

Foreword – By Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor

Follow God’s Constitution to Lead a More Disciplined, Productive and Successful Life

I have been asked many times what makes a person successful. It is simple: to follow God’s Constitution. This makes a person disciplined, committed, and highly productive, and I urge others to follow the simple set of rules that are set out in the Holy Book. If you do this, you will succeed.

I looked to the West to see what made it so powerful and I determined that the West was following the Constitution of God; waking up early, working hard, with discipline and integrity. I realised that by following the rules of God, the West was much more productive than the Arab World.

I see too much laziness in some parts of our world. If we follow God’s Constitution, then we will be far more productive, and we will be able to better compete on the world stage. If we follow the rules set out in the Holy Book then we will win.

Time is the most important thing in life. You must split your time up between work, sport and relaxation. Unfortunately in some parts of the Arab World there isn’t a balance and nothing is implemented in accordance to be healthy and productive.

More often than not people happily bank their salaries, yet they are not producing what they are capable of. They are operating at 10-15 per cent of what they should, while others in the West are producing 100 per cent or more.

The secret to success is discipline. Follow a clear plan that is available to everyone. They are not my rules, they are simple rules laid down by God.

God gave us the day to work and the night to relax and spend time with the family. Start the day early, have breakfast early, and work hard with integrity. Allow time every day to exercise, to stay fit and healthy. You cannot produce if you are not healthy in body and mind. After work, spend time with your family and friends, eat early and go to bed early. These are the rules I follow without fail. If you do this, you will see the difference in your productivity and energy levels. You will not only produce 100 per cent, but more.

God teaches us to be disciplined. He gave us five daily prayers. We must perform these each day in a timely manner. This is our obligation. There is no compromise, apart from for the sick and travelling. It also shows the importance of time keeping.

We must pass on these values on to our children, and lead by example. We must raise the bar and inspire others to follow our lead.

I have provided some examples from the Holy Koran and the Hadith from the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

This is based on research conducted by Sheikh Fares Al Mustafa, Imam and Preacher at the Al Farooq Omar Bin Al Khattab Mosque and Centre.

The Principles in Life to follow for a Healthy, Productive and Disciplined Life.

Based on research conducted by Sheikh Fares Al Mustafa, Imam and Preacher at the Al Farooq Omar Bin Al Khattab Mosque and Centre.

The law of the Lord in the everyday life.

God created the man, a superior to all other beings. He gave him the ability to think, to know what is right and wrong. He created everything under his disposal to benefit from and enjoy.

Ref: Surat Al-Jāthiyah : 13

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ

And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth - all from Him.

I am often asked about the secret of success, and my response is very simple. I follow ‘The Constitution of God’. I urge people from Arab nations to take time to reflect on what is really important in life, and adopt these very simple rules set out to us by God. People who follow God’s will are disciplined and have a clear path to follow.

As human beings we were all created equal; we were gifted with a mind to think, a heart to feel and a body to move. And each of these gifts need to be nurtured and cared for, otherwise we are wasting our precious gift of life from God.

There are some seven billion people sharing our world of different races, colours, religions and ethnic backgrounds, and I believe we can be categorised into two types – not more. First, there are those that uphold God’s law, who follow the rules and enjoy a happy existence and secure their place in Heaven. The others are those who feed off the world and take all the earthly pleasures available while neglecting the teaching of God’s Constitution. These are people who have no faith, no direction, and ignore God’s will and mistreat fellow human beings.

God’s Constitution is clear in His Holy Koran and in the religion of Islam, and those who choose to follow it are winners both in life and death.

Build and nurture in the Earth

Ref: Surat Hūd : 61

هُوَ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا

He has produced you from the earth and settled you in it.

God created this beautiful, diverse and resource-rich world for His worshippers to populate it, build and make it flourish and prosper.

We must sustain God’s creation, not destroy it.

Man's mission on earth is to work hard and responsibly. We are all prone to temptation, but it is important to be strong and have the will power and faith to stay on the right path. We must turn our backs on laziness, sluggishness and apathy. If we do that, then we will see the fruit that it bears.

Protect the body and keep it clean

Ref: Surat Al-'Anfāl : 11

وَيُنزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُمْ بِهِ

And sent down upon you from the sky, rain by which to purify you.

