

Spirituality and Sustainability

EXPERIENCES OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

Edited by
Abdul Rashid Moten

With a foreword by Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak,
Rector, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)



IIUM



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CHAPTER 14

Spirituality Through Humanitarian Fieldwork

Wan Mazwati Wan Yusoff

Islamic spirituality is understood by many as a state of being close to Allāh (SWT), affecting one's thought and actions. To many, spirituality means, among others, being absorbed in *adhkār* (invocations of remembrance of Allāh), reading the Qur'ān, performing night prayers, or following the path of *sūfīs* or mystics. It is often forgotten that spirituality can also entail giving to others, helping the needy and sharing the pains of those suffering from economic hardship. This chapter describes the experience of the author, two of her students and others who supported them in a humanitarian project they undertook. It describes a group of IIUM volunteers' journey into spirituality by way of being involved in humanitarian work in conflict zones. The impetus for the involvement in the humanitarian work was derived from the Prophetic tradition that equated the believer with one who is friendly and befriended and the best of people to be those who are most beneficial to people. There is another tradition which emphasises three things: *sadaqah jāriyah* (ceaseless charity); knowledge which is beneficial; or a virtuous descendant who prays for the deceased. Being involved in humanitarian work involves training for the believers so that they may develop their soul (*nafs*) to the highest level, i.e. the peaceful, reassured soul.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the meaning of spirituality, the humanitarian work undertaken by the volunteer group and its religious impact on their lives. Noticeably, their involvement in the humanitarian work made them realise the meaning of Islam as mercy to mankind (*rahmatan lil'ālamīn*). Muslims should look at spirituality from a bigger perspective and heed the Qur'ānic exhortation to be physically, intellectually and spiritually active and get involved in giving, so others could live for the pleasure of Allāh (SWT).

Islamic Spirituality

Al-Nu'man ibn Bashīr narrated that Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) enjoined the believers to take care of their "heart" because if it is sound, the whole body is sound and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. This Prophetic tradition has both physical and spiritual dimensions. As found in the Qur'ān, the human

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[The body of the page contains extremely faint, illegible text, likely a list of contributors or a preface. The text is too light to transcribe accurately.]

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THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

The International Islamic University Malaysia has, since 2018, redoubled its struggle to restore its wisdom, strengths, and dignity and promote comprehensive excellence. Hence, the University adopted the United Nations' sustainable development agenda as a complement to the University's vision and mission of Islamisation, Integration, Internationalisation and Comprehensive Excellence.

The book explains the ways in which the SDGs will provide a new strategy to apply the concept of Islamisation, which has long been the foundation of the IIUM. Consequently, the university's operations and facilities have been adjusted so that they become mediums in applying and showcasing a lifestyle that is sustainable. Everything in the university i.e. the curricular and extra-curricular courses, the research activities, and everyday operations in administrative offices and other places are geared towards sustainable development in line with the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. Elements of sustainability are integrated in every aspect of the university's administration and, indeed, in teaching, research and community engagement. Consequently, the IIUM has adopted "Humanising Higher Education through maqāṣid al-sharī'ah and SDGs" as its official strategic mission.

ABDUL RASHID MOTEN served as Senior Professor in Political Science at the International Islamic University Malaysia. Currently, he is Guest Writer at IIUM, and has published 24 books and monographs and contributed more than 200 articles to peer-reviewed journals and encyclopedias.

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