through proper and systematic processes of: (a) correct and systematic spiritual education (*tarbiyah rūḥiyyah*) and discipline (*riyāḍah*); (b) character discipline and refinement (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*), purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and (c) various aspects of *mujāhadah* (systematic measures taken to control, purify or refine the lower soul) which are meant to control and keep in check the base desires and passions.

One of the most important functions of the *qalb* is described in the Qur'an as the process of understanding, comprehending, reasoning, intellection and intuiting arising from the cognitive faculty of the spiritual heart. This cognitive or thinking faculty and function of the heart is called in Arabic and religious literature as *`aql* (intellect, intelligence), although the Qur'an does not use the term. This means that Allah SWT wants human beings to understand that it is the *qalb* that produces right thinking, rational understanding or rational comprehension (the Qur'an uses the verbal forms of *na`qilu* ("we understand"), *ya`qilun* ("they understand"), and *yafqahūn* ("they understand"). It is assisted by the five senses which provide knowledge input or data for the *qalb* to use by means of its cognitive faculty (*`aql*). The following verses (in translation) illustrate this fact:

***Have they not travelled in the land, so they have their hearts by which they might understand and their ears might listen? For indeed it is not the eyes that are blinded; it is rather the hearts in the breasts that are rendered blind. [emphasis added] (Q. al-Ḥajj 22:46)***

***And certainly We have created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind; they have hearts with which they fail to understand; and they have eyes with which they fail to see; and they have ears with which they fail to hear. They are like cattle - indeed, even more astray. Such are utterly heedless. [emphasis added] (Q. al-A`rāf 7: 179)***

The role of the sound intellect or reasoning which is the cognitive function of *qalb*, nevertheless, is very crucial for the *qalb* to make right and wise decisions which produce right and wise actions or behaviour. A full Islamic understanding of the complex nature of the soul and the proper relationship of the four elements of the soul, namely 1) *rūḥ* 2) *qalb* 3) *`aql* and 4) *nafs* can be read from al-Ghazali's *Book of Knowledge* (tr. Nabih Amin Faris, 1962) and *Marvels of the Heart* (tr. Walter J. Skellie, 2010) which are found in his *magnum opus*, *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (translated from his *Iḥyā' `Ulūm al-Dīn*).

Informed and nurtured by the knowledge and wisdom of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, the *Insan Sejahtera's* heart will be able to inspire, motivate, strengthen and spur other human beings to greater heights of spiritual-ethical development and progress, against the tide and forces of disbelief, polytheism, corruption, anarchy, depravity, immorality, falsehood, nihilism, atheism, individualism, racism and secularism. A corruption-and-hypocrisy-free Muslim society in the future has to be anchored upon the purified hearts and sound intellects of the new breed of *Insan Sejahtera*, otherwise there is not going to be a moral transformation and history will repeat itself. The social sciences of agnostic or atheistic societies in the West and in the East will most likely disagree with this approach to societal futures envisioning because the religious or theistic worldviews are pushed out of scientific or scholarly discourse by the reigning secular humanistic paradigms. But for Islamic scholars, this is the correct and proper approach; unfortunately, the approach is not followed or adopted in mainstream or governmental socio-political institutions of Muslim countries. Consequently, they keep having political crises and chaos, one after the other, as they fail to emancipate their minds and souls from the Western "lizard's hole", the allegory used by the Prophet (s.a.w.) to indicate the tendency of Muslims to emulate the ways of the People of the Book (Christians and Jews).

