

**CANCER OF  
CORRUPTION AND  
PANDEMIC OF  
HYPOCRISY IN MALAY-  
MUSLIM POLITICS:  
MUSLIM POLITICS:  
*THE URGENCY OF  
MORAL-ETHICAL  
TRANSFORMATION***

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## PREFACE

It is by the grace and mercy of Allah SWT that I was able to complete the first draft of this work in the last ten days of *Ramaḍān al-Mubārak* 1442 H. It is my little and humble contribution to the campaign of *Rasuah Busters* launched last year by the dynamic and forward-looking visionary community leader, Dato' (Dr.) Hussamuddin Hj. Yaacob, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Karangkrak Group. I am one of those citizens of Malaysia who are disgusted, appalled and sickened by two political phenomena of contemporary Muslim community (*ummah*) in Malaysia: 1) political corruption and hypocrisy of Malay-Muslim political parties and politicians, 2) political disunity and fragmentation of the Muslim community. It appears to me that our sixty-four years of independence from British colonialism have brought the nation to its lowest ebb in terms of immoral and unethical politics, as well as disunity of the Muslim community.

In this monograph of mine I am using the word “moral” and “ethical” interchangeably although in the Western context, “moral” usually refers to an individual’s personal values or principles as to what is right and wrong, while “ethics” refers to “rules, principles, norms and values that are external to the individual” such as organisational codes of conduct, professional codes of ethics, or values and norms of a community. (“Understanding Morality and Ethics”, <https://www.diva-portal.org>). I also use three hyphenated words, namely “spiritual-moral-ethical”, because from the Islamic perspective the morality and ethics of a Muslim are not derived from his/her personal beliefs or thoughts as to what is right or wrong. Good moral and ethical values of Muslims are supposed to be the products of sound faith in God and the spirituality that such faith engenders. Islamic spirituality is therefore derived from the profound relationship with God, and the moral and ethical values of Islam are based on Divine revelation as contained in the injunctions of the Qur’an and the teachings of the Prophetic *Sunnah*. Similarly, the code of ethics of Muslim organisations, businesses or communities are to be in consonance with spiritual and moral teachings of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*. In secular societies, morality and ethics are not derivatives of Divine norms and values, but the products of societal development and changing circumstances. In the post-modern civilisation, all values are relativised as much as there is nothing absolute any more. The Islamic

perspective rejects both modern and post-modern worldview regarding morality and ethics.

Looking at the phenomenon of political corruption and hypocrisy in Malay-Muslim political behaviour and culture, I believe it is symptomatic of an inner crisis of the leaders and the followers of the political parties: the moral decay as a consequence of several factors, including the impact of materialistic modernisation, the pragmatism of political parties, the materialistic and egoistic character of key political leaders, the lack of proper and sound moral-ethical education in political parties, the fear of the rise of non-Muslim political dominance, and the impact of the secularised democratic political system. This advanced state of moral-ethical decadence requires, to my mind, a fundamental change to arrest the inner spiritual-moral decay which is manifested in unethical and hypocritical political behaviour. The damage it has done to the Muslim community and the nation is immense, while the political split and animosity of the Malay Muslims in two or three political groupings have widened and deepened. Therefore, the remedies cannot be found in superficial solutional approaches. The corrupt Malay-Muslim political culture, system and behaviour coupled with the widening disunity require urgent transformational measures. With the prospect of a more uncertain, pandemic-ridden, turbulent climate emergencies, and prolonged political crisis in the country and globally, the transformation has to take place at the most fundamental levels – the spiritual, moral and ethical consciousness of political leaders, cadres, followers and supporters.

A new paradigm of leadership transformation has to be introduced, because the old conventional leadership system and paradigm have failed the *ummah* and the nation miserably. I call this paradigm “Theocentric Leadership Paradigm” which is based on the Prophetic model characterised by; a) the desire to seek the pleasure of Allah SWT and ultimate wellbeing in Paradise (*al-Jannah*); b) selflessness, humility, and mutual consultation (*shūrā*); c) proper management and governance of worldly affairs as obedient, sincere and competent vicegerent (*khalīfah*) of Allah SWT in accordance with the worldview of *Tauḥīd* (uncompromising Islamic monotheism), and non-attachment (*zuhd*) to earthly existence or comfort; and d) profound sense of direct accountability to Allah SWT in this world and in the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter) reinforced with the deeply entrenched values of *taqwā* (God-fearing

consciousness), *ihsān* (benevolence, kindness, moral excellence and spiritual-moral beauty) and *maḥabbah* (love and devotion) of Allah SWT.

This new paradigm of Muslim leadership will be the most important component of the indispensable Spiritual Education (*Tarbiah*) Programme which includes the fundamental knowledge of the worldview of *Tauḥid* as the springboard for the moral-ethical transformation of the Malay-Muslim political culture, system and behaviour. A crucial component of the knowledge of the worldview of *Tauḥid* is knowledge regarding the Divinely-designated role and goal of the Muslim community as *Ummah Wasaṭ*, the chosen “Community of Justice, Goodness, Moral Excellence and Just Balance”. All efforts aimed at the betterment or progress of the Muslim community in Malaysia or in other Muslim countries, have to be redefined and reoriented towards fulfilment of the Divinely-ordained goal of *Ummah Wasaṭ* at the national or local levels. It is the responsibility of the new breed of multi-ethnic Islamic leaders to sustain the political transformation of the Malaysian Muslim community and to ensure that the transformation becomes a critical strategy to reach the most preferred scenario of *Ummah Wasaṭ* by the end of November 2076 which would coincide with the birth of the 16<sup>th</sup> *Hijriyyah* century.

As for the agencies which would embark upon the major transformation agenda of the Muslim community, it is best if Muslim political parties including Muslim-majority political parties themselves were to start the transformation process in their own parties or by way of collaboration among the political parties. I discuss briefly in the Conclusion of this monograph the implications of the transformation agenda on new political configuration or redefinition of Muslim parties or Muslim-majority parties in Malaysia of the future. If Muslim political parties or Muslim-majority parties do not wish or fail to embark on the major transformation agenda after the forthcoming 15<sup>th</sup> General Election, the efforts at producing a generation of new breed of leaders must be initiated and carried forward by Muslim NGOs, private higher educational institutions and Islamic universities such as IIUM, USIM, UniSHAMS, UniSZA and other institutions of higher learning. A consortium of higher learning institutions dedicated to the *ummatic* transformation agenda could play a leading role in the moral-ethical re-education and reunification of the *ummah*, as the country moves forward into more crisis-laden and uncertain futures.

On a more personal note, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and heartfelt thanks to Datuk Dr Rais Hussin Haji Mohamad Ariff and Emir Research Bhd for

kindly sponsoring the publication of this monograph and for urging me in 2020 to write in English a work of this nature which never crossed my mind before. May Allah SWT reward Datuk Rais and his company generously for all the noble efforts undertaken by him, and continue to bless him and his family with good health, longevity and true success in this world and in *Yaum al-Ākhirah*. *Āmīn, yā Rabb al-`Ālamīn!*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**CANCER OF CORRUPTION AND  
EPIDEMIC OF HYPOCRISY IN MALAY-  
MUSLIM POLITICS: *THE URGENCY OF  
MORAL-ETHICAL TRANSFORMATION***

إنما الأمم الأخلاق ما بقيت...فإن هم ذهب أخلاقهم ذهبوا

***“Nations survive as long as their  
morality is alive; When the morality is  
gone, they too perish.”***

***Ahmad Shauqi Bey (1868-1932),  
Egyptian “Prince of the Poets”***

M. Kamal Hassan

## **INTRODUCTION**

As a Malaysian citizen of Malay ethnic origin who is approaching – *in shā' Allāh* (God-willing) -- 79 years of his earthly life but has never been affiliated with any political party until today, I have to confess that I have been most disillusioned, dismayed and ashamed by the two major crises facing the nation – 1) deplorable moral decay in the arena of politics and governance of the nation, and 2) the widening internal rifts within the Malay-Muslim community since the last five years. It appears to me that the moral decadence and the syndrome of “*fitnah-memfitnah*” (the Malay expression for false accusations, allegations and unethical rumour-mongering) which accompanies it – with venoms of hate-politics, defamation, slander, political assassination and acts of treachery (*khianat*) polluting the political atmosphere -- have worsened in the last few years, particularly after the 14<sup>th</sup> General Elections.

Not only the agenda of national integration has been trampled under the boots of ugly ethno-religious polarisation, but the political stability of the nation and the direction of national politics have been in the doldrums. Unfortunately, the descend of Covid-19 pandemic upon the country more than a year ago has complicated the political crisis and accelerated the desperation of political opportunists. The precariously thin margin that divides the ruling coalition party and the opposition has unleashed desperate attempts -- unashamedly -- by both sides of the political divide, one for the sake of survival, the other to topple the government. To make matters worse, the involvement of the factor of political narcissism appearing to the public as a well-meaning “saviour” in spite of advanced age, turned the political turmoil of the last few years into a complex phenomenon of political manoeuvrings, machinations and hypocrisy that is unprecedented. The political crisis and the *fitnah* syndrome became so disgusting and unpalatable to the general public that no less than the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* himself and the Deputy *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* had to issue official statements on a few occasions which expressed their displeasure and disappointment at the moral decay in the political arena.

I could not help but share the sentiments of their Majesties, and as an ordinary and ageing spectator of national scenarios, the unprecedented moral crisis in Malay-Muslim politics is most disturbing and appalling, not just to me but to many



other decent human beings. I decided to write about it as a lay person, because I am not a political scientist nor a sociologist, and suggest a fundamental solution that I hope would be considered by the Malay-Muslim political leaders. However, even if what I am proposing is not agreeable or palatable to the political elites, I feel I have at least discharged my religious responsibility, within my means, of “enjoining that which is good and right and prohibiting that which is bad and wrong” (*al-amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa'n-nahy `an al-munkar*) as decreed by Allah SWT in the Qur'an (*Sūrah Āl `Imrān* 3:110). The moral decadence behind the political corruption and turmoil, the unethical conduct involved and the resulting discord among Muslims are definitely forms of **munkar** (something disapproved, reprehensible, objectionable or rejected because it is bad, wrong, harmful or sinful) from the Islamic moral perspective. According to a Prophetic saying (*ḥadīth*), the Prophet (*ṣalla'LLāhu `alaihi wa sallam*, meaning “may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him”, henceforth abbreviated as s.a.w.)

***Whoever sees a munkar, he/she should change it with his/her hand [authority, power], if he/she is not able to do so, he/she should change it with his/her tongue [verbally or in writing], if he or she is not able to do so, then he/she should change it with his/her heart, and that is the weakest of faith.*** (Muslim)

Before proceeding further, I need to explain why I have decided to focus on contemporary Malay-Muslim politics, and not on Malaysian politics as a whole which would include the politics of non-Malay communities. First of all, I have to admit that I have no knowledge of the politics of other ethnic groups such as the Chinese, Indian, Sikh, Orang Asli, Iban, Melanau, Kadazan, Dayak, Dusun, Murut or other ethnic groups, to enable me to make any objective or critical observations concerning their political behaviours or parties' machinations. But that does not mean that I presume that the problems of political corruption and hypocrisy (or double or multiple standards, or Machiavellian politics) do not exist in non-Malay politics, or that economic corruption does not exist in non-Malay economics or non-Malay private sector. To be sure, the history of post-independence Malaysian politics has witnessed many instances of unethical political behaviour which were driven by extremist chauvinistic sentiments – particularly as they manifested in the national tragedy of May 13, 1969 racial riots.

To my mind, racially-motivated political strategies and ethnic-based prejudices will continue to dictate the politics of mutual hostility on both sides of the Malaysian political divide for some time to come. Of course, those prejudices will invariably be camouflaged by both sides invoking the rhetoric of national interest, virtues of national unity, economic equity, democratic principles or universal human rights. It is also well-known that the promotion or preservation of a particular ethnic community's interest could also be augmented by resorting to political bribery, corruption or economic threats. Underground agents of financial seduction or coercion have also played their sinister role to maintain "the black economy" or to secure demographic advantage in some strategic political constituencies.

Second, as I have indicated above, it is a religious obligation for Muslims to do something to put an end to social evils and unethical phenomena, especially within the Muslim community. I therefore choose to ventilate my feelings in this monograph and share my concerns regarding what I perceive to be serious moral failures (*kemungkaran*) of some Malay-Muslim politicians, leaders or political parties. I am doing this as I approach the end of my earthly existence when I was looking forward to the ascendancy – not downward spiral -- of Malay-Muslim political cooperation, solidarity, unity, maturity, stronger Islamic religious brotherhood (*ukhuwwah Islāmiyyah*) and leadership of high integrity. In the worldview of Islam, the absence of *ummatic* unity among Muslims and complacency about it is a very serious religious shortcoming, a dereliction of religious duty. Muslims need to know or be reminded all the time that it is **God Himself, Allah (*Subḥānahū wa Ta`ālā*, meaning "Gloried and Exalted is He", henceforth abbreviated as SWT), Who has commanded all Believers in His religion to be united by holding fast to His Book (Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 103) and by loving Him, His Messenger (s.a.w.) and His cause above everything else (Q.*al-Baqarah* 2:165). His beloved Messenger, Muḥammad (s.a.w.), too has emphasised on many occasions **the obligation of Muslims to live and work together as a single united religious brotherhood.****

Third, being a truly non-partisan Muslim spectator of political events – a fact that those who know me very well from my school days until today can vouch for – it is my sincere wish that some of the decent and sincere Malay-Muslim political leaders and followers would feel compelled by the current political turmoil and moral decay to do some serious soul-searching, self-introspection (*muḥāsabah*) and rethinking which could pave the way to:

- (a) Major transformations of their respective political parties, cultures and behaviours in the near future.
- (b) The strengthening and unification of Muslim religious community (the Islamic *ummah*) which transcend ethnic, cultural, linguistic, geographical or colour distinctions, as a **Divine imperative** and embody the Prophetic universal mission of *Raḥmatan li'l-Ālamīn* (“Compassion and mercy to all the worlds”, ref. Q. *al-Anbiyā’* 21: 107).

I do hope and pray that there would be major improvements and reforms in Malay-Muslim political behaviour and culture as well as Islamic political solidarity, cooperation or – better still -- unity in the next three to five years, on the road to the *ummatic* spiritual-moral transformation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the meantime, I believe many Malaysians across the racial divide do not want Malaysian politics in the next one or two years to be influenced any more by the anachronistic imaginations of elderly political leaders who may be well-meaning but essentially driven by self-delusion or narcissism, as if political wisdom, national glory and shared prosperity can only flow out of their continued leadership. This phenomenon is, of course, not unique to Malaysian politics. Many authoritarian though charismatic nationalist leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as President Jamal A. Nasser, President Ir. Soekarno, President Ferdinand Marcos, and Chairman Mao Zedong have also been infected by this virus of self-delusion.

Fourth, I believe there are many old-timers like me out there who may be having similar sentiments, concerns or disillusionments as I do, and they may wish to augment and go beyond this little effort of mine in “self-criticism with zero vested interest” in more impactful and effective ways.

## CHAPTER 1

### EXPRESSIONS OF PUBLIC CONCERN REGARDING CORRUPTION AND UNETHICAL POLITICAL CONDUCT IN RECENT YEARS

Of late, many political observers, analysts and public intellectuals have made critical observations regarding several factors which have been and are still pushing the nation towards the dangerous chasm of political turmoil and divisions despite the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19. However, in December 2020, when His Majesty Tuanku Raja Nazrin as the Sultan of Perak Darul Ridhwan openly criticised the political crisis in his state during the official appointment of the new Chief Minister of his state, the national media seized the occasion to highlight it because it exposed not just the essence of unethical political manoeuvring in Perak but also that which has been going on in the capital of the nation. What His Majesty revealed, to my mind, exposed the problem of character in political party leaders which was just the tip of the iceberg:

The Sultan reminded the state lawmakers that they were elected only because of the trust shown by the people. “The people have chosen them to carry out the responsibility to provide services and upgrade their economy as well as their social needs. The people, especially the poor, are affected by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, where some have lost their jobs and income. The people should not be betrayed due to the influence of the emotional grudge over conservative political thinking,” he said. The Sultan also pointed out that a person’s true character will be revealed when he comes into wealth, position and power. “When a person is surrounded with greedy, self interest, double faced, with hidden intention people as well as those who misused relationships with leaders, the humble and moderation culture disappears, with the person’s arrogance appearing. [emphasis mine] “Do not at any time allow yourself to be careless or to be on cloud nine, whereby you forget the green grass you once step on which has now turned brown because it has not been watered for long,” he added. [emphasis added] (“Perak Sultan says third MB in over two years reflects poorly on state’s politicians.” <https://malaysia.news.yahoo.com/perak-sultan-says-third-mb-041814741.html>. Accessed on February 10, 2021).

The Sultan also said:

He [the political leader] does not have to offer bribes or compensation to secure support which is not guaranteed to deliver loyalty. Similarly he does not have to use warnings or

threats in order to strengthen his position because such power which is derived in such a way is most fragile.[emphasis added](<https://www.utusan.com.my/terkini/2020/12/pelantikan-tiga-mb-sepenggal-cerminan-kegagalan-pemimpin-sultan-nazrin>). Accessed on January 1, 2021. Refer also to Sultan Selangor's concern with the increase in the phenomenon of corruption and the spread of fake news in society as reported in "*Sultan Selangor bimbang gejala rasuah, fitnah*", *Harakah*, February 8-11, 2021).

I wish to record my appreciation of the views expressed by the well-known National Journalism Laureate, and long-standing public intellectual Tan Sri Johan Jaaffar who urged for the birth of a new political culture to "*help create an improved political eco-system and to bring sanity to our political culture*" (Johan Jaaffar, "*The birth of a new political culture?*", *The Star*, 28 September 2020).

The recent statement of the preeminent social activist and intellectual who transcends ethnic and religious barriers, namely Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye (trustee of *Malaysia Unity Foundation*) -- whom I have held in high esteem for decades for what he stands for in this multi-ethnic and multi-religious society – deserves special attention and action:

As the new year arrives, Malaysians must continue to remain united and resilient in facing challenges that the pandemic has brought....Achieving unity is not by sloganeering but by the government's implementation of fair and just policies to benefit all Malaysians....In managing the nation in such difficult times, good governance and integrity are essential [emphasis added] (*The Star*, January 2, 2021).

Among the local academia, I know there are many non-partisan academics who are equally disillusioned with the unethical games that some politicians play for the sake of their own survival. Two eminent professors in Universiti Malaysia Pahang, the late Prof. Dato' Dr. Ishak Ismail and Prof. Dato' Dr. Hasnah Haron drew our attention to the decline of ethical politics five years ago. Making a critical but mildly worded evaluation of the then situation they said :

We have politicians from both sides of the political divide who are concerned more about their power base than the stability and

harmony of the country. Why do these things happen? Is it because we have moved too fast too soon? We have grown from a simple society to a materialistic culture.

Today, what is important to most of us is realising our self-actualisation at all costs, and in this pursuit, we are not able to distinguish between what we need and what we want. Along the way, we have thrown away good norms, values and systems. What do we need to do to rectify things? (<https://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/12/194089/ethics-all-about-doing-good>. Accessed on 8 February 2021)

In an article, “*Politik kita masih di takuk lama*” (Our politics is still at the old notch) after the collapse of the Pakatan Harapan government, Dr. Ilyas Abdullah, a senior lecturer with a doctorate in political science in the Faculty of Management and Policy Studies, UiTM Pahang branch, expresses his dismay with the moral failure of political elites and the disappointment of the *rakyat* with the false dawn of “Malaysia Baru” (The New Malaysia) after the GE-14. Among other things, he complains:

[The current political stalemate] shows clearly that the style of politicking (*gaya berpolitik*) among the political elites, whether in the governance era of PH [Pakatan Harapan] or in that of PN [Perikatan Nasional], does not differ very much. The political elites are still maintaining the attitude of lack of maturity in their politics when they give priority to the interest of personal power and quarrelling with each other as compared to thinking about the interest of the *rakyat*.

The civil movement which is driven by the *rakyat* to make politics and administration of the nation more ethical (*memoralkan politik dan pentadbiran negara*) has still not attained its objective because the future of the nation is still being manipulated by political elites with (personal) interests. The definition of “new politics” being touted by academics has still failed to be translated into tangible realities because the [meaning of the] definition is only measured by the extent to which the primordial elements have collapsed in the general elections among the voters, but it has failed to see the changes in the behaviour of political elites who are still practicing old politics which lacks maturity but greedy for power such that it has brought instability to the nation. (*Rencana. Utusan Malaysia*, January 6, 2021)

We are fortunate to have Prof. Dr Sivamurugan Pandian, professor in political sociology in USM who is respected for his balanced, well-informed and rational analyses over several years until the present day either on Malaysian T.V. or in the print media. Commenting on the issue of the controversial political funding

which could be construed in some cases as a form of political corruption in contemporary politics, our learned professor has this to say [translated from the original Malay text]:

Certainly, in order to sustain political activities, political funding is required. Abuse of power [or authority] gives rise to the issue of integrity in the practice of political corruption....Clear guidelines are necessary if corruption [or bribery] is considered as a criminal act....

Humanistic values which marginalise the element of corruption in life has to be promoted and appreciated. The spirit of humanity which uses the humanistic values as a shield must be lifted so that it will not be polluted by bad elements which lead to crimes...(Sivamurugan , “*Rasuah politik atau imbuhan?*” *Sinar Ahad*, 7 February 2021. Commenting on UMNO’s future in light of the forthcoming GE15, he poses a rhetorical question, “*Masih adakah simpang kejujuran dalam politik?*” (Is there still a junction for sincerity in politics), *Sinar Ahad*, February 21, 2021):

When it was reported by the media at the end of January 2021 that Malaysia dropped six spots to 57th position among 180 countries in the Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2020, many Malaysian community leaders and intelligentsia expressed their dismay and have urged the government to give more serious attention to curbing the moral and social disease. For example, the president of Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) Dr Muhammad Mohan called on the Perikatan Nasional government

to accelerate institutional reforms by among others, making Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) more independent, pushing for the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) Bill instead of the Independent Police Conduct Commission (IPCC) Bill, speeding up the enactment of a political financing law to stop money politics and restoring parliamentary democracy at the earliest opportunity. He also recommended greater transparency on matters of public interest by narrowing down the scope of what should be confidential under the Official Secrets Act. Only with such momentum and commitment from the leadership, the trajectory of the corruption perceptions index can be reversed, (<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/malaysia-drops-six-spots-57th-position-corruption-perceptions-index>. Accessed on February 14, 2021).

I agree with the views and recommendations of Ivlynn Yap, patron and principal advisor of Citrine One, a local advisory communication company with a network in Asia Pacific region, who identifies the problem of political party funding from external sources and the absence of transparency regarding the sources and the amount given to the party or certain leaders in the party as the major cause of political corruption in the country. She says that if this practice is not stopped,

the corruption will continue to spread and the people will be the victims. Those who are going to benefit are the greedy ones serving their own selfish interests....It is high time that this type of thinking and culture be terminated. However rigorous is the anti-corruption campaign, there is not going to have any impact as long as there is no political will to draw up the parliamentary Act on Political Funding (Ivlynn Yap, “*Salah siapa rasuah jadi budaya Malaysia*,” *Sinar Harian* February 12, 2021 from <https://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/123550/KHAS/Sinar-Rasuah-Buster/Salah-siapa-rasuah-jadi-budaya-Malaysia-1.123550>. Accessed on February 14, 2021).

In a letter to the editor of the FMT with the heading “Regeneration is what we need, not the older generation,” Kua Kia Soong of SUARAM highlights another problem in Malaysian politics which he calls “the scourge of gerontocracy”. The political frustrations and grievances it generates could lead some ambitious politicians to resort to unethical or hypocritical behaviour or actions. He says:

In other democratic countries, we also see responsible and honourable politicians resigns at the slightest failure of judgement on their part or when their term has reached a convenient point for some other younger leaders to pick up some experience....Political parties and MPs are lobbied by powerful corporations and often seem unable to propose the bold changes necessary to address this emergency. We have seen some induced by developers to pass environmentally destructive projects through corrupt methods. (Kua Kia Soong, Letter to the editor, *The FMT News App*, January 1, 2021)

The concerns of Chairman of the Board of Directors of Karangkrak Group, Dato’ (Dr.) Hussamuddin Hj. Yaacob – as a prominent public opinion leader and independent socio-religious activist – about abuse of power in Malaysia should be heeded by political as well as national leaders because his views reflect the feelings of the ordinary people as he knows the heart-beat of the masses and is well-informed



regarding the serious political crisis in the country and the rise in high-level corruption which reached its peak in the shameful 1MDB scandal. Consequently, the international media as well as foreign leaders portrayed and looked at Malaysia as a country governed by the system of kleptocracy, a word which is unheard of in Malaysia. The Malaysian people, together with the international community, have been alarmed by the mind-boggling magnitude of the 1MDB scandal and are looking forward to what the ongoing court case would reveal in terms of the extent of abuse of power, corruption within a political party, collusion between big business and government, nepotism, hypocrisy and all kinds of deceptions. The scandal should have ignited within the community and the political party a new resolve of Malay political leaders to bring an end to the old and corruption-ridden political system and culture which have made it possible for the 1MDB to happen. (See Tom Wright and Bradley Hope, *Billion Dollar Whale: The Man Who Fooled Wall Street, Hollywood, and the World*, Hachette Books, 2018)

I would have expected Malay nationalist politicians to feel ashamed, if not betrayed, by what the book revealed – without implying that the book is completely objective – and the scandal itself should explode the myth of the principle of selflessness represented by top national leaders. The Malaysian public now knows that the former president of a particular political party was found guilty by the Malaysian court of law of seven charges involving money laundering, abuse of power and money laundering over RM42 million of SRC International Funds. Instead of seeing an internal systemic revolution in Malay political culture being initiated on a big scale, the Malaysian public and media were inundated with waves of denial syndrome and apologetic narratives in the form of *argumentum ad absurdum*.

Dato' Hussamuddin expressed his disgust, a year ago, with the cancer of corruption, in the following way:

In this era of ours, our morality is terrible with corrupt leaders who cheat and use [public funded] facilities but they do not take care of the welfare of the people. Funds are being used to finance festivities.... (*Hubungan kaum, agama semakin parah di Malaysia*”, *Sinar Harian*, January 10, 2020 from <https://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/65292/KHAS>. Accessed on January 2, 2021)

The recent initiative started by him and his independent newspaper *Sinar Harian* to launch the *Rasuah Busters* media campaign throughout the country in his struggle against the nation's Enemy Number One is most laudable and admirable. The campaign reinforces the sense of public disgust, shame and zero-tolerance for the practice of corruption and abuse of power in the nation. It is heartening that more and more NGOs, concerned citizens, important public figures and community leaders are participating in the national campaign and expressing their support for Dato' Hussamuddin's sincere efforts, who has no political axe to grind. In a recent interview, he said:

I have been in the newspaper publication industry for 40 years. I am someone who believes in media freedom. Throughout my 40 years in the world of business, I see this moral degeneration of the people getting worse. The problem of corruption is becoming more rampant. It is almost more than a year now that the nation has been dashed by the storm of COVID-19. The people's lives appear to be so miserable. In fact, the situation is made worse by groups quarrelling among themselves. ("*Segera putuskan rangkaian rasuah,*" *Sinar Harian*, February 20, 2021).

