

'Darkness to Light' in Islamic Corporate Governance

Iznan Tarip¹

There are emerging works on the dark side of organisation, looking at the dark out-side (e.g. political instability, multi-national corrupt syndicates), and in-side (e.g. workplace violence, nepotism). The 'darkness' not only involves generalised corrupting mechanisms, but also specific issues that are purposefully 'brushed under the carpet' by the organisation. This paper contributes to the evolving field by introducing the theme 'darkness to light' from an Islamic perspective. It is situated within the discourse of Islamic corporate governance, looking not only at the shadows lurking within an Islamic system of corporate governance, but also its 'light' side that tries to illuminate every nook and cranny of the virtuous organisation. Furthermore, the dynamic interplays between organisational darkness and light are scrutinised, forming these 'grey' areas in which organisational members struggles to navigate. The paper also presents an illustrated case study to help explore these interplays. The case shows that some organisational elements are situated exclusively on the light and dark sides, but many in these grey areas. Strategies and mechanisms are then proposed to systematically shine more light into these dark sides and grey areas, in order for the organisation to gain benefits from them.

Keywords: Islamic corporate governance, Islamic governance, dark side, light side, virtuous organisation

¹ The author is a researcher at the Institute of Policy Studies and the Institute for Leadership, Innovation & Advancement at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. He earned his PhD at the Department of Leadership and Management at Lancaster University, United Kingdom

Contemporary research on the metaphorically dark side of the organisation has been studied extensively, albeit sporadic. Often, the darkness refers to corruptions in the organisation. The analogies rotten apples, rotten barrels, rotten branches, rotten trees and rotten orchards are prominent to depict corrupt individuals, organisations and industries.^{1,2,3,4,5} But there are many kinds of corruptions, and they do not necessarily equate to the dark side of the organisation. The field can focus on various aspects of organisational life, such as leadership,^{6,7,8,9,10} technology,^{11,12,13,14} creativity,¹⁵ corporate culture,¹⁶ and political networks,^{17,18,19} and is expanding.²⁰ This paper contributes to the field by introducing the theological theme 'darkness to light' from an Islamic perspective, to shine more light to the issues facing the contemporary organisation. This approach is necessary because both

-
- ¹ Jennifer J. Kish-Gephart, David A. Harrison, and Linda Klebe Treviño, "Bad Apples, Bad Cases, and Bad Barrels: Meta-Analytic Evidence About Sources of Unethical Decisions at Work," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 95, no. 1, 2010
 - ² Be Ashforth et al., "Re- Viewing Organizational Corruption - Introduction," *Academy Of Management Review* 33, no. 3, 2008
 - ³ Christian N. Thoroughgood, Samuel T. Hunter, and Katina B. Sawyer, "Bad Apples, Bad Barrels, and Broken Followers? An Empirical Examination of Contextual Influences on Follower Perceptions and Reactions to Aversive Leadership," *Journal of Business Ethics* 100, no. 4., 2011
 - ⁴ George Gilligan, "Jerome Kerviel of The "Rogue Trader" Of Societe Generale: Bad Luck, Bad Apple, Bad Tree or Bad Orchard? (France)," *The Company Lawyer* 32, no. 12, 2011
 - ⁵ Sanja Kutnjak Ivković, "Rotten Apples, Rotten Branches, and Rotten Orchards," *Criminology & Public Policy* 8, no. 4, 2009
 - ⁶ Robert Hogan and Joyce Hogan, "Assessing Leadership: A View from the Dark Side," *International Journal of Selection and Assessment* 9, no. 1-2, 2001
 - ⁷ Ken W. Parry and Sarah B. Proctor-Thomson, "Perceived Integrity of Transformational Leaders in Organisational Settings," *Journal of Business Ethics* 35, no. 2, 2002
 - ⁸ Art Padilla, Robert Hogan, and Robert Blair Kaiser, "The Toxic Triangle: Destructive Leaders, Susceptible Followers, and Conducive Environments," *Leadership Quarterly* 18, no. 3, 2007
 - ⁹ James M. Dobbs and James J. Do, "The Impact of Perceived Toxic Leadership on Cynicism in Officer Candidates," *Armed Forces & Society* 45, no. 1, 2019
 - ¹⁰ Thomas Hol Fosse et al., "Active and Passive Forms of Destructive Leadership in a Military Context: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 2019
 - ¹¹ Vivien K. G. Lim, "The It Way of Loafing on the Job: Cyberloafing, Neutralizing and Organizational Justice," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 23, no. 5, 2002
 - ¹² Brian R. Dineen et al., "Aesthetic Properties and Message Customization: Navigating the Dark Side of Web Recruitment," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 92, no. 2, 2007
 - ¹³ René Riedl, "On the Biology of Technostress: Literature Review and Research Agenda," *Data Base for Advances in Information Systems* 44, no. 1, 2013
 - ¹⁴ Marisa Salanova, Susana Llorens, and Eva Cifre, "The Dark Side of Technologies: Technostress among Users of Information and Communication Technologies," *International Journal of Psychology* 48, no. 3, 2013
 - ¹⁵ Francesca Gino and Dan Ariely, "The Dark Side of Creativity: Original Thinkers Can Be More Dishonest," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 102, no. 3, 2012
 - ¹⁶ Hugh Willmott, "Strength Is Ignorance - Slavery Is Freedom - Managing Culture in Modern Organizations," *Journal of Management Studies* 30, no. 4, 1993
 - ¹⁷ Laurence J. O'Toole and Kenneth J. Meier, "Desperately Seeking Selznick: Cooptation and the Dark Side of Public Management in Networks," *Public Administration Review* 64, no. 6, 2004
 - ¹⁸ Jordan Siegel, "Contingent Political Capital and International Alliances: Evidence from South Korea," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 52, no. 4, 2007
 - ¹⁹ Jamie D. Collins, Klaus Uhlenbruck, and Peter Rodriguez, "Why Firms Engage in Corruption: A Top Management Perspective," *Journal of Business Ethics* 87, no. 1, 2009
 - ²⁰ Stephen Linstead, Garance Marechal, and Ricky W. Griffin, "Theorizing and Researching the Dark Side of Organization," *Organization Studies* 35, no. 2, 2014

'light' and 'darkness' are prominent themes with religious worldview, not just Islam. They are not treated as a mere analogy, intended to display verbosity, but have deeper marks in the hearts and minds of both the intellectuals and laypersons.

Additionally, the dark side of the organisation may critically inform the discourse within Islamic corporate governance, looking not only at the 'light' side within an Islamic system of corporate governance, but also the shadows cast within the contemporary organisation. The intellectual crossover between secular and religious is not an innovation of the 21st century, and certainly not so for the field of Islamic corporate governance, whereby the contemporary Islamic model of governance is arguably an adaptation of the stakeholder model from Continental Europe, mixed with best practices of Anglo-Saxon and more importantly, Shari'ah principles.¹ The need for intellectual crossover has always existed throughout the Muslim historical footprints. There is a common challenge faced, which is to achieve good corporate governance. Hence, the need to explore 'darkness to light' in Islamic corporate governance to illuminate every nook and cranny of the virtuous organisation.

