

Activities

I have been asked by a number of friends that I should write on how to train during Ramadhan... and it's already past half way of this holy month ! Will do that in my next post insyaAllah. My training have been minimal. Cycle less than twice a week, run..? So far..none... Swim..? none.. Been busy with work, sorting out things other than work, i.e. life. What else.. oh yeah, spending more time with the family, having *berbuka*(breaking of fast) with them followed by prayers. Ramadhan bazaar visit? Only once. *Itu pun kebetulan* I was in that area Shah Alam) where Paan's mum opened a stall. So I dropped by. Paan, *daging salai masak lemak cili api tuh, memang sedap*. Ada lagi?! hehe.. So whoever is planning to visit the bazaar at the Stadium Shah Alam open car park, check out the food at this stall ok? Stall number 201 'Masakan Kampung Kak Ina'

It's Not All About Refraining from Food & Drinks

In the Malaysian context (the least that I am accustomed of), whenever the word *fasting* or *puasa* is mentioned, we normally would relate it to ONLY refraining from food and drinks from dusk till dawn.. Whereas the actual meaning in Islam encompasses a significance and definition much wider than that. The same way Islam is not just a religion, but a way of life. Ramadhan is like a 'bonus' month where all hell-gates are closed, and the heavens gates opened. It is a month where all good deeds are rewarded double, triple or more compared to other months. It is also a month where all satan, and jinns are tied and prisoned. What is left for us Muslims is just the 'raw' us. Want to evaluate yourself? There is no other timing than this month. Allah has given us this month to prove ourselves worthy to Him by engaging in acts that brings us closer to Him. So why not take this opportunity?

Pillars of Islam

Fasting during Ramadhan is one of the 5 pillars in Islam. The other 4 include *shahada* (creed), prayers, almsgiving (*zakat*) and hajj (at least once in a lifetime). These are the basic acts of a Muslim. The act of doing these acts will have the person rewarded by Allah, and of course not merely by doing it -- none of the 5 mentioned acts are just physical acts. They are also (and more importantly) spiritual in every sense. It is each and every one of us Muslim's responsibility to understand this. I won't delve into the matter deeper as I do not have the credibility to talk much of this topic. But I would be selfish if I didn't share some of my thoughts and the little knowledge that I have. *Sekadar renungan dan peringatan kepada semua*. I am not perfect, neither are you. While some of us, insyaAllah, engage ourselves in daily prayers and fasting during Ramadhan, do we remind ourselves that we also shouldn't be backbiting ? We shouldn't be gossiping

away, or engage in empty talks during our free time now that we are skipping breakfast, lunch and tea !

Do we not remember that Ramadhan is the best month to spread love and peace to all those around us no matter what background, race or religion they come from , and in that sense the perfect month to KILL hatred? Do we remember that as much as we want Allah to forgive our previous sins, we should also be more forgiving, helpful, kind .. and all good deeds and value that you can list here. So, that's why Ramadhan is not a month solely refraining from *makan and minum*. Bersederhana, berjimat and not buying more that we need for berbuka. If you have a lot of left overs in your fridge which end up in the trash, then its time to buy lesser. Its a month of 'training' and practice so that it becomes a habit for the coming months before we reach another Ramadhan.

Invest and train for the akhirah

A Muslim would know that life does not end when our soul parts from the physical body. In fact, the start of an eternal life in the hereafter starts when our worldly life ends. Hence, that balance of how we should be living our lives in terms of values, objectives and goal should be clear and in line with the religious values that have been taught to us Muslims. While not all of us are privileged to learn religious knowledge when we were young, it is still our responsibility to seek and learn these fundamentals. We are never too old to learn, and age should not be an excuse for us not to pick up that book and read..

