

IKHWAN AL-MUSLIMIN AND POLITICAL MOVEMENT (A Study of Hasan al-Banna's Thought)

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Abstract

The Muslim Brotherhood is a movement founded by Hasan al-Banna in 1928. The aim of this movement was originally to spread Islamic values. However, in its development, the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood spread beyond Egypt and grew into a political movement with the aim of ending British colonial control and destroying all Western influence. The organization's goal is to establish a state governed by sharia law with the slogan "Islam is the solution". This research aims to explore al-Hasan al-Banna's thoughts through the Muslim Brotherhood movement which was able to spread out to various countries with the political ideology it carries. The data is extracted from various writings with historical and political approaches. The results of this research show that Hasan al-Banna had progressive ideas to advance Islam through political channels. For him, through this way, aspects of the life of Muslims, such as economic, social, educational and cultural, can be improved.

Keywords: Ikhwanul Muslimin, Hasan, al-Banna, Politics, Islam

BACKGROUND

The Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamic organization founded in Egypt. The organization was founded by an Islamic scholar named Hassan Al-Banna in 1928. Since then, the Muslim Brotherhood has continued to grow and is considered to be the oldest organized Islamic movement in modern history. Al-Banna himself stated that the purpose of establishing the Muslim

Brotherhood was to establish an Islamic state based on the principles and decrees of the Koran as well as the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad.¹

In the beginning, the Muslim Brotherhood only focused on the aspects of education and charity, before finally entering the world of politics. Along with its development, this group began to spread to other Muslim countries. Quoted from the Al Jazeera website in 1938, the Muslim Brotherhood was said to have around 200,000 members. This number had risen to half a million in 1948. In addition, since 1940, the group has established offices in a number of Arab countries, including Syria and Lebanon. Meanwhile, its headquarters in Cairo became a meeting point. It was during this period that the Muslim Brotherhood began to be blamed for a series of incidents in Egypt, including the assassination of Prime Minister Mahmoud An-Nukrashi Pasha in 1948. This group is also known to have played a role with other groups who also fought against British intervention in the country. Furthermore, in the real world of politics, the Muslim Brotherhood tries to distance itself from taking sides with other parties. However, afterwards the Egyptian government took an authoritarian path and made this group one of its targets. In 1949, Al Banna was murdered and indications of the perpetrators point to government agents.²

Who is Hasan al-Banna? His full name is Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Banna. The figure born in 1906 AD (1325 H.) in the city of Mahmudiyah, Buhairah province, northeast of Cairo, Egypt,³ grew up in a devout Muslim family. His own biological father is Sheikh Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahman who is better known by the nickname al-Sa'ati (the watchmaker). The al-Banna family is known as a religious family. It is not surprising that in this family environment, a number of religious knowledge can be well mastered.⁴

Because of this sufficient knowledge, Sheikh Ahmad was entrusted with teaching religion. To support his abilities, he has a personal library

¹<https://international.sindonews.com/read/767871/44/sejarah-terbentuknya-organisasi-ikhwanul-muslimin-di-mesir-dan-pengaruhnya-di-dunia-politik-arab-1652385925>

²<https://international.sindonews.com/read/767871/44/sejarah-terbentuknya-organisasi-ikhwanul-muslimin-di-mesir-dan-pengaruhnya-di-dunia-politik-arab-1652385925>.

³Tim Penulis IAIN Syahid, *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1992), h. 303; Hasan al-Banna, *Majmu'at al-Rasail* (t.tp.: Muassasat al-Risalat, t.th.), h. 5; Munawir Sadzali, *Islam dan Tata Negara, Ajaran, Sejarah, dan Pemikiran* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1993), h. 147.