This paper starts with a review of the dark side of organisation literature. Two issues are then raised: how to define dark and light sides of the organisation, and how to navigate the grey areas. To tackle these issues, the themes 'light' and 'darkness' within the worldview of Islam are presented. As a result, a multi-levelled framework is constructed, displaying the dynamic movements from light to darkness, and vice versa. The usefulness of this framework is then illustrated through a case study in the context of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Brunei, on the struggles of brightening up the said organisation.

Dark Side of Organisation

Is the dark side of the organisation a defined field of study? Arguably, yes. Vaughan is the first author to legitimise the field by systematically reviewing four works of literature on the dark side from a sociological perspective.² In particular, the author examined the case of "routine nonconformity" or organisational deviance, referring to

¹ Zulkifli Hasan, "A Survey on Shari'ah Governance Practices in Malaysia, GCC countries and the UK: Critical Appraisal", *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management* 4, no.1, 2011

² Diane Vaughan, "The Dark Side of Organizations: Mistake, Misconduct, and Disaster," *Annual Review of Sociology* 25, 1999

“...event, activity, or circumstances, occurring in and/or produced by a formal organization, that deviates from both formal design goals and normative standards or expectations, either in the fact of its occurrence or in its consequences, and produces a suboptimal outcome...”¹

The author then further elaborated three concepts under routine nonconformity: mistake, misconduct and disaster, all of which are systematically produced as part of the social organisation. Mistake refers to an act that produces unexpected adverse outcomes, misconduct refers to an act that violates internal rules and regulations, and disasters as “organizational-technical systems failure” with outcomes that are “unexpected, adverse, and of high social impact and cost regardless of the number of lives and amount of property lost”.² The review also found that these deviances have aspects from the environment, social organisations and “socio-cognition”, and that the origin of the dark side “is located in the connections between these levels of analysis that systematically produce organizational deviance”.³

A more recent review is by Linstead and colleagues for a special issue in the academic journal *Organization Studies*.⁴ Titled ‘Theorizing and Researching the Dark Side of Organization,’ the authors included the two previous works in their review to represent the sociological and psychological perspectives respectively, with addition from works of ‘organisational misbehaviour’ and a range of critical approaches to the dark side. Indeed, contributions on organisational (mis)behaviours are abundant, which may not necessarily theorise about the ‘dark side,’ but as Linstead and colleagues argued, they are “closely aligned with dark side framework”.⁵ Eby & Allen’s *Personal Relationships* is an example, as well as, many other individual works looking

¹ Ibid., 273

² Ibid., 293

³ Ibid., 298

⁴ Stephen Linstead, Garance Marechal, and Ricky W. Griffin, "Theorizing and Researching the Dark Side of Organization," *Organization Studies* 35, no. 2, 2014

⁵ Ibid., 168

at counterproductive actions, insidious workplace behaviours, discrimination, bullying, incivility, and more.¹

- Organisational (Mis)behaviour?

Another important work covered in the review is *Organizational Misbehaviour* by Ackroyd & Thompson, combining both sociological and psychological approaches.² The authors defined organisational misbehaviour as “anything you do at work you are not supposed to do.”³ This book intended to shed more light into often neglected issues in organisational behaviour research, which is that misbehaviours are here to stay. This is contrary to ‘management’, which emphasises control and advancement, and assume that better management would lead to the removal of non-compliance, and eradication of organisational misbehaviour. However, a truer and richer picture of organisational behaviour based on real-life experiences of the “ordinary” employee is that they exercise “what modest power they have in ways that they think fit, and to continue to define their interest and identity as being, in some ways, distinct from those of their employing company”,⁴ thus, give birth to some forms of misbehaviours: ‘soldiering’, ‘absenteeism’, ‘pilferage’, ‘humour’, and the politics of sexuality. Interventions by management would tend to be marginal and temporary, especially when it comes to “customary misbehaviour”,⁵ e.g. customary absenteeism. The authors argued that the ineffectiveness of management is possibly due to both incorrigible and innovative characteristics of organisational (mis)behaviour. Thus, old misbehaviours may persist, while newer ones may emerge.

Another important work is *The Dark Side of Organizational Behaviour*, edited by Griffin and O'Leary-Kelly, looking at specific behaviours that lead to negative consequences.⁶ For them, the dark side behaviour refers to “motivated behavior by an employee or group of employees that have negative consequences for an individual within the organization, another

¹ Lillian Turner de Tormes Eby and Tammy D Allen, *Personal Relationships: The Effect on Employee Attitudes, Behavior, and Well-Being*, Routledge, 2012

² Stephen Ackroyd, *Organizational Misbehaviour*, ed. Paul Thompson and Inc ebrary, London; Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999

³ Ibid., 2

⁴ Ibid., 3

⁵ Ibid., 4

⁶ Ricky W Griffin, Anne O'Leary-Kelly, and Robert D Pritchard, *The Dark Side of Organizational Behavior*, Jossey-Bass San Francisco, CA, 2004

group of individuals within the organization, or the organization itself”.¹ Under this umbrella, they collected works on various dark side behaviours, some are primarily injurious to the self or other people (such as verbal and physical violence, sexual harassment, drug abuse, alcohol drinking, smoking, and suicide), or to the organisation (e.g. corporate theft, violating organisational rules and regulations, inappropriate impression management behaviours, breach of confidentiality).

What is interesting from these works is that what organisation requires may not necessarily equate to what the society’s expectations and individual’s needs. Even going to the toilet can be considered as misbehaviour! The company Amazon, despite being the largest company in the world, have a track record of mistreating their employees. Under their strict time constraints, employees felt pressured to drive at dangerous speeds, skip meals and even bathroom breaks.² This then raises the question: who defines darkness within the organisational context? Furthermore, is the definition process relative?

Another issue is that despite the ubiquity of organisational misbehaviour, not all organisational misbehaviours are detrimental to the said organisation. In other words, these misbehaviours do not necessarily constitute the dark side of the organisation. In Karlsson’s *Organizational Misbehaviour in the Workplace: Narratives of Dignity and Resistance*, the author argued that organisational misbehaviours have the potential to be constructive.³ The author illustrated the argument using the case of conscious rule-breaking in the contexts of Norwegian Health Care, whereby workers apply other ‘social rules’ (e.g. caring and ethical rules) to meet clients’ needs and be dignified, overriding management rules. In the author’s words, “In order to perform dignified work, they had to misbehave”.⁴ This seems like misbehaviours can not only be at the dark side of the organisation but also the light side, producing positive results for the organisation.

¹ Ibid., 4

² Hayley Peterson, “Missing wages, grueling shifts, and bottles of urine: The disturbing accounts of Amazon delivery drivers may reveal the true human cost of ‘free’ shipping,” *Business Insider*, 12 September 2018, available online: <https://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-delivery-drivers-reveal-claims-of-disturbing-work-conditions-2018-8>

³ Jan Karlsson, *Organizational Misbehaviour in the Workplace Narratives of Dignity and Resistance*, ed. ProQuest, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire [England] ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012

⁴ Ibid., 178

This would then create a field of grey-ness, an area of intersections between dark and light sides. Indeed, many of the works on the dark side are reactions to the light¹ (e.g. creativity,² and technology).^{3,4} Vaughan equally surmised that aspects of the environment, organisation and socio-cognition associated with the light side are also “systematically related to the dark side.”⁵ The author highlighted Weick’s work⁶ that shows how the same processes that produced the light side (safety) can produce darkness (accidents and disasters):

“Training, often used to prevent errors, can create them; information richness introduces inefficiency, too little produces inaccuracy; teams have multiple points of view that enhance safety, but as they become a cohesive group they share assumptions, so the “requisite variety” important to safety is lost.”