We invest \$\$, time, and energy on material things and our worldly life.. We spend hours out there working, or.. if you're a sports person, training. Preparing for a race for instance, takes commitment. The bigger and the important the race, the bigger commitment it takes. Take the ultra marathon of 100km for example. *Memang cukup rapi persiapan nya.* [note: again, this is a reminder to myself and all of my Muslim friends out there]. From the reference and readings that we look up to get the best training program, the planning out of training schedule, the \$\$ spent on gears, apparels and sports nutrition to the hours taken for training (including travel time)..The effort to train at night or early morning, the planning to organize that trip to Singapore for the race.. That's a lot of commitment..

If we can to this extent prepare for a triathlon/duathlon/running event, can we not do the same for OURselves.. for the akhirah. Our well being in akhirah is not determined by how strong we are at running, how many hours we clock for that 10km run, or how much we invested on that Bianchi frame. Or even what reward our receive at work. So the discussion focus here is akhirah. Fine if you can clock a 30mins for a 10km or 2:15 for an OD tri. In fact, I would want to better poor timing. BUT... do I balance my eagerness to participate in sports with my willingness to invest, train and work for a good if not excellent akhirah. And you? If you are willing, then Alhamdulillah. And if not, it is not too late. Islam is a way of life. Its

ummah has to be excellent in all aspect of their lives. We, human being, have to work hard in achieving our goals. Not everybody is born with a silver spoon in his/her mouth, and even then that does not give us any right to boast or be proud of our worldly status, titles and pay cheques. Be humble.

Work hard. We reap what we sow.

There is Quranic verse which I would like to share here :

"O man! Verily, you are returning towards your Lord with your deeds and actions (good or bad), a sure returning, so you will meet (i.e. the results of your deeds which you did)."

(Surah al Inshqaq/ The Sundering 84:6)

We work hard not only for the world, but also the akhirah. If we work hard for the good things with good intentions, insyaAllah, good is what we get. *If yang jahat yang kita niatkan, dan jahat yang kita lakukan, ternyata jahat itu kita dapat.* While not all rewards are gained consciously here on earth, I believe Allah's Blessings are continuous, in all forms or sizes. Sometimes invisible Its the matter of how humble we are as khalifah and servants of Allah. Every blessing counts, the way how each and every single minute of our deed counts. One may not be happy with a RM1000 t-shirt from Hugo Boss or a RM8000 hand bag from Chanel.. and in fact, continues on to ask for more. This kind of person is more a fakeer than an actual poor person. And then complains that the oak dining table is not big enough and hence, the 'need' to buy another one. The line between need and want becomes blur. Islam teaches us to work hard so that it can ease our lives on earth so that we can concentrate on our mission as khalifah on this earth, and becoming the best of nations, insyaAllah. Islam does not encourage its ummah, to be boastful or not thankful for whatever advantages and richness that they have. In fact, one should be more humble.

While there is this concept of prayer and tawakal in Islam, that only compliments our hard work and perseverance. In my opinion, it is not right that we go around chanting how life is treating us badly, or how unlucky we are just because we don't have what other people have. Work hard, earn a living that we can be comfortable and bersyukur (thankful of), praying and praising the Lord every time we reap that reward. When hardship befalls us, its the only reason that we need to strengthen our faith and work harder. We cannot be reliant on helping hands forever. Can we? So remember whenever you help 1 person, make sure you do it in a way which teaches that person to help themselves better.

I am no preacher

Lost in the indulgence of judging other people for their flaws, we normally and

sometimes almost unintentionally forget to look, reflect and evaluate our OWN selves. I have lived with this 1 simple ethical principal : 'LABELS ARE FOR JARS. NOT HUMAN'. Some people love to go about labelling people this and that, unaware how this simple act of hatred (especially when it is a negative label) is eating themselves. We do not realize, that not only it is sinful to condemn one person just for the sake of condemning, but far worse than that, he or she fails to better him or herself than the person who was being condemned. I am not a preacher, in fact I have a long way to go as a learner, student of life and a person. Think of yourself? Are you good enough? How prepared are you for the akhirah? It is never too late to start. Start reflecting, start learning and start acting. May Allah Guide us to the correct and righteous path. Amen.

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