I readily endorse the ethical ideal of "Principles before Politics" which Nathaniel Tan, as a critical political commentator and columnist for *The Star* newspaper, highlighted in his recent article. Describing political parties as a "never-ending dirtying machine" because their overriding objective is nothing more than to secure the Prime Minister's position for their leaders – "this is the level of meaninglessness we have reached" -- and politicians as people who "are conditioned to think of the next elections, rather than the next generation" he laments:

Values, ideals, and principles seem to have all taken a back seat to conflicts between feudal warlords. (*The Sunday Star*, March 21, 2021)

An expression of public concern with Malay-Muslim politics that I consider the most incisive, frank, instructive and revealing so far is from the recent two-page interview by *Mingguan Malaysia* (March 7, 2021) of Tun Musa Hitam, a former deputy prime minister (1981-1986) and among the few most experienced Malay political leaders still surviving. He is utterly disgusted with the current political imbroglia and Malay leaders who are essentially more concerned about their

personal interests than the peoples' or the nation's. A portion of the report by Danial Dzulkifly is as follows:

Commenting on the current political “musical chairs” affecting the country, Musa expresses his disgust, stating politicians who switch sides are making a mockery of national politics. “I’m bored of the whole situation. I said once that what are you politicians doing, it is as if you are all ‘pretend playing cooking’ in politics. They are fooling around with politics, for their own interest....They are not politicking for national interest but their own survival,”... Musa then attributed the issue to the politics of money, an ideology that is gaining momentum when any general election looms. “With the issue of switching parties that is out of control now, in my opinion it’s not politics or ideology. If it can be an ideology by gaining money it could be the ideology of money....Some said that the reward now is no longer small like in the past. This sort of situation will become more often when a general election is near”....(Danial Dzulkifly, in [www.malaymail.com](http://www.malaymail.com), March 7, 2021)

The latest public outburst regarding political corruption and hypocrisy came from the mouth of the outgoing Inspector General of Police, Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, the final day of his service with the police force. Known for his determination, integrity, frankness and fearlessness in combatting the scourge of corruption in the police force, and pulling no punches he expresses not only his disgust with political interference in the internal affairs of the force, the egoistic and arrogant attitude of a particular minister directing him to appoint politically-compliant police officers to important positions, but also the corrupt practices of government politicians misusing their powers and buying over of politicians from rival parties which resulted in the political “frog-jumping” phenomenon at state and federal levels. In his view, “the country’s political landscape had been devastated because of corruption.” (*New Straits Times*, Saturday May 1, 2021). He deplores the “hypocrisy” [he used this English word] of politicians saying one thing in public but doing opposite things behind their back. He describes the whole phenomenon, using the English word, “sickening” in his speech and how the people are really “fed-up” or “sick and tired” (*muak*) with the hypocritical conduct and corruption of those politicians. He calls upon the Anti-Corruption Agency (SPRM) to investigate the political corruption that triggered the “frog-jumping” phenomenon in politics. He says in the press conference:

I see in politics corruption happening everywhere, and the act of threatening [the electorate] is corruption. I request

SPRM to go in, take action and don't be afraid...It reflects a picture as if this nation does not have laws, and everyone is free to do whatever he/she likes to buy politicians. SPRM should not just investigate the police. Rather they should be investigating the politicians. Bring back the clean political culture for our nation. (*Berita Harian*, 1 May 2021. See also *The Star*, Saturday 1 May, 2021 and *Sinar Harian*, Saturday 1 May, 2021 and *Sinar Ahad*, Sunday 2 May, 2021).

This monograph of mine, I reiterate, is but a humble effort of a concerned Malaysian academic – an arm chair one to be sure -- who is truly independent and without any political affiliations. I started to write this monograph just before the *Rasuah Busters* was launched, but I hope it complements Dato' Hussamuddin's *jihad* as a Muslim intellectual contribution which is pleading for the **eradication** of the abominable scourge of political corruption in the Malay-Muslim community which put me and the Muslim *ummah* in Malaysia to shame, as well as the **elimination of suicidal internal political disunity** within it. As an old man who is appalled and disgusted with the corrupt politics of his ethnic group, this monograph is also my intellectual "*wasiat*" (testament) to the younger generation of the educated elites of the Muslim community in Malaysia – the future leaders of the *ummah* – to play an active role towards the moral-ethical transformation of the Malay-Muslim community, because they too have the **RASA MALU** (feeling of shame, loss of dignity and self-respect in Malay culture) deep in their hearts.

## CHAPTER 2

### CORRUPTION AND HYPOCRISY IN MALAY-MUSLIM POLITICS OF CONTEMPORARY MALAYSIA

After benefitting from several critical observations from concerned Malaysian citizens such as those mentioned above, I wish to explain that this little book of mine would focus on only two interrelated factors – two sides of the same coin -- which I believe are among the major causes of the split within the Malay-Muslim community and the moral decay, namely political corruption and political hypocrisy which have spiked in recent times. At the root of this deplorable phenomenon, I believe, is the lust and craze for political power, just because with it, any party or coalition will be able to actualise their aspirations for themselves or their constituencies, for the ethnic groups they represent as well as the freedom to distribute government projects to their cronies, grass-root leaders and war-lords. Besides, the political power provides the key to incredible authority, wealth, status and worldly pleasures to the political leaders, family members and close associates.

The corruption of politics in Malaysia, in which I would include cronyism, nepotism, collusion between politics and business, has confirmed beyond any shadow of doubt what Lord Acton predicted in 1887: “*Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely*”, and the spread of the epidemic of political hypocrisy in recent years is a proof that Machiavellian pragmatism which upholds the doctrine of “the end justifies the means” is a dominant feature of Malaysian politics. In the vicious competition for political supremacy and dominance, what matters ultimately is victory for one’s party or one’s faction or oneself: the stakes are too high to bother thinking of upholding principles of integrity, ethics or legality. In order to justify or defend one’s immoral actions, one resorts to double or multiple standards – saying or proclaiming one thing in public and the opposite in private, one thing for public or international consumption and another thing for one’s party, cliques or supporters.

Lying in politics is nothing new, no doubt, and all over the world many politicians and political leaders practice lying as part of mainstream political culture. The term “political hypocrisy” is a well-established term in the literature on world politics which refers to the practice of saying one thing in public but doing something

else in private, a behaviour that many people around the world associate, unfortunately, with modern politics. The way political hypocrisy is viewed in the West may be gleaned from a good article on the subject written by Ged Mirfin, “Political Hypocrisy: Magical realism and the death of the political actor.”

The problem in a nutshell is that the people increasingly distrust the political system they’re part of. Political hypocrisy they feel has become so rife that it is harder to find an example of genuine and really sincere politicians than it is the obverse. The reason why the general public is so incensed about political hypocrisy is that it has such a huge impact on our daily lives. There’s a lot of hypocrisy in the world, especially in politics....Hypocritical behaviour bothers us so much in large part because we want to take people’s words and actions as representative of their character. Hypocrisy reveals startling inconsistencies between behaviour and character. Worse still hypocrisy is the contrivance of a false appearance of virtue or goodness, while concealing real character or inclinations, especially with respect to religious and moral beliefs. (Ged Mirfin, “Political hypocrisy: Magical realism and the death of the political actor...See also David Runciman “Political hypocrisy: The mask of power, from Hobbes to Orwell and beyond” from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290006746\\_Political\\_hypocrisy\\_The\\_mask\\_of\\_power\\_from\\_Hobbes\\_to\\_Orwell](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290006746_Political_hypocrisy_The_mask_of_power_from_Hobbes_to_Orwell). Accessed on February 14, 2021).

Benjamin Rossi, a researcher in political philosophy, has summed up the prevalent view regarding political hypocrisy in the West as something that is inevitable or even necessary in certain circumstances. He says:

Much more recently, Judith N. Shklar [1928-1992. Professor of political theory and government, Harvard University] argued that hypocrisy is nearly inevitable in political systems premised upon competitive elections, since candidates will employ persuasive rhetoric that requires a certain degree of dissimulation. Ruth Grant [1951-professor of political science at Duke University] went further, arguing that without a plausible alternative for achieving comparable goods, hypocrisy in politics may very well be a moral necessity. ( Benjamin Rossi “The Uses and Abuses of Political Hypocrisy” from [https://www.prindlepost.org/2020/08/the-uses-and-abuses-of-political-hypocrisy/August 27, 2020](https://www.prindlepost.org/2020/08/the-uses-and-abuses-of-political-hypocrisy/August%2027,%202020). Accessed February 14, 2021).

I am aware that there are several types of lying and hypocrisy in politics, and there are prominent Western political scientists who subscribe to secular ethics, liberalism, realism or pragmatism who tend to justify the use of political hypocrisy or

lying in politics -- when political leaders or heads of governments choose not to speak the truth or be hypocritical for reasons known only to them. Be that as it may, I wish to clarify, however, that I am not using the term “hypocrisy” as the exact equivalent of the Arabic term “*nifāq*” in Islamic theology or ethics, or the “hypocrite” as the equivalent of the Qur’anic “*munāfiq*”. In Islamic theology and in the Qur’an, hypocrisy refers to the socio-religious phenomenon in which those people (or even covert non-Muslims) who claim to be Muslims present themselves outwardly as Muslims and perform religious rituals of Islam, but in reality, that is in their hearts, they do not believe in the teachings of Islam. In fact, they would be secretly working or conspiring, against the interest of Islam or Muslims. As such they are regarded theologically as among the worst of disbelievers and their punishment in the Hereafter would be in the lowest part of Hell (ref. Q. *al-Nisā’* 4: 142-145, *al-Baqarah* 2: 8-10, *al-Taubah* 9: 54-55).

Thus, the hypocrisy that I am referring to in this book is not religious hypocrisy, but the politician’s practise of lying to or deceiving the public with regard to political matters, such as the practice of double standards in political behaviour; deceptive and mendacious behaviour among politicians; the making of false statements by political leaders to mislead the public so that the latter would view the politician(s) positively or as serving the interest of the *rakyat* whereas they are actually working for the political survival of their party or their clique or themselves; the unilateral breaking of political pacts or agreements; disregard of political promises due to changing circumstances; and dishonesty in making pledges to the voters just before the elections. In the last two and a half years, the Malaysian public witnessed a number of dramatic political manoeuvres, surprising turn of events and political gamesmanship which represented hypocritical political behaviour rarely seen in Malaysian political history.

## CHAPTER 3

### “ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!” TO THE CORRUPT POLITICAL SYSTEM AND CULTURE

In whatever way one wishes to define political corruption and hypocrisy in contemporary Malaysian politics, the scourge has reached unprecedented levels of decadence due to several factors, which I do not intend to discuss in this monograph. It is not easy for us to predict what else will be cooked up or staged by the political conspirators or “desperados” as political parties position themselves and manoeuvre to secure victory for themselves in the forthcoming battle of GE15 which could occur any time before the end of 2023.

What we can expect is that the nearer it gets to the D-Day the more intense will be the money politicking, the buying over of MPs from rival parties, intra-party jockeying, inter-party horse-trading, “frog-jumping” events and mischievous political manoeuvring and intrigues, and the more rampant will the corruption and hypocrisy become. Normally, when a major political party finds itself pushed to the wall either by its own strategic failures resulting in some of its MPs jumping ship, or by the unexpected strengthening of its political rivals just before the general elections, nothing is too sacred or *ḥarām* (forbidden) anymore. My hope is that there would still be some Malay-Muslim politicians whose moral conscience is not dead, who would exert their influence to prevent their party or their colleagues from resorting to immoral political tactics or behaviour, otherwise they would be conniving in the wrongdoings of their party. It is also my hope that the moral conscience of some key leaders of Malay-Muslim political parties is still alive and that the rust on their hearts can be removed over time so that eventually the spiritual-moral consciousness of the inherent *fiṭrah* (the primordial and inherent predisposition to God-consciousness) in their soul would prevail.

We will have to assume that among the rank and file of some Malay-Muslim political parties, the prevalent collective psyche is one that accommodates some degree of corruption or hypocrisy if the objective is not perceived as personal gain but for the benefit of the “race, nation and religion” (*demi bangsa, negara dan agama*). Judging from the political scenarios of the last two years, party followers do not tend to regard such corruption as sinful or evil from the religious point of view.



As the moral or religious perspective becomes relativised, marginalised or rationalised within the Malaysia political environment being impacted by the secularisation ethos of modern democracy, what we the non-partisan observers consider political corruption or hypocritical behaviour might not be regarded as serious deviations at all. This attitude becomes all the more common when a particular party is elevated, in the eyes of followers and leaders, to the status of a *keramat* (hallowed and venerable religious persona) with a sacrosanct aura around it. Besides, such a party is regarded by its members as serving the cause of religion because it has championed some religious causes; traditionally promoted the establishment of important Islamic educational or economic institutions to show to the public that it is a defender of Islam; or popularising religio-political concepts from the Qur'an from time to time. Therefore, the party behaves in public as if it has acquired religious legitimacy strong enough to justify or compensate for whatever morally-compromising political behaviour, decisions or strategies it has to make in order to gain popularity and garner political support.

As an academic, I would like to digress at this juncture, to a purely research issue that I have been thinking about, i.e., the phenomenon that political parties in modern Malay culture seem to have acquired a life and personality of their own as supra-human or "semi-holy" entities which could demand "sacrificial offerings" from time to time from their loyal followers in order for them to deliver important "political fruits" of some kind to the followers on a regular basis. I feel there is a new area of inter-disciplinary research in Malay-Muslim politics that needs to be explored and scientifically studied by experts in organisational psychology, sociology of religion, Malay political behaviour and sociology of political parties. I would also like to know how Malay political parties, as part of imported Western political institutions, transplanted in Malay culture and society in early 1950s have evolved and transformed Malay collective psyche and culture to be at variance with many aspects of traditional Malay-Islamic *adat* (custom, convention, mores), values and principles. A related issue is how is it that in modern Malay-Muslim politics -- a mundane tool or instrument (in Arabic, *wasīlah*) -- could be misconstrued as a sacrosanct objective. One thing for sure, and that is the traditional Malay-Muslim worldview has no place for modern political parties, nor the ideology of modern democracy and Westminster parliamentary system -- imported lock, stock and barrel. I tend to think that the contemporary Malay-Muslim political dilemmas and crisis are also the long-term

results of the colonial grafting of a British liberal democratic system onto a communitarian monarchy-led Malay consensual culture which does not tolerate dissent or challenges to the status-quo. A related question is “could it be that the Malay political crisis is a symptom of the underlying tension among three political strands competing for ideological supremacy – the Malay-traditional, the Malay-Islamic and the Malay-secular nationalist?” As I may be wrong in my theoretical assumptions, I hope our professional politicians, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists, political philosophers and Malay culture experts will be able to provide the correct explanations for the contemporary Malay-Muslim political malaise and crisis.

## CHAPTER 4

### TRANSFORMATION OF MUSLIM POLITICAL CULTURE, BEHAVIOUR AND FUTURE MUST BE BASED UPON A TRANSCENDENT WORLDVIEW

Be that as it may, I believe the phenomenon of political corruption and hypocrisy which has debased many Malay-Muslim political leaders and put the Muslim *ummah* in Malaysia to shame shall continue to haunt Malaysian politics in the foreseeable future unless there are:

- a) A major transformation of Muslim political culture, parties and behaviour based upon a holistic and overarching ideology that is not based on valorisation of racial origin, ethnicity or language.
- b) A new breed of leaders whose characteristics will be elaborated at the appropriate section below and who would be the main drivers for the process of transformation mentioned in the above statement.

What I mean by “a holistic and overarching ideology that is not based on valorisation of racial origin, ethnicity or language” is the worldview of *Tauḥīd* (lit. affirmation of the absolute oneness of God, and the uncompromising monotheism of Islam) which is provided by the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.). In the Malaysian context, the intellectual discourse on the worldview of *Tauḥīd* as articulated by post-colonial Islamic reformist-renewalist thinkers in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, Egypt and Indonesia began to have an impact on an Islamic *da`wah* organisation, *Badan Dakwah Al-Rahmaniah* (around 1966-1968), an Islamic party, the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PMIP or PAS) (beginning in 1970), two Islamic youth organisations, ABIM (*Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia*) (beginning in 1972) and JIM (*Jama`ah Islah Malaysia*) (beginning in 1990), *Persatuan Wadah Pencerdasan Umat* (WADAH) (established in 2005), *Pertubuhan IKRAM Malaysia* as a *da`wah* organisation (established in 2009) and other Muslim NGOs. The most prominent Islamic intellectual and scholarly exponent of the worldview of Islam in Malaysia is none other than Professor Tan Sri Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the Founder-Director of ISTAC (Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation, established in 1987). The discourse on the worldview of Islam in 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia was spearheaded by *al-Marḥūm* Buya HAMKA (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, 1908-1981) with his books -- *Falsafah Hidup* (Philosophy of Life) written in 1940, after he finished writing *Tasawuf Moden* (Modern Sufism) in 1939, *Pandangan Hidup Muslim* (Muslim

Worldview) (1960), *Falsafah Ideologi Islam* (Philosophy of Islamic Ideology) (1950). I would consider Buya Hamka as the first Islamic thinker in the whole of Southeast Asia to write about the worldview of Islam in a comprehensive way, albeit in the Malay-Indonesian language. Another prominent Indonesian political leader, intellectual and thinker who addressed the subject of Islamic worldview was *al-Marḥūm* Mohammad Natsir (1908-1993), the leader of Masjumi Party and the first Prime Minister of the new Republic of Indonesia (1950) who wrote on the subject in his collection of essays, *Capita Selecta* (three volumes, 1954, compiled by Sati Alimin). As far as books in English on the subject of the worldview are concerned, the late Professor Dr Ismā'īl Rāji al Fārūqī has written one of the best – if not the best -- expositions in the English language to this day, *Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (first published in Malaysia by ABIM in 1982). My colleague in IIUM, Professor Dr Abdelaziz Berghout has also written an excellent introduction to the subject in his *Introduction to the Islamic Worldview: Study of Selected Essentials* published by IIUM in 2009.

Leaders of the Muslim community, particularly Muslim political and national leaders, need to understand the worldview of *Tauḥīd* in a profound way because it has far-reaching implications on all aspects of Muslim life, culture and civilisation. It is also their responsibility to explain the worldview to members of their parties or organisations they lead. As there are several ways of articulating the worldview, it has first to be correctly understood and then interpreted to show its direct relevance, applicability and implications on politics, political behaviour and political ethics of Muslim parties and politicians, in a rapidly changing world, with new emerging challenges and futures of uncertainties, turmoil and turbulence on a global scale. In view of vast and rapid changes, the political ideologies of Muslim parties or Muslim majority parties, to my mind, need to be revised and transformed in accordance with the universalist *Tauhidic* worldview which transcends history, ethnicity, the nation state or language barriers.

It is extremely crucial that Muslim political parties, politicians, followers and leaders understand, internalise and be morally guided by the worldview provided by the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, for history has shown that the moral excellence and ethical integrity of the first generation of Muslims and Muslim leaders which transformed the Muslim communities into a world civilisation of knowledge, ethics and virtue, were based upon the new and revolutionary worldview that the Qur'an

introduced and the Prophet (s.a.w.) implemented, thereby supplanting and overthrowing the faulty worldviews of paganism, traditionalism, racism, tribalism, Arabism, materialism, feudalism, and secular humanism.

This theocentric worldview posits, first of all, the belief and conviction in the absolute unicity of Allah SWT as the One And Only God or Object of Worship Who has no partners or peers in His essence, attributes and actions whatsoever and whose sovereignty, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence and commandments embrace and affect all aspects of human life; this-worldly (*duniawī*) and other-worldly (*ukhrawī*) as human beings are His creatures (*khalq*), servants (*ʿibād*) and vicegerents (*khulafāʾ* in plural, or *khalīfah* in singular, meaning “vicegerent”, “representative”, “successor”, “custodian” or “steward”) on His planet Earth. If not for this God-given worldview human beings would not know for sure – as proven by the history of modern secular philosophies -- that mankind (*insān*) has been created by God in order to know Him and to serve Him. This is contrary to the conception that the Creator or God or Deity or Father or Supreme Being who, after creating the world, leaves it to human beings to develop the world as they think fit, or allows human authorities or rulers to rule over worldly affairs the way they like, without His intervention or interference (“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s”), or to the 20<sup>th</sup> century theology crafted by Harvey Cox that in the modern era human beings have come of age and they have the capability and the intelligence to manage the rise of urban civilisation in The Secular City without any need for God’s guidance (Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*, 1965). It is important to bear in mind that the conception of God in the worldview of *Tauḥīd*, is completely different from the polytheistic, associationistic, pantheistic, humanistic or Deistic conceptions. It is also different from the Ancient Greek, Ancient Roman, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Indigenous, New Age or secular theories of God or the Supreme Being.

In the *Tauhidic* worldview, Allah SWT with His dominant attribute of *Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn* (the Nourisher, Sustainer, Owner, Provider, Protector and Master of all the worlds), is constantly, incessantly and actively involved in maintaining and sustaining His Signs in the Cosmos and other creations, not only in the non-human worlds of existence but more so in overseeing the lives of humans, either as individuals, groups, communities, societies and civilisations. What is even more distinctive about the acts of Allah SWT is that He does not cease to intervene in the web and flow of

human history and societal development in human life, politics, economics, culture and civilisation to render assistance, support, special favours or final victories in favour of the Believers, the God-fearing (*Muttaqūn*), the Do-Gooders (*Muḥsinūn*), the Virtuous (*Ṣāliḥūn*), the Patient Ones (*Ṣabirūn*), the Grateful Ones (*Shākirūn*), the Enjoiners of what is Right or Good and the Prohibitors of what is Wrong or Evil (*al-Āmirūna bi'l-Ma'rūf wa al-Nāhūna `an al-Munkar*), etc. Whenever He considers it appropriate or just, He would intervene, intercede or interfere, directly or indirectly, in human affairs in the sense of reminding, refraining, obstructing, warning, deterring, threatening or punishing the wrongdoers, the unjust, the oppressors, the corruptors, the arrogant rulers, the mischief makers, the ungrateful elites, the scheming hypocrites, the deluded followers of Satan, the obstinate disbelievers, the evil conspiracies, etc. (see Ismā'īl R. al Fārūqī, *Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, 1982, 1998)

As Muslims and Believers, we must know, remember and be mindful that Allah SWT is also *Al-Raqīb*, The Ever Watching and Observing God (Q. *al-Nisā'* 4: 1, *al-Mā'idah* 5: 117, *al-Ḥadīd* 57: 4). He watches everything in the Cosmos as a vigilant Witness, detecting, witnessing and observing everything that we do. He is the Guardian protecting the weak and the innocent and anticipating what would befall upon His servants. He SWT observes all thoughts, deeds and feelings. He sees what is hidden in our hearts and minds. Allah SWT as *Al-Raqīb* is also the Controller; preserving and organising the affairs of creation with perfect planning (*ar-Raqeeb*, Understanding al-Qur'an Academy, [understandquran.com](http://understandquran.com). Accessed on March 17, 2021).

As for His omniscience, absolutely nothing escapes His all-comprehensive knowledge (*'ilm*), sight and vision (*baṣar*). He SWT knows the biggest and the minutest, the apparent and the hidden, the furthest and the nearest, and He is present as well when two human beings conspire in the most private of places, and He knows exactly what is going on in the hearts of His servants. The realisation that our Creator-Sustainer-Master sees everything that we do even under the most secretive of circumstances and that He SWT knows what is going on in our minds including our hidden motives or bad intentions we nurse in our hearts, should make all Muslim leaders, including political leaders and aspiring young politicians, refrain from initiating, saying or doing things which are immoral, unethical, unjust, unfair or

contrary to Islamic ethical norms and values. The fact that Allah SWT sees and knows everything that we do, and that after we die and raised up on the Day of Judgement we are going to stand up in His Court of Absolute Justice to be punished and put to shame for our sinful and bad deeds, should instil in us the sincere desire to have stronger faith (*īmān*), deeper God-fearing awareness (*taqwā*), loftier character and profounder sense of moral excellence and beauty (*ihsān*) in our hearts and our behaviour, so that human societies and civilisations would become truly virtuous and ethical. Then with our hearts cleansed of all the corrupting elements, we may finally return to Him SWT on the awesome Day of Judgement with sound and clean hearts (*qulūb salīmah*) “on the day when wealth and children will be of no use” (Q. *al-Shu`arā`* 26: 88-89).

The *Tauhidic* God of Islamic monotheism is also different from other conceptions of the Supreme Being or God in that He is constantly monitoring, controlling and overseeing – without respite -- everything in existence in the whole Cosmos from the minutest and simplest things to the largest and most complex of entities. He SWT governs and rules over everything, including human lives, with absolute justice, truth, purpose, balance, wisdom, and abundance of love and mercy. We need to understand that the doctrine of worship of and servitude (*‘ibādah*) to Allah SWT, in this Revelation-based worldview, requires that all human activities be in conformity with His Way or Code of Life known as the *Sharī`ah* which includes the major principles, norms and values governing not only worship proper, but also the economic, political, governance and cultural aspects of human life and civilisation. Human beings who choose or prefer to make other than Allah SWT as their objects of worship or adoration, or who refuse to follow Divine guidance and follow instead what their independent reason or imagination conjure up for them, shall be deprived of His blessings and **The Good Life**” (*ḥayāh ṭayyibah*) promised to His obedient servants in this world (Q. *al-Naḥl* 16: 96). As for those who turn away from Divine guidance and choose to construct their lives – including politics or governance -- according to their own whims and fancies, they have to be prepared to live in or experience “narrowed, stressful and straightened circumstances” (*ma`īshah ḍanka*, in Q. *Ṭāhā* 20:124). The Qur’an warns that in the Hereafter the intellectually arrogant, the rebellious and corrupt servants shall dwell in the hellfire of Divine wrath and retribution.

Reverting to the issue of *`ibādah* as the primary purpose of human existence in the worldview of the Qur'an, the sincere and humble servants of Allah SWT in Malaysia, who want to go into politics or are already in political parties should not fail to seize the opportunity to make the political arena or nation-building as avenues for worshipping Allah SWT over and above the worship proper. Politics as an avenue or instrument of *`ibādah* and *khilāfah* (vicegerency) could be considered as the new paradigm of Malay-Muslim political activism as it would eliminate or reduce to the minimum all forms of unethical and immoral conduct in post-normal Malaysian politics. Led by the new breed of God-fearing and competent leaders of high moral integrity, Malay-Muslim politics would be transformed – thanks to the method of *Raḥmatan li'l-`Ālamīn* (Compassion and Mercy to all the Worlds, Q. *al-Anbiyā'* 21: 107) -- into an ethical *ummatic* agency for enlightened and blessed national and civilisational growth which spreads goodness, peace and prosperity for all human beings.