Vaughan’s previous examination of mistake, misconduct and disaster further illustrated the dynamism of the grey areas, as follows:

“Mistake, misconduct, and disaster are socially defined in relation to the norms of some particular group. Whether an incident or activity producing an unexpected negative outcome is viewed as conforming or deviant, whether it is defined as mistake, misconduct, or disaster will vary by group. Also, it will be viewed as conformity at the group level, transformed into mistake at the organizational level and misconduct at the institutional level (S Zerilli 1998, personal communication).”⁷

¹ Stephen Linstead, Garance Marechal, and Ricky W. Griffin, "Theorizing and Researching the Dark Side of Organization," *Organization Studies* 35, no. 2, 2014

² Francesca Gino and Dan Ariely, "The Dark Side of Creativity: Original Thinkers Can Be More Dishonest," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 102, no. 3, 2012

³ René Riedl, "On the Biology of Technostress: Literature Review and Research Agenda," *Data Base for Advances in Information Systems* 44, no. 1, 2013

⁴ Marisa Salanova, Susana Llorens, and Eva Cifre, "The Dark Side of Technologies: Technostress among Users of Information and Communication Technologies," *International Journal of Psychology* 48, no. 3, 2013

⁵ Diane Vaughan, "The Dark Side of Organizations: Mistake, Misconduct, and Disaster," *Annual Review of Sociology* 25, 1999: 292

⁶ Karl E. Weick, "Organizational Culture as a Source of High Reliability," *California Management Review* 29, no. 2, 1987

⁷ Diane Vaughan, "The Dark Side of Organizations: Mistake, Misconduct, and Disaster," *Annual Review of Sociology* 25, 1999: 283

Even in the cases of ethical (normatively light) and narcissistic (normatively dark) leadership may not necessarily be pure light or dark respectively. Brown & Mitchell broadens the research agenda of ethical leadership to also include its necessary counterparts, the unethical leadership,¹ and Campbell and colleagues cautioned researchers “to avoid the temptation to view narcissistic leadership as an either-or phenomenon (good vs. bad, effective vs. ineffective, bright side vs. dark side),”² and scrutinise their behaviours, the context for the behaviours’ activation and flourishing, and their effects on outcomes. Such intellectual clarity is needed when examining the dark and light sides of the organisation, especially in navigating the grey areas within contemporary organisational settings.

- Grey Areas in Organisation

There is a need to extend the review of the dark side into the grey areas. John Bruhn’s “The Functionality of Gray Area Ethics in Organizations” in the *Journal of Business Ethics* is of value here.³ The author’s definition of the grey area in ethics is “where the line between what people must do or not do and what they may choose to do or not choose to do is blurred,”⁴ which is similar to the previous discussion. The author also posited that these grey ethical issues can both be beneficial and destructive. The benefits and liabilities of grey areas in an organisation are replicated as follows:

Benefits	Liabilities
To organisation:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage person-organisation fit • Affirm accountability • Increase positive perceptions of organisational culture • Leverage risks • Reinforce boundaries, social control • Affirm organisational values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proliferation of policies • Can be resource (time and money) intensive • Different cultural attitudes may conflict • Can create turnover intention • Can create distrust and divisiveness • Can divert attention away from organisational goals

¹ Michael E. Brown and Marie S. Mitchell, "Ethical and Unethical Leadership: Exploring New Avenues for Future Research," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 20, no. 4, 2010

² William Keith Campbell et al., "Narcissism in Organizational Contexts," *Human Resource Management Review* 21, no. 4, 2011

³ John Bruhn, "The Functionality of Gray Area Ethics in Organizations," *Journal of Business Ethics* 89, no. 2, 2009

⁴ *Ibid.*, 208

To leaders:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm leadership authority • Opportunity to create a moral community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can result in outside intervention • Can create a confusing regulatory environment • Whistle-blowing
To members:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas of unfairness & inequality • Encourage openness & discussions • Deal with minor problems informally • Encourage social responsibility and personal morality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can create climate of defensiveness & self-protection • Can create a need for liability protection • Can create cynicism & disloyalty

Table 1. Some benefits and liabilities of grey areas in an organisation.
Source: John Bruhn, "The Functionality of Gray Area Ethics in Organizations," *Journal of Business Ethics* 89, no. 2 (2009)

To mitigate these grey areas, organisations need to respond to secure these benefits by renewing their existing policies and procedures, to help guide employees. However, the author also warned that grey areas may emerge from inflexible and not-so-creative policies. The author then posted policy formulations would not be able to cover all grey issues. To cover the grey areas, there are two components: the organisation's ethical culture and individual ethical choices,¹ so that these issues "are dealt with situationally."² To proactively address these grey issues and gain benefits from them, Bruhn then calls upon the intuitive leaders and managers, coupled with anticipatory management, to "prepare organizational members for change and help them to learn about options, the effects of change for them, and how their values will be protected."³

Bruhn's proposition does have limitations, however. For one, a societal standard for ethics with ever-evolving cultural values, exacerbated with social media and globalisation, can potentially mount monstrous pressure on institutions to also change their ethical standards. Indeed, what constitutes the dark and grey issues may differ for different stakeholders (e.g. Amazon's mistreatment of employees). Would the intuitive leaders and managers be

¹ Ibid., 210

² Ibid., 208

³ Ibid., 212

capable to navigate through the evolving landscape, especially when scientism and over-rationalisation are placed on the management's pedestal? There are indeed many authors that call for intuitions for more ethical decision-making in the workplace,^{1,2,3,4} but to what extent is its practice? Would they be able to distinguish, between rightful organisational activities and corrupted ones, between good behaviour and misbehaviour, between light and darkness?

The second limitation would then be that the intuitions of leader and managers are not sufficient to help navigate the grey areas. The main reason being that intuition, or *nous*, is only one of the intellectual virtues identified by Aristotle, and it is part of an even greater virtue, which is *sophia* or philosophic wisdom.⁵ *Sophia* is a combination of *episteme*, or scientific knowledge, and *nous*, and it deals with ethics and morality. Thus, rather than searching for the intuitive leader, the wise leaders and followers are sought after to tackle the grey ethical issues.⁶

At this point, it can be surmised that when scholars and practitioners talk about the dark side, it refers to various issues: corruption, organisational disaster, physical and mental abuse, misbehaviours and even suicide. However, what constitutes the dark may not be absolute darkness. Some darkness from the perspective of central management can be light from employees' perspective (e.g. conscious rule-breaking to perform dignified work). Additionally, darkness and light have many intersections, giving rise to grey areas. So arguably, the light, dark and grey areas are shades of ethics, explicit ethical issue or otherwise. To help navigate these areas, this paper employs an Islamic perspective on light and darkness, which are themes prominent in the scholarly tradition, to provide an alternative lens for examining these grey areas. In particular, the Islamic perspective 1) defines

¹ Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine : The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer*, ed. Stuart E. Dreyfus and Tom Athanasiou, Oxford, UK : B. Blackwell, 1986

² Bernard McKenna, David Rooney, and Peterw Liesch, "Beyond Knowledge to Wisdom in International Business Strategy," *Critical Studies in Innovation* 24, no. 3, 2006

³ Jaana Woiceshyn, "A Model for Ethical Decision Making in Business: Reasoning, Intuition, and Rational Moral Principles," *Journal of Business Ethics* 104, no. 3, 2011

⁴ Celia Moore and Francesca Gino, "Approach, Ability, Aftermath: A Psychological Process Framework of Unethical Behavior at Work," *The Academy of Management Annals* 9, no. 1, 2015

⁵ Aristotle, W. D. Ross, and Lesley Brown, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009: 1139b15-41b22

⁶ Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi, "The Wise Leader," *Harvard business review* 89, no. 5, 2011

the dark and light sides of the organisation, and 2) scrutinises the dynamic interplays between the two sides to help navigate in the grey areas.