⁴Di antara ilmu agama yang dikuasai adalah Tauhid, Fikih, dan al-Quran. Lihat Imam Munawir, *Mengenal Pribadi 30 Pendekar dan Pemikir Islam dari Masa ke Masa* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1985), h. 530-531; Maryam Jamilah, *Para Mujahid Agung* (Bandung: Mizan, 1989), h. 125.

which contains books from various branches of knowledge. The facilities he had also encouraged him to pursue writing in the field of hadith, as well as Islamic jurisprudence. One of his works, among others: *Badai' al-Musnad fi Jam'i wa Tartib Musnad al-Syafi'i wa al-Sunan*.⁵

Ahmad al-Banna is a locally revered imam (prayer leader) and mosque teacher of the Hanbali rite. He studied at Al-Azhar University. He wrote and collaborated on books on Islamic traditions, and also had a shop where he repaired watches and sold gramophones. Although Ahmad al-Banna and his wife owned some property, they were not wealthy and struggled to make ends meet, especially after they moved to Cairo in 1924. Like many others, they found that studying Islam and piety was no longer as highly valued in the capital, and that expertise cannot compete with large-scale industries. Warrior blood, with a strong cultural spirit, Sheikh Ahmad tries to forge his son to become a fighter and reformer. Not surprisingly, he applied a strict and disciplined education to his son Hasan al-Banna. Even a number of books such as *al-Syathibiyat*, a book about the seven qira'at schools of the Qur'an are asked to memorize, in addition to memorizing the Qur'an. Because there is a library at home, Hasan al-Banna automatically struggles with his father's personal library which contains books on religion, law, hadith, language, as well as books on folklore that give rise to a very impressive heroic spirit, such as the saga of Abu Muhammad al-Bathal, North African hero.⁶

At the age of 12 years (1918), al-Banna was so interested in sufistic life. He saw people who were engaged in remembrance. In al-Banna's mind, there is peace and coolness that adorns the lives of those who diligently carry out the zikr. Among the sufistic practices he has witnessed is the remembrance performed by the tarekat al-Hasafiyat group. Here al-Banna captures the impression that people who recite zikr have an open heart and are pious.⁷

At a relatively young age Hasan al-Banna was already involved in writing poetry. The spirit of art grew along with the conditions in Egypt, which at that time was under British colonialism. The most effective way for people who do not take up arms like soldiers is to write essays, poems and poems to encourage the people or soldiers to fight against the invaders. This condition of colonialism also spurred al-Banna's artistic soul to write a

⁵*Ibid.* (Imam Munawir), h. 531; Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power, the Politics of Islam*, terjemahan Enna Hadi dan Rahmani Asmuni, *Islam dan Kekuasaan* (Bandung: Mizan, 1984), h. 234.

⁶(Imam Munawir), h. 531-532.

⁷Tim Penulis IAIN Syahid, *loc.cit.*

number of struggle poems. He believes that serving the motherland is an obligation that cannot be abandoned.⁸

At the age of 14 years (1920), al-Banna entered the junior teacher's school (Dar al-Mu'allimin) in Damanhur. It seems that the fascination of the al-Hasafiyat congregation filled his soul more and more, so that in 1922, he swore oath to become a member of the order in the presence of the son of the congregation's founder himself. This tarekat figure later also influenced the development of al-Banna, especially in teachings about true brotherhood. A year later 1923 M. he moved to the Dar al-'Ulum school, Cairo. While studying at this school, he also actively participated in tarekat activities.⁹

The journey of life in taking various knowledge and activities made him close to Rashid Ridha. From here, he learned a lot about Afghani and Abduh's thoughts. In addition, he collected a number of al-Manar magazines, which greatly inspired him, especially on political and social issues, Islamic reform, Islamic government, and reform of Islamic law. The belief in the need for struggle and renewal of thought in Islam continues to emerge. Al-Manar's ideas exerted a strong influence on his thoughts and actions. He believes that Islam is a perfect religion which has complete teachings, includes all the systems needed by humans to regain the glory of Islam - including political, economic and social systems - without the need to imitate Western concepts.¹⁰

Because of his intelligence and breadth of knowledge, in 1927 al-Banna was appointed as a teacher at a school in the Ismaili city around the Zues canal after completing his education at Dar al-Ulum Cairo.¹¹

Activities, extensive reading, and the objective conditions of Egypt at that time forced al-Banna to engage in a number of da'wah activities and struggles. In 1928, al-Banna and six of his friends managed to form an association known as the Ikhwan al-Muslimin.¹²

⁸Imam Munawir, *op.cit.*, h. 532.