From the worldview of *Tauḥīd*, Malay-Muslim political leaders shall realise the Truth that this earthly existence or life (*al-Ḥayāt al-Dunyā*) is but a brief prelude to the Eternal Life in the Hereafter (*Ākhirah*). Nevertheless, it is an extremely important space-time that Allah SWT has provided because, first, it is a period in which the Creator-Sustainer-Master tests the quality of sincerity, obedience and commitment of His servants, vicegerents and Believers in Him, and second, it is the unavoidable theatre of action for His servants, vicegerents and Believers to collectively construct virtuous communities and societies, culminating in holistic, integrated and virtuous civilisations throughout human history, in accordance with the higher objectives (*maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*) of the Divine Way, Code of Life and Law as enshrined in His Final Book, the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of His Final Messenger, Muḥammad (s.a.w.). We need to be reminded that human beings are the best spiritual-moral-intellectual beings He has created, but His true Believers have been designated by Him to be an excellent universal Community or Brotherhood, described by Him as *Ummah Wasaṭ* (the Just, the Best and the Balanced Community) "in order (for them) to become Witnesses (*Shuhadā'*) unto mankind, and the Messenger (Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.) to become witness unto you...." Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 143) [more on this important concept below].

The Qur'an elucidates the Divinely revealed message that while the purpose of human existence is to serve and worship Allah SWT, the ultimate goal of the



individual, community, society and civilisation is to gain goodness and wellbeing (*ḥasanah*) in this world and goodness and wellbeing (*ḥasanah*) in the Hereafter, with Divine Pleasure (*Riḍwāna'LLāh*) as the greatest pleasure and loftiest objective for True Believers. The Divinely revealed Truth that the real life is the eternal one that follows after death and the Day of Judgement will be a terrible judgement period in which all human beings will be resurrected to go before the Court of Divine Justice in order for them to be justly examined and minutely scrutinized with regard to what they have done in the life of the world should make Malay-Muslim political leaders aware and, hopefully, penitent of any wrongdoings, mischief or unethical acts they have committed for the sake of political party or personal gain. The fear of being put to shame on the Day of Judgement or being punished in Hell for their moral-ethical misconduct should induce them to undertake personal as well as party reforms based on the new **“Politics as *ʿIbādah*” Paradigm.**

This unique worldview brought by Islam to humanity is, unfortunately, not properly or widely understood as such, let alone internalised, among the Malay-Muslim masses as well as among the secular educated Malay-Muslim leaders. Being of Divine origin the *Tauhidic* worldview has proven to be better, more resilient and more lasting than any man-made worldviews, ideologies or philosophies as demonstrated by the brilliant universal, integrated and holistic civilisation of knowledge and virtue which the worldview spawned for more than a thousand years in the past. If the worldview is fully and properly understood and consistently applied by Muslim leaders and followers, it would produce the best results and prevent the worst in the lives of human beings, societies and civilisations. In post-colonial times, the Muslim nationalist leaders preferred to adopt the ideologies of nationalism (with different variants), modernism, pragmatism or realism as the dominant post-colonial ideology. Now the Muslim world is going through the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with greater challenges ahead with all the global crises, environmental emergencies, socio-political turmoil, international Islamophobia, right-wing fascism and racism in Europe and USA, oppression and genocide of Palestinians by the Zionist apartheid state, feminist revolution, economic turbulence and moral relativism. Some Muslim nations of the Middle East appear to be more misguided and more hypocritical than when they were in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The current COVID-19 pandemic should be a convenient justification for Muslim countries to reset the national development agenda for societal transformation, to get out of the paradigms

of neo-liberalism or neo-colonialism and turn away from the political, economic, or educational *qiblahs* constructed by modern homo-centric Western civilisation.

Under new and rapidly accelerating changes in the world and in Malaysia with direct implications on current Malay-Muslim politics and futuristic visions of the multi-ethnic Muslim community of Malaysia, the *Tauhidic* worldview should serve effectively as the new ideological force of Malay-Muslim political and ethical transformation in the near and distant future, a future when racism, chauvinism, fascism, nationalism, religious extremism, bigotry, militancy and hate-politics should have become obsolete, completely dysfunctional and no longer characterise mainstream Malaysian politics. But under these changing circumstances, the worldview needs to be promoted anew, articulated, propagated, socialised and manifested as “the application of the Prophetic mission of spreading compassion and mercy to all the worlds (*Rahmatan li'l-'Alamin*)” by groups of **multi-ethnic Muslim** leaders, scholars, intellectuals and professionals possessing the leadership attributes described above (Selfless Leaders of High Integrity, Competency and *Taqwā*). In the long run – say, two to three decades and more -- I envisage that there would be radical changes to the landscape of national politics in Malaysia which would open up windows of opportunities for **the new breed of ethical and multi-racial Muslim leaders** to lead the new Muslim *ummah* as well as the new Malaysian society to greater heights of political solidarity, harmony, prosperity, peace and maturity.

We have to admit that in the short-run, it will be difficult to eradicate the cancer of corruption and pandemic of political hypocrisy because they have become an entrenched part of the system and the culture. With regard to money politics as one source of political corruption, I feel that as long as we do not have effective means, laws and regulations controlling a major factor of corruption, i.e. money politics – which is a global curse – we will have to live with the phenomenon of political corruption, notwithstanding the internal reforms or partial improvement measures. We know that in this globalised and inter-dependent world, local political parties have been receiving political as well as financial support from international forces which would like to see secular, liberal and anti-Islamic political or religious organisations gain wider support and dominance in the country, even among Malay-Muslim elites or intelligentsia.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE URGENCY OF SPIRITUAL-MORAL TRANSFORMATION OF MALAY-MUSLIM POLITICAL CULTURE BASED ON THE WORLDVIEW OF *TAUHĪD*

Recent history has shown that political corruption and hypocrisy in many new Muslim nations could yield political advantages only for a short while. They are bound to backfire in the long run, because those unjust, oppressive (*zālim*) and immoral practices are against the noble and elevating goals of true Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwwah Islāmiyyah*), unification of the Muslim *ummah*, national integration or inter-ethnic cooperation. They are manifestations of base human qualities, greed, jealousy, envy, rancour, selfishness, nihilism and egoism which all world religions detest.

From Islamic religious perspective, the utilisation of immoral means even to achieve a noble or praiseworthy aim, is reprehensible and unethical. Instead of gaining Divine blessings (*barakah*) or good pleasure (*riḍwān*), such acts would earn the displeasure and wrath (*ghaḍab*) of Allah SWT if not in this world, then certainly in the Hereafter. Without getting Divine blessing or the pleasure of Allah SWT, the politician's unethical manoeuvres and strategies to achieve a particular political advantage ("*muslihat*") will not be sustainable. They may even lead to more trials and tribulations (*balā'*) and misery for the community. **Therefore, if the Malay political leaders' conception of power, success, failure, honour, dignity, indignity, shame, loyalty or brotherhood is not in harmony with or – worse still -- contradictory to the conceptions of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Messenger (s.a.w.), then they cannot expect the results of their efforts to earn the approval or pleasure of their Creator-Sustainer-Ruler.** The community may have to face the displeasure if not the wrath of their Creator-Sustainer-Ruler for the audacity or ignorance of the leaders in contradicting or ignoring His commandments or guidance.

On the issue of unity of the Malays (*perpaduan Melayu*), it has been shown in modern history of nation-states that common ethnicity, language, culture, nationalism or man-made ideology (such as democracy, liberalism, communism or socialism) cannot produce lasting unity, internal peace and national cohesion without a higher set of shared goals, principles, norms and values which transcend

the diversities and entrenched hierarchies of different groups of citizens. As far as the Malays are concerned, this transcendent and overarching bond is already available in the worldview of *Tauḥīd* but it has to be consciously adopted and articulated in light of changing circumstances and forecasts of what the future scenarios of Malaysian politics and economics are going to be. The worldview is then systematically internalised, socialised and encultured with the determination, commitment and constancy that Islam requires. This is an urgent matter because, from the speculations, foresights of futures experts in the West, and concerned intellectuals and thinkers worldwide, the whole world will be facing many drastic changes, more global crises and catastrophes in the not-too-distant future.

In order to encourage Malay-Muslim political leaders to undertake the necessary paradigm shift and major transformations – going beyond change and reformation -- to put an end to immoral Machiavellian politics or the bitter struggle for political power and glory without regard for spiritual-ethical values or negative consequences to the community as a whole, or as the saying goes “*Menang sorak kampung tergada!*” (You win the applause but your village is gone), I consider it my religious duty, at least, to highlight the urgency of adopting the worldview of *Tauḥīd* not only as a potent panacea for the cancer of political corruption and pandemic of hypocrisy in the Malay-Muslim community and the disunity of the community which accompanies the moral decay, but because it is the God-given worldview for human beings to live in His Earth as His obedient servants and sincere Vicegerents or Stewards of His Earth (*khulafā’ al-arḍ*) as it approaches the Hour.

I have already explained briefly the meaning of *Tauḥīd* or the doctrine of absolute and uncompromising monotheism of Islam which is the bedrock of the Islamic or Qur’anic worldview. My hope on this fundamental issue is that the large majority of Malay-Muslim politicians and their top leaders would have the correct understanding of the creed (*‘aqīdah*) and realise its spiritual and moral-ethical implications on Muslim political culture and behaviour.

Now in the following part of this chapter I wish to discuss the second most important constituent of the worldview, namely the revolutionary conception of human beings with regard to their identity, nature, functions and criteria of nobility as revealed in the Qur’an, before discussing some important Islamic socio-ethical concepts which have a bearing on politics and nation-building.

### 5.1. Revolutionary Concepts of Human Beings' Nature: Implications for Transforming Malay-Muslim Political Culture and Behaviour.

Muslims are generally aware that human beings were created by Allah SWT essentially as His servants, with original spiritual purity without any tinge of “original sin” or spiritual burdens of sinful deeds of other beings. As His servants, they are endowed with responsibilities and rights in the world so that they would be able to attain true and lasting happiness and bliss in the Hereafter, the final destiny of human life and existence. The Malay-Muslims together with non-Malay Muslim *ummah* in Malaysia need to be reminded and reinforced with several important spiritual-ethical teachings of Islam which should become part and parcel of their Islamic religious knowledge from which they would draw moral or ethical lessons to guide them in educational, economic, social, cultural or political developments. Among those spiritual-ethical teachings are the following:

A). The pure and untarnished spiritual essence (*rūḥ*) of human beings which originated from Allah’s being SWT (Q. *al-Hijr* 15: 29, *Ṣād* 38: 72) which makes them special creatures in the sight of Allah SWT should lead Malay-Muslim politicians to give more and special attention to spiritual needs and values of the people and the nation.

B). The primordial covenant between Allah SWT and all human beings in their spiritual states when He asked them “*Alastu bi-Rabbikum?, qālū “Balā, shahidnā...”*”Am I not your Master-Lord-Sustainer? They said, “Indeed You are, and we bear witness to it... “(Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 172) makes the natural primordial disposition of human beings, called the *fiṭrah*, to naturally incline consciously or unconsciously towards God, or to be connected one way or the other to the Divine Origin, Master and Sustainer. This Divinely-revealed knowledge should make Malay-Muslim political followers and leaders to look at all human beings, including non-Muslims, with respect because they are creatures of the same God who possess the same *fiṭrah* and spiritual dignity (*karāmah insāniyyah*) as they do, and if these non-Muslims are given the right guidance and compassionate regard they could become better Muslims than the born ones. Evidences of this fact abound in the present world, in the West or in the East.

C). The Divine *amānah* (trust) accepted by human beings (Q. *al-Aḥzāb* 33:72) as responsible Vicegerents or Representatives of Allah SWT who were given

the limited free will and choice to choose from different paths in developing the world and build civilisations (*imārah al-arḍ*) in accordance with the higher objectives of the *Sharī'ah* (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), should make political leaders realise their accountability to Allah SWT on the Day of Judgement in the ways they handled the Divine *amānah* of reason, religious obligations, authority, knowledge, wisdom and whether they contribute to the proper development or advancement of society in accordance with the objectives of the *Shari`ah* or not. The awareness that this Divine trust is also shared by non-Muslim fellow citizens, irrespective of whether they know it or not, should induce Muslims to treat their fellow citizens in the spirit of respecting the Dignity of Being Human (*insāniyyah al-Islām*).

D). The key role of the soul (*nafs*) of humans and its three or more stages, and the centrality of the spiritual heart (*qalb, fu'ād*) in human personality development requires spiritual, intellectual nourishments and regular purification (*tazkiyah*) efforts (Q.*al-Shams* 91: 8-11, *al-A`lā* 87:14-15) so that the human personality will not be corrupted, polluted or afflicted by the destructive diseases of *kufr* (disbelief), *shirk* (polytheistic beliefs or acts), *kibr* (arrogance), *riyā'* (dissimulation), *ḥasad* (envy, jealousy), *ḥiqd* (malice, spite, rancour), *ujb* (self-admiration, conceitedness, delusion) *ḥubb al-riyāsah* (love or craving for social status or recognition), *ḥubb al-dunyā* (love or craving for the fleeting pleasures of the mundane world) and other kinds of *ghurūr* (delusions, deceptions or illusions). This agenda of self-introspection, self-reform, self-purification and self-transformation and moral-spiritual growth, in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, should be given highest priority by all potential, would-be leaders, including senior leaders in Malay-Muslim parties because the diseases of the spiritual heart (*amrāḍ al-qalb*) are among the deep unseen roots of moral decay, ethical deviation, political corruption and hypocrisy. Islam teaches that egoism, greed, intellectual arrogance, narcissism, duplicity, delusions and craving for worldly power, influence, status and wealth grow out of diseased spiritual hearts. This **obligation of spiritual purification** "*tazkiyah al-nafs*" is not just to be carried out by political leaders and followers, but by all kinds of leaders in the Muslim community. In fact, al-Imām al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 C.E.), one of the greatest spiritual teachers in human history, and many other religious scholars consider the obligation as an individual religious obligation (*farḍ `ain*).

E). The attributes, behaviour, teachings and examples of Allah’s Prophets, Messengers, the Final Messenger of Allah SWT, the true Servants of The Compassionate Master (the *‘Ibād al-Raḥmān* in Q. *al-Furqān* 25: 63-77), the holistic and integrated mindset and personality of *Ulu’-Albāb* (Possessors of Sound Intellects and Intuitive Knowledge) as described in 16 verses of the Qur’an and the personality and soul of true *‘Ulamā’* of Allah SWT (Q. *Fāṭir* 35: 28) are the best sources for guidance, inspiration and motivation to become God-fearing, humble, selfless leaders of high integrity, because when we follow the footsteps of those virtuous and selfless leaders of humanity, we will become forever conscious of our servanthood to God, accountability to our Creator-Sustainer-Master and the absolute certainty of our meeting Him on the Day of Judgement.

F). The special identity, characteristics, behaviour, attitudes and responsibilities of true Believers (*al-Mu’minūn*) to gain holistic success and permanent wellbeing (*al-Falāḥ*) and avert true misery and permanent loss (*al-Khusrān*) should be the model to be followed by all Muslims in all spheres of human activities, including the political. References in the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* regarding the virtues of “Those who have believed” (*alladhīna āmanū*) or the *al-Mu’minūn* (Believers) are too numerous to be highlighted here. All Muslims, politicians or otherwise, who regard themselves as true Believers, **must understand** the meaning, significance and implications of being Believers by studying relevant verses of the Qur’an, including the verses cited in this part, so that they can internalise those meanings to become the main features of their identity, and to translate them into good deeds, righteous actions (*‘amal sāliḥ*), moral conduct (*sulūk*) and comprehensive way of life. The positive rewards for such commendable efforts are assured by Allah SWT in in this world and in the Hereafter. One of the characteristics of true Believers is the following:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ  
زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

***Indeed the true Believers are those who, when Allah's name is mentioned, their hearts tremble, and when His verses are recited to them their faith grows, and who put their trust in their Lord. (Q. al-Anfāl 8:2)***

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا  
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

**Indeed the true Believers are those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then they did not entertain any doubt and strove hard in the Way of Allah with their lives and their possessions. Those are the truthful ones. (Q. al-Hujurāt 49: 15)**

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ  
اُقْتَرْتُمْ بِهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسْكِنٌ تَرْضَوْنَهَا  
أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى  
يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

**Tell them, (O Prophet): "If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your wives and your tribe and the riches you have acquired and the commerce of which you fear a slackening, and the dwellings that you love, if they are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His decree. Allah does not guide the evil-doing folk."(Q. al-Taubah 9: 24)**

As Believers, we should always be most grateful to Allah SWT for providing and sustaining us with all kinds of bounties and blessings many of which we may not be aware of because they are intangible and are operating within our body, mind and soul. There is one verse in the Qur'an that should encourage and motivate us to be even more virtuous, more God-fearing and more beneficent because from it we know that Allah SWT promises to grant these special Believers –men and women alike – **The Good Life (Hayāh Tayyibah)** in this worldly life. Our good Believers who are into politics and Muslim political leaders should feel assured that if their political intentions, goals, means and activities come under the rubric of good deeds as defined by the Qur'an, and the faith in Allah SWT is sound and sincere, then they could look forward to be among the beneficiaries of **The Good Life in this life**, because Allah SWT always fulfils His promises. The verse is as follows:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً  
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



**Whosoever acts righteously - whether a man or a woman - and is a Believer, We will surely grant him/her a GOOD LIFE; and will surely grant such persons their reward according to the best of their deeds.**  
[emphasis added] (Q. *al-Nahl* 16: 97)

Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi gives his commentary of the above verse as follows:

The righteous attitude not only leads to a happy life in the Hereafter, but it also guarantees, by Allah's grace, a pure and happy life even in this world. And this is a fact that those people who are sincerely righteous, honest, pure and fair in their dealings enjoy a much better life in this world. For they enjoy that confidence and real honour and respect because of their spotless character, which is not enjoyed by those who lack these virtues. They obtain such pure and outstanding success as are denied to those who employ dirty and disgusting ways to win success. Above all, they enjoy, even though they might be living in poor houses, that peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience which is denied to the wicked dwellers of mansions and palaces. (Abul A`la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

In the first verse (Q. *al-Anfāl* 8: 2) which I quote above, Allah SWT describes the deep God-fearing consciousness in the personality of Believers, such that their hearts tremble at the mere mention of the name of their Master and their trust in their Master is complete. In the second verse Allah SWT describes the Believers as those whose faith in their Master is unshakeable such that they would strive with their wealth and their selves for Divine causes. Believers should realise that they, with all their possessions or personal assets, do not really own anything, because everything in the Cosmos belongs to the Creator-Sustainer-Master. He is the Real Owner of human beings and their belongings which He provided as a trust from Him to be used only for virtuous and Divinely approved causes. Yet, His obedient servants will be rewarded with true happiness, success, wellbeing and bliss in the Hereafter for all their "sacrifices".

Finally, in the last verse **Believers are being instructed and reminded by their Compassionate Master that they have to place their love (*maḥabbah*) for Allah SWT, The Messenger of Allah SWT and striving in Allah's causes above**

**their love for their spouses, parents, children, friends, wealth, residences or business assets which are part of the fleeting pleasures of worldly life.** This high and lofty quality of Islamic spirituality is the ultimate test of becoming Believers in Islam.

As Muslim politicians are also Believers, they have to make sure that their love or devotion for the party, their party's goals, their leaders, their constituencies or their wealth, power and status is placed below that of their love and devotion to Allah SWT, the Noble Messenger (s.a.w.) and striving for Allah's causes. **For the Believers the party, political culture, behaviour and the political struggle that they subscribe to must not be at variance, let alone in contradiction, with the commandments, exhortations and teachings of their Creator-Ruler-Sustainer and the normative traditions (*Sunnah*) of His Beloved Messenger (s.a.w.) . Otherwise, it is a clear indication that they have not fully and properly understood, let alone exemplify, the meaning of adherence to Islam, the teachings of the Qur'an regarding being a Believer and being a member of the Muslim *ummah*.**

In the worldview of *Tauhīd*, the Believers are the principal social and moral actors in Islam that Allah SWT chooses, favours and regards as the extraordinary moral-spiritual force and Divinely-driven instrument for the advancement of all that is *Ma`rūf* and rejection of all that is *Munkar*. When the above four verses as well as others in the Qur'an are studied and contemplated, then we would understand that what Allah SWT considers as "The Way of the Believers (*sabīl al-Mu'minūn*, as in Q. *al-Nisā'* 4: 115) is the zero-corruption way to true success, power, dignity and honour that many political leaders are striving for their communities or constituencies. **It is the Way of the Believers, not the ways of the worldly deceptions, of Disbelievers or of Hypocrites (*Munāfiqūn*) that should be followed by all Muslims whether they are in public administration, law enforcement agencies, politics, economics, science and technology institutions, media or cultural activities.**

G). The dangerous downward pull of the lower self (*nafs ammārah*), passion, base desire, caprice (*hawā*), ardent desire or lust (*shahwah*), Satanic insinuations (*waswasah*) and the delusions (*ghurūr*) of this-worldly life (*al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*) which

have toppled, destroyed and disgraced countless leaders, rulers, or powerful elites in human history should make all Muslim political leaders wary of the way they and their party struggle for power and achieve their goals. They should remember **that they shall be thoroughly questioned by Allah SWT** Who had given them countless bounties in their life in the world after they are resurrected from their graves on the terrible and exceedingly frightening Day of Judgement.

H). The grave threats for Disbelievers and great promises of Allah SWT for Believers and God-fearing servants (*Muttaqūn*) throughout human life on earth should induce the community of Muslims to be the upholders of justice and moral-spiritual excellence, to make great sacrifices for the sake of Allah SWT, to avoid all that are considered *Munkar* or *Ḥarām* (forbidden). The community is required by Allah SWT to strive on the Straight Path (*al-Ṣiraṭ al-Mustaqīm*) or the road less travelled with perseverance, consistency, determination, commitment, because Muslims should know that Allah SWT is with them if they true Believers and He will open ways and means for them to attain their noble and virtuous objectives when the time is appropriate in His judgement (Q. *al-Aḥqāf* 46: 13).

I). The necessity for all Muslims to follow the normative traditions and precedents (*Sunnah*) and role model (*uswah ḥasanah*) of the Messenger (s.a.w.) and his early Companions as exemplary leaders (Caliphs) of society, states, and civilisations, as well as to fulfil his mission of “spreading compassion and mercy for all the worlds” should make Muslim political leaders less dependent upon secular models of political development, nation-building or sustainable societies. The Prophetic mission of *Raḥmatan li'l-Ālamīn* and his examples of humanistic (*insāniyyah al-Islām*) and compassionate (*rahmāniyyah al-Islām*) attitude are Divine principles which have yet to be applied fully and consistently by Malay-Muslim political parties and adapted to contemporary *da'wah* and inter-civilisational dialogue in a plural society such as Malaysia. The scope for trans-ethnic philanthropy, altruism and inter-community development programmes aimed at providing relief to the sufferings of the urban poor – regardless of religious or ethnic differences -- is opened up before the Malay-Muslim urban communities even wider under these trying COVID19 pandemic scenarios. Already some Malay-Muslim political parties have seized the opportunities to provide material assistance to the urban poor and the underprivileged. In this regard, we can draw great lessons in sincere and non-politically driven community upliftment efforts and Islamic philanthropy from the

amazing work done single-handedly by Ustaz Ebit Liew in different parts of the country.

J). The fact that Allah SWT has created mankind and made of them peoples of different ethnic, linguistic and geographical origins, not for the purpose of sowing enmities among different nations or tribes, but for the purpose of instilling the desire to know one another (*lita`ārafū*, as the Qur'an says), to cooperate and work together for the promotion of the common good in spite of religious or cultural differences, should be seriously studied by political parties which are based on Malay nationalism or traditional notions of ethnic sovereignty. In the following verse Allah SWT makes this purpose very clear.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا  
إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

***O people, indeed We have created you all from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God-fearing of you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. [emphasis added] (Q. *al-Hujurāt* 49: 13).***

In the above verse Allah SWT introduces a new and revolutionary criterion of human nobility which negates the traditional criteria of race, colour, lineage, status, class, wealth, authority, or material strength, namely the criterion of “Most God-fearing of you” (*atqākum*). It cannot be overemphasised that this principle of human nobility or dignity based on *taqwā* must be internalised by all Malay-Muslim political leaders and would-be leaders in the near future. In fact, Allah SWT has made repeated assertions and admonitions that the spiritual value of *taqwā* has to be developed by all Muslims, including Prophets and Messengers. It is no wonder that Muslims are reminded every Friday during the *khutbah* (sermon) that they are supposed to have and increase the quality of *taqwā* in their personalities.

Abul A`la Mawdudi says in his commentary:

In this verse the whole of mankind has been addressed to reform it of the great evil that has always been causing universal disruption in the world, that is, the prejudices due to race, colour, language, country, and nationality. On account of these prejudices man in every age has generally been discarding

humanity and drawing around himself some small circles and regarding those born within those circles as his own people and those outside them as others....but this discrimination has assumed the worst forms of hatred, enmity, contempt and tyranny.... One can easily judge how stupendous and devastating is the error for whose reform this verse of the Quran was revealed.

In this brief verse, Allah has drawn the attention of all mankind to three cardinal truths:

(1) The origin of all of you is one and the same....

(2) In spite of being one in origin, it was natural that you should be divided into nations and tribes.... But it was all due to satanic ignorance that the differences among mankind created by Allah to be a means of recognition, were turned into a means of mutual boasting and hatred, which led mankind to every kind of injustice and tyranny.

(3) The only basis of superiority and excellence that there is, or can be, between man and man is that of moral excellence...The real thing that makes one person superior to others is that one should be more God-conscious, a greater avoider of evils, and a follower of the way of piety and righteousness. Such a man, whether he belongs to any race, any nation and any country, is valuable and worthy on account of his personal merit. And the one who is reverse of him in character is in any case an inferior person whether he is black or white, born in the east or the west.

These same truths that have been stated in this brief verse of the Quran have been explained in greater detail by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his addresses and traditions....

On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, in the midst of the *Tashriq* days, he addressed the people, and said:

***O people, be aware: your God is One. No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, and no non-Arab any superiority over an Arab, and no white one has any superiority over a black one, and no black one any superiority over a white one, except on the basis of taqwa (piety). The most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious and righteous of you. Say if I***

**have conveyed the Message to you?** And the great congregation of the people responded, saying: **Yes, you have, O Messenger of Allah.** Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **Then let the one who is present convey it to those who are absent.** [emphasis added] (Baihaqi).

In a *ḥadīth* he has said:

**You are all the children of Adam, and Adam was created from the dust. Let the people give up boasting of their ancestors, otherwise they will stand more degraded than a mean insect in the sight of Allah.** (Bazzar).