Light & Darkness in the Worldview of Islam

One of the names of Allah *tā āla* is *an-Nūr*, the Light of the heavens and earth, and the Light that guides.¹ The light is also attributed to the Qur'an, all the prophets of Islam, including the final Messenger, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his Sunnah. The Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are also considered. Allah *tā āla* is the Essential Light, whereas other luminaries are accidental lights. Light is also metaphorically used for positive qualities, such as faith, truth, knowledge, joy and felicity, explained Berrada.² These lights guide the hearts of the believers then, now, and forever.³ This light-connection between Allah *tā āla*, the primary Light, and the believers can be seen in sūrah *an-Nūr* verse 35 regarding 'light upon light.'⁴

In the next verse, Allah *tā āla* talks about houses of worship, whereby the remembrance of Allah *tā āla* is emphasised, and that people are not distracted from remembrance by other activities.⁵ Other verses speak about buildings having the right foundation, which is the *Taqwā*.⁶ From these verses, the virtuous city, virtuous organisation and virtuous people can be theorised, which are different levels of the collective hearts guided by the light of Allah *tā āla*. The virtuous people are the main driver for the virtuous organisation

¹ The translation of Sūrah *an-Nūr*: 35

² Khalid Berrada, "Metaphors of Light and Darkness in the Holy Quran: A Conceptual Approach," Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, <https://flbenmsik.ma/data/bassamat/basamat1/Berrada.pdf>

³ Said Nursi explained regarding the heart and light, as follows: "The term heart indicates that the dominical subtle faculty is to man's spiritual dimensions what the cone-shaped piece of flesh is to the body. For just as the physical heart is a life-machine that pumps the water of life to all the parts of the body, and if it is obstructed or ceases from activity, [life departs and] the body stiffens; so the subtle inner faculty dispenses the light of true life to all parts of the corpus composed of man's spiritual aspects, and his [mental] states, and hopes. And if, Allah forbid, the light of belief fades away, his being, with which he contends with the universe, becomes like a motionless spectre, dark in its entirety" (pp. 86)

Said Nursi, *Signs of Miraculousness: The Inimitability of the Qur'an's Conciseness*, translated by Şükran Vahide, Istanbul, Turkey: Sözler Publications, 2013

⁴ The translation of sūrah *an-Nūr*: 35 ﴿Allah is the Light of the heavens and earth. His Light is like this: there is a niche, and in it a lamp, the lamp inside a glass, a glass like a glittering star, fuelled from a blessed olive tree from neither East nor West, whose oil almost gives light even when no fire touches it- light upon light- Allah guides whoever He will to his Light; Allah draws such comparisons for people; Allah has full knowledge of everything ﴾

⁵ The translation of sūrah *an-Nūr*: 36-38 ﴿shining out in houses of worship. Allah has ordained that they be raised high and that His name be remembered in them, with men in them celebrating His glory morning and evening: men who are not distracted, either by commerce or profit, from remembering Allah, keeping up the prayer, and paying the prescribed alms, fearing a day when hearts and eyes will turn over. Allah will reward such people according to the best of their actions, and He will give them more of His bounty: Allah provides limitlessly for anyone He will ﴾

⁶ The translation of sūrah *at-Tawbah*: 109-110 ﴿Which is better, the person who founds his building on consciousness of Allah and desire for His good pleasure, or the person who founds his building on the brink of a crumbling precipice that will tumble down into the Fire of Hell, taking him with it? Allah does not guide the evildoers: the building they have founded will always be a source of doubt within their hearts, until their hearts are cut to pieces. Allah is all knowing and wise ﴾

and virtuous city; their hearts constantly in a state of remembrance of Allah *tā'āla*, aided by the light of the Qur'ān, while fulfilling the rights working collectively towards fulfilling the *Maqāsid* of the Sharī'ah.

The absence of these lights is what is called 'darkness'. Berrada explained that "darkness stands for evil, contumacy and misguidance, spiritual retrogression, atheism, falsehood, ignorance, disquietude, grief and poignant doubt, damnation and other vices and negative qualities."¹ Individuals in darkness are devoid of the remembrance of Allah *tā'āla*, do not follow the way of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and do not take lessons from the Companions. Their buildings do not have solid foundations, illustrated as a building "on the brink of a crumbling precipice that will tumble down".² This verse can be referred back to the difference between Masjid at-Taqwā and Masjid Ad-Dirār. Ibn Kathir explained that the former masjid has been built based on *Taqwā* of Allah and His pleasure, and the latter was built based on "causing harm, disbelief and causing division among the believers, and as an outpost for those who warred against Allah and His Messenger ﷺ".³ From this verse, as well as others, the hypocritical organisation and corrupted people can be theorised, whereby the organisation pretended to be virtuous, but the people's hearts are filled with vices, with intentions to cause harm.

The Qur'ān also tells of the many layers of darkness. Again, in sūrah *an-Nūr* verses 39 – 40, Allah *tā'āla* says, in its near translation:

﴿ But the deeds of those who disbelieve are like a mirage in a desert: the thirsty person thinks there will be water but, when he gets there, he finds only Allah, who pays him his account in full - Allah is swift in reckoning. ﴾

﴿ Or like shadows in a deep sea covered by wave upon wave, with clouds above – *layer upon layer of darkness* – of he holds

¹ Berrada, "Metaphors of Light and Darkness in the Holy Quran: A Conceptual Approach"

² The translation of sūrah *at-Tawbah*: 109-110 ﴿ Which is better, the person who founds his building on consciousness of Allah and desire for His good pleasure, or the person who founds his building on the brink of a crumbling precipice that will tumble down into the Fire of Hell, taking him with it? Allah does not guide the evildoers: the building they have founded will always be a source of doubt within their hearts, until their hearts are cut to pieces. Allah is all knowing and wise ﴾

³ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, available online:
http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1588&Itemid=64

out his hand, he is scarcely able to see it. The one to whom Allah gives no light has no light at all. ﴿

Ibn Kathir explained that these verses refer to two kinds of disbelievers: the deluded and the ignorant.¹ The actions of the deluded, thinking that they are doing good, are not accepted by Allah *tā'āla*, “either because of a lack of sincere belief or because he did not follow the proper ways of the Shari‘ah.” The second verse, regarding ‘layer upon layer of darkness’, refers to the ignorant follower who did not know the true nature of the leader.

