

Courses in self-development, energies, happiness and other countless other pseudo-scientific fields have become a phenomenon in Kuwait. Some of these are derived from Buddhist and Hindu philosophies and come to us enveloped in a cloak of Islam. In my opinion, the source of this phenomenon is the high levels of anxiety and psychological stress from financial and political uncertainty, family disintegration, and social pressures. All of the above have created a career for those who don't have a real profession. I don't include everyone, for there may be real specialists in some of these fields, but on the other hand there are those who have simply enrolled in some course, give themselves some academic sounding title, and begin tweeting their wisdoms right and left. Unfortunately, the people follow their lead. I would like to offer three examples that might summarize the situation.

First, a colleague once told me about a course she attended which was organized by a lady. The topic of the course was "how to keep you husband." I asked my colleague about the lady's professional background and experiences which qualify her to offer such courses. She responded, "She is a doctor!" Later, she told me she had dropped out of the course and lost the registration fees. When I asked her why, she replied that the instructor had divorced after her husband took a second wife! Seriously, if she didn't know how to maintain her own marriage, how could she teach other women?

In the second example: I noticed that my nephew Abdullah had the title of a writer and certified trainer. I asked him, "Abdullah, what are your training qualifications?" He replied that he had taken some courses. I then advised him to consider the difference between a doctor and an *attar*—a practitioner of traditional medicine. He