

**Speech by Dr. Putri Swastika,
Graduate's Representative at INCEIF's 10th Convocation 2018**

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Bismillahirrahmanirrahiim

The Honourable Chancellor, Tan Sri Dato Sri Dr. Zeti Akhtar Aziz

The Honourable Pro-Chancellor, Dr. Rozali Mohamed Ali

Yang Berbahagia Datuk Nor Shamsiah Mohd Yunus, Governor Bank Negara Malaysia

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood, Under Secretary General - Partnerships, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Members of the Senate

Respected Faculty Members

Graduands

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

AsSalaamu'allaykum WarahmatuLlahi Wabarakatuh

Praise be to Allah for His mercy and guidance. May peace and blessings of Allah be on Prophet Muhammad s.a.w., his household and companions.

Let me thank to INCEIF for this honor to deliver this graduation speech. I am truly humbled by this recognition since I, myself, have never thought to stand before you at this podium today.

My fellow graduates,

A wise man once said, "education is an investment". I believe this "*qiyas*" is a perfect description of our journey in the program. But as we know, there are few types of investments depending on their structures.

I can assure you that my journey of Ph.D. represents exotic investment that is highly complex in nature.

I began the program when all my time is allocated only to study. I was young and single. I was away from home, so I had no physical responsibility in caring my parents except the moral obligation to study hard. If I relate these periods with the analogy we mentioned before, education is a plain vanilla investment for me. My life was a standard version of a student.

It becomes more complex after I got married. Then, I had to leave my husband to do my research and fellowships in Leipzig, Germany. Soon after returning home, I got pregnant. During these periods, there were moments when I feel demotivated and questioned myself; "Why am I doing this?"

I suffered during the low times where I feel like quitting. Writing a dissertation is physically and emotionally exhaustive. We know how intense and stressful it was especially when ideas normally disappear in difficult situations.

My fellow graduates,

The light soon came when my first son born. That was the tipping point for my journey. My son gives me energy to finish what I have started. During this time, energy booster was also coming from my supervisors, Prof. Abbas Mirakhor and Prof. Murat Cizakca, and Prof. Datuk Syed Othman Alhabshi, who believed in me that I can accomplish this assignment.

My fellow graduates,

Our story of journey may differ. But I believe, we experienced a similar emotional rollercoaster and low moments. But perseverance has made us here today.

My fellow graduates,

Love is the seed of perseverance. We are able to finish our thesis or dissertation because we love our research and we hope that one day, someone would read and pick up our ideas and implement it. Most importantly, we are able to stand up from defeated time and steadfast because we love our family. We love to see them smiling proud and happy.

My fellow graduates,

Love is also the secret ingredient of Islamic financial system. It is a system where respecting human connection is the capital for inclusiveness and equitable economic and financial transactions. It is a system that empowers man to do his or her function as the God's vicegerent, to extend His love to all mankind and other creations. It is a system that urges humanization of financial transactions. By all means, to exercise risk sharing contracts, you got to love your partner. Love is what makes Islamic finance different to the conventional.

My fellow graduates,

Today, the world faces so many problems. The earth has come to a point where we could not find a place that the air and water have not being polluted. Poverty is now a serious problem, not only for the third-world countries, but also developed nations. Everywhere we see number of alcohol and drug addicts and crimes are increasing. Trust is missing in our social value, as we do not even know the name of our neighbors. War is indeed in front of our eyes, as conflicts in the Middle East has yet solved. Truly, it is a sad situation considering literacy is no longer our problems, every child has access to formal education, and that number of master and Ph.D. holders in our countries is now increasing.

We should, thence, ask ourselves. What is going wrong?

My fellow graduates,

Remember the wise man analogy that education is an investment?

The answer is, all this while, we have invested in wrong products. We are taught to measure our success through earnings and salaries. We are taught to imbibe individualistic and competition values in our education system, instead of respects and cooperation. We are taught that development could only be measured through tangible substance in our possession. Love is the forgotten instrument in our earlier education process. Our conventional education system has turned to be junk investment.

My fellow graduates,

I am certain that, like myself, you are grateful to be an INCEIFian. Because at this institution, I found this missing piece, the love, in the education process. We are gathered with teachers who love Islamic finance and dream to install Islamic universal laws in the economic system. We make network of friends who shares the same mission of taking part in establishing Islamic financial system in their respective countries. We are served by the generosity and the mercy of the INCEIF staff and management that cares to improve on our soft skills in writing, debating, or econometrics. In fact, in this institution, I re-learnt the love to Allah SWT, to His messenger, and to all His creations.

I learnt that the only effective method to solve our socio-economic problems is through sharing risk and responsibility, and that requires you to become a humble loving man. Only a humble loving man is willing to share the risk of others.

These values are taught throughout our learning process at INCEIF.

My fellow graduates,

Now as an INCEIF alumni, we have this *amanah*, that is, to spread this love to as many as Allah's creations. To internalize the love we learnt here into our homes and daily life. To implement and instrumentalize the principle of risk sharing at our home institutions. And to continue being a steadfast advocate for Islamic finance. Thus, believe me, if we persevere these moral values in our personality, our investment of pursuing Masters or Ph.D. in Islamic finance would yield only positive return in the future. In syaa Allah.

We must also realize the consequence of becoming INCEIF graduates which means, we are now ready to represent INCEIF values to outside world.

My fellow graduates,

My journey of Ph.D. has been like the exotic investment, where investors could expect high returns for the risks. My dear friends, it is literally true considering when I began the program as single individual, I am now here with my two handsome children. *smile*

Now, may I request my fellow graduates to all stand up.

Let's thank our lecturers, INCEIF management and staffs for making our life as INCEIF student memorable, and importantly to our parents and families who have made their sacrifices for our success story.

Please give them the most thunderous clap

Thank you Graduates. And now, please follow me in reciting the pledge of class of 2018.

We, the class of 2018, pledge

1. to continue to deepen our knowledge in Islamic finance
2. to give back to the society and serve others through Islamic finance
3. to be ambassadors of Islamic finance wherever we are.

Allow me to invite our President and Chief Executive Officer, Y.Bhg. Professor Datuk Dr Azmi Omar, to receive the pledge from our fellow graduate, Brother HAZEEM HAREEZ BIN HAZMI, who is also one of our Student Representative Council SRC member.

Thank you Datuk and also thank you Brother Hazeem

Dear graduates, please be seated

May Allah SWT continue to bless INCEIF and all people in the institution, to produce quality graduates with knowledge and wisdom. With that, I end my speech.

Thank you very much.

AsSalaamu'allaykum wa RahmatuLlahi wa Barakatuh.