The contrast between light and darkness is clear and made parable between those who can see and those who are blind,² those who can hear and those who are deaf. Indeed, those in darkness cannot truly progress. Without proper direction, people are simply shuffling around in a dark room, but none are going anywhere, even if there are ‘leaders’ giving vague directions. What is more gruesome is that their ignorance and misguidance are made to appear fair to them.³ That is why true progress requires true light. Said Naquib al-Attas explained that progress is a “*definite direction* that is aligned to a *final purpose* that is meant to be achieved in worldly life”.⁴ If the direction is indefinite or vague, or if the direction is aligned to immoral ends, then this is not progress.

- ‘Darkness to light’ and vice versa

Additionally, the Qur’ān also tells about the transition from ‘light to darkness’. In sūrah *al-Baqarah* verse 17, Allah *tā'āla* ﴿ takes away their light, leaving them in utter darkness, unable to see ﴿.⁵ These are the hypocrites, likened to the fire-kindlers, but their fires are later extinguished. This is because they had received the light of guidance but then preferred the darkness of misguidance. In their immoral preference, they then cannot return to the state of guidance. Additionally, the disbelievers take the *Tāghūt* (false deities and

¹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, available online:

http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2421&Itemid=79

² For example, in sūrah *al-An‘am*:1, sūrah *al-An‘am*:122, sūrah *Ar-ra‘d*:16, sūrah *al-Fāṭir*:19-20

³ The translation of sūrah *al-An‘am*: 122 ﴿ Is a dead person brought back to life by Us, and given light with which to walk among people, comparable to someone trapped in deep darkness who cannot escape? In this way the evil deeds of the disbelievers are made to seem alluring to them ﴿

⁴ Syed Muhammad al-Naqib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam : An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, 2nd ed. ed., Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 2001: 39

⁵ The translation of sūrah *al-Baqarah*: 17 ﴿ They are like people who [labour to] kindle a fire: when it lights up everything around them, Allah takes away all their light, leaving them in utter darkness, unable to see ﴿

false leaders) as their *Awliyā* (supporters and helpers), which brings them from light into darkness.¹ May Allah *tā āla* protect us from such states.

There are several verses in the Qur’ān related to the theme ‘from darkness to light.’^{2,3,4,5,6,7} These verses show that the people of the earth will be guided by the Light of Allah *tā āla*, through various channels, including His Mercy, the Angels, the Qur’ān and other Holy Books, His Messengers, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the Companions, clear proofs and unequivocal evidences, all towards the One Truth, away from the multiple darkness of falsehood, disbelief, doubt, hesitation and perpetual destructions. In the contemporary context, ‘darkness to light’ also refers to the process of enjoining others to goodness, from falsehood to truth, from doubt to clarity, from disbelief to belief, from confusion to order, from hesitation to certainty, from hypocrisy to righteousness, ultimately towards the One Truth. In this process, Allah *tā āla* also encourages spending wealth in the Path of Allah, and to further acquire faith.⁸ Ibn Kathir explained that Allah *tā āla* “has removed all barriers between them and the acquisition of faith,”⁹ bringing them ﴿ from the depths of darkness into light. ﴿

¹ The translation of sūrah *al-Baqarah*: 257 ﴿ Allah is the ally of those who believe: He brings them out of the depths of darkness and into the light. As for the disbelievers, their allies are false gods who take them from the light into the depths of darkness, they are the inhabitants of the Fire, and there they will remain ﴿

² The translation of sūrah *al-Mā'idah*: 16 ﴿ with which Allah guides to the ways of peace those who follow what pleases Him, bringing them from darkness out into light, by His will, and guiding them to a straight path ﴿

³ The translation of sūrah *al-Ibrāhīm*: 1 ﴿ Alif Lam Ra This is a Scripture which We have sent down to you [Prophet] so that, with their Lord's permission, you may bring people from the depths of darkness into light, to the path of the Almighty, the Praiseworthy One ﴿

⁴ The translation of sūrah *al-Ibrāhīm*: 5 ﴿ We sent Moses with Our signs: ‘Bring out your people from the depths of darkness into light. Remind them of the Days of Allah: there truly are signs in this for every steadfast, thankful person ﴿

⁵ The translation of sūrah *al-Aḥzāb*: 43 ﴿ it is He who blesses you, as do His angels, in order to lead you out of the depths of darkness into the light. He is ever merciful towards the believers ﴿

⁶ The translation of sūrah *al-Ḥadīd*: 9 ﴿ It is He who has sent down clear revelations to His Servant, so that He may bring you from the depths of darkness into light; Allah is truly kind and merciful to you ﴿

⁷ The translation of sūrah *al-Ṭalāq*: 11 ﴿ and a messenger- reciting to you Allah's revelations that make things clear- to bring those who believe and do righteous deeds from darkness into light. Allah will admit those who believe in Him and do righteous deeds into Gardens graced with flowing streams, where they will remain forever – He has made good provision for them ﴿

⁸ The translation of sūrah *al-Ḥadīd*: 7-11 ﴿ Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and give out of what He has made pass down to you: those of you who believe and give will have a great reward. Why should you not believe in Allah when the Messenger calls you to believe in your Lord, and He has already made a pledge with you, if you have faith? It is He who has sent down clear revelations to His Servant, so that He may bring you from the depths of darkness into light; Allah is truly kind and merciful to you. Why should you not give for Allah's cause when Allah alone will inherit what is in the heavens and earth? Those who gave and fought before the triumph are not like others: they are greater in rank than those who gave and fought afterwards. But Allah has promised a good reward to all of them: Allah is fully aware of all that you do. Who will make Allah a good loan? He will double it for him and reward him generously ﴿

⁹ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, available online:
http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1645&Itemid=113

- Implications for Organisation

With the clarification of the theme 'darkness to light' from an Islamic perspective, the two original issues the dark side of the organisation can be addressed. First, the definitions of light and darkness in the worldview of Islam are set: Allah *tā'āla* is the Essential Light, along with other luminaries are accidental lights, with which guides the hearts of the believers, and darkness is, or rather multiple darknesses, the absence of the Light. These definitions then have implications for the organisation. Previously, when the assumed secular authors talked about light, dark and grey areas of the organisation, they were referring to shades of ethics. From an Islamic perspective, this holds true. However, one main differentiator between Islamic and the secular is the religious-spiritual connection with Allah *tā'āla*, whether it is on the individual or societal levels. So, the dark or light sides of the organisation refer to ethical, religious and spiritual dimensions of organisational activities. This position may not be comfortable to some, simply because ethics concerns all, but spirituality in the workplace is not widely subscribed or well-understood, more so for religiosity and Islamicity. As of now, these three dimensions are assumed to be differentiated but interconnected.

The understanding of light and darkness can be extended to the organisational level. On one extreme, the 'virtuous organisation' is filled with believers with hearts always in a state of remembrance of Allah *tā'āla*, aided by the light of the Qur'ān. The organisation has dynamic structures, rules, cultures and processes which are configured to facilitate the group of believers towards the fulfilment of the *Maqāṣid* of the Sharī'ah for the individual, organisational and societal, thus, materialising the 'virtuous city'.

On the other extreme, the 'hypocritical and corrupt organisation' is filled with corrupt leaders and ignorant followers, pretending to be a virtuous organisation, but they have intentions to cause harm to the society and taint the city. Their organisational structures, rules, cultures and processes are geared towards the fulfilment of immoral goals. The spaces between these two extremes are occupied by various organisations that would undergo the continuous transitions 'from darkness to light,' or vice versa, i.e. towards becoming a virtuous organisation, or becoming hypocritical and corrupt. The hearts within these organisations have the potentials to be purified and

corrupted,¹ the former would contribute towards materialising the virtuous organisation and virtuous city, while the latter towards the corrupted organisation and city.² The figure below shows the dynamics between light and darkness.