In another *ḥadīth* the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

**Allah will not inquire about your lineage on the Day of Resurrection. The most honourable in the sight of Allah is he who is most pious.** (Ibn Jarir).

In still another *ḥadīth* he said:

**Allah does not look at your outward appearances and your possessions but He looks at your hearts and your deeds.** (Muslim, Ibn Majah).

These teachings have not remained confined to words only but Islam has practically established a universal brotherhood of the believers on the basis, which does not allow any distinction on account of colour, race, language, country and nationality which is free from every concept of high and low, clean and unclean, mean and respectable, which admits all human beings with equal rights, whether they belong to any race and nation, any land or region....

The real importance is not of the honour and dishonour of the world but of the honour and dishonour that one will receive from Allah. Therefore, what man should be most concerned about is that he should create in himself those real qualities and characteristics which make him worthy of honour in the sight of Allah. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

## CHAPTER 6

### UNIQUE CONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE MUSLIM *UMMAH* AND THE BELIEVERS (*MU'MINŪN*) IN THE WORLDVIEW OF *TAUHĪD*

#### 6.1. The Divine Appointment of The Muslim *Ummah* as the *Ummah Wasaʿ* to Become Witnesses (*Shuhadā'*) Unto Mankind

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ  
عَلَيْكُمْ شَاهِدًا ۖ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ  
الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ ۗ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ  
هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ إِيْمَانَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ  
رَّحِيمٌ

**And it is thus that We appointed you to be an *Ummah Wasaʿ* (Just-Best-Balanced Community) so that you might be witnesses (*Shuhadā'*) to all mankind and the Messenger might be a witness to you. [emphasis added]**

***We appointed the direction which you formerly observed so that We might distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels. For it was indeed burdensome except for those whom Allah guided. And Allah will never leave your faith to waste. Allah is full of gentleness and mercy to mankind. (Q. al-Baqarah 2: 142-143)***

It is reported by Imam Ahmad on the authority of Abū Saʿīd al-Khuḍarī that the Prophet (S.A.W.) interpreted the word “*wasāʿan*” in verse 143 of *Sūrah al-Baqarah* to mean “just” (*ʿadlan*). A just community requires being in the middle-most position and not swayed by emotions, biases or prejudice in making judgements, decisions or giving evidence. The noun “*al-wasaʿ*” (literally, meaning the middle, the middlemost, the centre), according to the commentator, Abū Suʿūd, is “originally a name for something whereby the connection of all sides to it is of equal distance, such as the centre of a circle. The word is then used [not in its literal sense] to describe the praiseworthy human qualities, by virtue of those qualities being in the centre of two extreme qualities, one of excessiveness (*ifrāṭ*) and the other of laxity (*tafrīṭ*).” (al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Khaṣāʾiṣ al-ʿĀmmah li- al-Islām*, 1977). One of the wise sayings of the Arabs is “*Khairu al-umūr al-wasaʿ*” (The best of affairs is the middle

position). Therefore, when it was said that the Quraish tribe is “*awsaṭ al-`Arab*” in terms of genealogy and locality, it means that it was the best tribe, just as when it was said that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was “*wasāṭan fī qaumihī*” it means that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was the noblest among his people genealogically. (see the *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī or *Tafsīr* Ibn Kathr).

Hence the word “*awsaṭuhum*” in verse 28 of *Sūrah al-Qalam* (Q.68) has been interpreted by the Qur’an commentators to mean “the most just of them” (*a`daluhum*). This interpretation is confirmed by al-Imām al-Rāzī in his *Tafsīr* in which he says, “The most just place for deciding something is to be in the middle, because its judgement with regard to all its sides is the same and is equal.” (al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*). Therefore the word *wasāṭ* cannot be adequately translated into English by referring to its literal meaning of “being in the middle” or “mid-most” position, or by just one word such as “moderation” because it has a broad and interconnected meaning including the meanings of *al-khairiyyah* (being the best or most excellent), *al-tawassuṭ* (being in the centre between two extremes) or *al-tawāzun* (being in the state of balance, equilibrium) or *i`tidāl* (moderateness).

The term *al-wasaṭiyyah* is a verbal noun from the word *wasāṭ* and should perhaps be best translated as “the State of Justness-Goodness-Balance”, or “the State of Being Just, Best and Balanced”. In the post 9/11 world situation which saw the emergence of the phenomenon of Muslim extremism, radicalism and militancy many Muslim scholars and leaders prefer to highlight the dimension of balance, equilibrium and avoidance of extreme orientations towards laxity (*tafrīt*) on the one hand and excessiveness (*ifrāṭ*) on the other hand in Islam and the Islamic *Ummah*. While the emphasis given to the *i`tidāl* (moderateness) characteristics of Islam is justifiable under the Islamophobia-orientation of Western thought and the threat of isolated Muslim militancy or radicalism, we should not forget that the primary meaning of *Ummatan Wasatan* is a Just (*`Adlan*) and Best Community (*Khairiyyah*). We need to remember that the quality of being the best or the choicest community is clearly emphasised by Allah SWT in verse 110 of *Sūrah Āl `Imrān* when Allah SWT declares:



كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ  
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۗ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ  
وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

***You are now the Best Community brought forth for (the guidance and reform of) mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book believed it were better for them. Some of them are believers but most of them are transgressors. (Q. Āl `Imrān 3: 110)***

This verse is quite well-known to educated Muslims and leaders of the community because it is among the most popular public quotations from the Qur'an either from Friday khutbahs or from religious forums on T.V. and the radio. It reminds us Muslims that we belong to the Best Community ever produced by Allah SWT for the benefit of mankind as a whole. It makes us feel happy because Allah SWT Himself designates the Muslim community to be in that ideal condition. Nevertheless, the Best Community status has been acknowledged by Allah SWT Himself with the caveat that the Muslim community enjoins all that which is good, right, beneficial, virtuous, ethical and praiseworthy. This is what *al-ma`rūf* means. At the same time the Muslim community is a community which prevents, prohibits, and deters all kinds of *al-munkar* – bad, wrong, harmful, evil, destructive, reprehensible, unethical, immoral, detestable ideas, acts or behaviours. The Divinely-imposed condition of *al-amr bi'l-ma`rūf wa al-nahy `an al-munkar* is demanding and not many Muslim countries or communities in the world today fulfil this condition, because the political systems of those countries and their leaders do not represent the ideals of Islam. The nation's adherence to Islam, in fact, requires them to try to be good examples of virtuous and moral society and their leaders should try to be honest fighters against evil, corruption, injustice, wrongdoings and many other kinds of vices.

Be that as it may, Muslim political parties and leaders in Muslim countries including Malaysia are duty-bound to implement the religious responsibility of *al-amr bi'l-ma`rūf wa al-nahy `an al-munkar* (popularly called in Indonesia and Malaysia as *Amar Makruf Nahi Munkar*) to the best of their abilities in the Malaysian political contexts. They should be reminded that failure to carry out that fundamental religious obligation will result in negative consequences as indicated in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

Commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi on this issue is as follows:

This is the same declaration that was made earlier (see verse 2: 143 above). The Arabian Prophet (peace be on him) and his followers are informed that they are being assigned the guidance and leadership of the world, a position the Israelites had been relieved of because they had shown themselves unsuitable. The Muslims were charged with this responsibility because of their competence. They were the best people in terms of character and morals and had developed in theory and in practice the qualities essential for truly righteous leadership, namely the spirit and practical commitment to promoting good and suppressing evil and the acknowledgement of the One True God as their Lord and Master. In view of the task entrusted to them, they had to become conscious of their responsibilities and avoid the mistakes committed by their predecessors. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

It should be noted that *Khairiyyah* (being the best community) feature of the Muslim *Ummah* is integrated in the verse on *Ummah Wasaʿt* while the principle responsibility of enjoining the good and prohibiting the bad is also an integral part of the *Ummah Wasaʿt* characteristics. Therefore, when we emphasise the balanced nature or moderateness of Islam and the Muslim community in this world of turmoil, violence and moral decadence, we should not play down the importance of the Divinely-prescribed obligation of “enjoining the good and forbidding the bad” in different spheres of the life of the community, the nation and the world community. Of course, in the case of Muslim communities as minority communities in secular nation-states or non-Muslim majority countries, they will have to find the legal, proper and wise ways of executing the Islamic moral and ethical responsibilities. They have to take into account the prevailing atmosphere of Islamophobia, the overwhelming prejudice of the masses against the concept of *Sharīʿah* and what the Qur’an stands for.

Nevertheless, the collective function of this “Just-Best-Balanced Community” is to becoming the most suitable “witnesses over mankind” regarding the integrity and purity of Allah’s religion, the practice of justice and fairness, and the

commandment of all that is good and prohibition of all that is bad, as well as the practice of true balance and proper moderation in this worldly life. Therefore, in our desire to convey the balanced, equilibrium or moderateness image of Islam and the Muslim community – and there are many examples which can be drawn from many verses of the Qur’an and incidents in the exemplary life of the Final Messenger of Allah SWT -- let us not forget the Muslim *Ummah*’s assumption of moral-spiritual leadership among mankind by playing the role of just Witnesses unto mankind. The *Ummah Wasat* is, therefore, expected to acquire the qualities of justice in law and order; good governance and ethical and just political systems; equitable socio-economic development; harmonious inter-communal relations; high educational standards and technological prowess of Muslim youth and adults who are able to utilise resources in cyber space without getting lost or trapped in its relativism, nihilism and hedonism; creative yet ethical cultural forms and standards; peaceful coexistence and cooperation with other religious communities with good character traits of competent, responsible, sincere and accountable leaders of integrity.

The focus of attention of *Ummah Wasat* should be on how best the Muslim community presents itself as **witnesses** of:

- a) Justice to God, to other human beings, to nature and the environment:
- b) High moral integrity, corruption-free, efficient and effective good governance:
- c) Implementation of *Amar Makruf Nahi Munkar* in all spheres of individual, societal and national life;
- d) Excellence in charity, humanitarian causes, and caring for other human beings or animals;
- e) Moral, spiritual and social excellences and benevolence:
- f) Holistic and balanced personality, culture and civilisation based on *īmān* and *taqwā*.

Only by having those praiseworthy attributes, the Muslim community deserves to be called **Witnesses** for other human beings. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the Prophet (s.a.w.) is going to evaluate his *Ummah* on the Day of Judgement with regard to its record of *wasatiyyah* in this world. One of the greatest challenges for Muslim communities and elites is how not to “follow other communities into the lizard’s hole” a second or a third time, in the development of politics, economy, culture or communication. We know, however, that it is difficult to find successful Islamic models of holistic human and civilisational development today to be emulated. But the situation can be changed if there is the collective desire and sincere intention to change and to transform. Many Muslims know the Qur’anic assurance that “**Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change that which is in themselves**” (Q. *al-Ra`d* 13: 11, *al-Anfāl* 8: 53). In light of the Qur’anic imperatives on the Muslim *umma* as the God-appointed *Ummah Wasat* with the sacred responsibility of moral witnessing **for mankind**, Muslim political parties and political leaders have the moral and religious obligation to ensure that whatever objectives or goals they have set for themselves, for the political parties or for the nation should be in harmony or not contradicting any of the principles or goals of the Just-Best-Balanced Community of Islam. In fact, if Muslim political parties and political actors were to operate in accordance with the values and norms of *Ummah Wasat*, keeping in mind the Divinely-ordained global witnessing function, the possibility of unethical or immoral behaviour becoming the normal feature of post-modern Muslim politics would be minimal and strongly resisted by the new Muslim political culture of integrity, justice, moral excellence and compassion for all, that I am humbly advocating in this book.

When the concept of *wasatiyyah* was discussed in Malaysia by political leaders and elites two to three years ago, the favourite word in Malay which was used to translate the Arabic term was “*kesederhanaan*”. It was a translation of the English word “moderation”. I personally prefer the Malay term “*pertengahan*” (being at the centre), “*jalan tengah*” (the middle path), “*pertengahan yang teradil dan terbaik*” (the most just and best central position), “*keseimbangan*” (state of balance) or “*cara keseimbangan*”(method of balance) to *kesederhanaan* which could be misunderstood or misinterpreted to mean “not insisting on high standards of excellence, a sort of complacent attitude or tolerance of mediocrity or liberality”.

However, it is alright to use “*kesederhanaan*” (moderation), for example, in the use of water for ablution or watering plants, in consumption of food and drinks, in exercising, in dress, in beautifying or furnishing our homes, or in conversations. But when it comes to work or doing a job, it is useful to know that there is a Prophetic saying that “Allah likes that if one of you is to do something that he/she does it to the best (*itqān*) of his/her ability” (al-Tabarāni). Hence a tolerance of low standards connotation or a half-hearted way of working is just the opposite of Qur’anic *wasatiyyah* which requires upholding and practicing the principles of justice and fairness, moral-spiritual excellence and striking the right balance or equilibrium between two extremes.

I also feel that the popular use of the word *kesederhanaan* in the Malay world as a feature of the mainstream Muslim culture or community could be misconstrued by some liberal Muslim elements or secular non-Muslim intelligentsia – as their influence becomes stronger -- as a liberal or lukewarm religious attitude with regard to the necessity of upholding religious obligations or principles related to the Islamic creed, worship proper, the *Sharī’ah* or Islamic ethics. On the fundamental characteristic of justice in the *Ummah Wasat*, we should note that there is nothing to suggest *kesederhanaan* in the following commandments of Allah SWT:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ  
 أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا  
 فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلُؤْأُوا أَوْ تَعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا  
 تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

***O Believers! Stand firm for justice and bear true witness for the sake of Allah, even though it be against yourselves, your parents or your relatives. It does not matter whether the party is rich or poor - Allah is well wisher of both. So let not your selfish desires swerve you from justice. If you distort your testimony or decline to give it, then you should remember that Allah is fully aware of your actions. (Q. al-Nisā’ 4: 135)***

...وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا  
وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا  
اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

**....Let not the hatred of some people - who once hindered you from the Sacred Mosque - incite you to commit transgression. Cooperate with one another in righteousness and piety, and do not cooperate in sin and transgression. Have fear of Allah. Allah is stern in punishment. (Q. al-Ma'idah 5: 2)**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

**O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared and die not but as true Muslims. (Q. Āl `Imrān 3:102)**

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهَبُونَ بِهِ  
عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَأَخْرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا  
تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ

**Hence, make ready against them whatever force and war mounts you are able to muster, so that you might deter thereby the enemies of God, who are your enemies as well, and others besides them of whom you may be unaware, [but] of whom God is aware; and whatever you may expend in God's cause shall be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged (Q. al-Anfāl 8: 60).**

In the following verse, however, human beings – politicians or non-politicians -- are told to make the Hereafter as the objective of whatever worldly bounties we might have, but we are not supposed to neglect our responsibilities in this important, though brief, worldly life. The idea of correct or just balance between the demands of *Ākhirah* and the responsibilities in the *Dunyā* is implicit in the verse:

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيْبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِن  
كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ  
الْمُفْسِدِينَ

**Seek rather, by means of what Allah has given you (of**

***bounties in this world), the abode of the Hereafter, while not neglecting your share in this world. Be good to others as Allah has been good to you, and do not seek mischief in the land, for Allah does not love the mischief makers. (Q. al-Qaṣaṣ 28:77)***

Going back to the *Ummah Wasat* verse 143 of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, I find the following commentary on the by Abul A`la Mawdudi very enlightening. Let us ponder over this insightful and instructive explanation:

This [verse 2: 143] constitutes the proclamation appointing the religious community (*ummah*) consisting of the followers of Muhammad to religious guidance and leadership of the world. [the phrase] “And it is thus”, which precedes this proclamation, contains two allusions. It alludes, in the first place, to that Divine Guidance which enabled the followers of Muhammad to know the Straight Way so that they could attain progress to the point of being proclaimed [‘the *Ummah Wasat*’, lit. “Community of the Mid-Most Position” or “the Justly Balanced Community”]......

Furthermore, just as the Prophet had been entrusted with the heavy responsibility of conveying to the Muslims the guidance which he had received, in a like manner a heavy responsibility has been laid on the Muslims to communicate this guidance to all mankind. If the Muslims fail to establish before God that they did their duty in conveying to mankind the guidance they had received through the Prophet they will be taken to task seriously and their honourable position as the leaders of the whole world, far from being of any help to them, will spell their disaster. They will be held responsible along with the protagonists of evil for all the errors of belief and conduct which have spread during their term of leadership. They will have to face the grim question: What were they doing when the world was convulsed by storms of transgression, injustice and error? [emphasis added] (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur’an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

Knowing that Allah SWT has made it clear that the Muslim communities all over the world are integral parts of the universal *Ummah Wasat* appointed by Allah SWT Himself, Muslim politicians and national leaders in Malaysia have to assume the responsibility to make the elevated status and vision of *Ummah Wasat* as the

larger and long-term goal of their political struggle and politicking. Looking forward to a much better future after having learned the bitter lessons of failure to fulfil the Divine trusts in many areas of civilisational and political developments, the Muslim *ummah* of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds in Malaysia must plan to work together as a single brotherhood to move forward -- away from the old divisive and morally depraved political culture of the last sixty years or more – towards achieving the enlightened goals of a new Malaysia which upholds the principles of justice and fairness to all, moral excellence for all creatures of God, balance between rigid literalism in religiosity and unlimited freedom of human rights, between religious fanaticism and intellectual liberalism, and between the needs of this world and the needs of the Hereafter.

## 6.2. Believers of Islam Constitute One United *Ummah*

All Muslims in Malaysia of whatever ethnic origin need to be reminded that from the Qur’anic worldview perspective, Muslims are **one religious community/nation that includes multiple peoples, multiple races, languages and homelands**. Allah SWT says:

وَأَنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ. فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ  
زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

*This community of yours is one single community of the same faith, and I am your Lord (Who creates, sustains, and protects you), so hold Me alone in fear and keep your duty to Me in piety. Yet afterwards people divided themselves into different sects, and each sect rejoices in what it has. (Q. al-Mu’minūn 23: 52-53)*

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ۖ وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ  
بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ كُلُّ إِلْحَاظٍ رَاجِعُونَ

*Indeed this Ummah of yours is one single community, and I am your Lord [Who creates, sustains, and protects you]; so worship Me alone. But they have torn asunder their unity into many parts [forgetting that] unto Us they all are bound to return (Q. al-Anbiyā’ 21: 92-93)*

The Prophet (s.a.w.) emphasises the nature of Islamic brotherhood in the single *ummah* in the following two sayings:



الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يُسْلَمُهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ  
كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ، وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً فَرَّجَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ  
كُرْبَاتِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

***A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever covers the faults of a Muslim, Allah will cover his faults on the Day of Resurrection. (al-Bukhārī, Muslim)***

الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ النَّاسُ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ مَنْ أَمِنَهُ النَّاسُ  
عَلَى دِمَائِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ

***The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe, and the believer is the one people trust with their lives and wealth. (al-Nasā'ī)***

It is interesting to know that an eminent British orientalist, Montgomery Watt, interpreted the concept of the *ummah* in the following way:

***The concept of the ummah as it comes in Islam is the most unprecedented magnificent idea. Till our time it still remains to be a fount for every stream of faith urging the Muslims to “uniting” into a single “nation” where all the boundaries of race, language, fanaticism to lineage or kin vanish. Islam is unique in creating this unity between its followers to include different spectrums of Arabs, Persians, Indians, Mongols, Chinese, Berbers, Negroes and white races sprawling all over the globe and with all their diverse interests. No one has ever come out of this nation trying to split this link or trying to disconnect himself from it. (Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, “They said about Islam”, WAMI, Saudi Arabia, 1992)***

It is clear from the injunctions of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Noble Prophet (s.a.w.) that unity of the *ummah* is an Islamic religious obligation (*farīḍah*) and a social necessity (*ḍarūrah*) which, unfortunately, have been challenged in Muslim countries, internally, by the centrifugal forces of nationalism, obscurantism, feudalism, tribalism, sectarianism, religious extremism and the modern multi-party system and, externally, by the combined forces of Western colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, materialism, secular democracy, secular humanism, liberal

capitalism, socialism and secular legal systems. In the contemporary Malaysian context, it appears to me that the unsettled existing political disputes and the struggle for political power as the GE 15 approaches will continue to split the Muslim *ummah* in the short run.

In order to reverse the centrifugal trend and prepare for major transformations in the long run, let us recall first of all some of the scriptural principles, in addition to what we have highlighted above ( Q. *al-Hujurat* 49:10, *al-Anbiya'* 21: 92, *al-Muminun* 23: 53), which make unity of Believers mandatory, not optional or merely recommended, because a great religious and civilising force that is badly broken or afflicted by serious internal conflicts, or emasculated by moral decadence of political leaders will not be able to play its Divinely-mandated roles as *Ummah Wasat*, “The Best Community” (*Khair Ummah*) or spreaders of “Compassion and Mercy to all the Worlds” (*Rahmatan li'l-`Alamin*). All Muslims have to be constantly reminded that it is Allah SWT Himself who commands Muslims to be united – not on the basis of common ethnic origin -- but on the basis of submission to a transcendent faith, by holding fast to His religion and His Book, because it is by being united that the spiritual-ethical teachings of Islam and the benefits of *Ummah Wasat* can be spread widely, collectively and effectively. It is also by being united that the *Ummah* would be able to carry out the responsibility of “enjoining that which is right and good, and prohibiting that which is wrong and bad” on a global scale which would earn the respect or appreciation of other communities. The *Ummah* would also be able to receive blessings, assistance and protection of Allah SWT which are greatly needed by all Muslim communities. The verse that is often quoted in this regard is the following:

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا □ وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا ۝  
 وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا ۗ  
 كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

***Hold fast together to the cable of Allah and be not divided. Remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you: you were once enemies then He brought your hearts together, so that through His blessing you became brothers. You stood on the brink of a pit of fire and He delivered you from it. Thus Allah makes His signs clear to***

***you that you may be guided to the right way. (Q. Al-`Imrān 3: 103)***

The following commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi is also extremely useful in light of the usual tendency of Muslims to be disunited for various unjustifiable reasons:

The expression 'cable of Allah', in this verse, refers to the 'religion of God'. The reason for use of the word 'cable' (*ḥabl*) is that it both establishes a bond between man and God and joins all Believers together. To take a firm hold on this cable means that the Believers should attach profound importance to their religion: this should always be the centre of their concerns; they should continually strive to establish it; and the common desire to serve it should make them co-operate with each other.

As soon as Muslims turn their attentions away from the fundamental teachings of their religion and lose sight of establishing its hegemony in life they begin to concern themselves with matters of secondary importance. And, just as they rent the communities of the former Prophets, enticing people away from their true objective in life, so schisms and dissensions are bound to plague their lives. If Muslims do this they are bound to suffer indignity and disgrace both in this world and the Next as happened with the followers of the previous Prophets. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari).

Another verse of the Qur'an that Muslims – especially politicians -- have to know, remember and contemplate upon, because some of them may be guilty of disobedience to the commandments of Allah SWT and are prone to quarrel among themselves such that they lose the respect of other communities, is the following:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ  
رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

***And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not quarrel with one another lest you should lose courage and your power depart. Be steadfast, surely Allah is with those who remain steadfast [emphasis added] (Q. al-Anfāl 8: 46).***

### 6.3. Efforts to Reconcile Conflicts Between Muslim Political Parties Have to be Taken Because They Belong to a Single Brotherhood Under the Sovereignty of Allah SWT

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

***Surely the Believers are none but brothers unto one another, so set things right between your brothers, and have fear of Allah that you may be shown mercy. (Q. al-Hujurat 49: 10)***

Commentary by Maulana Abul A`la Mawdudi:

This verse establishes a universal brotherhood of all the Muslims of the world, and it is by virtue of this that the sort of fraternity that exists among the Muslims exists among the followers of no other religion and creed. The importance of this command, and its demands, has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in many of his traditions from which one can understand its full significance and spirit.

Jarir bin Abdullah says:

***The Prophet (peace be upon him) took a pledge from me on three things: That I will establish the Prayer, that I will continue to pay the zakat, and that I will remain a well-wisher of every Muslim. (al-Bukhari: Kitab-al-Iman).***

According to Abdullah bin Masud, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

***To abuse a Muslim is sinful and to fight him a disbelief.***

Abu Hurairah relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

***The life, property and honour of every Muslim is forbidden to every other Muslim. (Muslim: Kitab-al-Birr was Silah; Tirmidhi: Abwab-al-Birr was-Silah).***

Abu Saeed Khudri and Abu Hurairah say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

***A Muslim is a brother to the other Muslim: he does not treat him unjustly, he does not leave him alone and he does not dishonour him. There is no greater evil than***

**that one should hold a Muslim in contempt. (Musnad Ahmad).**

Sahl bin Saad as-Saidi has related this saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

***A Believer's relation with the community of the Believers is just like the head's relation with the body. He feels their afflictions as the head feels the pain of every part of the body. (Musnad Ahmad)***

In another *hadith* bearing on the same subject the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

***The Believers' example in the matter of their mutual love, relationship and compassion with one another is of the state of the body that when a part of it is afflicted, the whole of it is afflicted with fever and restlessness. (al-Bukhari, Muslim)***

In another *hadith* he is reported to have said:

***The Believers are with one another like the bricks of a wall so that each is strengthened by the other. (Bukhari: Kitab al- Adab; Tirmidhi; Abwab al-Birr was-Silah). (Mawdudi, Towards Understanding the Qur'an tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)***

#### **6.4. Everyone is a Guardian or Responsible Leader**

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

أَلَا كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْنُورٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ فَإِلِمَامٌ الَّذِي عَلَى النَّاسِ  
رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْنُورٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهُوَ  
مَسْنُورٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَوَلَدِهِ  
وَهِيَ مَسْنُورَةٌ عَنْهُمْ وَعَبْدُ الرَّجُلِ رَاعٍ عَلَى مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ وَهُوَ  
مَسْنُورٌ عَنْهُ أَلَا فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْنُورٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

***Every one of you is a guardian and is responsible for his flock. The leader of people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects. A man is the guardian of his family and he is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband's home and his children and she is responsible for them. The servant of a man is a guardian of the property of his master and he is responsible for it. No doubt, every one of you is a***

**shepherd and is responsible for his flock. (al-Bukhārī and Muslim)**

From the above *ḥadīth*, we learn that everyone is accountable to Allah SWT for what he/she is responsible for. Thus, leadership in political parties, from the lowest to the highest is likewise answerable and accountable to Allah SWT on the Day of Judgement. People who have been wronged or unjustly treated by their leaders in worldly life also have the right to demand justice or punishment against those who have been guilty of unjust treatment on the Day of Judgement.

