

Graduate Representative Speech by Muzakkir Muhammad Diah @ INCEIF 12TH Convocation

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

The Honourable Chancellor, Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz

The Honourable Pro-Chancellor, Dr Rozali Mohamed Ali

Chairman of Board of Directors Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar

Members of the Board and University Senate

Distinguished Faculty Members

Fellow Graduates

Firstly, let me thank INCEIF for this honour to deliver this graduation speech. I am truly humbled by this recognition as I have never thought to stand before you at this podium today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Back in 2018, I was retrenched after a year working as a regulator in the public transport industry. My organisation was disbanded and all the career plans I have made were crushed within minutes after the disbandment announcement. During months of uncertainties, I came across an ad that promoted pursuing post-grad studies in Islamic Finance at INCEIF while scrolling my Instagram. (kudos to the marketing team! I really fell for it) Without any hesitation, out of curiosity, I googled and did some research on Islamic Finance. Coming from a political science background which is all about words (the only time we see numbers is when we type in data in SPSS). To be frank, I had zero knowledge when it came to Finance, let alone Islamic Finance. With the vigorous Islamic Finance developments and opportunities in Malaysia, I decided to take the leap and apply for the scholarship to do my Masters at INCEIF. I still remember the first day I stepped into INCEIF where I got interviewed by Prof SHA (Prof Dr Syed Hamid AlJunid), and he convinced me that I was more than capable to venture into this if I was interested to do so.

So that was how my journey began with INCEIF, one of the most prestigious schools of Islamic Finance. In the beginning, the unknown was exciting. Those days, I could justify struggling with jargons and new concepts like Mudarabah, Musharakah, asset-backed, asset-based, DeFi, cryptocurrencies, and other financial and Shariah terms. After completing 14 courses in 1 and a half years for the MIFP programme, my worldview towards the finance industry has changed completely. Pre-INCEIF, I - like most layman - had this assumption that apart from the jargons, Arabic words and cosmetic differences, Islamic Finance is more or less the same as its conventional peer - unexceptional. But once you dig deeper into the technicalities, the whys and hows, you are faced with the abundant resources and possibilities offered by Islamic finance. How it is not just about looking after the interest of one party over the other. How underlying assets are crucial in any transactions to avoid any harm to all parties. And how the social aspect of Islamic Finance instruments promotes the distribution and the redistribution of wealth. All these phrases that started to become trendy in the last decades - "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" "Save Trees, Save The Planet", "SDGs" - these principles were already cast in stone in Islam 1,400 years ago.

On climate change *"Impurity has appeared on both land and sea as an outcome of what the hands of people have done."* (Quran Ar-Rum - Verse 41)

On wealth management, Prophet Sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, said: "This wealth is sweet (alluring); whoever earns it lawfully and spends it rightfully, then what excellent help it is!" (Al-Bukhari)

Today, I am more appreciative of the beauty of what Islam and Islamic Finance have to offer.

Fellow graduates,

As students, especially post-grad, we had lot on our plates as we juggled our work schedule, part time studies, our family commitments and our social gatherings concurrently. But friends, look at where you are today. Remember how we started and see what we have accomplished today. You made it here to the last act, either physically or virtually. You made the choice to give your best every single morning to finish what you have started and believe me, you did not throw away your shot. You managed to finish all the coursework from the comfort of staring into your laptop for hours. Even a pandemic of a global proportion could not stop you from gaining new knowledge. You have done tremendously well in making this through. You should be proud of yourselves. This is a victorious day for all of you after all the sacrifices and efforts you have put in.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I end my speech, on behalf of the graduates, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the people who make INCEIF excellent. To the Chancellors and Board of Directors, for the wisdom you bring and the vision that you lay out for INCEIF, we thank you. To the administration, the exceptional oversight you bring to the School and for making the tough calls when needed, we thank you. To the faculty members, who give your all each and every day labouring to provide us with a tremendous education and pushing us to do our best, we thank you. To the staff who tirelessly coordinated our lives and our events while supporting us and the faculty, we thank you. To each member of each family represented in our class, for your support, sacrifice and dedication, we thank you. Especially the parents and guardians who have been our backbones throughout our education journey, we thank you.

Lastly, congratulations fellow graduates. We made it!

Wa billahi taufik walhidayah wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.