⁹Tim Penulis IAIN Syahid, *loc.cit.*; *ibid.* (Imam Munawir).

¹⁰Munawir Sadzali, *loc.cit.*

¹¹Imam Munawir, *op.cit.*, h. 532-533; Tim Penulis IAIN Syahid, *loc.cit.*; Depag R.I., *Ensiklopedi Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: IAIN Jakarta, 1992/1993), h. 351.

¹²*Ibid.* (Tim Penulis IAIN Syahid), h. 304; (Depag R.I.); Bandingkan dengan Reuben Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam* (Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1965), h. 89; Morroe Berger, *Islamic in Egypt Today* (Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1970), h. 9.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ikhwan al-Muslimin engaged in the fields of religion, social affairs and education. However, the political conditions that he considered were not conducive, so he spread his wings to enter the political arena.¹³ Because it entered this area, the al-Banna movement began to be suspected by the government. The large number of followers with such great charisma made the government wary of the Ikhwan al-Muslimin movement. Finally, because it was considered dangerous, Hasan al-Banna was killed on February 12, 1949 AD in Cairo.¹⁴

The da'wah system carried out by al-Banna resembles the preaching style of the Tablighi Congregation which is currently developing in Indonesia and other Asian countries. Together with his friend, al-Banna rolled out his mission and da'wah through *jaulah* (going around to) every person, place they met. Sometimes they use taverns, shops, cafes enough to accommodate their listeners. Twice a week, al-Banna appears at the tavern in the form of explaining verses, remembering the punishments of hell and the pleasures of heaven. The advantage of al-Banna compared to the oral da'wah carried out by preachers today is that al-Banna utilizes artistic traditions such as fables, stories, saga as a medium to explain the contents of Qur'anic interpretations according to actual needs.¹⁵ This association aims to carry out a total renewal of the Egyptian people, based on absolute obedience to the Shari'a.¹⁶ Al-Banna in carrying out all his activities is supported by his excellent abilities both in terms of physical, psychological, and intelligent brain, so that everything can be carried out properly.¹⁷

In the era of al-Banna growing up, he witnessed the condition of the community's diversity. It seems that formal religious symbolism is still a characteristic of the diversity of Egyptian society. The term Islam that is usually attached to someone is still unfamiliar to those who hear it, even though Islam is a religion that is embraced by the majority of the Egyptian people. They think that the term Islam is sufficient to address al-Azhar University. In al-Banna's view, their Islam is more about heredity, not as an awareness that grows in their hearts as true Muslims. Even more ironic, al-

¹³Depag R.I., *ibid.*; Munawir Sadzali, *op.cit.*, h. 145.

¹⁴Tim Penulis IAIN yahid, *loc.cit.*

¹⁵Imam Munawir, *op.cit.*, h. 533.

¹⁶Maryam Jamilah, *op.cit.*, h. 130.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, h. 128.

Azhar figures themselves forgot about the duties they carried out, they were involved in political waves, which caused al-Azhar university to be dragged into the realm of practical politics.¹⁸

It seems that Egyptian society in general has forgotten Islam as a way of life. They are starting to replace Islam as a way of life with a paradigm of life that is far from the order and rules that exist in Islam. They forget that Islam is actually a source of political, social, economic and constitutional behavior.¹⁹ This phenomenon prompted Hasan al-Banna to come up with ideas aimed at eradicating the disease that was being suffered by the Egyptians.²⁰ Al-Banna's renewal ideas cover various aspects of human life. Al-Banna stated that Islamic teachings cover all human affairs and are universal. Understanding Islam cannot be done only by studying interpretation, or just fiqh, or separating religious issues from politics. For him, Islam is a way of life and can even become an alternative ideology for Western nations that smells of capitalism and Marxism.

Even though the figure of al-Banna has passed away, the ideas and movements of the Ikhwan al-Muslimin are still being carried on by his loyal followers.