#### **6.5. If Two Factions of Believers Fight One Another, Then It Is Obligatory To Reconcile The Two Sides:**

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنَّ فَاءَهُ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

***If two parties of the Believers happen to fight, make peace between them. But then, if one of them transgresses against the other, fight the one that transgresses until it reverts to Allah's command. And if it does revert, make peace between them with justice, and be equitable for Allah loves the equitable. [emphasis added] (Q. al-Hujurāt 49: 10)***

Commentary by Abul A`la Mawdudi:

[M]utual fighting is not the character of the Muslims, nor should it be. It is not expected that being the Believers they would fight mutually. However, if such a thing ever happens, the procedure that follows should be adopted....The recipients of this command are all those Muslims who may not be a party to either of the groups and for whom it may be possible to try to make peace between them. In other words, Allah does not approve that the other Muslims should just sit and watch the clash when two groups of their own community have fallen to mutual fighting. But whenever such a sad situation arises all the Believers should become concerned and should do whatever they can to bring about peace and reconciliation between the parties. They should urge the parties to desist from fighting; they should exhort them to fear God. Their influential people should go and talk to the responsible men of the two sides, should find out the causes of the dispute and do

whatever they can to effect reconciliation between them...(Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

#### 6.6. Reconciliation Between People (*Islāḥ Dhāt Al-Bain*) is More Important Than the Rank of Voluntary Fasting, Prayer and *Ṣadaqah* (Charity)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ ۗ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ ۚ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ  
وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ ۖ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

***They ask you concerning the spoils of war? Tell them: 'The spoils of war belong to Allah and the Messenger. So have taqwā (fear and obedience) of Allah and reconcile the differences between yourselves and obey Allah and His Messenger if you are true Believers. (Q. al-Anfāl 8:1)***

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ  
زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

***The true Believers are those who, when Allah's name is mentioned, their hearts quake, and when His verses are recited to them their faith grows, and who put their trust in their Lord. (Q. al-Anfāl 8: 2)***

Commentary by Abul A`la Mawdudi:

Being reformers, the Muslims should focus their attentions on their goal - the reform of the world - rather than on the material benefits which accrue to them incidental by way of God's additional reward in lieu of their strivings. If the attention of Muslims is not diverted from material benefits to their true mission, it is likely that material benefits would become an end in themselves. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

#### 6.7. Efforts To Bring About Reconciliation Within The Muslim *Ummah* Are Among The Greatest Religious Virtues And Good Deeds

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَت إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

***And if two parties of the Believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; indeed Allah loves those who act equitably. (Q. al-Hujurāt 49: 9)***

A dispute or fighting between two groups of Believers may arise from a variety of causes or divisive factors that can lead to physical or even violent clashes, and if the fighting is not curtailed the conflict can disrupt the general peace and harmony in the society. In a nation which has a good law and order system, the state is supposed to intercede between the two fighting groups, to go against the one who caused the violent conflict. The third party in the form of the state authorities is duty-bound to come to the aid of the oppressed group. The intervention of the third party, however, must be in accordance with the principles of *`adl* (justice) and *qisṭ* (equity) to ensure the legal and rightful settlement of the conflict.

This issue of reconciliation between Muslim groups, organisation, political parties or between individuals is directly relevant to the Malaysian political environment today. Not only are the Malay-Muslims politically divided since 1955, but the divisions have been getting wider and more since the last one decade. Some of the political divisions, disunity, tensions, enmity, conflicts or squabbling can be reduced or eliminated if there are serious efforts to bring the conflicting parties, groups or individuals to seek reconciliation or restoration of normal relations between the quarrelling groups. The Qur'an and the *Sunnah* have laid down the ethics of proper and honourable relationships among Muslims and the explicit do's and don't's are numerous. Having knowledge of the ethics of Islamic brotherhood and *ummatic* inter-personal and inter-group conduct from the two revealed sources is a basic requirement in obligatory religious knowledge regarding the subject of *akhlāq* (ethics, morality), but the willingness to live by the Divinely-enjoined ethics is far more important. As for the religious obligation to work out reconciliations between two opposing groups or Malay-Muslim political parties, I think not many



Muslims are aware of the necessity for a third party to restore friendly or brotherly relations the contending parties.

The multi-party system of liberal democracy is partly to blame for the lack of independent efforts of mediation or political reconciliation. The differences in political ideologies and goals among Muslims make it difficult for Muslim parties in many Muslim countries (e.g. Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria) to work together or move towards cooperation, mutual understanding or reconciliation after bitter quarrels. In the case of the current Malay-Muslim political split, it is absolutely necessary for the conflicting parties to work towards reconciliation, cooperation or even integration if circumstances require it. Below are some relevant Qur'anic and Prophetic texts and a scholar's commentary on the necessity of reconciliation and the assimilation or practice of Islamic social ethics:

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَفْضَلِ مِنْ دَرَجَةِ الصِّيَامِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالصَّدَقَةِ قَالُوا بَلَى قَالَ صَلَاحُ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ فَإِنَّ فُسَادَ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ هِيَ الْحَالِقَةُ وَعِنْدَ أَبِي دَاوُدَ: "إِصْلَاحُ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ" فَإِنَّ فُسَادَ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ هِيَ الْحَالِقَةُ". وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: "هِيَ الْحَالِقَةُ، لَا أَقُولُ تَحْلِقُ الشَّعْرَ، وَلَكِنْ تَحْلِقُ الدِّينَ"  
(الترمذي)

**Abu Darda reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Shall I not tell you of something more important in degree than (voluntary) fasting, prayer, and charity?" They said, "Of course!" The Prophet said, "Reconciliation between people (who are in conflict). Verily, corrupted relations between people is the razor. I do not mean the razor that shaves the hair, but the razor that shaves the religion."** (al-Tirmidhi)

**The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "The best charity is to reconcile between people." (Al-Tabarani in Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer)**

Reconciling people is a branch of faith and an Islamic moral code through which grudges are eliminated, hearts are

purified, and flames of fitnah are extinguished. Allah Almighty said – about this quality – (which means):

***No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah – then We are going to give him a great reward. (Q. al-Nisā' 4: 114)***

Islam urges the Believer to regard 'reconciling people' as one of his most important aims in his worldly life, as it is through reconciliation that the Ummah becomes a coherent unit where one part thereof seeks to amend the other part. Thus, it becomes like a single body; if one organ of it complains, the rest of the body suffers sleeplessness and fever. Neglecting this matter leads to the disintegration of the Ummah and the severance of its ties. That is why Islam considered reconciling people better than many acts of worship. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

***Should I not tell you that which is better in degree than (voluntary) prayer, fasting, and charity. They (the companions) said: "Yes." He said: "Reconciling people, for grudges and disputes are the razor (that shaves faith)." (Ahmad, Abu Dawood, and Al-Tirmidhi)***

Reconciliation should be realized by bridging the gaps that occurred because of disputes and conflicts over worldly affairs and by removing their bad effects. Some scholars maintain that the prayer, the fasting, and the charities that are mentioned in the hadith refer to the voluntary, not the obligatory.

Al-Qari said:

Allah Almighty knows best about the intended meaning. However, it could mean that bringing reconciliation to conflicts and disputes that might lead to shedding blood, plundering money, and violating sanctities is better than fulfilling obligatory acts of worship whose benefits do not extend to others, taking the possibility of making up for them, in case they are missed, into consideration. This is so because such acts of worship are among the Rights of Allah Almighty that are less significant in His sight than the rights of the slaves. As regards his saying, "**Grudges and disputes are the razor,**" the author of *An-Nihayah* said: " 'The razor' refers to such a bad quality that removes faith, just like a razor removes hair. It was also said that it refers to severing ties of kinship and injustice." At-Teebi said: The hadith urges reconciling people and avoiding corrupting relations between them, because reconciliation is a reason for holding firm to the rope of Allah Almighty and

avoiding disunity between the Muslims, whereas disputes are a crack in the religion. Whoever seeks to amend the relations between the Muslims and removes the corruption thereof will attain a degree that is greater than that of the fasting person who observes night prayers and is preoccupied with his own benefit only....From the sum of these hadiths, we reach an important result, which is that our great religion aspires for reconciliation and seeks for it. Allah Almighty informed us that settlement of disagreements is best. Allah Almighty says (which means): **"...there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them – and settlement is best."** (Q. *al-Nisa'* 4: 128)

Reconciling people is a great act of worship that Allah Almighty loves. The one who seeks to reconcile people is the one who offers his effort, money, authority, and power to reconcile the disputing parties. He is a person whose soul loves goodness and yearns for it. He does not care about the people's opinions or criticism as long as he seeks the pleasure of Allah Almighty. He exposes himself to embarrassing situations and shares the concerns of his Muslim brothers in order to reconcile two persons.....

What further indicates the great virtue of reconciling people is that Islam allows lying to reconcile quarrelling people. The intended meaning of lying here is to exaggerate in describing and confirming the good aspects of the other party so as to reconcile hearts and to assert that such a dispute was not intentional. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *"The one who reconciles people is not considered a liar if he exaggerates what is good or says what is good."* [Ahmad] A scholar said: **"Allah Almighty likes lying for the sake of reconciliation and dislikes truthfulness for the sake of corruption."**

***The gates of Paradise are opened on two days: Monday and Thursday. Every slave who does not associate anything with Allah Almighty is granted pardon, except the person in whose (heart) there is rancour against his brother. It would be said: delay both of them until they reconcile; delay both of them until they reconcile; delay both of them until they reconcile.*** (Muslim) (The Virtue of Reconciling People <https://www.islamweb.net/en/article/214492/the-virtue-of-reconciling-people>. Accessed on March 2, 2021)

**6.8. Among the Ethics of Islamic Brotherhood and Muslim *Ummah*: To Refrain from Libel, Slander, Mocking, Scoffing One Another, Using Bad Nicknames, Excessive Suspicion, Spying, Backbiting.**

Consider the following verses:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا  
خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا  
تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْألقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ  
الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

***O you who believe, let not a group (of men) scoff at another group, it may well be that the latter (at whom they scoff) are better than they; nor let a group of women scoff at another group, it may well be that the latter are better than they.***

***And do not taunt one another, nor revile one another by nicknames. It is an evil thing to gain notoriety for ungodliness after belief. Those who do not repent are indeed the wrong-doers. (Q. al-Hujurāt 49: 11)***

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ ۖ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا  
تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۗ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ  
مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْنَاهُ ۗ وَأَنفُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

***O you who have believed, avoid being excessively suspicious, for some suspicion is a sin. Do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would surely detest it. Have fear of Allah. Surely Allah is much prone to accept repentance, is Most Compassionate. (Q. al-Hujurāt 49: 12)***

Commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi:

The Believers were made to realize [in other verses in *Surah al-Hujurāt*] that by virtue of the most sacred relationship of the faith, they were brothers to one another, and they should fear God and try to keep their mutual relations right. Now...they are being enjoined to avoid and shun those major evils which generally spoil the mutual relationships of the people in a society. Slandering and taunting the people and harboring suspicions and spying on others are, in fact, the evils that cause mutual enmities and then lead to grave mischief. In this connection, from the commandments that are being given in

the following verses and the explanations of these found in the Hadith a detailed law of libel can be compiled. The western law pertaining to libel in this regard is so defective that a person who sues another under this law may well cause some loss to his own honor. The Islamic law, on the contrary recognizes a basic honor for every person and gives nobody the right to attack it, no matter whether the attack is based on reality or not, and whether the person who has been attacked has a reputation of his own or not. Only the fact that a person has debased and humiliated the other person is enough to declare him a criminal unless, of course, it is proved that the humiliation caused had a legal ground for it....

From this warning it follows automatically that whenever a person is forming an opinion on the basis of conjecture, or is about to take an action, he should examine the case and see whether the conjecture he is entertaining is not a sin, whether the conjecture is really necessary, whether there are sound reasons for the conjecture, and whether the conduct one is adopting on the basis of the conjecture is permissible. Everyone who fears God will certainly take these precautions. To make his conjecture free and independent of every such care and consideration is the pastime of only those people who are fearless of God and thoughtless of the accountability of the Hereafter. [emphasis added]. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

### **6.9. Allah SWT Has the Power to Unite or Disunite People's Hearts**

In our efforts to bring about social, religious or political reconciliations, unifications, cooperation, restoration of peaceful relations or integration in the Malay-Muslim community, we seek first the Divinely revealed guidance, principles, values or methods to be implemented in Muslim political culture. The next step is to find the most suitable individuals or groups which are acceptable to both or more sides involved in the conflict. This is quite challenging because the would-be mediators have to be non-partisan, respectable, knowledgeable in Islamic ethics of disagreement and senior in age and experience. In addition to knowing the background of the political parties and the conflicting leaders, and other useful knowledge and skills – such as the art of communication, dialogues, negotiation and psychological techniques of persuasion, the mediators also need Divine

assistance. With Divine assistance, the seemingly insurmountable obstacles can be changed into achievable goals as has happened in several critical moments in the life of Prophet Muhammad (s.aw.) in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq and the unexpected positives consequences of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah which was regarded by many Companions as a shameful and demeaning sell-out to Makkan pressures. What appeared to be a fatal liability for the fledgling Muslim *ummah* and a big loss of face for Muslims turned out to be a great asset and opening of the doors of Divine blessing never thought to be possible – all because of Divine assistance, support and protection.

While secular methods of reconciliation rely only upon human knowledge, skills and material resources, the Qur'an has made it incumbent upon human beings – after exerting all the necessary efforts and utilising the most suitable human knowledge, wisdom and skills – to turn humbly, earnestly and sincerely to Allah SWT in order to beseech assistance from the *Rabb al-‘Ālamīn*, the Owner and King of Human Beings (*Mālik al-Nās*), The Provider of Provisions (*Al-Razzāq*), The Lifter of All Harm (*Kāshif al-Ḍurr*), The Responder to all Supplicants (*Mujīb al-Sā'ilīn*), The Source of True Peace (*Al-Salām*) and The Compassionate (*Al-Raḥmān*) and The Merciful (*Al-Raḥīm*). We know from the Qur'an that Allah SWT had intervened miraculously in the lives of Prophets, Messengers, Saints, true Believers, Fighters and Defenders of the faith, the struggle of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) and his Companions in Makkah and in Madinah. With regard to the transformation of Yathrib populace into an Islamic nation-state, we should know that Yathrib, being inhabited by a majority Arab society made up of two warring Arab tribes of Aus and Khazraj, it would be an extremely difficult task for the new Prophet (s.a.w.) coming from Makkah to unite the two inimical tribes who had been involved in bloody battles for years. But Allah SWT informs the new Muslims that He SWT had united their hearts and turned them into peace-loving brothers and sisters. This is what was revealed by Allah SWT: 3: 103

...وَأذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ  
فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا ۗ وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم  
مِّنْهَا ۗ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

**...And remember the bounty that Allah bestowed upon you: you were once enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so that through His bounty you became brothers. You stood on the brink of a pit of fire and He delivered you from it. Thus Allah makes His signs clear to you that you may be guided to the right way. (Q. Āl `Imrān 3: 103)**

Commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi:

This refers to the state of the Arabs on the eve of the advent of Islam. There were animosities among the tribes which regularly broke out into fighting; every now and then there was much bloodshed. Things had reached a point that the entire Arabian nation seemed to be on the verge of destroying itself. It was due to the blessings of Islam alone that it was saved from being consumed by the fire to which this verse alludes. The people of Madina had embraced Islam some three or four years before these verses were revealed. They had witnessed the blessing of Islam as it unified into one brotherhood the Aws and Khazraj, two tribes which had long been sworn enemies. Moreover, both tribes treated the migrants from Makka in a spirit of sacrifice and love seldom seen even among members of the same family.

If they had eyes to see they could conclude for themselves whether their salvation lay in adhering firmly to this religion or in abandoning it and reverting to their former state; i.e. decide whether their true well-wishers were God and His Messenger or those Jews, polytheists and hypocrites who strove to plunge them back into their former state. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

Another example of the Sovereign's benign intervention into the world of His creatures and positive intrusion into inter-human relations is His instilling of the moral or affective values of love (*al-mawaddah*) and mercy and intimacy (*al-rahmah*) in the lives of the Prophet's Companions, in human societies and in the relationship between husbands and wives to strengthen and sustain the institution of the family:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ  
بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

***And of His Signs is that He has created mates for you from your own kind that you may find peace in them and He has set between you love and mercy. Surely there are Signs in this for those who reflect. [emphasis added] (Q. al-Rūm 30: 21)***

Commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi:

[T]his [family] system has not come about by chance, but the Creator has brought it about deliberately with the object that the man should find fulfilment of the demands of his nature with the woman, and the woman with the man, and the two should find peace and satisfaction in association and attachment with each other. This is the wise arrangement which the Creator has made the means of the survival of the human race on the one hand, and of bringing the human civilization into existence on the other hand. If the two sexes had been created on different patterns and designs, and the state of agitation which changes into peace and tranquillity only through union and attachment between the two had not been placed in each, the human race might have survived like sheep and goats, but there was no possibility of the birth of a civilization. Contrary to all other species of animal life; the fundamental factor that has helped create human civilization is that the Creator by His wisdom has placed a desire and a thirst and a lodging in the two sexes for each other, which remains unsatisfied unless the two live in complete attachment and association with each other. This same desire for peace and satisfaction compelled them to make a home together. This same desire brought families and clans into being, and this same desire made social life possible for man. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

Another type of Divine assistance is revealed to the early Muslims when Allah SWT informs the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his Muslim followers that He had decisively intervened by instilling tranquility (*al-sakīnah*) in the heart of His beloved Messenger (s.a.w.) and the hearts of thousands of his soldiers at a critical moment in their encounter with a well-trained enemy to ensure victory for the Believers' side in a battle that could turn the tide on the Muslims, despite their larger number. Allah SWT declares:



لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ ۖ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ ۖ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ  
كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ  
ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُمْ مُدْبِرِينَ

***Surely Allah has succoured you before on many a battlefield, and (you have yourselves witnessed His succour to you) on the day of Hunayn when your numbers made you proud, but they did you no good, and the earth, for all its vastness, constrained you, and you turned your backs in retreat. (Q. al-Taubah 9: 25)***

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ  
تَرَوْهَا ۗ وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ

***Then Allah caused His tranquillity to descend upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and He sent down hosts whom you did not see, and chastised those who disbelieved. Such is the recompense of those who deny the Truth.(Q. al-Taubah 9: 25-26)***

Commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi:

The battle of Hunain had taken place in the valley of Hunain between Taaif and Makkah in the month of Shawwal A.H. 8, a year or so before the revelation of this discourse. This was the first battle in which the Muslim army consisted of 12,000 fighters and this far outnumbered the army of the disbelievers. But in spite of this the archers of the Hawazin clan wrought havoc among the Muslim army and put them to rout. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and a few of his bravest companions, however, firmly stood their ground and rallied the routed army, and ultimately won the victory. It was because of their perseverance that the army reassembled and the Muslims ultimately won the victory; otherwise they would have lost much more at Hunain than they had gained by the conquest of Makkah.....

[Allah assures the Believers] [t]hat Allah, Who helped you in far worse and dangerous situations on so many occasions before this, is there even now to help you. Had this mission depended on your might, it could not have come out victorious in the hard trials at Makkah, nor in the battle of Badr when the odds were heavily against you. This is because Allah's power has been helping you, and past experiences have shown you

how effective that power is. Rest assured that the same power will help you to succeed in your mission. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

Allah SWT informs His servants that He could put into the hearts of enemies of Islam the feeling of fear (*al-ru`b*) (Q. *Anfāl* 8: 12), could heal or increase diseases of the spiritual heart depending on the attitudes of His servants (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 10). He SWT states there are many instances in human history when a small group of people could defeat a larger group by His leave, particularly if the smaller group is on the side of Truth (*al-Haqq*), while the larger group is on the side of Falsehood (*al-Bāṭil*) or Disbelief (*Kufr*) (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 249). It should be crystal clear to the Believers that if they are people who are morally upright and they are on the Right Path in their political struggle while their intentions are in harmony with the Islamic principles, then they could supplicate to their Compassionate Creator-Sustainer-Master to seek His assistance, support or guidance after they have taken the necessary steps within their capabilities to achieve their *Ma`rūf* political objectives. As to when and how Allah SWT would respond, they have to leave that to Him and their proper attitude should be in accordance with what the Prophet described about the mindset of a true Believer:

وعن أبي يحيى صهيب بن سنان رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "عجبا لأمر المؤمن إن أمره كله له خير، وليس ذلك لأحد إلا للمؤمن: إن أصابته سراء شكر فكان خيراً له، وإن أصابته ضراء صبر فكان خيراً له" (مسلم)

***Abu Yahya Suhaib bin Sinan (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "How amazing is the condition [mindset] of a Believer; there is good for him/her in everything and this applies only to a Believer. If prosperity befalls him/her, he/she expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him/her; and if adversity befalls him/her, he/she endures it patiently and that is better for him/her" Muslim).***

Reverting to the issue of the necessity of reconciliation or rapprochement in the Malay-Muslim politics and the promise of Divine assistance, subject to the fulfilment of the conditions of sincerity, determination and commitment to the

teachings of Allah SWT and His Messenger (s.a.w.), it is clear that this religious obligation has been neglected by the Muslim community; therefore it has not received the attention it deserves. It is possible, however, that there are attempts to bring about reconciliation but such attempts have to remain secretive because of the sensitivities involved. There may be a need for an independent Muslim NGO to develop a special wing or unit that is specialised, trained and dedicated to bring about political rapprochement, reconciliation, cooperation or peaceful relationships between Muslim political parties, despite tactical, strategic, ideological or personality differences or conflicts. This need for institutionalisation of independent reconciliation efforts is another task for the Malay-Muslim *ummah* leaders to consider in the near future.

#### **6.10. The Forgotten Socio-Political Implications of Being Believers**

It is widely known to Muslim masses and leaders that all Believers are duty bound to obey Allah SWT and the Final Messenger (s.a.w.), not only because that is the basic duty of all servants and vicegerents of Allah SWT, but also as the basis of loving Him and His Messenger (s.a.w.) above everything else in this world, and being deserving of His care, benevolence, grace and blessings in this world and in the Next. But I believe not many leaders, not to speak of Muslim masses, are aware that being Believers means that they are obligated to seek answers or solutions to all their disputes, first, from the His revealed Book and from the wisdom of the Final Messenger. But if the two sources do not have the answers or solutions they are looking for – due to the novelty of the socio-political or cultural issues – then they are supposed to look for the answers from the knowledgeable scholars or experts in the disputed matters. If the scholars or experts are not able to provide the satisfactory solutions, then they are permitted to use their own reasoning (*ijtihād*, subject to certain religious conditions) to solve the problem, provided the solution is in harmony with the worldview of *Tauhīd*, the principles, norms and values of Islam. The particular verse that should be remembered and studied by all Muslim leaders no matter what their fields of specialisation or spheres of societal leadership they are in, is the following:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ  
 مِنْكُمْ ۖ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
 تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ  
 خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا □

***Believers! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those from among you who are invested with authority; and then if you were to dispute among yourselves about anything, then refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you indeed believe in Allah, and the Last Day; that is better and more commendable in the end. [emphasis added] (Q. al-Nisā' 4: 59)***

The commentary by Abul A`la Mawdudi is very long but it is very useful and enlightening.

[This verse] lays down the following principles as permanent guidelines:

(1) In the Islamic [social] order...God alone is the focus of loyalty and obedience. A Muslim is the servant of God before anything else, and obedience and loyalty to God constitute the centre and axis of both the individual and collective life of a Muslim. Other claims to loyalty and obedience are acceptable only insofar as they remain secondary and subservient, and do not compete with those owed to God. All loyalties which may tend to challenge the primacy of man's loyalty to God must be rejected. This has been expressed by the Prophet (peace be on him) in the following words: '**There may be no obedience to any creature in disobedience to the Creator.**' (Muslim, 'Iman', 37; Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 3, p. 472 - Ed.)

(2) Another basic principle of the Islamic [social] order ... is obedience to the Prophet (peace be on him). No Prophet, of course, is entitled to obedience in his own right. Obedience to Prophets, however, is the only practical way of obeying God, since they are the only authentic means by which He communicates His injunctions and ordinances to men. Hence, we can obey God only if we obey a Prophet. Independent obedience to God is not acceptable, and to turn one's back on the Prophets amounts to rebellion against God. The following tradition from the Prophet (peace be on him) explains this: '**Whoever obeyed me, indeed obeyed God; and whoever disobeyed me, indeed disobeyed God.**' (Bukhari, 'Jihad',

109; 'I'tisam', 2; Muslim, 'Amarah', 32, 33; Nasa'i, 'Bay'ah', 27; etc. - Ed.) We shall see this explained in more detail a little further on in the Qur'an.

(3) [...] Muslims are further required to obey fellow Muslims in authority. This obedience follows, and is subordinate to, obedience to God and the Prophet (peace be on him). Those invested with authority (*ulu al-amr*) include all those entrusted with directing Muslims in matters of common concern. Hence, persons 'invested with authority' include the intellectual and political leaders of the community, as well as administrative officials, judges of the courts, tribal chiefs and regional representatives. In all these capacities, those 'invested with authority' are entitled to obedience, and it is improper for Muslims to cause dislocation in their collective life by engaging in strife and conflict with them. This obedience is contingent, however, on two conditions: first, that these men should be Believers; and second, that they should themselves be obedient to God and the Prophet (peace be on him). These two conditions are not only clearly mentioned in this verse they have also been elucidated at length by the Prophet (peace be on him) and can be found in the Hadith. Let us consider, for example, the following traditions: A Muslim is obliged to heed and to obey an order whether he likes it or not, as long as he is not ordered to carry out an act of disobedience to God (*ma'siyah*). When ordered to carry out an act of disobedience to God he need neither heed nor obey.

***There is no obedience in sin; obedience is only in what is good (ma'ruf).*** (For these traditions see Bukhari, 'Ahkam', 4; 'Jihad', 108; Muslim, 'Amarah', 39; Tirmidhi, 'Jihad', 29; Ibn Majah, 'Jihad', 40; Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, pp. 17 and 142 - Ed.)

***There will be rulers over you, some of whose actions you will consider good and others abominable. Who even disapproves of their abominable acts will be acquitted of all blame, and whoever resents them he too will remain secure (from all blame); not so one who approves and follows them in their abominable acts. They (i.e. the Companions) asked: 'Should we not fight against them?' The Prophet (peace be on him) said: 'No, not as long as they continue to pray.'*** (See al-Bukhari, 'Jihad', 108 - Ed.)

This means that their abandonment of Prayer will be a clear sign of their having forsaken obedience to God and the Prophet (peace be on him). Thereafter it becomes proper to fight against them. In another tradition the Prophet (peace be on him) says:

***Your worst leaders are those whom you hate and who hate you; whom you curse and who curse you. We asked: 'O Messenger of God! Should we not rise against them?' The Prophet (peace be on him) said: 'No, not as long as they establish Prayer among you: not as long as they establish Prayer among you.'*** (See Muslim, 'Amarah', 65, 66; Tirmidhi, 'Fitan', 77; Darimi, 'Riqaq, 78; Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 6, pp. 24, 28 - Ed.)