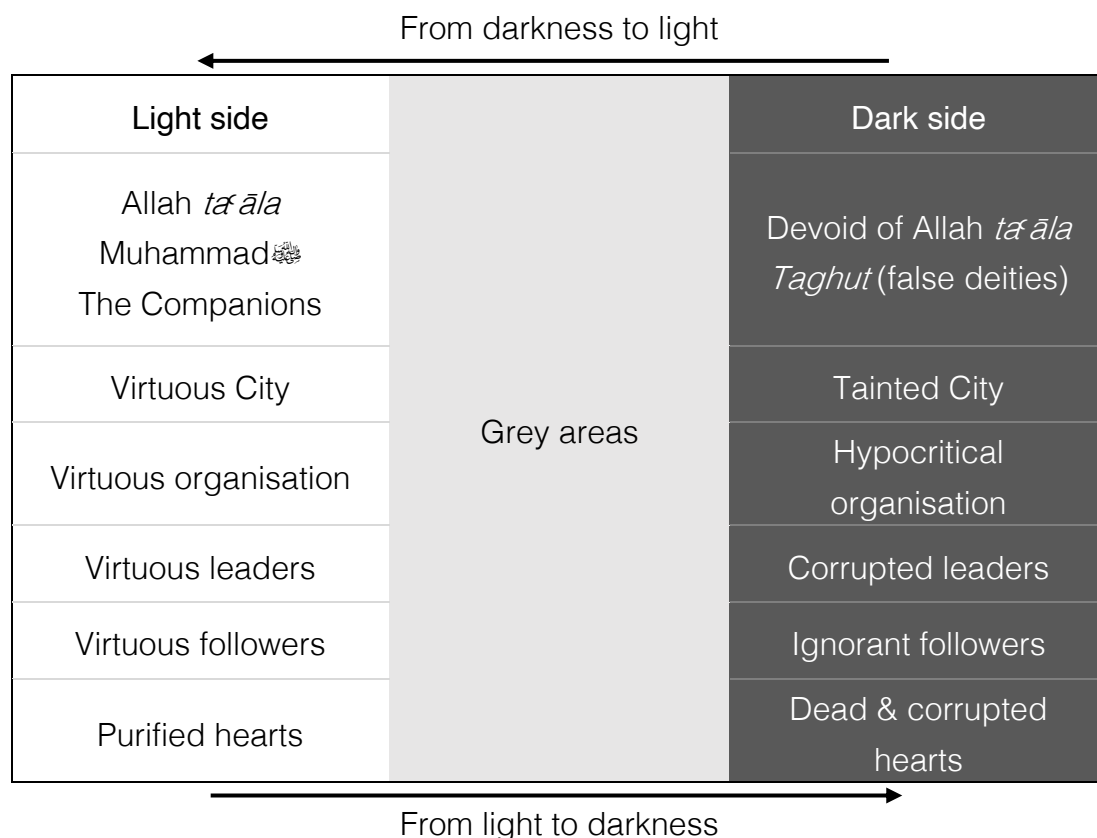


Figure 1. Components of Light and Darkness in Organisation

With these two extremes and the spaces between them, we can then scrutinise the dynamic interplays between the two sides to help navigate in the contemporary grey areas, which is the second issue to be addressed in this paper. As shown in the figure above, the grey areas arise within the spaces between the two extremes of light and darkness. These areas can be analysed into four levels: the wider external environment (i.e. the virtuous or tainted city), the organisation (i.e. the virtuous or hypocritical), the collective (i.e. both leaders and followers) and individual. What is analysed is the ethical, religious and spiritual dimensions of organisational activities. To illustrate the usefulness of this ‘darkness to light’ framework, an empirical case study

¹ Abū Hāmid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Aṭ-ṭūsī al-Ghazālī, "Aja'ib Al-Qalb (Wonders of the Heart)," in *Ihya Ulum Al-Din (Revival of the Religious Science)*, ed. Walter James Skellie, Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2007

² Iznan Tarip, "Wise Agents and Organisational Moral Learning," *the Journal of Islamic Governance* (forthcoming)

conducted in 2015 is re-examined in the light of the new framework. The case will show how an important organisational system has cast shadows over the whole organisation.

Before delving into the case study, a disclaimer is due. The 'darkness to light' framework shows the absolute extremes set primarily in the Qur'an. However, such extreme ends are not the main concern of the case study, as the knowledge of absolute light and darkness resides with Allah *tā'āla* only. Rather, the grey areas within these extremes are. So, the case study is situated within the grey areas. This disclaimer would then allow discussions among mortals with bounded rationality to make informed judgements and navigate these grey areas. Hence, the organisational elements of light and darkness that will be presented later on are, not in its absolute sense, but rather only relative to the case study at hand.

Case study: Training Record System in a Ministry

In 2015, an empirical case study was conducted by the author at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Brunei, to look into their organisational moral development. One particular case is selected to be examined for this paper: 100-hours training record system. From the previous study, essential factors that affected the developmental trajectory of the system were identified. Data collection was conducted through multiple means: documentations, casual conversation, direct observation and unstructured interviews with key employees within the Ministry and related governmental agencies, and semi-structured interviews of 20 employees in various departments to gain their perspective of the case. Using the same set of data, the task now is to re-analyse these factors to illustrate the interplay between darkness and light within the said organisational context.

- Elements of Light

But before going deeper into the case, there is a need to understand the wider context, and why this case is suitable for this paper. First, Brunei is specifically chosen for its Islamic outlook, dubbing itself as *Zikir* nation, implementing Shari'ah criminal law, and can arguably qualify to be one model of a Virtuous City. Second, the Ministry of Religious Affairs is selected for its clear and explicit direction for organisational moral development, and its many roles in Brunei's society. One of its roles is to ensure that Islam is well-protected and

well-promulgated in the country, thus the organisation can be called virtuous. This religious body, along with the Brunei Islamic Religious Council as an advisor to the Sultan, has accomplished many in the areas of religious education, legislation, wealth distribution, technology, infrastructure, international relations and so on.

As mentioned, the 100-hours training record system is selected to illustrate the situated interplay between dark and light sides of an organisation. This particular system is situated with the virtuous city and the virtuous organisation. It originated with the right objectives, which are: 1) a way for the Institute to ensure that Ministries and Departments provide systematic training and development programs for their employees; 2) giving chance for employees to develop themselves, and 3) to establish an efficient civil service. To achieve these, it was deemed important to set a minimum of 100 training hours per year for all civil service. It was introduced by the Civil Service Institute (CSI), another governmental agency, on 21 January 2003 and institutionalised to all the ministries in Brunei.¹ The directives were received by the Ministry, deemed important for the organisation, and thus resources were allocated accordingly for implementation. The directive was still present and legitimate at the time of data collection, with continuous support from the Ministry's top management, thus can be seen as the light side of the organisation (i.e. the training record system supports the moral development of the organisation).