METHOD

This article examines the thought of Hasan al-Banna, particularly his thought regarding Islam and politic. Hasan al-Banna was chosen for two reasons. First, he was a Muslim reformer who has staunchly advocated for religious renewal *Second*, as a thinker and reformer, Hasan al-Banna leaved a legacy to be referred for Islamic system of government. Qualitative data were collected by mapping the religious renewal of Hasan al-Banna, then analyzed critically through a theological and political approach. Primary data consisted of Al-Banna's understanding of religious renewal. These were supported by secondary data, namely information and documents dealing with religious renewal.

¹⁸Anas al-Hajaji, *Ardun wa Tqdimun li Syakhshiyat al-Imam al-Syahid Hasan al-Banna*, terjemahan Bahrn Abu Bakar dan Anwar Rasyidi, *Biografi Hasan al-Banna, Tokoh Pejuang Islam* (Bandung: Risalah, 1984), h. 31.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, h. 32-32; Ahmad Amin, *Yaum al-Islam*, terjemahan Abu Laila dan Muhammad Tohir, *Islam dari Masa ke Masa* (Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya, 1993), h. 204-205.

²⁰Disinyalir, al-Banna dalam pemikiran keagamaannya dipengaruhi oleh tokoh Syiah Zaidiyah dari Yaman, Muhammad al-Syaukani (1760-1824), lihat H.A.R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, terjemahan Machnun Husein, *Aliran-aliran Modern dalam Islam*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 1993), h. 192.

Collected data were analyzed using content analysis, during which the researchers read articles and books written by al-Banna and analyzed them contextually. The internal coherence of the text was analyzed to map their meanings. Analysis consisted of three stages: restatement, description, and interpretation. Through this process, Hasan al-Banna's thought on religious renewal was analyzed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Al-Banna's thought on muslim brotherhood

Hasan al-Banna put forward the importance of the unity of the Ummah and peace. According to him, this has been exemplified in the example of the life of the Prophet Muhammad who has no equal until now.²¹ The sense of brotherhood makes Islam reject hostility and fanaticism. The existence of a sense of brotherhood will lead to unity among the people. While the division of the people is the most dangerous social disease.²² So as the Peace, according to him the idea that justifies a holy war is not true, because Islam prohibits fighting infidels without justification.²³ On the other hand, Islam teaches equality of rights and obligations among its people, there is no difference between them at all except in terms of piety.²⁴ Weaknesses and slavery that occur in Muslims stem from the lack of Muslim faith. They have strayed from the path ordained by Allah and are following the path of the secular, materialistic, capitalist, and Marxist ideologies of the West.²⁵ Islam also highly upholds social justice. As the main feature of Islamic teachings regarding the limitation of power within a group of people is social justice. Al-Banna proposed to the Egyptian government to guarantee individual rights, adhere to the principle of deliberation, limit power, and be accountable to the people of Egypt.²⁶ So Islam does not tolerate arbitrariness. Al-Banna called on the Egyptian people to have a good work ethic, because a good ethic produces good economic and social conditions. Satisfaction with

²¹John J. Donohue dan John L. Esposito, *Islam in Transition, Muslim Perspectives*, terjemahan Machnun Husein, *Islam dan Pembaharuan, Ensiklopedi masalah-masalah* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 1993), h. 136-137; Depag R.I., *op.cit.*, h. 351.

²²Anas al-Hajaji, *op.cit.*, h. 158; QS. 3:103.

²³QS. 4:1.

²⁴QS. 49:13; 49:9.

²⁵J.L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, terjemahan Alwiyah Abdurrahman dan Missi, *Ancaman Islam, Mitos atau Realitas?* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), h. 136.

²⁶Anas al-Hajaji, *op.cit.* h. 149; QS. 49:9; 6:152.

poverty, according to him, is not true. Islam teaches its people to meet their needs in order to avoid poverty. Material needs obtained to support his struggle.²⁷ For this reason, good education is needed in order to be able to strengthen science and technology, and use it within the framework of Islamic values, as well as in a planned context, to avoid the process of westernization and secularization within Islamic society.²⁸ For this reason, obedience to Allah's revelation and the Sunnah of the Prophet is also needed, which is the main basis for the life of Muslim society.²⁹ Muslims must return to Islam, comply with Allah's laws and guidelines for living in society and as a state.

b. Westernization and Modernization

Hasan al-Banna has an anti-Western imperialism view which he sees not only as a political and economic threat, but also a cultural threat to Islam. Westernization threatens the basic identity and independence of the Muslim way of life.³⁰ Hasan al-Banna proclaimed Islam as an ideology that was sufficient, governing all aspects of life. Reliance on the West must be avoided altogether.