In this tradition the position is further clarified. The earlier tradition could have created the impression that it was not permissible to revolt against rulers as long as they observed their Prayers privately. But the latter tradition makes it clear that what is really meant by 'praying' is the establishment of the system of congregational Prayers in the collective life of Muslims. This means that it is by no means sufficient that the rulers merely continue observing their Prayers: it is also necessary that the system run by them should at least be concerned with the establishment of Prayer. This concern with Prayer is a definite indication that a government is essentially an Islamic one. But if no concern for establishing Prayer is noticed, it shows that the government has drifted far away from Islam making it permissible to overthrow it. The same principle is also enunciated by the Prophet (peace be on him) in another tradition, in which the narrator says: ***'The Prophet (peace be on him) also made us pledge not to rise against our rulers unless we see them involved in open disbelief, so that we have definite evidence against them to lay before God'*** (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

(4) [...] Whenever there is any dispute among Muslims or between the rulers and the ruled the matter should be referred to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and all concerned should accept with sincerity whatever judgement results. In fact, willingness to take the Book of God and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger as the common point of reference, and to treat the judgement of

the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* as the last word on all matters, is a central characteristic which distinguishes an Islamic system from un-Islamic ones. Some people question the principle that we should refer everything to the Book of God and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be on him). They wonder how we can possibly do so when there are numerous practical questions involved, for example, rules and regulations relating to municipal administration, the management of railways and postal services and so on which are not treated at all in these sources. This doubt arises, however, from a misapprehension about Islam. The basic difference between a Muslim and a non-Muslim is that whereas the latter feels free to do as he wishes, the basic characteristic of a Muslim is that he always looks to God and to His Prophet for guidance, and where such guidance is available, a Muslim is bound by it. On the other hand, it is also quite important to remember that when no specific guidance is available, a Muslim feels free to exercise his discretion because the silence of the Law indicates that God Himself has deliberately granted man the freedom to make his decision.

Since the Qur'an is not merely a legal code, but also seeks to instruct, educate, admonish and exhort, the earlier sentence which enunciates a legal principle is followed by another which explains its underlying purpose and wisdom. Two things are laid down. First, that faithful adherence to the above four principles is a necessary requirement of faith. Anyone who claims to be a Muslim and yet disregards the principles of Islam involves himself in gross self-contradiction. Second, the well-being of Muslims lies in basing their lives on those principles. This alone can keep them on the straight path in this life, and will lead to their salvation in the Next. It is significant that this admonition follows immediately after the section which embodies comments about the moral and religious condition of the Jews. Thus the Muslims were subtly directed to draw a lesson from the depths to which the Jews had sunk, as a result of their deviation from the fundamental principles of true faith just mentioned. Any community that turns its back upon the Book of God and the guidance of His Prophets, that willingly follows rulers and leaders who are heedless of God and His Prophets, and that obeys its religious and political authorities blindly without seeking authority for their actions either in the Book of God or in the practice of the Prophets, will inevitably

fall into the same evil and corruption as the Israelites. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari).

In short, the above verse contains Allah's instruction to all true Believers that they should first seek the solutions to their intra-community problems or intra-party conflicts from His revealed Book and from the wisdom of the Final Messenger (s.a.w.), before seeking other sources. I would like to remind political leaders of Malay-Muslim parties to consider the personal and political implications of the Divine commandment seriously so that their efforts to find the right solutions to their inter-party conflicts would be in accordance with the commandment, and earn the blessings and assistance of Allah SWT in this world and in the Hereafter. All too often, Muslim leaders and followers who are not aware of this Divine commandment or forget it, would seek the solutions to their internal or inter-party political disputes from sources – political or otherwise – which ignore Divine wisdom or revealed knowledge. Admittedly, many contemporary political, economic or social problems require individual or collective *ijtihad* (independent reasoning or thinking based on religious teachings or values on issues not covered by the provisions of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*) as a means to search for the right solutions, but the results of such *ijtihad* should be in harmony with the principles, norms and values of the two primary and authoritative sources.



## CHAPTER 7

### CORRECTING MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT ISLAM AS PART OF THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

Many books have been written by good Islamic scholars since the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century regarding misunderstandings and misperceptions about Islam among Muslims as well as among non-Muslims. It is an important subject that should be included in Islamic political educational programmes aimed at clarifying several aspects of Islamic religion, culture and civilisation which have been misunderstood, misperceived or misinterpreted by fellow Muslims, especially in light of the crusade of Islamophobia and the weird distortions of Islam being orchestrated by anti-Islamic forces in the world today. The educational programmes should address, clarify and refute some deliberately misconstrued or misrepresented understandings of the teachings of Islam, such as the concept of *Jihād*, position of women, “political Islam”, mysticism, fundamentalism, piety, the authenticity of the Qur’an, the *Sunnah* and *Taşawwuf*, etc. We even have people, today, like Daniel Gibson and Jay Smith, the Christian evangelist, apologist and polemicist who are unashamedly deconstructing and revisioning the early history of Islam, including making the absurd claim that Makkah was in Petra as part of the Nabatean culture and that the so-called original *Ka`bah* and Mina were in the vicinity of ancient Petra.

What I would like to discuss in this part of the monograph is the faulty mental frame of many people in the Muslim community, including political party leaders and followers, as well as in the minds of some educated Muslims, that Islamic religion is essentially about performance of *`ibādah* proper, i.e. the fundamental religious obligations of the five daily prayers, the payment of *zakat*, fasting in the month of Ramaḍhan and pilgrimage to Makkah, or performance of Hajj. According to this popular but faulty mental frame, good behaviour or good character (*akhlāq*) is, no doubt, important in Muslim personality, society and life, but it is generally not viewed as more important than the observance of those religious rituals and obligations, or as organically and logically connected to the six Pillars of Faith and the five Pillars of Islam. By emphasising the importance of believing in the six Pillars of Faith and fulfilling the five Pillars of Islam, many Muslims assume that the purpose of Islamic religiosity and meaning of adherence to Islam is sufficiently fulfilled. With the formal

compliance to the two important dimensions of Islam -- although without much depth of understanding -- they assume they would be able to gain salvation in the Hereafter. It is not impossible or strange if some Muslim leaders also entertain such naïve but popular assumptions regarding the scope and force of Islamic religiosity. Hence, the aspect of good character, moral integrity and ethical probity tend to be given less attention among many Muslims in the community as they are not generally perceived to be an integral and organic part of the component of worship proper (*`ibādah*).

In addition, some educated Muslims argue that there are non-Muslim states in the modern world which are more ethical in their public life or more observant of ethical values of integrity, civic consciousness, respect for law and order, independence of the judiciary from executive control, or social justice such that the phenomenon of corruption or abuse of power is not perceived as dominant in those states. Yet in several Muslim societies and nations, corruption, abuse of power, authoritarianism and lack of good governance are rampant, in some countries even endemic. On this issue, my explanation is that in those Western countries, the ethical values of integrity, civic consciousness, professionalism, respect for law and order, independence of the judiciary from executive control, have become the entrenched culture and regular habit of the people and the government, after decades if not centuries of public education in the primacy of civic consciousness, enculturation of democratic institutions of checks and balance, the advanced development of the free press which acts as the ethical watchdog of the nation, and the higher levels of economic and social justice.

However, when we look at the statistics regarding major financial scandals in the world – including the ethical factors behind the grave financial crisis of the last two decades -- and the existence of organised high level crime in economically-advanced nations, not to speak of the high incidence of moral decadence in sex-related crimes and the break-up of the family institution, we will find that that many Western nations too have been experiencing serious ethical problems, even in politics. But we have to admit that the ethical norms and values of integrity, civic consciousness, professionalism, respect for law and order, independence of the judiciary from executive control, the existence of the free press to question or criticise government decisions and policies without fear or favour, and good governance

have yet to become mainstream Muslim culture or dominant features of Muslim nations.

Therefore, I am not ashamed to propose publicly and openly that Muslim political leaders of Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, Sudan, Brunei Darussalam, etc. – i.e. countries which used to be under British colonial rule and have adopted the British parliamentary system – learn, study and discover how British Members of Parliament and the office of the Speaker of the House of Commons, have reached a high level of political maturity, decency, rationality, civility and etiquette in the conduct of parliamentary debates, and in the ability of government parties as well as opposition parties to forget political differences to work together on some important national or international issues. I also wish and hope that there are or will be Muslim prime ministers who can match the excellent ethical example set by German Chancellor (for 4 terms from 2002-2021), Dr. Angela Merkel (Ph.D in Quantum Chemistry), in terms of political wisdom and adroitness; political leadership style that sincerely puts the interest of nations and people above self; humility, simplicity, integrity, modesty, self-criticism and opposition to fanfare, vanity and praise. Named as “the most powerful woman in the world” for a record fourteenth time by *Forbes* in 2018, she has also won international plaudits for her handling of Covid-19 pandemic in Germany.

With regard to the issue of the disconnect in the mental frame of the Muslims in general between Islamic religiosity and Islamic ethical behaviour, it is my understanding that this problem arises from the weaknesses and shortcomings in the way Islamic religious knowledge is taught and assessed in national schools. The fragmentation of Islamic teachings into water-tight compartments of *Ilmu Tauhid* (theology), *Ilmu Feqah* (jurisprudence and Islamic rules and regulations) and *Ilmu Akhlak* (morality) and the emphasis on the ability to read the Qur’an without understanding it, are partly responsible for the isolation of the subject of Islamic morality in the religious education of Muslims. In the national schools, importance is generally given at the primary levels to rote learning and the passing of exams in the secondary levels. and the number of distinctions students have obtained in the examined subjects. With regard to Islamic theology and Islamic jurisprudence, both subjects are usually taught without linking them organically to Islamic moral behaviour.

The neglect of the subject of philosophy or wisdom (*hikmah*) behind religious obligations, teachings or commandments which would explain the spiritual and moral objectives and benefits to be derived from them and from religious duties may be another reason for the lack of attention given to moral integrity in many areas of Muslim society. As for the important and crucial knowledge and practice of Islamic spiritual values and Islamic morality (also known as *Ilmu Tasawwuf*) as found in the writings of al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim and Ibn Taimiyyah, they are given serious attention mainly by elderly adults and senior citizens or pensioners who go regularly to the local mosques to pray, and who begin to realise the critical value of such knowledge being understood and practised by them, even if they were late in being exposed to the knowledge of *taṣawwuf*.

What I would like to reiterate here is that *Ḥusnu'l-Khuluq* (good character or praiseworthy moral conduct) in Islam or the worldview of *Tauḥīd* is part and parcel of one of the four most important dimensions of the religion of Islam as revealed by Allah SWT directly to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) in the famous "*Ḥadīth Jibrīl*" (in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*). This *Ḥadīth* summarises the whole religion of Islam into a unity of 1) *Islām* (the five pillars), 2) *Īmān* (the six pillars) 3) *Iḥsān* (spiritual-moral excellence, benevolence and beauty, manifested in good character) and 4) Knowing the *Ashrāt* or *ʿAlāmāt al-Sā`ah* (Portents or Signs of the Last Hour or day of Judgement). The first component covers the fundamental religious obligations or matters of *ʿibādah* proper, the second covers matters of belief and faith in transcendent realities, the third covers matters of morality and ethics (*akhlāq*) arising from the profound awareness and conviction (*yaqīn*) that Allah SWT is continuously watching us outwardly and inwardly, while the fourth covers matters of eschatology. From this *ḥadīth* Muslims are informed that morality, which deals with virtues and vices, ethical and unethical conduct, and good character, is an integral part of Islamic religion and is inextricably connected with the dimensions of faith, religious rituals and life after death. However, the first component has been developed by Islamic religious scholars in early Islamic history and civilisation into the discipline of Jurisprudence (*ʿIlm al-Fiqh*), the second was developed into the science of Theology (*Uṣūl al-Dīn* or *ʿIlm al-Tauḥīd*) and the third was developed into the science of Spirituality and Mysticism (*ʿilm al-Akhlāq* and *ʿIlm al-Taṣawwuf*). Unfortunately, the branching out of the three religious sciences as a result of intellectual evolution and

specialisation has led to unintended consequences: compartmentalisation and academic rivalry, each disciple claiming to be the most important Islamic religious science.

It was the great theologian, jurist and Sufi, al-Imām al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 CE., may Allah SWT bless his soul) who managed to reunite and reintegrate the religious sciences, but the fragmented method of teaching the religious sciences in schools and in the universities, and the lack of emphasis on the interconnectedness and organic integralist nature of the three religious sciences, indirectly perpetuates the sense of separation of religion from ethics in the minds of even the educated Muslim, let alone the masses. Consequently, there exist in many Muslim countries and communities, including Malaysia, the paradoxical phenomena of bribery, fraud, corruption, nepotism, double standards, slander, back-biting, breaking of promises and treachery being committed by educated Muslims who believe in Allah SWT and the Hereafter, pray five times a day, and not a few have performed the pilgrimage to Makkah.

Muslims need to be well instructed and religiously educated that in the worldview of *Tauḥīd*, or the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, good character and ethical behaviour are the necessary and logical consequence of adherence to Islamic religion, and, as such, any slackening or deficiency in good conduct or ethical behaviour is a symptom of weaknesses or shortcomings in religious faith. "The virtuous human being" (*insān ṣāliḥ*) is the type of personality that Allah SWT expects to emerge from the process of understanding, believing the Islamic theology (*ʿAqīdah*), obeying, following, and implementing the Divine Law (*Sharīʿah*), internalising and practicing the Islamic system of morality (*Akhlāq*). Thus, the production of the good and virtuous human being ("*insān ṣāliḥ*") is the primary purpose of education in its holistic, integrated and comprehensive sense (*tarbiyah, taʿlīm, taʿdīb, irshād*) from Islamic perspective. The family that is formed on the basis of Islamic education is the virtuous family (*usraḥ ṣāliḥah*), the society that is established by virtuous individuals and families is the virtuous society (*mujtamaʿ ṣāliḥ*), the state that manages the society is the virtuous state (*daulah ṣāliḥah*), and the civilisation that is constructed by the virtuous society and the virtuous state becomes a virtuous civilisation (*ḥaḍārah ṣāliḥah*).

I would like to reiterate and remind our Muslim political leaders and followers that in the teachings of Islam, good moral character and good ethical behaviour are the **direct outcome** of being a Believer in Islam and immersion in the Islamic way of life. This is made clear in no uncertain terms by the Prophet (s.a.w.) himself when he said, “***I have been sent only to bring to perfection the virtues of good character***” (al-Baiḥaqī). It is my fervent hope that after Muslim leaders or followers are exposed to this profound truth in the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* as well as in the syllabus of spiritual transformation programmes organised by Muslim political parties, the long-standing conceptual and behavioural disconnect between religion and ethics will be removed from the flawed mental frames of Muslim leaders or masses. Then the regeneration of the culture of good character and moral integrity as required by the religion of Islam becomes one of the primary goals of the transformation of Malay-Muslim political culture and behaviour that I am proposing.

I shall reproduce below some of the many sayings of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and of a few religious scholars to emphasise the integral, organic and inseparable connection in Islam between faith and religiosity with good character or good moral-ethical conduct. I also would like to highlight the supreme importance of good character and ethical behaviour of Muslims in the religion, society and culture of Islam so that no Muslim politician, cadre, follower or supporter will continue to behave or act immorally or unethically in the political arena or in national governance as long as they are Muslims. All the texts on *ḥadīth* are taken from the collection of Abu Amina Elias from the website [https://www.abuaminaelias.com/good-character-is-the-path-to-salvation/February 13, 2016](https://www.abuaminaelias.com/good-character-is-the-path-to-salvation/February%2013,%202016).

### **7.1. Some Prophetic *Ḥadīths* on Good Character**

Good character, morals, ethics, and manners are fundamental to the religion of Islam and the means by which we can achieve salvation in the life to come. Good character is a major theme in the teachings of the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. True righteousness is defined by it and the best Muslims are those who practice it. The believers with the most complete faith, who are most beloved by Allah and His Messenger, are those with the best character.

Allah praised the Prophet's character and set him as the example for all Believers to follow. Allah said:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

**Verily, you (O Muhammad) are upon great moral character. (Q. al-Qalam 68:4)**

Ibn Kathir comments on this verse, saying:

The meaning of this verse is that the Prophet would emulate the Quran in its commands, its prohibitions, and it became his temperament. His character became accustomed to it and he abandoned his visceral carnal nature. Whatever the Quran commanded he did, and whatever it prohibited he abstained. Along with this, Allah ingrained within him great character traits of modesty, generosity, courage, forgiveness, forbearance, and every beautiful trait. (Source: Tafsīr ibn Kathīr 68:4)

The primary mission of the Prophet was to instil good character within the Believers in every aspect of their lives.

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ صَالِحَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

**Verily, I have only been sent to perfect righteous character.** (Source: Musnad Aḥmad 8729), Grade: **Sahih**

Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ حُسْنَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

**I have been sent to perfect good character.** (Source: al-Muwaṭṭa 1614), Grade: **Sahih**

Jabir ibn Abdullah reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَعَثَنِي بِتَمَامِ مَكَارِمِ الْأَخْلَاقِ وَكَمَالِ مَحَاسِنِ الْأَفْعَالِ

**Verily, Allah has sent me to perfect noble morals and complete good deeds.** (Source: al-Mu'jam al-Awsat 7073), Grade: **Hasan**

....Since good character is so important, behaving in a morally upright manner is a religious obligation. The Prophet commanded Muslims to behave well in every circumstance and with every human being, not simply to those who are close to us.

Abu Dharr reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

وَحَالِقِ النَّاسِ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ

**Behave with good character toward the people.** (Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhi1987) Grade: **Sahih**

....Good character is not merely recommended or secondary to issues of doctrine. Rather, good character, morals, ethics, and manners are the spirit that breathes life into our doctrines. It is the very essence of righteousness spoken about all throughout the Quran. It is accessible to our innate rational nature, as Allah has bestowed upon all of us the power to recognize righteousness and sin even without the aid of revelation.

An-Nawwas ibn Sam'an reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي صَدْرِكَ وَكَرِهْتَ أَنْ يَطَّلِعَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ

**Righteousness is good character and sin is what waivers in your heart and you hate for people to find out about it.** (Source: Şahīḥ Muslim 2553), Grade: **Sahih**

In another narration, The Prophet said:

لَا يَبْلُغُ الْعَبْدُ حَقِيقَةَ التَّقْوَى حَتَّى يَدَعَ مَا حَاكَ فِي الصِّدْرِ

**The servant will not reach the reality of Godfearing piety (taqwa) until he leaves what waivers in his heart.** (Source: Şahīḥ al-Bukhārī 8), Grade: **Sahih**



Good character is the result of a pure heart that is free from spiritual diseases like envy, malice, and arrogance. A person with good character had integrity and is not overly attached to worldly things at the expense of righteousness.

.....From all this, many classical scholars understood that good character is essential and required in Islam, even equivalent to the religion itself.

Ibn Al-Qayyim writes:

الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ خُلُقٌ فَمَنْ زَادَ عَلَيْكَ فِي الْخُلُقِ زَادَ عَلَيْكَ فِي الدِّينِ

***The religion itself is entirely good character, so whoever surpasses you in character has surpassed you in religion.*** (Source: Madārij al-Sālikīn 2/294)

Ash-Shatibi writes:

وَالشَّرِيعَةُ كُلُّهَا إِنَّمَا هِيَ تَخْلُقُ بِمَكَارِمِ الْأَخْلَاقِ

***The Shariah in its entirety only creates noble morals.*** (Source: al-Muwāfaqāt 2/124)

Abdullah ibn Amr reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

خِيَارُكُمْ أَحْسَنُكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا

***The best of you are those with the best character.***  
(al-Bukhari) Grade: ***Muttafaqun Alayhi***

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخِيَارُكُمْ خِيَارُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ خُلُقًا

***The most complete of the Believers in faith are those with the most excellent character, and the best of you are the best in behaviour to their women.***

(al-Tirmidhi) Grade: ***Sahih***

In another narration, the Prophet said:

حَيْرُكُمْ إِسْلَامًا أَحْسَنُكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا إِذَا فَفَهُوا

**The best of you in Islam are those with the best character, if they have understanding.**(Aḥmad)  
Grade: **Sahih**

And in another narration, the Prophet said:

شِرَارُ أُمَّتِي الثَّرَثَارُونَ الْمُشَدِّقُونَ الْمُتَقَيِّهُونَ وَخِيَارُ أُمَّتِي  
أَحْسَنُهُمْ أَخْلَاقًا

**The most evil in my nation are the garrulous, the braggarts, and the pompous. The best of my nation are those with the best character.**  
(al-Bukhari: *al-Adab al-Mufrad*) Grade: **Sahih**

Aisha reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

إِنَّ مِنْ أَكْمَلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيْمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَالْأَطْفُهُمْ بِأَهْلِهِ

**Verily, the Believers with the most complete faith are those with the most excellent character and who are most kind to their families.** (al-Tirmidhi) Grade: **Sahih**

Jabir ibn Samurah reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

إِنَّ الْفُحْشَ وَالتَّقْحُشَ لَيْسَا مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ وَإِنَّ أَحْسَنَ النَّاسِ إِسْلَامًا  
أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا

**Verily, obscenity and immorality are not part of Islam. Verily, the best people in Islam are those with the best character.**

(Aḥmad) Grade: **Sahih**

Ibn Umar reported: A man said, "O Messenger of Allah, which of the Believers is best?" The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا

**Those with the best character.**

(Ibn Mājah) Grade: Hasan

Abu Darda reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَثْقَلُ فِي مِيزَانِ الْمُؤْمِنِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ خُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ  
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيُبْغِضُ الْفَاحِشَ الْبَذِيءَ

**Nothing is heavier upon the scale of the Believer on the Day of Resurrection than his good character. Verily, Allah hates the shameless, obscene person.**

(al-Tirmidhi) Grade: Sahih

Aisha reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَيُذْرِكُ بِحُسْنِ خُلُقِهِ دَرَجَةَ الصَّائِمِ الْقَائِمِ

**Verily, the Believer may reach through his good character the status of one who regularly fasts and prays at night.** (Abī Dāwūd) Grade: Sahih

Usamah ibn Shareek reported: I witnessed the bedouins ask the Prophet, saying,

“O Messenger of Allah, what is the best thing a servant may be given?” The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

خُلُقٌ حَسَنٌ

**Good character.**

(Ibn Mājah) Grade: Sahih

Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet was asked, “What enters most people into Paradise?” The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said:

تَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ

**Righteousness and good character.**

It was asked, “What causes most people to enter into the Hellfire?” The Prophet said:

## الْفَمُّ وَالْفَرْجُ

### ***The mouth and the private parts.***

(Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhī 2004), Grade: **Sahih**

Sahl ibn Sa'd reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَرِيمٌ يُحِبُّ الْكِرَمَ وَمَعَالِيَ الْأَخْلَاقِ وَيُبْغِضُ سَفْسَافَهَا

***Verily, Allah is generous and He loves generosity and exalted character, and He detests vanity.*** (Source: Sunan al-Kubrā 19134), Grade: **Sahih**

For all of these reasons, the Prophet would supplicate for good character and he encouraged us to ask Allah for good character as well.

Aisha reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

اللَّهُمَّ أَحْسَنْتَ خُلُقِي فَأَحْسِنْ خُلُقِي

***O Allah, you have made my form excellent, so make my character excellent.*** (Source: Musnad Aḥmad 23871), Grade: **Sahih**

Jabir ibn Abdullah reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي لِأَحْسَنِ الْأَعْمَالِ وَأَحْسَنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ لَا يَهْدِي لِأَحْسَنِهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَقِنِي سَيِّئَ الْأَعْمَالِ وَسَيِّئَ الْأَخْلَاقِ لَا يَقِي سَيِّئَهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ

***O Allah, guide me to the best deeds and the best character, for no one guides to the best of them but you. Protect me from evil deeds and evil character, for no one protects from the evil of them but you.*** (Source: Sunan al-Nasā'ī 896), Grade: **Sahih**

....Ibn Taymiyyah summarizes the good character teachings of Islam, saying:

وَيَنْدُبُونَ إِلَىٰ أَنْ تَصِلَ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ وَتُعْطِيَ مَنْ حَرَمَكَ  
وَتَعْفُو عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِبِرِّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَصِلَةِ الْأَرْحَامِ  
وَحُسْنِ الْجَوَارِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ إِلَى الْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ  
وَالرِّفْقِ بِالْمَمْلُوكِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَخْرِ وَالْخُبْلَاءِ وَالْبَغْيِ  
وَالْإِسْتِطَالَةِ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ بِحَقِّ أَوْ بَعْدِ حَقِّ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِمَعَالِي  
الْأَخْلَاقِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ سَفْسَافِهَا وَكُلِّ مَا يَقُولُونَهُ وَيَفْعَلُونَهُ مِنْ  
هَذَا وَغَيْرِهِ فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُتَّبِعُونَ لِلْكِتَابِ وَالسُّنَّةِ وَطَرِيقَتِهِمْ هِيَ  
دِينُ الْإِسْلَامِ الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ بِهِ مُحَمَّدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

The Believers encourage people to reconcile relations with those who have cut them off, to give charity to those who have deprived them, and to forgive those who have oppressed them. They order people to be benevolent with parents, to uphold family ties, to be benevolent with neighbours, to be kind with orphans, travellers, and the poor, and to be gentle with servants. They forbid bragging, arrogance, and transgression. They discourage people from feeling superior over others, rightly or wrongly. They enjoin people to use lofty manners and prohibit them from pursuing trifles. All that they say or do from these virtues and other teachings, in all of it they follow the Quran and the *Sunnah*. Their path is the religion of Islam with which Allah has sent Muhammad, peace be blessings be upon him. (Source: al-Aqidah al-Wasitiyah 1/71)

([https://www.abuaminaelias.com/good-character-is-the-path-to-salvation/February 13, 2016.](https://www.abuaminaelias.com/good-character-is-the-path-to-salvation/February%2013,%202016))

It is my sincere hope that after going through the above collection of Prophetic sayings and scholars' elaborations on the necessity of good character and behaviour, Muslim political leaders and followers would give more priority to, and be more concerned with, the elimination of unethical or immoral conduct in the political party or organisation. The disconnect in the mental frame of many Muslims has to be transformed, at least at the conceptual level.

The greater challenge for the political parties is, first, how to make the religious principle that Islamic religiosity and spirituality have to be manifested in good conduct and ethical behaviour become part of the mindset of all members of the party. Otherwise, the members' religiosity is faulty and seriously defective in spite of them having the right beliefs and being observant of prayer, fasting or payment of the poor-due (*zakāt*) on a regular basis. Second – this is the crucial part – how to

make that religious principle part and parcel of the mainstream culture of political parties and organisations.

