

Lehman College

**My Leaps of Faith Yesterday and Today**  
Virtue: Faith

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### My Leaps of Faith Yesterday and Today

On August third, fear tried to steal my voice.

“We need to get out! We need to get out! We need to leave!” My twelve-year-old self-attempted to shriek. My yells were nearly drowned out by the booming voice of my Father and scratchily synchronized with my Mother’s pleading. The yellow toned lights of our living room washed over my sight and my senses were overwhelmed. My older Brother, Youssou, did his best to comfort me, holding my frame in his arms. At that moment I asked myself, ‘How many more times could we keep going through this?’

“We need to leave!” I begged one last time, and we did.

All we had was the few dollars left in my mother’s purse, A green Quran with dainty gold embellishments, and the pajamas that pushed against our bodies from the gentle august night wind. It was the middle of an August night, in my checkered patterned pajamas that everything familiar to me was gone. The walls adorned with Senegalese abstract art, became something to admire only through my memories, and the tall bookshelf packed with history, astronomy and French law books weren’t mine to get lost in anymore.

On August third, I took a leap of faith with my family to escape the domestic abuse that reigned in our home.

My faith looked like a twelve-year-old African girl who stands at the end of a skyscraping cliff and taunts the edge ever so slightly. With just four prominent words, the rock underneath her gives out, and her body falls into the darkness below, unsure of what would catch her, or if anything would catch her at all. She holds a Quran in her hands though, so she trusts that everything will be fine in the end. That is what my “leap of faith” looked like.

In Islam, the word for having an unbreakable faith in God is “Tawakkul”. It is a word that comes to me when doubt settles itself in me today. Sister Umm Thameenah describes Tawakkul, saying it is to “...always remember that the situation of a true believer is always one of goodness: For when they are granted a blessing from Allah (SWT) they praise Him and due to that they are rewarded and their blessings increase and when a calamity strikes they patiently persevere, and as a result of which they are rewarded and granted something better than what they lost.” {**IslamiCity**. ( 2009, October 20). Umm Thameenah: Tawakkul (Trust in God)}. A strong sense of faith still remains important to me today, but in a larger aspect, I think it is something everyone should have a semblance of. I am not saying that all people must be religious or believe in God(s) though. Even in a secular sense, faith is simply a spark that tells each one of us to make the attempt, or, as Nike has surely drilled into our heads by now, “Just Do It”. Every day, my phone notifies me of natural disasters, political disputes, and ethical issues occurring around the world. The current political climate in America is

In a 2017 Ted Talk, Pope Francis proclaimed, “Many of us, nowadays, seem to believe that a happy future is something impossible to achieve. While such concerns must be taken very seriously, they are not invincible. They can be overcome when we don't lock our door to the outside world. Happiness can only be discovered as a gift of harmony between the whole and

every single component. ” {TED. ( 2017, April 4). Pope Francis: Why the only future worth building includes everyone [www.Ted.com.]}. Such a statement raise a reminder to me of why faith is a virtue. It reminds me of the purely positive meaning of behind my own beliefs.

Today, every morning, I take the bustling 4 train to Lehman college. I walk through my lively campus and interact with students of various faiths and backgrounds. Everyone comes with a story. In classes, I vigorously scribble notes of Amy Herman's, Visual Intelligence and copy the descriptions of statistics equations. When I reach the grounds of Lehman and a pen and paper is before me, my brain comes alive and my back straightens up in confidence. I get a strong feeling that my future will be bright. However, the end of my day will come and I am back on the 4 train on my way to East Harlem. As I take my last step off the stairs of the subway station and I pass what is only comparable to the setting of a "The Walking Dead" episode. The gliding through that I do on my college campus becomes trudging through once I am past 125th street. On each corner stands people who lazily hold themselves up as they sway, left to right. Many of their eyes are glazed over or completely closed and some others sit seemingly unconscious against tall cream buildings. Homelessness is rampant and violence continues to prevail in numerous parts of New York City. I struggle fiercely between thinking that the problem is getting worse, and the problem could only possibly get better. It is hard to have faith at times as you walk past people who resemble zombies as drugs eat away at their minds. Still, I believe and trust. "The world is full of ugliness, brutality, and injustices. Yet there is also tenderness, kindness, and concern and that takes the bigger part of our hearts. Without faith in ourselves we would hold ourselves cheap, and without a faith in others we could never live as

free people.” {**Psychologytoday**. ( 2012, September 28). Arthur Dobrin, D.S.W.: Why Faith is Important.}

While the form in which I take in faith has been something that saved me, for others in different countries, it may mean prejudice, oppression, and execution. “Christians have been largely driven out of the Middle East, with some calling it a new genocide. Meanwhile, antisemitism and Islamophobia are rising in Europe.” {**The Guardian**. ( 2018, August 27). Harriet Sherwood: Religion: why faith is becoming more and more popular}. As a member of the global capital, New York City, I have the honor to witness so many different faiths that while I may not wholly understand, I share the same caring of holding on to the virtue of faith. Faith is what drives us all to get up in the morning and work collectively to make the world one they would like to live in. Faith is a catalyst for positive world change and innovation. It isn’t something of archaic times. Faith has a place in this modern world and it is imperative for it to be held with importance well into our future.

As brothers and sisters of the world we share, I think shouldn’t be threatened by the diversity of faiths. Let us recognize peacefully that we all have something that makes us feel like everything will be okay.

On August third, as we walked with arms linked together past Walton Avenue in our pajamas, my brother slipped a prayer into my right hand encased in light brown leather, the Senegalese way. In it, the prayer said, “And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things.” {Verse 65:3. **The Holy**

**Quran}** When I fight through the obstacles that lie in front of my ability to trust in myself and my beliefs, I remember that night and how having faith changed my life.