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## Professional Humility

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LinkedIn, once lauded as a platform for professional networking and meaningful exchanges, has increasingly evolved into a potpourri of self-promotion and exaggerated claims. This trend is particularly disheartening when observed among Muslim professionals and academics who, ideally, should embody humility (*tawadhu*) and sincerity (*ikhlas*), avoiding any display of ostentation (*riyaa*).

Take, for instance, posts where individuals proudly announce trivial achievements, such as completing a basic certificate in a skill unrelated to their expertise, often with grandiose claims of newfound mastery. "I am thrilled to announce that I have obtained a Certificate in Picking Strawberries. This marks a turning point in my career," someone might write, expecting accolades for what is, in essence, an insignificant accomplishment.

Similarly, attending a single conference becomes an opportunity to declare oneself an authority in a field. For example, "After attending the Halal Socks Psychology Conference, I am now proficient in integrating Islamic principles into psychotherapy," is a claim that diminishes the genuine effort required to gain expertise in a nuanced and complex field. Such declarations, rather than signaling competence, often reflect a shallow understanding of the discipline and a craving for validation.

### **The Problem with Riyaa (Showing Off):**

In Islam, *riyaa* is strongly condemned as it undermines the sincerity of deeds. Allah warns against those who perform acts solely to impress others, seeking worldly recognition rather than divine pleasure:

**"So woe to those who pray, but are heedless of their prayer—those who make a show of their deeds and withhold simple assistance." (Qur'an, 107:4-7)**

When professionals, particularly those claiming to represent Islamic values, engage in self-promotion, it not only contravenes the ethos of humility but also risks reducing sacred knowledge to a tool for personal branding.

### **Further Examples of Exaggerated Self-Promotion:**

- 1. Inflated Titles:** Individuals refer to themselves as "thought leaders," "pioneers," or "influencers" after publishing a single article or conducting a basic workshop.

2. **Misrepresentation of Credentials:** Listing honorary degrees or certifications from unverified institutions as though they are equivalent to rigorous academic qualifications.
3. **Overstatement of Contributions:** Claiming to "revolutionize" a field based on limited and often unpublished work, without evidence of meaningful impact.

## Where Is Humility?

True humility is about acknowledging the limits of one's knowledge and striving for continuous learning without seeking external validation. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplified this quality. Despite his unparalleled status, he always maintained humility, reminding his companions, "*I am but a servant of Allah.*"

## Encouraging a Culture of Sincerity:

1. **Focus on Genuine Contributions:** Share insights or experiences that add value to others' lives without seeking personal accolades.
2. **Acknowledge Collective Effort:** Highlight the team or collaborative efforts behind achievements rather than taking sole credit.
3. **Maintain a Service-Oriented Mindset:** Approach professional endeavors as a means to benefit the community, not to enhance personal stature.

By fostering humility and sincerity, Muslim professionals can uphold the principles of *ikhlas* and ensure that their work reflects a genuine commitment to benefiting others, free from the taint of self-promotion or *riyaa*.