## 7.2. The Loss of *Al-Ḥayā'* (Bashfulness, Shyness, Shamefulness, Self-Dignity, Modesty) in Muslim Politics And Governance

The high incidence of political corruption and hypocrisy in Malay-Muslim political culture and behaviour is symptomatic, to my mind, not just of the failure of some leaders and followers to raise their level of religiosity to the levels of *Ihsān* and *Taqwā* that Believers are supposed to be operating at, but of the loss of the virtue of **RASA MALU**. This could be partly the result of the impact of materialistic values, individualism and secularising modernity since the last six decades of national development. In order to restore the role and impact of the **RASA MALU** attitude and mindset in Muslim politics, I would like to highlight its supreme importance in Islamic religiosity, spirituality and ethics. In fact, it is part of the good character dimension of Islam that I have discussed above, but because I want to give a special focus on this very important part of Malay culture, I need to refer to several *ḥadīths* on what is known in Arabic as *al-ḥayā'* under the rubric of faith and good character in this separate section:

الإِيمَانُ بِضْعٌ وَسَبْعُونَ أَوْ بِضْعٌ وَسِتُّونَ شُعْبَةً فَأَفْضَلُهَا قَوْلُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَدْنَاهَا إِمَاطَةُ الْأَدْيِ عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ وَالْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

***Faith has over seventy branches, the uppermost of which is the declaration: None has the right to be worshipped but Allah; and the least of which is the removal of harmful objects from the road, and al-Ḥayā' (bashfulness, shyness, shamefulness, modesty) is a branch of faith.***  
[emphasis added] (Muslim)

In this *ḥadīth*, *al-ḥayā'*, instead of any other spiritual-moral value, is deliberately chosen to be mentioned specifically as a branch of faith, which shows it is the most important practical manifestation of Islamic faith. In fact, Ibn al-Qayyim has stated that:

the body has its life, the life of the heart is *ḥayā'*. Therefore *ḥayā'* is one of the main characteristics of Iman. Muslims should possess both an inner and outer modesty. This is reflected in behavior, speech and appearance, and includes being mindful of God at all times...A sense of *ḥayā'* should affect a Muslim's conduct before God, before others and even when one is alone. [emphasis added] (<https://muslimcentral.com/yasir-qadhi-the-branches-of-faith-15-modesty>. Accessed on April 18, 2021)

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ  
لِكُلِّ دِينٍ خُلُقًا وَإِنَّ خُلُقَ الْإِسْلَامِ الْحَيَاءُ

Ibn Abbas reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “**Verily, every religion has a character and the character of Islam is al-Hayā' (bashfulness, shyness, modesty, self-dignity).**” [emphasis added](Ibn Mājah)

عَنْ قُرَّةِ بْنِ إِيَّاسٍ كُنَّا عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَذُكِرَ  
عِنْدَهُ الْحَيَاءُ فَقَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ الْحَيَاءُ مِنَ الدِّينِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ  
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَلْ هُوَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ ثُمَّ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ  
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ الْحَيَاءَ الْعَفَافُ وَالْعِيَّ عِيَّ اللِّسَانِ لَا عِيَّ الْقَلْبِ  
وَالْعَمَلُ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ وَإِنَّهُنَّ يَزِدْنَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيَنْقُصْنَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا  
وَمَا يَزِدْنَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا يَزِدْنَ فِي الدُّنْيَا

Qurrah ibn Iyas reported: We were with the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, when *al-ḥayā'* was mentioned to him. They said, “O Messenger of Allah, is *al-ḥayā'* part of the religion?” The Prophet said, “**Rather, it is the entire religion.**” **Then, the Prophet said, “Verily, *al-ḥayā'* is abstinence, reticence of the tongue but not the heart, and deeds are all part of faith. They bring gain in the Hereafter and loss in the world: what is gained in the Hereafter is much greater than what is missed in the world.”** [emphasis added] (al-Baiḥaqī: *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*)

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
وَسَلَّمَ اسْتَحْيُوا مِنْ اللَّهِ حَقَّ الْحَيَاءِ قَالَ قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا  
نَسْتَحْيِي وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ قَالَ لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنَّ الْإِسْتِحْيَاءَ مِنْ اللَّهِ حَقَّ  
الْحَيَاءِ أَنْ تَحْفَظَ الرَّأْسَ وَمَا وَعَى وَالْبَطْنَ وَمَا حَوَى وَتَتَذَكَّرُ

الْمَوْتِ وَالْبَلَى وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ تَرَكَ زِينَةَ الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ  
فَقَدْ اسْتَحْيَا مِنْ اللَّهِ حَقَّ الْحَيَاءِ

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“Be with *al-ḥayā'* before Allah, as *al-ḥayā'* is His right.”** We said, “O Messenger of Allah, surely we have *al-ḥayā'*, all praise is due to Allah!” The Prophet said, **“It is not like that. Rather, *al-ḥayā'* before Allah, as *al-ḥayā'* is His right, this means that [you] are to guard the head and what runs through it, to guard the stomach and what fills it, and to reflect upon death and trials. Whoever desires the Hereafter, let him abandon the embellishment of worldly life. Whoever does so has been with *al-ḥayā'* before Allah, as is His right.”** [emphasis added] (al-Tirmidhī).

عن أبي مسعود عقبة قال قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إن مما  
أدرك الناس من كلام النبوة إذا لم تستحي فافعل ما شئت

Abu Mas'ud reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“*Verily, among the words people obtained from the Prophets are this: If you do not have any feeling of shame, then you do as you wish (even if you know that it is bad, wrong, evil or reprehensible)*”** (al-Bukhārī)

Ibn Rajab said, “The scholars interpret this saying in two ways. First, that it is a command of caution and warning, meaning if there is no shame, do as you wish, for Allah will repay you accordingly... Second, that it is a command of description, meaning that whoever does not have shame will do as he wishes, for it is shame that prevents evil deeds.”

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا كَانَ  
الْفُحْشُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ وَمَا كَانَ الْحَيَاءُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ

Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“*Vulgarity is not found in anything but that it disgraces it, and *al-ḥayā'* is not found in anything but that it beautifies it.*”** (al-Tirmidhī)



عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ الْحَيَاءُ وَالْعِيُّ  
شُعْبَتَانِ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ وَالْبَدَأُ وَالْبَيَانُ شُعْبَتَانِ مِنَ النَّفَاقِ  
قال الترمذي وَالْعِيُّ قَلَّةُ الْكَلَامِ وَالْبَدَأُ هُوَ الْفُحْشُ فِي الْكَلَامِ  
وَالْبَيَانُ هُوَ كَثْرَةُ الْكَلَامِ مِثْلُ هَؤُلَاءِ الْخُطَبَاءِ الَّذِينَ يَخْطُبُونَ  
فَيُوسِّعُونَ فِي الْكَلَامِ وَيَتَفَصِّحُونَ فِيهِ مِنْ مَدْحِ النَّاسِ فِيمَا لَا  
يُرْضِي اللَّهَ

Abu Umamah reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“Modesty and reticence are two branches of faith. Profanity and temerity are two branches of hypocrisy.”**

Al-Tirmidhi said, “Reticence is to speak little. Profanity is to speak obscenely. Temerity is to speak too often, such as those preachers who preach at great length and with eloquence, to be praised by people in what is not pleasing to Allah.” (al-Tirmidhī)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْحَيَاءُ  
مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ وَالْإِيمَانُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَالْبَدَأُ مِنَ الْجَفَاءِ وَالْجَفَاءُ فِي  
النَّارِ

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“Modesty is part of faith and faith is in Paradise. Shamelessness is part of insolence and insolence is in Hellfire.”** (al-Tirmidhī)

.....فَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُسْتَحْيَا مِنْهُ مِنَ النَّاسِ

.....The Prophet said, **“Allah is more worthy of your modesty than people.”** (al-Tirmidhī)

([https://www.abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline.](https://www.abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline))

The spiritual-moral virtue of *al-ḥayā'* is to be applied by all Muslims at three levels of relationship: (1) relationship with other people or other creatures of Allah

SWT, (2) relationship with one's inner self, and (3) relationship with Allah SWT which is the most important relationship. The Believer should feel ashamed in the presence of Allah SWT for his/her misconduct, or the misconduct of his/her families, groups, organisations or parties. As representatives of the *Ummah Wasaʿ* appointed by Allah SWT to be leaders of justice, goodness, moral excellence and just balance, and exemplars of *amar makruf nahi munkar*, Believers should feel most ashamed (**RASA MALU**) and most appalled by the moral decadence and ethical deviations of Muslim elites and leaders in many areas of national life as well as on the international front.

I believe if this knowledge of the supreme importance of having the attitude of bashfulness, shyness, shamefulness, modesty and self-respect – the elements of the Malay value of **RASA MALU** – in Islamic religiosity, personality and identity were adequately taught and explained to political party members and leaders to show its relevance to Muslim political culture and behaviour, it will become part of the political ethics of Muslim actors and players in the political arena. The knowledge and its internalisation will have far-reaching positive effect when it is incorporated systemically with other values and norms in the worldview of *Tauḥīd* into spiritual-moral education programmes of Muslim political parties and organisations. When **RASA MALU** once again becomes part and parcel of the personality and character of Muslim political leaders, I am confident the syndrome of political corruption and hypocrisy would be stamped out.

We shall now move on to focus on what I consider to be the principal mechanism for the transformation agenda of Malay-Muslim political culture, and the reconciliation efforts towards cooperation, unification or greater solidarity of the *ummah*. The mechanism is effective spiritual education (*tarbiyah rūḥiyyah* or *tarbiyah imāniyyah*) programme of the Muslim leaders and would-be leaders in the political arena to become the new breed of leaders.

I have maintained that the goal of moral transformation of Muslim-Malay political behaviour and culture including true and lasting solidarity and unification of the Malay-Muslim *ummah* can only be achieved if the Malay-Muslim political leadership is constituted of a new breed of leaders possessing professional

competency, high moral integrity, strong *īmān* and deep *taqwā* as the *conditio sine qua non* upon which other conditions can be added to meet the different needs of different circumstances. Let us first discuss the type of Islamic leadership that the proposed spiritual education programme will be designed to produce.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE TYPE OF ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP REQUIRED TO LEAD THE MUSLIM *UMMAH* TO THE GOAL OF SOCIO-POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

First of all, we need to remember that, as individuals and as a Muslim community, we are living in an age which is characterised in the Qur'an by the term *fasād* (moral decadence, chaos, mischief, corruption, deceit, oppression and pollution) in the following verse:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ  
بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

***Corruption, oppression, mischief, deviation and pollution have appeared on the land and at sea because of men's deeds: and so He will let them taste [the evil of] some of their doings so that they might return [to the right path] (Q. al-Rūm 30: 41).***

There is also no doubt that Muslims are going through an age which is regarded by Islamic religious scholars as the “end of Times” (*ākhīr al-zamān*) in which many kinds of afflictions and tribulations (*fitnah*) including political *fitnah* would occur. Without strong, sincere and unshakeable *īmān* (deep faith and conviction in Allah SWT as the One and Only God, Creator, Guide, Sustainer, Controller, and Sovereign of all that exists and in His teachings) reinforced with deep, well-entrenched and invigorated *taqwā* (profound consciousness and constant mindfulness of Allah SWT, accompanied by obedience to His commandments as well as fear of transgressing His prohibitions), many Muslim individuals and communities would easily succumb to the dominant unislamic trends in this so-called “post-truth” and “post-normal” times. It is useful to remember in this regard that Believers have been cautioned by the Qur'an that they should not assume that they would have an easy life in this world just because they are people who have true faith in Allah SWT. The Qur'an refers to the inevitability of being tried by Allah SWT in several places, but the following verses should suffice our purpose:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ  
 وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ  
 قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ  
 وَرَحْمَةٌ □ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

**We shall certainly test you by afflicting you with fear, hunger, loss of properties and lives and fruits. Give glad tidings, then, to those who remain patient; Those who when any affliction smites them, they say [with deep conviction]: “Verily, we belong to Allah, and it is to Him that we are destined to return.” Upon them will be the blessings and mercy of their Lord, and it is they who are rightly guided [emphasis added] (Q. al-Baqarah 2:155)**

The current worldwide COVID-19 pandemic that forces whole nations to live under emergency conditions is another form of test for the Believers, because it puts many people in difficult economic, social and psychological circumstances. In facing these most challenging times in an age of global turbulence and moral decadence, Muslim societies, including Malaysia, need a new breed of leaders who are capable as role models of leading with courage, wisdom, genuine concern for people’s welfare, moral integrity, humility, compassion, simplicity and transparency. It is with those moral-ethical leadership qualities that Divine blessings, assistance and protection would descend upon the community and help it to be resilient to face the trials and tribulations. Hence the importance and necessity for the Muslim community, not only in Malaysia but in all Muslim countries, to plan for the production of this new breed of leaders to lead the Muslim communities out of the whirlpool of political corruption and hypocrisy towards the oasis of justice, moral excellence and true wellbeing (*al-Falāḥ*) in this world and in the Hereafter as represented by the *Ummah Wasaʿat* vision of the Qur’an.

From the perspective of secular, liberal, pragmatic or realistic paradigms of Western political thought, my standpoint against political corruption and hypocrisy would easily be dismissed as moralising, absolutist, unrealistic and even utopian. Negative evaluations coming from such perspectives do not bother me at all, or deter me, because the dominant contemporary secular culture, society and civilisation advocate the separation of politics or management of public affairs from religious norms, principles, values and worldview. But in Islamic history, civilisation and

worldview, the business of governing or managing society, education, economy and political systems and culture of Muslims have to be guided and imbued by the worldview, guidance and norms from the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. the true Believers do not despair as they know that nothing really belongs to them, that they belong to Allah SWT and that they shall return to their Compassionate Master Who is "The Best of Carers/Protectors" (*Ni`ma al-Maulā*) and "The Best of Helpers" (*Ni`ma al-Naṣīr*).

There are, no doubt, some Muslim elites who subscribe to the secular dogma or system of separation of religion and politics, but the mainstream Islamic religious scholarship and tradition do not accept such perspectives or paradigms. It is obvious that I do not agree with the secularist dichotomy or the separation dogma as far as Islamic societies and cultures, including Malaysian society, are concerned.

**In the Malaysian context, I believe Malay-Muslim political behaviour and culture can, and ought to be transformed – hopefully, within the next two to five years at the earliest -- on the basis of the conscious adoption of the worldview of *Tauḥīd* with emphasis on its moral–ethical principles and values. However, it would be more feasible or more realisable in the short run if the following three major drivers exist, namely:**

10. a) The Malay-Muslim masses, or elites or political leaders demand such a transformation after realising the serious negative consequences, or disastrous setbacks, which are brought about by the current prevailing political system, culture and behaviour.

10. b) The Malaysian society as a whole and the democratic political system disapprove of populist political leaders and give a higher premium to personalities known for high ethical integrity to become leaders of political parties or of the nation. and.

10. c) **The Malay-Muslim political parties are being led by SELFLESS, SINCERE, COMPETENT, TOLERANT AND HUMBLE LEADERS OF HIGH INTEGRITY WITH GOD-FEARING CHARACTER, POSSESSING SOUND KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM REGARDING COMPLEXITIES OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD AND EXPOSURE TO MULTI-ETHNIC AND MULTI-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUES. IN SHORT, THESE ARE THE NEW BREED OF**

**LEADERS POSSESSING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY, STRONG ĪMĀN (TAUHIDIC FAITH), HIGH MORAL INTEGRITY AND DEEP TAQWĀ OF ALLAH SWT.** I consider this factor as the driving force and the most crucial factor for the transformation of Malay-Muslim society, culture and politics in the future.

In Malay language, we can say they are ***PEMIMPIN YANG TIDAK MEMENTINGKAN DIRI, JUJUR, MERENDAH DIRI, CEKAP, BERLAPANG DADA TERHADAP PLURALITI KEAGAMAAN, BERLATARBELAKANG PENDIDIKAN BERKUALITI, MENGETAHUI DAN MENGIKUTI REALITI DUNIA SEMASA, BERKEUPAYAAN BERDIALOG SECARA HARMONIS DENGAN MASYARAKAT ATAU INSTITUSI BUKAN ISLAM, DAN – YANG TERPENTING -- MEMPUNYAI KEUPAYAAN PROFESIONAL, IMAN YANG KUAT, INTEGRITI YANG TINGGI SERTA TAQWA KEPADA YANG MENDALAM TERHADAP ALLAH SWT.***

It is crucial, too, that these leaders possess transparent and ethically clean track record in whatever profession they were trained in or whatever public position they held at state or federal levels, and that their motives for political management and leadership have to be ethically-driven and proceed from hearts (*kalbu*, or *hati nurani* in Malay) which are filled with genuine concern, compassion, empathy and love for the welfare of the people as a whole. These leaders should truly be embodiments of the principles of “*bersih* (morally and spiritually), *cekap dan amanah*” (clean, efficient/competent and trustworthy) which became very popular in public administration of the 1983-1988 period. Last but not least, they have to provide good examples of leadership within the democratic political system, practice democratic and servant-leadership principles, and respect the results of democratic elections even if the results are not in favour of the Muslim or Muslim-Malay communities.

I think it is obvious that the emergence, production and development of this new breed of leaders cannot come out of vacuum – without the above three drivers -- nor can it be produced by the conventional leadership paradigms which do not address the spiritual and moral problems of human beings or the future goal of the good life in the Hereafter. It does not mean that, without the prospect that the three drivers mentioned above would develop in the next few years, the proposed agenda

of Malay-Muslim political transformation cannot proceed. This breed of leaders can be produced by adopting, following and going through what I would call the Theocentric Leadership Paradigm (TLP) based on the Prophetic model which will be discussed in detail below. Nevertheless, in order to produce and sustain the new breed of leaders on a large and regular scale, it would be ideal if the following educational infrastructure is available locally or internationally to serve as the breeding ground or seed-beds in which the seeds of *ummatic* future leadership could sprout:

a) The existence of a system of education which gives high priority to character development and values-based education in the national education system;

b) The existence of a system of holistic primary, secondary and higher secondary Islamic education which integrates general education with Islamic religious knowledge and ethical values, and whose goal is the production of integrated, holistic and balanced Believers with God-fearing souls (*Mu'minūn-Muttaqūn*), and;

c) The existence of tertiary educational institutions – public or private -- in Malaysia which prepare graduates in order to become competent Islamic leaders, managers or professionals of high moral integrity with appropriate problem-solving skills, who are imbued with Islamic spiritual-ethical values. Private Islamic tertiary institutions of this kind could be available in other countries, such as Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan, South Africa, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kuwait, Sudan, Nigeria, U.K. U.S.A. and Australia. They could become the future overseas centres of holistic higher Islamic education producing the new breed of leaders for the Muslim world.

d) The existence of Malaysian Islamic youth organisations, movements, NGOs and Muslim political parties which could work together to also produce political leaders of the new breed. Muslim political parties could use their own political recruitment, caderisation and education programmes for implementing the transformation agenda. Some tertiary educational institutions – faith-based or otherwise -- in the country could also be urged to develop and institutionalise the Theocentric Leadership Paradigm aimed at producing the new breed of leaders for the Muslim *ummah*. I foresee that more private Islamic institutions of higher learning



of international quality would emerge in Malaysia and Indonesia in the near future which are based on the holistic, integrated and comprehensive Islamic educational worldview. They, together with other institutions or organisations dedicated to the production of the new leaders, could be the new sources for the recruitment, nurturing and moulding of the new leaders of Muslim socio-political transformation in the years ahead. Already there are a few private holistic Islamic educational institutions in Malaysia which can serve as seed-beds of the new breed of Muslim leaders.

However, we have to bear in mind that the majority of Muslims in the world today, sad to say, seem to exist at the level of **nominal** religiosity, as people known as “Muslims” by virtue of being born to Muslim parents, whereas Allah SWT wants people who embrace Islam to become *Mu’minūn-Muḥsinūn-Muttaqūn* (with the unity of *īmān*, *iḥsān* and *taqwā*) human beings, or, better still, become *Muḥibbūna’Llāh* (Lovers of Allah SWT). Their lack of knowledge of the teachings of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.) forces them to live as nominal Muslims or, at best, as ritual-oriented Muslims. Having only the bare minimum knowledge of Islam, they become convenient followers or beneficiaries of the secular-oriented conventional systems in Muslim countries. At the same time the ignorant masses and those young Muslims who lack sound religious knowledge are easily exposed to the poisons and viruses of immorality, misinformation, anti-Islamic propaganda, fake knowledge, false wisdom, nihilism, relativism, Islamophobia, agnosticism, atheism, post-modern meaninglessness, deceptions of all kind in the social media and the Internet.

At any rate, we cannot ignore the fact the Qur’an emphasises that as obedient servants of Allah SWT, Muslims are supposed to be living at the preferred level of *Mu’minūn-Muḥsinūn-Muttaqūn*, but they should strive to be at the level of *Muḥibbūna’Llāh*, as Lovers of Allah SWT, of His Beloved Messenger (s.a.w.) and of Striving in His Path because those who have true *īmān* are described by Allah SWT as having the greatest love for their Compassionate and All-Mighty Master:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ  
أَمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ....

**Yet among people are some who take others as equals to Allah and love them as Allah alone should be loved; but those who (truly) believe, they love Allah more than all else.** [emphasis added] (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 165)

In the above verse of the Qur'an, Allah SWT informs us that His servants who have *īmān* in Him shall love Him above everything else so that they would benefit tremendously from Divine grace, mercy, protection, blessings, power or "invisible soldiers" -- various responses of Allah SWT to the true submission, obedience, dedication and love from the true servants, the Believers. "**True faith requires that a man should give absolute priority to seeking God's good pleasure and should hold nothing too dear to sacrifice for the sake of God,**" says Abul A'la Mawdudi in his commentary on the above verse. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari).

Since many of the Muslim countries' problems and crises are a consequence of their failure to follow the guidance and values of Islam, either due to the influence of bad leadership, poor governance or ignorance of Islam, it is most crucial that adult and educated Muslims understand fully what it means to become Believers (*Mu'minūn*). We have already learned from the *Ummah Wasaʿat* verse about the Divinely prescribed responsibilities, roles and goals as a Community of Believers. One Makkan verse with similar import with the *Ummah Wasaʿat* Madinan verse but with different wordings emphasise the responsibility of Muslims to strive in Allah's cause to the best of their ability, to play the role of witnessing unto mankind and the duty to hold fast to the religion of Allah SWT. They are being assured by Allah SWT that He is present with the patient Believers as the Best Protector and the Best Helper for them. Therefore, they have no reason to be worried about discharging their responsibilities or having to face adverse circumstances:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۗ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ  
 مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۗ مَلَأَ آيَاتِكُمْ إِبرَاهِيمَ ۗ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۖ مِنْ قَبْلِ  
 وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ  
 ۗ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۗ  
 فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

**Strive in the cause of Allah in a manner worthy of that striving. He has chosen you (for His task), and He has not laid upon you any hardship in religion. Keep to the**

***faith of your father Abraham. Allah named you Muslims earlier and even in this (Book), that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over all mankind. So establish Prayer, and pay Zakah, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector. What an excellent Protector; what an excellent Helper! [emphasis added] (Q. al-Ḥajj 22:78)***

Commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi:

The Arabic word *jihad* is very comprehensive. It includes every kind of effort, exertion, conflict and war. *Jihad* for the cause of Allah means that it should be performed for His service and for His approval against those who prevent others from following His Way. The performance of *jihad* also requires that one should first of all fight against his own self in order to subdue it. For there can be no true *jihad* unless one fights against his evil self and subdues his desires and lusts to the obedience of Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself has emphasized the need for this *jihad*. Once when the warriors for the cause of Allah returned from *jihad*, he said: ***You have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad.*** They asked: ***What is that greater Jihad.*** The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: ***It is the jihad against his own desires and lusts.*** [emphasis added] (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari).

The ability to control the desires, sustain the purification of the soul (***tazkiyah al-nafs***) or the cleansing of the heart (***taṭhīr al-qalb***) and wisely direct the *Ummah* to the right goal of comprehensive and holistic wellbeing (*al-Falāḥ*), instead of the wrong and deceptive goals of ethnic dominance, nationalistic glory or materialistic pleasures, is the hallmark of true Islamic leadership which is sadly lacking in many Muslim countries, including Malaysia.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE NECESSITY OF *TARBIYAH RŪḤIYYAH* (SPIRITUAL EDUCATION) OR *TARBIAH ĪMĀNIYYAH* AS THE CORE OF THE THEOCENTRIC LEADERSHIP PARADIGM

Coming now to the mechanism for the major transformation agenda of Muslim politics, namely a systematic and institutionalised spiritual education for the Muslim leaders and those aspiring to be managers or leaders of society, there are at least two important contributions of contemporary scholars that we can refer to for our benefit. The first is by Sa`īd Ḥawwā, with the title *Tarbiyatuna al-Rūḥiyyah* (1992) (translated into Malay as *Pendidikan Spiritual* (2010) and published by Mutiara Ilmu Selektia Sdn Bhd), and the second is by Dr. Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Mensufikan Salafi dan Mensalafikan Sufi* (2008) (tr. of his book written in Arabic, *Tafsīr Fiqh al-Sulūk fī Ḍau' al-Qur'ān wa al-Sunnah*). In this book, al-Qaraḍāwī gives an excellent explanation as to why this kind of education is much needed today:

From my real experience and field activities, either with the common people or with intellectuals, among the negligent people or those activists of a variety of Muslim NGOs, I draw the conclusion that they – without exception – are greatly in need of sincere education for the internalisation of true faith in all its dimensions (*Tarbiah Imani*).

It is this *tarbiah* which cleans their hearts from love of this *dunya* and love of *diri* (self); which leads them towards Allah SWT; *tarbiah* which liberates them from worshipping matter; base desires and bad thoughts so that they would only be worshipping Allah, until they are able at the end to clean thoughts from polytheistic tendencies, clean the hearts from hypocrisy, remove the tongues away from making false speeches, clean the eyes from treachery, distancing words from fun and frivolousness, clean acts of worship from *riyā'* (ostentation), clean human interactions from fraud, and distancing life from contradictions. In other words, they are in need of cleansing of the soul as a basis of all forms of gain. (Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Mensufikan Salafi dan Mensalafikan Sufi*. Yogyakarta: USWAH, 2008: 34)

I agree with Dr Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī that the Muslim community should follow the example of spiritual-moral excellence of the earlier generation of Muslims based on the Prophetic model which developed:

[A] *Rabbānī* (God-oriented) Generation, emulate their morality and practice the 77 branches of faith in their lives, such that they would reach the level of *Iḥsān* (spiritual-moral intelligence and beauty) in which they worship Allah SWT as though they see Him, but even if they cannot (in fact) see Him, they are conscious that Allah SWT actually sees them. (Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Mensufikan Salafi dan Mensalafikan Sufi*. Yogyakarta: USWAH, 2008:35)

With regard to the dangers of being afflicted with serious spiritual ailments, especially for Muslims in leadership position, I cannot agree more with Dr. Qaraḍāwī when he says that a Muslim needs to know his/her weaknesses, the diseases of the spiritual heart, the delusions of base desires, and the doors through which Satan enters [into human hearts]. They have to know how to prevent themselves from those diseases to the best of their abilities, because prevention is better than cure, and then how to overcome them if they have been afflicted. He laments:

Unfortunately, human beings who are suffering from spiritual diseases tend to give more serious attention to physical diseases. They take lightly their spiritual ailments. But even if they are aware of their spiritual diseases, where are they going to find spiritual doctors? The religious scholars (*ulamā'*) are the ones who should in reality have the competency to deal with those diseases...(but what if those ulama' themselves have become afflicted by those diseases). (Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Mensufikan Salafi dan Mensalafikan Sufi*. Yogyakarta: USWAH, 2008: 35-36).