Even though he is anti-westernization, Hasan al-Banna is not against modernization. For him, modernization can help accelerate his struggle in conveying his ideas and da'wah mission. Because of this, he is not worried about using a suite of modern technological tools and mass communication to disseminate messages and mobilize public support. Messages originating from and rooted in Islamic teachings - conveyed - al-Banna reveals the problems of modernity, analyzes the relationship between Islam and nationalism, democracy, capitalism, Marxism, education, law, women and work, Zionism, and international relations.³¹

To realize this idea, he founded the Ikhwan al-Muslimin which eventually succeeded in recruiting followers from mosques, schools and universities, workers, traders, and young professionals. In general, they come from the urban, middle and lower classes. This movement aims to form a

²⁷Al-Banna, *op.cit.*, h. 203; QS. 4:5.

²⁸J.L. Esposito, *loc.cit.* (Ancaman Islam).

²⁹*Ibid.*; Abu al-Hasan 'Ali Nadwi, *Westrn Civilization Islam and Muslims* (Lucknow: Academy Research and Publications, 1969), h. 105.

³⁰*Ibid.*, h. 135; Erwin I.J. Rosenthal, *op.cit.*, h. 104.

³¹J.L. Esposito, *op.cit.*, h. 135; Harun Nasution dan Azyumardi Azra, *Perkembangan Modern dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1985), h. 304; Abu Hasan Ali Nadwi, *loc.cit.*

new generation who are educated in a modern way, but still oriented towards Islam, who are prepared to occupy every position in society..³²

Although at first it was only a da'wah movement with relatively few followers, because of his charism and expertise, many people began to be attracted to and join the Ikhwan al-Muslimin organization. In 1949 AD, this movement had more than two thousand branches spread all over Egypt, with about five hundred thousand members, plus an estimated number of sympathizers equal to the number of members. Each branch has a building for organizational activity centers, mosques, school buildings, meeting halls, and small industries.³³

c. Islamic Education and Social

In the field of education, the Ikhwan movement seeks to fight ignorance and works hard to put in place a perfect education system in educating Islamic society based on pure Islamic sources. This education bore fruit in the broad circle of the sons of Egypt. Their minds are free from the shackles of superstition, their eyes are open to the problems faced by the Islamic world.³⁴ Moral, soul and jihad education became al-Banna's priorities. According to him, the issue of morality is the main trigger for progress or failure of a nation, including Egypt. If the morality and spirit are good, then Egypt will rise from adversity and colonialism, on the other hand if the morals and mentality are damaged, then Egypt will suffer the same destruction as the previous nations. As for jihad education, it is not like jihad, which is often understood by people in general. Jihad for al-Banna is the optimization of faith, morals, soul and sacrifice. So Jihad in this sense is for the Ikhwan their way, and dying for Allah's way is their highest aspiration.³⁵

An example of an educational program implemented by the Ikhwan is establishing the Harra boarding school and the Ummahat al-Muslimin madrasa in the city of Ismailiyah and its branches in various places..³⁶ For al-Banna, this kind of effort is a very important jihad. Lived in an effort to build education until he died even in an effort to advance education. This is the jihad he means.

³²*Ibid.* (J.L. Esposito), h. 137.

³³Munawir Sadzali, *op.cit.*, h. 145.

³⁴Imam Munawir, *op.cit.*, h. 539-540.

³⁵*Ibid.*, h. 541-542.

³⁶Tim Penulis IAIN Syahid, *op.cit.*, h. 304; Imam Munawir, *op.cit.*, h. 547.