Furthermore, the training record system was also supported by the knowledge culture within the Ministry and the knowledge culture throughout the Brunei government. Training opportunities were widely available for government officers, which is another contributor to the system's continuity. Training sessions are provided in-house or from external organisations. CSI, for example, would encourage each ministry to send their employees to train with them. In-house training is also available, which may be specific to the departments' function or just general administration training. However, during the time of data collection, key respondents from the HR Section said that in-house training has been reduced due to lack of budget. Instead, the Ministry encouraged its employees to attend training provided by CSI, which is fully

¹ Civil Service Department, "World Cade Session Bersama Pegawai-pegawai Penyelaras Latihan," powerpoint presentation, Bandar Seri Begawan, 2015

sponsored by the Institute. The usual routine for training application is that employees are sent for training based on recommendations by their 'higher-ups', from departmental training units and/or central HR section. Employees may also propose to go for training not listed by the usual provider, and approval is given by discretion of top management. It is clear that the Ministry especially supported development through training with the limited resources available, and employees are encouraged to be active in training themselves. The continuity of the training record system can also be attributed to Islam's 'knowledge culture'. The Islamic culture of learning is evident from the general fondness for training and learning from the interviewees, and their invocation of spiritual motivations in relations to self-development within their respective organisational context.

- Elements of Darkness

Despite the many factors contributing to the training record system's continuity, it had cast shadows over the Ministry. At the time of data collection, only two out of ten departments used the record system for 2013 – 2014, which shows partial discontinuity of the system,¹ not uncommon within contemporary organisational settings.² If the system represents the light, then only one-fifth of the Ministry is lit through this system. The shadows cast by this particular light manifested as unintended negative consequences for the individuals and/or organisations, ranging from systemic doubts and confusion regarding the efficacy of the system, misuse of training to escape work, widespread resistance to "forced" training, lack of systematic employee development, lack of communication between higher-ups and their subordinates regarding training, the tediousness of recording training, and so on. These various shadows were borne out of a system that should have been promoting the light of knowledge to be transferred throughout the so-called virtuous organisation.

One of the darkneses cast over the Ministry was doubts and confusions regarding the record system, which were shared by many employees, hence dubbed systemic. This failure was reflected in several informal unstructured and formal semi-structured interviews conducted throughout the studies. The

¹ Civil Service Department, "World Cade Session Bersama Pegawai-pegawai Penyelaras Latihan," PowerPoint presentation, Bandar Seri Begawan, 2015

² Hans Berends and Irene Lammers, "Explaining Discontinuity in Organizational Learning: A Process Analysis," *Organization Studies* 31, no. 8, 2010: 1048

general response regarding the record system is that it started with praises for the system but soon followed by doubts and confusion. Interviewees showed support for the value of the system which promotes training among employees, but then also showed their reservations against the record system based on personal experience. Their frustration is coupled with widespread confusion related to the 'holistic' purposes of the system, its contents or scope, relevance to the organisation, and its implementation.

The doubts and confusions on the individual and group levels can also be traced back to the organisational level. At the time of the data collection, the Ministry's digital training record system was discontinued due to incompatibility with the systems in the CSI, the spearhead, as well as, the lack of expertise and manpower to reconfigure the system. One of the key informants then continued that the current practice is using physical record books for every employee, filled individually, and then collected by respective departments within the ministry. Afterwards, the records are either given to central HR to be summarised and sent to the CSI or sent directly to the CSI through each department. Such collection mechanisms showed that there was a lack of standard in returning these forms. Compounded with departmental autonomy, the existing operations have caused both the continuity (i.e. two departments used the system) and discontinuity (i.e. 8 departments did not use) of the system for the period 2013 – 2014.

Furthermore, interviewees have also highlighted, albeit sporadically, several organisational factors that they find lacking concerning the system. These include lack of monitoring of report submission, lack of clear development plans for employees, absence of incentives like promotion, difficulty in identifying training needs for their subordinates, and purposeless nomination for training just to fill the set quota. It can also be inferred from the widespread confusion and doubt that there is a lack of effective communication and dialogue among employees regarding the system, and how the system can create value for them. As a result, implementation and collective actions have mixed results. One copy of a filled training record gathered from Department 3 that had been submitted to the CSI contained many inaccuracies in terms of defining what counts as 'training.' However, the informant who supplied the record said that this particular form is one of the best filled-out forms. This shows that despite clear definitions of what constitutes 'training' provided by

the CSI, there are still confusions and misunderstanding that have not been clarified.

Another issue is with regards to the knowledge culture in the Ministry. It was mentioned previously that the knowledge culture is a factor that contributes to the continuity of the training record system. However, some aspects of culture also cause discontinuity. Over-training has led to the abandonment of the record system because the system did not add further value to them personally. There were also reported cases of employees avoiding training by invoking various excuses, such as work overload and lack of 'free' time. In other instances, interviewees reported that some employees had misused 'training' just to escape and procrastinate from work. If their reason is to procrastinate, then the 'training' will not benefit the Ministry whatsoever. Leadership also plays a crucial role in ensuring the continuity of the system. Lack of leadership, or excess of it, can lead to negative consequences. In this case, interviewees had expressed their resistance to 'forced' and pointless training, simply because their higher-ups said so. On the other hand, there are also cases of leaders not caring about employee training for various reasons (e.g. there are other priorities, confusions with training needs).

Discussion: Light & Darkness Intertwined

In summary, the 100-hours training record system is deemed as light as it is a system that supports the transmission of light of knowledge within the organisation. However, the system had also cast shadows within the Ministry, giving rise to various unintended and negative consequences. The multiplicity of the factors or elements of light and darkness are tabulated below; the elements of light refer to those that support the transmission of a particular 'light' within the organisation, while the elements of darkness refer to those that obstruct it.

In relation to the 100-hours training record system within the context of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Brunei:	
ELEMENTS OF LIGHT	ELEMENTS OF DARKNESS

ENVIRONMENTAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Zikir</i> Nation supports personal development 2. The wider governmental institution promotes the training record system for its moral intention of employee development 3. Training provided by the government (external to the Ministry). Budget available for training. 4. Knowledge culture widespread in the government 5. Islam's knowledge culture 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. External requirements from the Civil Service Institute constraint the re-configuration of digital training record system from within
ORGANISATIONAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Virtuous organisation with explicit direction for moral development 7. Legitimate directives from the Civil Service Institute received and agreed by top management is the Ministry of Religious Affairs 8. Subsequent organisational resource allocated. Central HR as its spearhead. Distributed physical record books to all employees 9. Departmental autonomy leads to system continuity (2 departments use the system). 10. Training provided in-house. Budget available for training 11. Knowledge culture widespread in the Ministry, in tandem with the system 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Lack of necessary expertise to re-configure the record system 3. Lack of standard for record collection, monitoring and feedback 4. Lack of incentives attached to complement the system 5. Departmental autonomy leads to system discontinuity (only 2 out of 10 departments submit records). Potentially due to lack of support and pressure from leaders or heads of departments 6. Training restricted by budget availability and quota 7. Knowledge culture not in tandem with the system (e.g. over-training, training avoidance, misuse of training)

