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(PERDANA MENTERI)

UPACARA: PERASMIAN SEMINAR PENGURUSAN ISLAM ANJURAN BERSAMA BANK
PEMBANGUNAN ISLAM (IDB) DAN KEMENTERIAN PELAJARAN

TEMPAT: UNIVERSITI ISLAM ANTARABANGSA, PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR

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MASA:

Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

Yang Berhormat Encik Anuar Ibrahim,
Menteri Pelajaran Malaysia;
Dif-Dif Kehormat;

Tuan-tuan dan puan-puan.

Alhamdulillah rabbil alamin wasalatu wasalamu ala
syidina Muhammadin wa ala alihi wasahbihi ajmain. Segala
pujian bagi Allah Subhanahu Wataala dan salam sejahtera ke
atas junjungan kita Nabi Muhammad s.a.w. Dengan izin Allah
kita dapat bersama-sama pada hari ini untuk menjayakan
Seminar ini.

2. Saya ingin merakamkan ucapan penghargaan dan
kegembiraan Kerajaan kepada Bank Pembangunan Islam yang
telah memilih Kuala Lumpur sebagai tempat mengadakan Seminar
ini. Saya juga merakamkan penghargaan kepada Kementerian
Pelajaran kerana menjadi penganjur bersama Seminar ini.
Adalah diharap Seminar ini akan berjalan dengan lancar dan
memberi faedah kepada kita semua. Saya yakin hasil dari
Seminar ini kelak boleh membantu negara-negara Islam,
termasuk Malaysia, dalam usaha memperbaiki lagi
pengurusan masing-masing.

3. Seminar ini disertai oleh peserta-peserta dari luar
negeri, dan oleh itu saya meminta izin untuk menyampaikan
ucapan saya seterusnya dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

4. Praise be to Allah, from Whom we seek aid, guidance and
forgiveness. And the blessings of Allah on His noble
Prophet Muhammad s.a.w., his family, his companions and
followers till the end of time.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. It is indeed an honour for me to have been invited here
to open this Seminar on Islamic Management, jointly
organised by the Islamic Development Bank and the Ministry
of Education. I hope that this Seminar will try to muster
the experiences and ideas of the participants to assist in
achieving a dynamic, thriving, and practicable Islamic
system of management in the modern world.

6. As we are all aware the religion of Islam is not determined by the acceptance and practice of rituals alone. Islam is a way of life, a practical religion which guides and provides for dealing with every aspect of life. Muslims cannot continue to be satisfied with vague statements that "Islam is a complete way of life" with no attempt to operationalise Islam's eternal ideals in our practical day-to-day life. If we say that Islam is for all times then we must apply it to the conditions prevailing in our times. Any attempt to recreate the state of affairs at the time of the Prophet, in order to enable us to practise the teachings of Islam would be an admission that Islam is good for Arabia in the 7th. century of Masihi or the 1st. century of the Hijrah only. Such a tacit admission would be contrary to Islam.

Distinguished participants,

7. The challenge of developing a modern management system compatible with Islam and yet capable of competing with the current westernised system is only daunting because we emphasise difference as being the essence. And so we strive to change all the practices in order to be different. Yet Islam is not Islamic because it differs from the earlier religions of the book. Indeed there are many origins, ideas and concepts in Islam that are identical with those of the Christians and the Hebrews. Islam is Islam because it practices the holy and noble values which the others either did not have or have discarded. It is these values and practices which distinguishes Islam and makes it a way of life rather than a set of rituals for the hereafter. And these values are for all times and are compatible with any and every age and situation.

8. An Islamic system of management in the fifteenth century Hijrah must of necessity be a new and modern experiment directed towards achieving the goals of Islam and translating its values and principles in the context of present day life. The Qur'an and the Sunnah are the primary sources of course, but there is also a great deal to be learnt from the history of the Muslims who ruled most of the civilised world for centuries with one of the most efficient systems of management and administration known to mankind.

9. However, the challenge for those who would try to seek out ways of Islamising the discipline of management by reference to old practices and books, is made more difficult by the neo-conservative approach of some Muslims who demand a total reintroduction of a hotch-potch of ossified ancient laws and regulations devised to deal with situations which have long since disappeared. Past practices may be used as guides but they are certainly not an intrinsic part of Islamic dogma. The static traditionalism of some Muslims whose taqlid-orientation goes against the dynamism of the Qur'an has meant that they have divorced themselves from human needs and conditions. These scholars have given the legal decisions of the early Muslim jurists the value of

eternal law, elevating them to the status of divine authority. Such is their insistence that even when these old authorities contradict the Qur'an, no one may dispute them. The role of ijihad is forgotten or circumscribed and that of al-istislah or public interest not even mentioned in passing.