In the social field, the Ikhwan movement established polyclinics, built sports facilities, scout training, and legal counseling institutions.³⁷ The Ikhwan organization also directs its attention to the business world. This organization established Syarikat al-Mu'amalat al-Islamiyyah, a trade union among Islamic entrepreneurs. Capital reached 30 thousand pounds. In Alexandria, they have a trading and engineering company founded with a capital of 3,500 shares valued at 70 thousand pounds, and 50 thousand pounds for initial businesses in the field of newspapers.³⁸ The profits earned are solely donated to the struggle of the movement and the needs of the people in need.

To introduce the Ikhwan's ideas and movements to the wider community, they need a communication medium in the form of publications. On March 5, 1946, this organization began publishing a newspaper under the name al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin. In its development, this publication effort can achieve the highest circulation.³⁹

d. Islam Politics

It seems that al-Banna is not satisfied with only working in the fields of economic empowerment, education and social community. He saw that there was an imbalance in the political mechanism in Egypt. According to him, if this is allowed to drag on, it can affect the socio-economic life of the Egyptian people. Finally the Ikhwan al-Muslimin involved themselves in opposing the British occupation and the establishment of the state of Israel in Palestine. Egypt's secular politics also adds to and strengthens his enthusiasm to change the state of Egypt. On December 12, 1947, Hasan al-Banna took the lead in a frenzied demonstration, departing from al-Azhar university. The leader ignited the spirit of the demonstrations with a fiery speech blasted from a car on a loudspeaker. In that event, a series of bloody incidents occurred, including the murder of the Cairo Police Chief.⁴⁰

As a result of the above murder incident, the government of Egypt – under King Faruq – decided to ban the activities of the Ikhwan al-Muslimin and arrest the main figures of this organization apart from al-Banna. Furthermore, in a short time, on December 8, 1948 the Prime Minister of

³⁷Anas al-Hajaji, *op.cit.*, h. 57.

³⁸Imam Munawir, *loc.cit.*

³⁹*Ibid.*, h. 546.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, h. 548; Munawir Sadzali, *op.cit.*, h. 146.

Egypt al-Nuqrasyi Pasha was killed by a veterinary high school student who was said to be a member of the Ikhwan. Even though al-Banna denies the accusations against him being involved in the killing, the government still blames the Muslim Brotherhood and disbands the organization.⁴¹

Even though it was disbanded, this movement went through an underground movement to avoid pressure and repressive actions from the government. Members of the Ikhwan al-Muslimin understand very well that the government is very anti to this movement. This can be proven by the arrest of a number of Ikhwan figures, and on February 12, 1949, the murder of Hasan al-Banna by the Egyptian police took place.⁴² According to another version, al-Banna's death in the struggle to develop Islam according to the Koran and sunnah was killed by a mysterious shooter who is believed by many to be a shooter 'entrusted' by the government on February 12, 1949 in Cairo. The departure of Hassan al-Banna became an endless sorrow for Muslims. He bequeathed 2 of his monumental works, namely the Diary of Da'wah and Da'i and Collection of Letters. In addition, Hasan al-Banna left the spirit and example of da'wah for all current da'wah activists. The effect of al-Banna's death penetrated the pulse of the movement. This organization gradually faded and weakened due to the pressure of a very repressive ruler. To this day, the Ikhwan al-Muslimin is still considered a dangerous and forbidden movement in Egypt. Therefore, anyone; community, academic or religious leaders who are indicated to be involved in or support this movement will face the Egyptian government.

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous descriptions it is to conclude that;

1. Hasan al-Banna is an Islamic reformer figure in Egypt who has brilliant ideas and ideas by establishing the Ikhwan al-Muslimin which aims to return Muslims to their own Islamic teachings which originate from the Qur'an and Sunnah in society and as a state, without imitating other people. Because Islamic teachings have regulated all aspects of human life.

2. Even though the Ikhwan al-Muslimin was disbanded and Hasan al-Banna has passed away, the spirit of his struggle still lives on and rages in the hearts of his loyal followers and supporters to current day, even though it is in a different form of movement. In an effort to realize his ideas, he formed a

⁴¹*Ibid.* (Imam Munawir); (Munawir Sadzali).

⁴²*Ibid.* (Imam Munawir).

container (organization) of the Ikhwan al-Muslimin which is active in various fields of life.

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