Individuals who possess the right kind of intellects, intelligences or reasoning are described by the Qur'an as *Ulu'l-Albāb* (possessors of sound intellects) in 16 verses of the Qur'an. These are also the intellects or intelligences of the God-fearing scholars (*al-`ulamā'* as in Q. *Fāṭir* 35: 28). Equipped with this kind of intellect and being well-versed with the Qur'anic worldview and paradigms, the futuristic *Insan Sejahtera* will be better able to engage intelligently and confidently in dialogue with the secularised non-Muslim leaders or elites on issues related to power, development, progress, wellbeing, sustainability, success, prosperity or happiness as their understanding and interpretation of those key concepts differ significantly from the secular humanistic or atheistic paradigms. The following verses instruct the *Insan Sejahtera* believers not to be influenced by people who are oriented only to this worldly life as their knowledge or sciences cannot provide the guidance or the way to the final destiny in the Hereafter:

***Therefore, avoid those who turn away from all remembrance of Us and desire nothing but the life of this world.***

***That is to them the only thing worth knowing [alternatively: "That is their sum-total of knowledge", [or "This is as far as their knowledge will take them"]]. Indeed, your Sustainer is fully aware as to who has strayed from His Path, and He knows best those who follow His guidance. [emphasis added]***

***Indeed, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth: and so He will reward those who do evil in accordance with what they did, and will reward those who do good with ultimate good.***

***As for those who avoid the [truly] grave sins and shameful deeds even though they may sometimes stumble, know that your Sustainer is abounding in forgiveness....(Q. *al-Najm* 53: 29-32)***

Abdullah Yusuf Ali's commentary on verse 30 above is as follows:

Men with a materialist turn of mind, whose desires are bounded by...material things, will not go beyond those things. Their knowledge will be limited to the narrow circle in which their



thoughts move. The spiritual world is beyond their ken. While persons with a spiritual outlook, even though they may fail again and again in attaining their full ideals, are on the right Path. They are willing to receive guidance and Allah's Grace will find them out and help them (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1999: 1640).

When *Insan Sejahtera* believers know and realise that it is the condition and state of the spiritual heart and soul that holds the key to their wellbeing in this world and more so in the Hereafter, it is their obligation to give primary attention to the purification of the heart so that it becomes **free from the fatal “diseases” of Kufr, Shirk, egoism, pride, arrogance, conceit, self-deception, jealousy, envy, rancour, heedlessness, love of the world and obsession with its fleeting pleasures.** They have to give special attention to the religious obligation (*fard `ain*) of the programme or agenda of moral-spiritual transformation which the concepts of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, *ihsān* and *taqwā* convey in all their developmental efforts including the challenge of the UN 2030 Agenda with the SDGs. They should know that this aspect of futures’ planning of the world is marginalised, if not absent, in the secular, agnostic or atheistic societies.

One of the challenges faced by the *Insan Sejahtera* in this regard is how to strike the right balance between the legitimate needs of this worldly life and the ultimate needs of the Hereafter. The Qur’an teaches the believers to adopt the mindset that is able to strike the correct balance of seeking goodness in this world and seeking goodness in the Hereafter from the guidance of Allah SWT:

***There are others who say: “Our Lord, grant us what is good [ḥasanah] in this world and what is good [ḥasanah] in the Hereafter, and protect us from the chastisement of the Fire.” They shall have a portion from what they earned; Allah is quick in reckoning. (Q. al-Baqarah 2: 201-202)***

The Qur’an also promises the believers whose lives are spent in good and virtuous acts that they would be given the “Good Life” (*Ḥayāh Ṭayyibah*) in this world:

***Whosoever does good deeds (or acts righteously) - whether a man or a woman – while having faith (in Allah SWT), We will surely grant him/her a good life; and will surely grant such***

***persons their reward according to the best of their deeds.(Q. al-Nahl 16:97)***

Abul A`la Mawdudi explains this verse in the following way:

This verse removes the wrong notions of both the Muslims and the disbelievers who are of the opinion that those who adopt a just honest and pious attitude, are most surely losers in this world, though they might be gainers in the Hereafter. Allah removes this misunderstanding, as if to say: This presumption of yours is wrong. The righteous attitude not only leads to a happy life in the Hereafter, but it also guarantees, by Allah's grace, a pure and happy life even in this world. And this is a fact that those people who are sincerely righteous, honest, pure and fair in their dealings enjoy a much better life in this world. For they enjoy that confidence and real honor and respect because of their spotless character, which is not enjoyed by those who lack these virtues. They obtain such pure and outstanding success as are denied to those who employ dirty and disgusting ways to win success. Above all, they enjoy, even though they might be living in poor houses, that peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience which is denied to the wicked dwellers of mansions and palaces. (Abul A`la Mawdudi,2016).