For earth to flourish we need to be strong mentally and physically. One of the biggest failings I see so often is the weakness in people's character. To have a strong mind and body you need to keep it clean, clear and free from substances. Health is in the hands of the creator, but it is the responsibility of the individual to protect their own body, to keep it clean, pure and healthy. This means that everything that passes our lips should be for the benefit of our body, we need to eat well and exercise to remain strong.

The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) in the *Hadith* encouraged better hygiene and the preservation of the health: "*dress well and trim your nails*".

Be a strong, not a weak believer

Religion encourages believers to be strong. A weak believer cannot create positive change and doesn't have a beneficial impact on his community. A strong believer is someone who can lead, and be a good role model for others to follow. In the *Hadith*, it is said that "*a strong believer is dearer to God than the weaker believer*". The strong, healthy believer doesn't like laziness, he is someone who works hard, with energy and a perseverance to succeed that will not relent. But this requires a healthy mind and body.

One of the Prophet's morning prayers sites: "*O Allah, I seek refuge in You from worry and sorrow, and I seek refuge in You from disability and laziness, and I seek refuge in You from cowardice and miserliness*". This prayer is self-explanatory about how much God and his Prophet despised laziness and cowardice.

Rest the body and wake up early

Ref: Surat An-Naba' : 9, 10, 11

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا، وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا، وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا

And [We] made your sleep [a means for] rest, and made the night as clothing, and made the day for livelihood.

Ref: Surat Yūnus : 67

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ

It is He who made for you the night to rest therein and the day, giving sight. Indeed in that are signs for a people who listen.

Islam teaches us to start the day earlier with prayer. The Prophet (PBUH) also set the example to wake up early when he sent his armies out for invasions. They would set off at the crack of dawn.

Starting the day early has been proven time and time again to make us more productive and less distracted. Staying up late, unless it is necessary for the livelihood of a person, harms the body and the mind. In a world that revolves around a 24 hour clock, sometimes this is not possible. Nonetheless it is important to ensure your body is rested and gets enough sleep.

Sleeping at night is a blessing by God and a requirement; it inspires internal peace, rests the mind and the body and revitalises it for the next day. Those who rise earlier not only reap spiritual rewards but also achieve more in the day.

Those who stay up late are subjecting themselves to health risks. Sleep deprivation weakens the body's immune system, affects the vitality and energy levels, appearance, and impacts the cognitive process resulting in memory loss.

A study conducted by an Italian university shows that the lack of sleep causes high blood pressure, and could lead to heart attacks. Another study by Stanford University in California, led by Dr D. Manuel, shows that lack of sleep leads to weight gain.

It is also important to strike a balance between work and rest.

Eat well and in moderation

Ref: Surat Al-'A`rāf : 31

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

And eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.

The Qu'ran encourages us to eat well; "Greed and abuse of food is not only frowned upon, it is mentioned in His Book. Everything that is done in excess is not liked by God."

It is crucial to instill good eating habits. Islam teaches good dietary practices. The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) told his followers to wash their hands before and after eating, and start eating with the praise of Allah. He also encouraged moderation. *"Nothing is worse than a person who fills his stomach. It should be enough for the son of Adam to have a few bites to satisfy his hunger. If he wishes more, it should be: **One-third for his food, one-third for his liquids, and one-third for his breath.**"*

One of the main principles of good health is a balanced diet which provides us with all the nutrients our body needs. In this day and age we have so much available to us, yet we still make the wrong choices. For our organs to function well we must fill ourselves with proper nutrients, not empty calories.

Work and produce, spend wisely and do not skimp

“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from poverty”, Prophet Mohammed has said.

Ref: Surat Al-Mulk : 15

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

It is He who made the earth tame for you - so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision - and to Him is the resurrection.

God encourages people to benefit from the Earth's goods and to work and prosper. Those who proclaim abstinence for the sake of belief are not appreciated because they are not reaping the benefits that God gave them.

We are God's worshippers, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use.

Materialism doesn't make people happy, helping mankind does. There is a saying that money is the root of all evil. I disagree. It is the way a person chooses to spend their money is where the difference between right and wrong comes into the picture. If a person grasps the opportunities given to him, works hard and reaps the financial rewards then that is great. It means he has more power to provide for his family and help others. Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is a mandatory duty for all Muslims to give a percentage of their money to those less fortunate than ourselves.

One seventh of the world's population today lives below the poverty line, earning less than \$1.25 per day. Poverty is not something to be ashamed of, or something to despise. It is time each and every one of us play a part in eradicating poverty.

(END)