GROUP	<p>12. Superiors' endorsement for subordinates' training, or from the relevant parties, e.g. nominated by local HR unit, and approved by superiors</p>	<p>8. Difficulty for leaders to identify employee training needs</p> <p>9. Forced and purposeless training pushed by higher-ups</p> <p>10. Lack of fruitful communication and dialogue among employees regarding the record system</p>
INDIVIDUAL	<p>13. Islam's knowledge culture internalised by employees, motivating them for self-development</p> <p>14. Interviewees praise the idea of the system</p> <p>15. Interviewees eager for training</p>	<p>11. Doubts and confusion regarding the system</p> <p>12. Individuals demotivated from seeing various shortcomings to the system</p> <p>13. Employees resist or avoid training</p> <p>14. Employees misuse training to escape work</p> <p>15. Interviewees don't even bother filling in the report</p>

Table 2. Organisational Elements of Light and Darkness in Relation to the 100-hours Training Record System within the Context of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Brunei

These elements are divided into four levels: environmental, organisational, group and individual levels. As exemplified above, these elements are intertwined among the four levels. For example, the light of knowledge is brightened within the virtuous city of Brunei through the availability of training sessions for civil servants, and a record system to ensure all receive a minimum of 100 hours of training. Civil servants have also internalised Islam's knowledge culture, albeit to varying extent, and are thus motivated towards achieving their organisational objectives, as well as, fulfilling the *Maqāṣid* of the Sharī'ah. On the other end, the darkness of doubts and confusion on the individual and group levels are partly caused by various organisational and environmental elements (e.g. lack of monitoring mechanism and constraints from external stakeholder).

Not only do the elements connected between different levels, but some can also cross over between darkness and light: which are, departmental autonomy, availability of training, knowledge culture, and leader-follower dynamics (bolded in Table 2). Departmental autonomy, coupled with the right complementary organisational mechanisms and knowledge culture to support the proper implementation of the training record system, would result in enhance brightness for the virtuous organisation. However, departmental autonomy, cemented with incompatible organisational mechanisms and culture, would only result in the birth of darkneses within.

Indeed, when discussing the light and dark sides of the organisation, I am referring to a package of organisational elements, activated within certain temporal and spatial dimensions, producing positive or negative outcomes respectively. The previous review of the literature on dark and grey areas of organisation would also agree. Organisational misbehaviours, for example, are only dark misbehaviours in relation to the harm caused towards the self, others, the organisation, or/and the wider society.¹ Even some misbehaviours have light attributes, producing positive results for various stakeholders.² Leadership is also another example: Brown & Mitchell's coupling of ethical and unethical leadership,³ and Campbell and colleagues' critical look of the narcissistic leader.⁴

The question then is how to ensure that the organisation benefits from these grey areas? Previously, Bruhn called upon the intuitive leaders and managers to ensure the benefits from the grey areas are extracted,⁵ or as this paper argues, the wise leaders possessing various intellectual virtues, not only intuition. In the case study, there was a hint given by one of the interviewees. In the face of ambivalence, the person responded that even though there are positive and negative aspects to the 100-hour training record system, it depends on the "intention" of the person. The intention would then shape agential actions.⁶ Coupled with definitive light within the organisation, sourced

¹ Griffin, O'Leary-Kelly, and Pritchard, *The Dark Side of Organizational Behavior*

² Karlsson, *Organizational Misbehaviour in the Workplace Narratives of Dignity and Resistance*

³ Brown and Mitchell, "Ethical and Unethical Leadership: Exploring New Avenues for Future Research"

⁴ Campbell et al., "Narcissism in Organizational Contexts"

⁵ Bruhn, "The Functionality of Gray Area Ethics in Organizations," 212

⁶ It is narrated on the authority of Amirul Mu'minin, Abu Hafs 'Umar bin al-Khattab (ra) who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "Actions are (judged) by motives (niyyah), so each man will have what he intended. Thus, he whose migration (hijrah) was to Allah and His Messenger, his migration is to Allah and His Messenger; but he whose migration was for some worldly thing he might gain, or for a wife he might marry, his migration is to that for which he migrated" [Bukhari & Muslim]

from Allah *tā'āla*, the believers can then navigate these grey areas, thus benefiting themselves and the virtuous organisation.¹ The quote above also hinted that there is a process of purifying one's heart within the organisational context, and with respect to the knowledge culture and the 100 hours training record system. With this process of purification, the negative perceptions that belonged to the dark side would then be managed to some degrees. A similar process within the secular literature would be 'compromise' and 'holism' as responses to ambivalence² from both light and darkness.

With the wise agents at the core for virtuous learning from darkness to light, some mechanisms can be put in place to transform the elements of darkness into light. Again, these mechanisms are a package of organisational elements, activated within certain temporal and spatial dimensions. With regards to the external constraints from the Civil Service Institute on re-configuring the digital record system, the Civil Service Institute can help with the re-configuration process together with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and its many departments. Only then will the digital record system 'fit' the various departments to benefit the many employees within as intended. The Ministry needs to also acquire the necessary expertise to drive the re-configuration process forward. Complementary incentives should also be put in place to motivate employees to use the record system. With regards to the struggle by leaders in identifying employees' training needs, a more robust systematic training needs analysis mechanism should be developed internally. This will then minimise any forced and unnecessary training upon the employees. With regards to the systemic doubts and confusions regarding the system, the solution lies in better socialisation mechanism and open communication among employees within the Ministry, as well as, with other civil servants. These are just some mechanisms that can be put in place to encourage the usage of 100-hours training record system to support continuous learning within the Government. However, the option of not using the training record system is still a viable choice, simply because it might be the wiser choice for the particular moment in time.

¹ Iznan Tarip, "Wise Agents and Organisational Moral Learning," the Journal of Islamic Governance (forthcoming)

² Blake Ashforth et al., "Ambivalence in Organizations: A Multilevel Approach," *Organization Science* 25, no. 5, 2014: 1465

Concluding Remarks

Ultimately, light and darkness from an Islamic perspective is always in relations to Allah *tā'āla*, even for the elements in Table 2. However, these elements may not necessarily be light using a different yardstick. *Zikir* Nation, Islam's knowledge culture and their internalisations within the hearts and minds of individuals would not necessarily be light. If anything Islamic is removed, the 100-hour training record system would still work towards its intended purpose, but it is not geared towards the worship of Allah *tā'āla* and the creation of an Islamically virtuous organisation, simply because the 'organisational purpose', 'strategic intent' and subsequent 'knowledge spiral' are not directed towards manifesting the Islamically virtuous organisation. This is not to say that alternative virtuous organisations apart from the Islamic are 'bad'. There may be other kinds of virtuous organisation, shaped by diverse worldviews with their complementary yardstick for judgements. The future task then would be to explore commonalities between various forms of the virtuous organisation and to explore the differences between ethics, religiosity and spirituality within the organisational context. The *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*, and the book *The Virtuous Organisation: An Introduction* by Charles C. Manz and colleagues would be good places to start.

Finally, these organisational elements outlined in Table 2 were judged by the author primarily concerning the continuity and discontinuity of the 100 hours training record system. The assumption here is that the record system is also 'light,' or at least, a version of it – that contributes toward the fulfilment of the *Maqāṣid* of the Sharī'ah. As meticulous as the author can be, the rule of human folly would only result in many shortcomings when delivering judgements, hence the provisional nature of the case study's outcomes. Is the record system truly a light for the government? ﴿ You may dislike something although it is good for you, or like something although it is bad for you: Allah knows and you do not ﴾.¹ Believers can rely only on Allah *tā'āla* for true light to shine upon them, their organisations and its surroundings.

¹ The translation of sūrah *an-Baqarah*: 216