##### 5. The Deception and Seduction of the *Dunyā*

A major obstacle in the path of *Insan Sejahtera* trying to be the true servant and vicegerent of Allah SWT on earth and carrier of Divine message of *al-Falāḥ* as opposed to *al-Khusrān*, and as a believer who is committed to the religious obligation of "enjoining that which is good and right (*al-ma`rūf*) and forbidding that which is bad and wrong (*al-munkar*)" in their communities and on the world stage, is the existence of deceptions and delusions in worldly life (*al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*).

It is crucial especially for the younger generation of Muslims who aspire to be leaders or managers of society in the future need understand how and in

what way the deception (*ghurūr*) of this world, the evil forces of Satan and the temptations of base desire mislead, corrupt and finally destroy leaders and masses alike. The following reminders from the Qur'an about worldly deception that all Muslims – especially leaders and elites -- must know and take heed especially when they are planning for the future of themselves, their organisations, their *ummah* or their countries:

***Know that the life of this world is only play, and idle talk, and adornment, and boasting among you, and rivalry in increase of wealth and children, like the example of rain whose (resulting) vegetation pleases the tillers, then it dries, then you see it turn yellow, then it becomes straw. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment, and forgiveness from Allah, and (His) good pleasure. And this-worldly life is nothing but a deceiving enjoyment. [emphasis added] (Q. *al-Ḥadīd* 57: 20)***

***Everyone is bound to taste death and you shall receive your full reward on the Day of Resurrection. Then, whoever is spared the Fire and is admitted to Paradise has indeed been successful. The life of this world is merely an illusory enjoyment. [emphasis added] (Q *Āl `Imrān* 3: 185)***

***The life of this world is nothing but a sport and a pastime, and the life of the Hereafter is far better for those who seek to ward off their ruin. Will you not, then, understand? (Q *al-An`am* 6: 32)***

***Men are naturally tempted by the lure of women, children, treasures of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle and plantations. These are the enjoyments in the life of this world; but with Allah lies a goodly abode to return to.[emphasis added](Q.*Al`Imrān* 3:14)***

***Say: 'Shall I tell you of things better than these? For the God-fearing there are, with their Lord, gardens beneath which rivers flow; there they will abide for ever, will have spouses of stainless purity as companions, and will enjoy the good***

**pleasure of Allah.' Allah thoroughly observes His servants.[emphasis added] (Q. Al `Imrān 3: 15)**

#### 6. Mahabbatu'LLāh

The *Insan Sejahtera's* love of Allah SWT is the highest and purest spiritual, emotional and intellectual consciousness in his/her personality. It is the consciousness in the heart and mind of true believers, without it one's faith is incomplete and defective as indicated in the following verse:

***Yet there are some who take others as equals to Allah and love them as Allah alone should be loved; but those who (truly) believe, they love Allah more than all else. (Q. al-Baqarah 2: 165)***

Mawdudi gives the following useful explanation in his commentary:

it is God alone Who can ask His subjects to acknowledge His sovereignty, to accept His commands as the source of law, to consider Him alone to be the Lord entitled to command men, to consider His commands supreme, and to turn to Him alone for correct guidance. Whoever either ascribes to any being other than God any of the aforementioned attributes or recognizes the claim of anyone save God to be entitled to any of the above-mentioned rights over His creatures is in fact setting up that being as a rival to God, and placing him on the same plane as God. By the same token, any individual or institution claiming to possess any of the exclusive attributes and rights of God (as mentioned above), is in fact claiming a position parallel and equal to that of God even though the claim to godhead may not have been categorically spelled out.