10. Apart from drawing out the general and ethical principles from the specific rulings of the Qur'an, we also need to learn to analyse contemporary reality using the basic and eternal concepts of Islam. It must be remembered that the early interpreters of the Qur'an and the Sunnah worked within the context of the situation prevailing at their times. They were not wrong. But the times and the situations have changed much and what was appropriate then may not be so now. The Qur'an and the Sunnah serve to guide us. Only on exceptional matters are they specific. For the rest, what is required of us is to stay within the guidelines when we formulate or devise solutions to our contemporary problems.

11. Indeed, that was the way of the Muslims during the glorious era of Islam. The end of this glorious period came when rigidity set in and the changed conditions were ignored when interpreting and formulating the fiqh. If after 800 years Muslim Spain finally fell into Christian hands, it is because the Muslims and their administrators and managers failed to recognise the changed situation and tried to solve 15th century problems, with 7th century methods.

12. Of course, the downfall of the Muslims was also due to the slow rot that their prosperity and power brought them. They deserted the Qur'an and gave themselves up to the good life. Tyranny, backwardness, exploitation and corruption then eroded the foundations of Muslim kingdoms. Political and administrative life became a playground for the nefarious activities of self-seekers and knaves. The combination of fossilised methods and approaches and the decline of Islamic moral values, particularly in administration and management, finally caused the downfall of the Muslim nations.

Distinguished participants,

13. What is there that distinguishes Islamic management from others? Is it the organisation and the hierarchy of managers? Is it the accounting systems? Is it the strategy or the objective? Actually the stress in Islam is on justice. It is right to make profit but not from the misery of others. Riba is forbidden because it has always been a well-known cause of human misery. Similarly excessive profit is proscribed by Islam because of the misery to those who could otherwise afford to have the goods and the services offered.

14. The Prophet (Peace be upon Him) was a manager and trader. The quality most associated with him is

trustworthiness. It is for this that he became known as 'Al Amin' or the trustworthy one. Muslim managers who should follow the sunnah of the Prophet like everyone else must be trustworthy. Such is the stress on trust that in Islam a written contract is not really necessary. A Muslim's word should be his bond. It is a measure of how much we have forsaken the teachings of Islam that we have to have written agreements all the time now.

15. There are some articles of faith in Islam that we must all accept without question. But in the conduct of our daily affairs the injunctions of Islam are always based on reasons which thinking men, Muslims or otherwise, can readily accept. It is up to us to look into these reasons for guidance in our daily affairs rather than to regard the injunctions as determinants of our belief in Islam.

Distinguished participants,

16. Only Allah is perfect and capable of perfection. Man can only strive towards it but never achieve it. Islam urges and instructs us to strive for perfection but does not condemn those who, having tried, fail to achieve it. But try we must. Certainly Muslims must try to adhere as perfectly as possible to the Islamic ethical code in the management of all worldly affairs.

17. The contemporary Muslim world presents a bewildering array of stigmas and problems. There is a great deal of discussion and debate about the role of Islam in the world today. Some of it is constructive, some obviously not. But from debates and discussions there should emerge ideas which can present a practical route to a Muslim civilisation of the future. It is the fusion of new ideas based on the eternal principles of Islam and their practical implementation that will shape the destiny of the ummah. I hope this Seminar will exhibit an openness and flexibility which can contribute to the process of implementing Islamic codes and methods in the 15th century of the Hijrah.

Distinguished participants,

18. It is hoped that this Seminar will propose management styles and ethics propagated by Islam. It certainly must ensure that both Muslims and non-Muslims enjoy a fair and efficient Islamic management. It is my belief that what this Seminar will come up with will constitute an 'ijtihad'. It must therefore examine interpretations of the Quran and Hadith in the light of the management problems faced by Muslim societies at present. If we fail to consider that point, we will fail to ensure that Islam is a religion for all times.

19. I pray that you will achieve success in your pioneering deliberations. It is with this hope and in the name of Allah the Merciful and the Compassionate, that I declare open this Seminar on Islamic Management.

Wabillahi taufik walhidayah wassamu'alaikum
warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.