

What is True Success?

Success is defined as the “accomplishment of an aim or purpose”. This aim or purpose can look vastly different from individual to individual depending on their values.

Research into the term “success” within the western society shows that it is often associated to monetary or professional achievement. Examples of this success are achieving a high position in a company, making enough money to purchase luxurious cars, handbags, clothing, and many other things.

Other forms of success often discussed within western society is the achieving of gender equality, the establishing of democracy and the obtaining of the western “freedoms”.

The living within these societies has caused many Muslims to view success through this western lens. When asked to describe a successful woman, many think of a woman dressed in a suit with a skirt that only reaches her knees, with her hair tied back, or straightened. This is even though Muslims are aware of the Sharia laws regarding the hijab and clothing of both women and men.

Does this make Muslims unable to achieve success? No.

When speaking of success, it is important to take into account that the West uses a system based on secularism, a separation between religion and life. And therefore, does not view religion as an essential part of their life. It is too them impossible for a Muslima to be successful because of her hijab. The introducing of this idea within our Ummah has led many Muslims to commit haram by removing her veil in order to achieve what the West has dubbed “success”. However, it is essential for these sisters to remember that the success that they seek will only give them success in this life, and not the next one. And the Prophet (saw) said: «مَا الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مِثْلُ مَا يَجْعَلُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِصْبَعَهُ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيَنْظُرْ بِمَاذَا يَرْجِعُ» **“By Allah, what is the world in comparison to the Hereafter except like when one of you dips his finger into the sea? Let him see what he brings back.”**

Success in Islam does not rely on money, which can disappear at any moment and won't save the person from the punishment of the Afterlife. It does not rely on professional achievements, which can disappear as soon as someone younger or more talented is found. It does not rely on gender equality, a flawed system set into place to convince women that they always must do more. No, in Islam Allah (swt) describes success as: **«قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ * الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ النَّعْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلرَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ»** **“Successful indeed are the believers: those who humble themselves in prayer; those who avoid idle talk; those who pay alms-tax; those who guard their chastity.”** [Al-Mu'minin: 8-9].

And he (swt) says: **«وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ»** **“the believers are also those who are true to their trusts and covenants; and those who are properly observant of their prayers.”** [Al-Mu'minin: 8-9].

But in return for their success, Allah (swt) does not offer a handbag, that will break in a few years, clothing that will go “out of fashion” or money that will not help them in the Afterlife. No, being successful in Islam is rewarded by: **«أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ * الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ»** **“These are the ones who will be awarded Paradise as their own. They will be there forever.”** [Al-Mu'minin: 10-11].

This is the true meaning of success. It is not measured in how much money you will make for a capitalist company after committing haram, it is not fighting for gender equality in a system who sees women as puppets and celebrating “female empowerment” by working despite being pregnant to allow companies to make money off of you. No, success is for those who follow the laws of Allah, who fight for Him (swt) to be happy with them. Those are the people that will enter Paradise and achieve true success in life, and in the Afterlife.

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