True faith requires that a man should give absolute priority to seeking God's good pleasure and should hold nothing too dear to sacrifice for the sake of God.(Mawdudi, 2007)

Allah SWT teaches in the Qur'an that as far as love is concerned, the true believers including the *Insan Sejahtera*, must give the highest priority first to Allah SWT, then to His Messenger (s.a.w) and striving in His cause, while other objects of love can come after the three specified in the verse:

***Tell them, (O Prophet): "If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your wives and your tribe and the riches you have acquired and the commerce of which you fear a slackening, and the dwellings that you love, if they are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His decree. Allah does not guide the evil-doing folk. (Q. al-Taubah 9: 24)***

It is not surprising that many Muslim societies fail to fulfil the Divine expectation and consequently are deprived of the blessings of true faith, the honour of bearing its standard and leading the world towards holistic wellbeing in this world and in the Hereafter. One wonders how many Muslims actually know that Allah SWT “has bought the lives and property of believers” such that they do not own anything at all. But they will be rewarded, nevertheless, with happiness bliss in the Hereafter if they use their property and their lives to advance the cause of Allah SWT in their earthly life. The following verses reveal this truth:

***The higher rank with Allah is for those who believed and migrated and strove in His cause with their belongings and their persons. It is they who are triumphant.***

***Their Lord gives them glad tidings of mercy from Him and of His good pleasure. For them await Gardens of eternal bliss.***

***Therein they shall abide forever. Surely with Allah a mighty reward awaits them.***

***Believers, do not take your fathers and your brothers for your allies if they choose unbelief in preference to belief. Whosoever of you takes them as allies those are wrong-doers.***

***Tell them, (O Prophet): "If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your wives and your tribe and the riches you have acquired and the commerce of which you fear a slackening, and the dwellings that you love, if they are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah***

**brings about His decree. Allah does not guide the evil-doing folk.**[emphasis added](Q. *al-Taubah* 9: 20-24)

## 7. Conclusion

Allah SWT has made it crystal clear that human beings are easily tempted by a variety of materialistic pleasures, forgetting that the future pleasures that Allah SWT reserves for the God-fearing (*li'lladhīna'ttaqau*) are purer, lasting and elevating, such as “the good pleasure of Allah”. *Insan Sejahtera* believers who are among those God-fearing **servants-leaders** who are driven by *īmān*, *ihsān*, *taqwā* and *maḥabbatu'llāh* -- aim for the final goal of the good pleasure of Allah SWT and will not sacrifice lasting happiness in the Hereafter for the glittering and tantalising deceptions of the fleeting pleasures of the world.

But modern and contemporary history has revealed many impressive national leaders and smart politicians who have been struck down, spiritually and morally, from their high pedestals and became objects of public derision, shame and rejection due to the influences of the destructive but delusionary forces described by the Qur'an. Hence, the necessity and urgency for Muslim leaders, scholars, intellectuals and organisations to institutionalise the spiritual education and training programmes or modules which are specially designed to promote good consciousness, awareness, and comprehension of the different challenges coming from external forces of evil including that of Satan, in addition to understanding the challenges from the inner forces of *nafs*, *hawā* and *shahwah*, and the well-established methods of overcoming such challenges. We believe many national development plans of many Muslim countries have been undermined or corrupted by leaders or power holders who succumbed to the temptations, deceptions and seductions of the pleasures of the transient and mundane life of the *Dunyā*, in spite of their professional training in leadership or management or elevated social status.

In looking forward to better futures scenarios, all Islamic and God-loving *Insan Sejahtera* believers have to bear in mind that they are part of the *Ummah Wasat* (the God-designated community of justice, excellence, goodness and balance) of the whole world although it is far from being the ideal. They should

plan to acquire and institutionalise, a) the qualities of justice in law and order; good governance and ethical and just political systems; b) equitable socio-economic development; c) harmonious inter-communal relations; d) high educational standards and technological prowess of Muslim youth and adults who are able to utilise resources in cyber space without getting lost or trapped in its relativism, nihilism and hedonism; e) creative yet ethical cultural forms and standards; f) peaceful coexistence and cooperation with other religious communities with good character traits of competent, responsible, sincere and accountable leaders of integrity. It is with those excellent attributes that the *Ummah* could be considered as suitable and competent Witnesses for other communities.

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