Dr Yusuf al-Qaradawi elaborates the content of the imperative spiritual education by focussing on its seven foundations – 1. Faith in *Tauḥīd* in the purest sense without any element of associationism (*Shirk*) of any kind, concrete or abstract. 2. Following strictly the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* as the Divine, original and authentic sources of Islamic spirituality. 3. Holistic and comprehensive spirituality. 4. Continuous worship of Allah SWT in all aspects of life. 5. Spirituality that does not undermine the simplicity, rationality, realism and middle-of-the-road religiosity of Islam. 6. Spirituality that is balanced and moderate. 7. Spirituality that is manifested and actualised in a variety of spheres of the Believer's life. (Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Mensufikan Salafi dan Mensalafikan Sufi*. Yogyakarta: USWAH, 2008: 44-73)

## 9.1. *Īmān* and *Taqwā* as Solid Foundations of Character Development of Muslim Followers and Leaders In the Theocentric Leadership Paradigm

Throughout the Qur'an Allah SWT stresses the point that Believers or those who have true *īmān* (*alladhīna āmanū*) and do good deeds (*wa `amilu al-ṣāliḥāt*) shall be truly successful and shall be saved from true and lasting loss and misery (*al-Khusrān*). In addition to *īmān* and *`amal salih*, *taqwā* is needed to sustain *īmān* and to ensure that human deeds become truly righteous, freed from all forms of *munkar* and earn the pleasure of Allah SWT. Hence, the frequently repeated commandments of Allah SWT in the Qur'an not just to Muslims but to Prophets and Messengers as well to make the quality of *taqwā* a primary attribute of their personalities and actions. It is therefore worthwhile to take some time to understand the significance and positive consequences to be expected from the integration and inculcation of *īmān* and *taqwā* in the personality, lives and culture of Believers. We shall briefly look into some verses of the Qur'an which show the positive effects and implications of the integration of *īmān* and *taqwā* in the Believers' personality and behaviour.

### 9.2 (A). The Lives and Property of Believers Have Already “Been Bought” by Allah SWT:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ  
يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ □ وَعَدَا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي  
التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا  
بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ □ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

***Surely Allah has purchased of the Believers their lives and their belongings and in return has promised that they shall have Paradise. They fight in the Way of Allah, and slay and are slain. Such is the promise He has made incumbent upon Himself in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Qur'an. Who is more faithful to his promise than Allah? Rejoice, then, in the bargain you have made with Him. That indeed is the mighty triumph. (Q. al-Taubah 9: 111)***

Commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi:

In this verse that aspect of the Islamic faith which determines the nature of the relationship between Allah and His servants has been called a transaction. This means that faith is not merely a metaphysical conception but is, in fact, a contract by which the servant sells his life and possessions to Allah and in return for this accepts His promise that He would give him the Garden in the life after death. In order to comprehend the full implications of this transaction, let us first understand its nature.

We should note it well at the outset that, in reality, this transaction is not in regard to the actual selling of the life and possessions of the servant to Allah in the literal sense, for Allah is in fact the real Owner of man's life and possessions. Allah alone has the right of ownership because He is the Creator of man and of everything he possesses and uses. Therefore there is no question at all of selling and buying in the worldly sense; for man possesses nothing of his own to sell, and Allah has no need to buy anything because everything already belongs to Him. However, there is one thing which has entirely been entrusted to man by Allah, that is, the freedom of will and the freedom of choice, and the transaction concerns that thing.... (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari).

## 9.2. (B). Highest Status Conferred by Allah SWT on Believers Who Make Serving The Cause Of Allah SWT as Their Primary Preoccupation:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ هَاجَرُوا وَ جَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ  
أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

***Those who have believed and emigrated and striven in His cause with their belongings and their persons have the highest rank in the sight of Allah. It is they who are triumphant (Q. al-Taubah 9:20).***

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَ لَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

***Do not, then, either lose heart or grieve: for you shall surely gain the upper hand if you are true Believers (Q. Āl 'Imrān 3:139).***

## 9.2. (C). Believers are Supposed to be Obedient to Allah SWT and His Messenger (s.a.w.) and are Urged to be God-Fearing:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْإِنْفَالِ قُلِ الْإِنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ فَاتَّبِعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا  
دَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

***They ask you concerning the spoils of war? Tell them: 'The spoils of war belong to Allah and the Messenger. So fear Allah, and set things right between you, and obey Allah and His Messenger if you are true Believers [emphasis added] (Q. al-Anfāl 8: 1).***

**9.2. (D). True Believers Love Allah SWT above Everything Else:**

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ  
 آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ  
 لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ

***Yet there are some who take others as equals to Allah and love them as Allah alone should be loved; but those who (truly) believe, they love Allah more than all else. If only the wrong-doers were to perceive now – as they will perceive when they will see the chastisement – that all power belongs to Allah alone, and that Allah is severe in chastisement! (Q. al-Baqarah 2: 165)***

**9.2. (E). Believers are Guarded and Protected by Allah SWT**

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ  
 كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ  
 أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

***Allah is the Guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of every darkness into light. And those who disbelieve, their guardians are the evil ones; they bring them out of light into all kinds of darkness. These are destined for the Fire, and there shall they abide (Q. al-Baqarah 2: 257).***

إِن تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمُ الْفَتْحُ ۗ وَإِن تَنْتَهُوا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَإِن  
 تَعُودُوا نَعُدَّ ۗ وَلِنُغْنِيَ عَنْكُم فِتْنَتَكُمْ سَيِّئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ  
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

***(Tell the unbelievers:) 'If you have sought a judgement, then surely a judgement has come to you. And if you desist from disobedience, it is all the better for you. But if you revert to your mischief, We will again chastise you;***



**and your host, howsoever numerous, will never be of any avail to you. Know well, Allah is with the Believers [emphasis added] (Q. al-Anfāl 8: 19).**

## 9.2. (F). The *Taqwā* Imperative in the Personality and Behaviour of Muslim Leaders and Follower

Allah SWT has made it very clear that Believers with the quality of *taqwā* (as *Muttaqūn* or *alladhīna attaḥau*) shall be able to benefit fully from Divine guidance bounties and positive assurances. With this quality, they shall be able to remain constantly on the Divine path of life as enunciated in the Qur'an and elaborated by the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.), and eventually they will be granted *al-Falāḥ* and entry in Paradise in the Hereafter. Among the basic characteristics of the *Muttaqūn* are that they possess strong faith in transcendent realities, including in all the attributes of Allah SWT, and they have firm conviction in the life of the Hereafter and its inevitability, as indicated in the following verses of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*: and others to follow:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ ۚ فِيهِ ۚ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ۚ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَ  
يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ  
إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى  
مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

**This is the Book of Allah, there is no doubt in it; it is a guidance for the God-fearing; Those who believe in the existence of that which is beyond the reach of perception, who establish Prayer and spend out of what We have provided them, who believe in what has been revealed to you (O Muhammad) and what was revealed before you (O Muhammad), and have firm faith in the Hereafter. Such are on true guidance from their Lord; such are the truly Successful. [emphasis added] (Q. al-Baqarah 2: 2-5)**

## 9.2. (G). Positive Consequences of *Taqwā* as Promised by Allah SWT

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا ۗ إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ  
يُورِثُهَا مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۗ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

**Moses said to his people: 'Seek help from Allah and be steadfast. Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah 'alone'. He grants it to whoever He chooses of His servants. The best outcome is for the God-fearing [emphasis added](Q. al-A`rāf 7: 128).**

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

**But Allah loves only those who fulfil their covenant and fear Allah. Truly Allah loves the God-fearing [emphasis added] (Q. Āl `Imrān 3: 76)**

In addition to loving the God-fearing (*Muttaqūn*) Believers, the Qur'an teaches Muslims that Allah SWT loves the *Muhsinūn* (those with moral-spiritual excellence), *Muqsiṭūn* (those who are just and fair), the *Tawwabūn* (those who are repentant), the *Mutawakkilūn* (those who place their trust in Allah SWT), and the *Mutaṭahhirūn* (those who purify themselves). These personalities represent, in fact, the interrelated aspects of the remarkable personality of the Believers whose characteristics are detailed in many *Sūrahs* and verses of the Qur'an (e.g. Q. Āl `Imrān 3:160; *al-Mu'minūn* 23:1-11, 57-61; *al-Nisā'* 4: 140-144; *al-Sajdah* 32: 15-17; *al-Shūrā* 42: 36-39; *al-Mumtaḥanah* 60: 1-6; *al-Şaff* 61: 2-3, 10-14; *al-Taubah* 9: 119; *al-Isra'* 17: 53-55; *al-Ḥadīd* 57: 16,19; *al-Burūj* 85: 6-11, etc.)

مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ  
مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ  
يَجْتَنِبُ مَنِ رُسُلِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ فَأَمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۗ وَإِن تُؤْمِنُوا  
وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

**Allah will not let the Believers stay in the state they are: He will set the wicked apart from the good. Allah is not going to disclose to you what is hidden in the realm beyond the reach of perception, but He chooses from among His Messengers whom He wills (to intimate such knowledge). Believe, then, in Allah and in His Messengers; and if you believe and become God-fearing, yours will be a great reward [emphasis added](Q. Āl `Imrān 3: 179).**

بَلَىٰ ۚ إِنَّ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ هَٰذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُم  
بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ

**Yes indeed, if you are perseverant and patient and be God-fearing, and then the enemy comes against you instantly, your Lord will reinforce (and strengthen) you with five thousand swooping angels [emphasis added] (Q. Āl `Imrān 3: 125).**

وَيُنَجِّي اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ لَا يَمَسُّهُمُ السُّوءُ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

**But as for the God-fearing, Allah will deliver them on account of their achievements: no harm shall visit them nor shall they grieve [emphasis added] (Q. al-Zumar 39: 61).**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُّضَاعَفَةً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تُفْلِحُونَ

**O you who have believed! Do not swallow interest, doubled and redoubled, and be God-fearing so that you may attain true success [emphasis added] (Q. Āl `Imrān 3: 130).**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ  
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

**O you who have believed! If you fear Allah He will grant you a Criterion<sup>24</sup> and will cleanse you of your sins and forgive you. Allah is Lord of abounding bounty. [emphasis added] (Q. al-An`ām 8: 29)**

وَ نَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

**And We delivered those who have believed and were God-fearing [emphasis added] (Q. Fuṣṣilat 41:18)**

....وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا

وَيَرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ ۗ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا

... وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا

ذَلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ أَنْزَلَهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَكْفِرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ  
أَجْرًا

. ...**And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out from all hardships.**

**And He will provide him from sources unimaginable to him. 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...and whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him. That is the Command of Allah, which He has sent down to you; and whosoever fears Allah and deeps his duty to Him, He will expiate from him his sins, and will enlarge his reward [emphasis added] (Q. al-Ṭalāq 65: 2-5).**

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ ۖ وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ  
يَتَّقُونَ ۗ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

**The life of this world is nothing but a sport and a pastime, and the life of the Hereafter is far better for those who are God-fearing. Will you not, then, understand? [emphasis added] (Q. al-An`ām 6: 32)**

## 9.2. (H). Allah SWT Joins *Īmān* and *Taqwā* to Produce Remarkable Positive Effects in the Believers' Lives and Activities

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ  
مُسْلِمُونَ

**O you who have believed! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and see that you do not die save in the state of submission to Allah [emphasis added] (Q. Āl-`Imrān 3: 102).**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

**O you who have believed! Fear Allah and seek the means to come near to Him, and strive hard in His way; maybe you will attain True Success [emphasis added] (Q. al-Mā'idah 5: 35)**

مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِي مَنْ رُسُلَهُ مَنِ يَشَاءُ ۚ فَأَمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۗ وَإِنْ تُوْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

**Allah will not let the Believers stay in the state they are: He will set the wicked apart from the good. Allah is not going to disclose to you what is hidden in the realm beyond the reach of perception, but He chooses from among His Messengers whom He wills (to intimate such knowledge). Believe, then, in Allah and in His Messengers; and if you believe and become God-fearing, yours will be a great reward [emphasis added] (Q. Āl `Imrān 3: 79).**

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِن كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

**Had the people of those towns believed and been God-fearing, We would certainly have opened up to them blessings from the heavens and the earth; but they gave the lie [to their Prophets] and so We seized them for their deeds [emphasis added] (Q. al-A`rāf 7: 96).**

وَ نَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

**(41:18) And We delivered those who believed and were God-fearing [from our terrible punishment] [emphasis added](Q. Fuṣṣilat 41: 18)**

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي  
الْآخِرَةِ ۗ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ وَلَا يَحْزُنُكَ  
قَوْلُهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ۗ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

**The ones who believe and are God-fearing. For them are glad tidings in this world and in the Hereafter. The words of Allah shall not change. That is the supreme triumph. (O Prophet!) Let not the utterances of the opponents distress you. Indeed, all honour is Allah's. He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [emphasis added] (Q. Yūnus 10: 63-65)**

It is clear from the revelations of the Qur'an that when *īmān* is strengthened with *taqwā*, Believers will not only be behaving with good moral and ethical conduct, but they can reach an elevated stage of spiritual development and spiritual proximity to Allah SWT, such that they become the fortunate recipients of many wonderful Divine bounties, blessings and assistance. Therefore, it is crucial that Muslim leaders and followers develop in themselves the attributes of true *Mu'minūn* and the *Muttaqūn*. One of the remarkable characteristics of true Believers is that, under adverse or favourable circumstances, they will respond in the most appropriate way as Allah SWT and the Prophet (s.a.w.) expect of them. But when they reach a higher level of spiritual relationship with Allah SWT, He would extend Divine love to them and their wishes would be fulfilled by Allah SWT. In a well-known *hadīth qudsī*, we are informed that as a result of the Believer's advanced spiritual development, Allah SWT would love him/her and would comply with his/her wishes:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

" إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَالَ: مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا، فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ، كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا، وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لِأَعْطِيْتَهُ، وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأُعِيذَنَّهُ، وَمَا تَرَدَّدْتُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ أَنَا فَاعِلُهُ تَرَدُّدِي عَنْ نَفْسِ عَبْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِ، يَكْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ وَأَنَا أَكْرَهُ مَسَاءَتَهُ "

(البخاري)

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said: ***“Allah (Mighty and Sublime is He) said: Whosoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him. My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon***

***him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it. I do not hesitate about anything as much as I hesitate about [seizing] the soul of My faithful servant: he hates death and I hate hurting him.***  
(al-Bukhārī)

### **9.3. Infusing *Īmān* and *Taqwā* in the Personality and Life of Muslim Followers and Leaders**

The different ways of infusing *īmān* and *taqwā* at the levels of individual personality and personal life are listed below from 9.3.1. to 9.3.9. The infusion of *īmān* and *taqwā* into the personality and personal life of followers and leaders, in addition to the acquisition of other relevant knowledge, values and skills would directly contribute to the strengthening of the culture of integrity, good governance, transparency, accountability, cleanliness, justice, work excellence, sacrifice and team-spirit in Muslim political parties and organisations. Both followers and leaders are required to continue strengthening, improving, purifying and elevating their *īmān* and *taqwā* by a variety of ways, depending on the respective levels of knowledge, experience, commitment and wisdom. Among the general Islamic intellectual, spiritual and social requirements they need to pay special attention are the following:

9.3.1. Understand the worldview of the Qur'an to obtain the God-given *Furqān* (the Divine Criterion or Yardstick to distinguish Truth from Falsehood) and *Nūr* (Divine Light) by which Muslims would properly evaluate the present realities, challenges and crises, and practise Islam as a comprehensive and holistic Way of Life (*niḡām al-ḡayāh*).

9.3.2. Understand and imbibe the concept of *Ummah Wasaḡ* (The Community of Justice, Excellence and Balance) as the goal of the Muslim *ummah* in the world and in Malaysia, with the aim of attaining the ultimate goal of *al-Falāḡ* (true success and wellbeing in this world and in the

Hereafter) and the *Riḍwāna’Lallāh* (goodly pleasure of Allah SWT) as the loftiest and highest human attainment.

9.3.3. Be conscious always of *al-Ākhirah* (the Hereafter) as the Real Life (*laḥiya’ l-ḥayawān*) and True End to be attained via *iṣlāhi* (reformational) and *falāḥī* (true wellbeing-oriented) acts in this present worldly life. Muslims need to be motivated by the consciousness of the terrible sufferings, punishments and ignominy of *al-Jahannam* (Hell) as well as the inexplicable and everlasting happiness and true felicity of *al-Jannah*. Let the yearning for Divine *Riḍwān* (Goodly Pleasure) be our highest, noblest and loftiest activity of our *qalb* (spiritual heart) day and night.

9.3.4. Be careful to avoid the tricks, deceptions, traps or strategies of Satan, the pitfalls of *al-Khusrān* (real loss and misery in the Hereafter) and *Sakḥaṭ* (displeasure) and *Ghaḍab* (wrath) of Allah SWT as one of the characteristics of the personality of *Mu’minūn-Muttaqūn*.

9.3.5. Know well the background of the existing social, economic, legal, political and cultural realities and contexts (*fiqh al-wāqi’*) and understanding them and interpreting them from the worldview of the Qur’an.

9.3.6. Overcome the inner obstacles or diseases of the spiritual heart (*qalb*) by undertaking the personal duty of *Tazkiyah al-Nafs* (purification of the self) and *Taḥīr al-Qalb* (cleansing of the spiritual heart) as a regular spiritual *amal* (practice).

9.3.7. Fulfil the social responsibilities and be actively engaged in local community development activities which should also include non-Muslim communities, to strengthen harmonious relationship with them and to promote the mission of spreading mercy and compassion to all communities in the spirit of “cooperation in righteousness and piety” (*ta`āwanū `ala al-birr wa al-taqwā*, in Q. *al-Mā'idah* 5: 2) and knowing one another in peaceful co-existence (as enjoined in Q. *al-Hujurāt* 49: 13) as



part of the permanent *ummic*, political party's or organisational identities.

9.3.8. Make the sincere intention to be involved in politics or party activities as an arena of *'Ibādah*, *'Amal Ṣāliḥ* and Islamic *Da'wah*. We have stressed repeatedly in this book that It is incumbent to practice *amar ma'rūf nahi munkar* as a religious and social duty, individually and collectively.

9.3.9. Develop *imān* and *taqwā* to the level of *Maḥabbah/Ḥubb Allāh* as the highest spiritual development of God-fearing believers (*Mu'minūn-Muttaqūn*).

After knowing the immense value of *imān* and *taqwā* in the Believers' life, organisation, carrier, society and civilisation, having internalised them in their spiritual hearts, and manifested them in the personality and behaviour of the Believers, they should look forward to getting Divine blessings, assistance and protection in material or immaterial forms as promised by Allah SWT. The firm commitment, consistency, perseverance and holding fast to conditions of *imān* and *taqwā* by both followers and leaders are bound to lead them to a higher level of moral intelligence and spiritual intimacy with their Compassionate Master and Sustainer. They will find it easier to cope with or solve worldly social problems arising from negative attitudes, emotional pressures or mental distress such as depression, anxiety and fear which are reportedly to be on the rise exponentially in many so-called "developed" societies in recent years, and during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The need to sustain the condition of spiritual-ethical *istiḳāmah* (constancy, determination and unflinching commitment) in order to be able to benefit continuously from the this-worldly blessings as well as the reward of entrance into *al-Jannah* (Paradise) with its everlasting bliss, felicity and true happiness cannot be over emphasised because Believers with those spiritual qualities are bound to be subjected to different forms of trials and tribulations in their lives and careers. It is necessary for Believers to understand, remember and be reminded of the following

promises of Allah SWT to those who remain firm and consistent in their belief that Allah SWT is their only Master, Guide, Sustainer and Protector :

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا  
وَلَا  
تَحْزَنُوا وَابْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي  
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُى أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا  
مَا تَدَّعُونَ نُزُلًا مِّنْ غُفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ

***Those who say “Allah is our Lord” and then remain steadfast, upon them descend angels (and say): “Do not fear nor grieve, and receive good tidings of Paradise which you were promised. We are your companions in this world and in the Hereafter. There you shall have all that you desire and all what you will ask for. This is by way of hospitality from Him Who is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. [emphasis added](Q. Fussilat 41:30-32)***

There are many enlightening commentaries of classical exegetes on the above verse. The commentary by Abul A`la Mawdudi, in his *Tafheem al-Qur`an* as is reproduced below:

....The context clearly shows that in the conflict between the truth and falsehood just as the worshipers of falsehood are accompanied by the devils and mischievous people, so are the believers accompanied by the angels. On the one hand, the companions of the worshipers of falsehood show their misdeeds seem fair to them and assure them that the tyrannical and dishonest acts that they are committing are the very means of their success and through them only will their leadership and dominance remain safe in the world. On the other hand, the angels come down to the worshipers of the truth and give them the message that is being mentioned in the following. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur`an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, The Islamic Foundation, Leister, UK, 2016).

#### 9.4. Infusing *Ihsān* and *Maḥabbah* of Allah SWT and His Messenger (s.a.w.) into the Personality of Muslim Leaders

The principle and value of *ihsān* (beneficence, benevolence, spiritual-ethical excellence and beauty, treating or caring for people with kindness over and above the limits of justice or legal obligations) are highly regarded and most appreciated by Allah the Beneficent Sustainer (e.g. Q. *al-Nisā'* 4: 36; *al-Isrā'* 17: 23). He has declared that He loves the *Muḥsinūn* (e.g. Q. 2: 195; *Āl 'Imrān* 3: 134, 148, *al-Mā'idah* 5: 13, 93) and commands all Muslims – leaders or followers -- to behave with *al-'adl* (justice) and *al-ihsān* (Q. *al-Naḥl* 16: 90; cf. Q. *al-Ḥujurāt* 49: 9; *al-Nisā'* 4: 58). Thus *al-'adl* and *al-ihsān* have been identified by Islamic religious scholars as the two indispensable and primary characteristics of Islamic governmental, political, economic, social and legal systems and institutions. But it should be remembered by all Muslims that **the highest value in the hierarchy of Islamic spiritual-ethical values** to be inculcated in the personality of Believers, among political leaders as well as followers, is that of ***maḥabbah*** (love) of Allah SWT, ***maḥabbah*** of the Messenger of Allah SWT and ***maḥabbah*** of striving for the cause of Allah SWT. Hence the personality of true Believers is characterised as consisting, among others, of intense love of Allah (***ashaddu ḥubban li'Liāh***) above everything else (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 165; *al-Taubah* 9: 24, 20-23). As such, the complete true Believer is the sincere and humble servant of Allah S.W.T. who possesses the attributes of ***islām, imān, taqwā, ihsān*** and ***maḥabbah*** -- all integrated and justly-balanced in his/her personality and life.

The fusion and nurturing of these fundamental spiritual-ethical values are the most valuable spiritual endeavours in the personality, society, culture and civilisation of Muslims. With this harmonious integration of the spiritual-moral values as the solid spiritual foundations of Islamic personality, Muslims have to equip themselves with the necessary knowledge, wisdom, attitudes, skills, technologies, plans and strategies – individually and collectively as a community – in order to execute in this worldly life the fundamental Divinely-prescribed missions of :

(1) ***ibādah*** (responsibility of worship and service of the servants of Allah S.W.T. for Him alone as the purpose of they being created by the Compassionate and Merciful Master);

(2) ***Khilāfah*** (responsibility of vicegerency or stewardship of the earth in accordance with the plan, guidelines and commandments of the Creator, Owner and Sustainer of planet Earth);

(3) ***Tazkiyah*** (responsibility of self-purification as well as developing sound human and civilizational growth with spiritual and ethical values);

(4) ***Iṣlāḥ*** (responsibility of carrying out social, political, economic, cultural, educational and moral reforms, reconstructions, improvements in accordance with the higher objectives of the Divine Way and Code of Conduct (***maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah***) and the worldview of *Tauḥīd*);

(5) ***Umrān / Imārah*** (responsibility of designing, constructing, building, developing and nourishing a virtuous/righteous human society, environment and civilization), and;

(6) ***Ummah Wasaṭ*** (**Community of Justice, Excellence, Goodness and Balance, in Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 143**) (i.e. the responsibility to actualise the *Muslim Ummah* that represents and manifests the noble qualities of justice, spiritual-ethical excellence, goodness and balance or equilibrium)

(7) ***Raḥmatan li'l-`ālamīn*** (“Compassion and Mercy for All the Worlds”, in Q. *al-Anbiyā'* 21: 107) (i.e. responsibility of Muslims as members of the Muslim community and as obedient and faithful followers of Allah’s most beloved Messenger, Muḥammad (s.a.w.), to spread, preach, manifest, act, share and translate in concrete terms the Islamic and Prophetic mission of spreading and manifesting love, mercy, compassion and peace to all the worlds – to fellow mankind including non-Muslims, animals, plants, and the world of nature).

By fulfilling the requirements and religious missions of true Believers by which they would attain holistic wellbeing (*al-Falāḥ*), the Believers become suitably qualified servants and vicegerents of Allah (S.W.T.), as well becoming suitable **Witnesses unto Mankind (as required by the goal of *Ummah Wasaṭ*)**, to earn the highest honour and great favour of the Compassionate Master, namely **His *riḍwān*** (goodly acceptance and pleasure) **in this *al-dunyā* and in the (future) *al-ākhirah***. As stated by the late Khurram Murad of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, U.K.. “For the Believer, the most coveted goal of life is to seek the good

pleasure of Allah and *Jannah* or Paradise.” (Khurram Murad, *In the Early Hours: Reflections on Spiritual and Self-Development*, 1999). Therefore, the well-known motto that Allah SWT teaches in the Qur’an, and which Muslims normally repeat in the opening supplication (*duā’ iftitāḥ*) at the beginning of their daily prayers, namely: **“Inna ṣalātī wa nusukī wa maḥyāya wa mamātī li’Llāhi Rabbi’l-`Ālamīn. Lā sharīka lahu wa bidhālika umirtu wa ana [awwalu’l-muslimīn] mina’l-muslimīn** [the bracketed phrase is the original in the Qur’an meant for the Prophet (s.a.w.), but replaced in the prayer of every Muslim to represent him/her, not the Prophet (s.a.w.)] should become the sincere pledge of all true Believers and lovers (*Muhibbūn*) of Allah (S.W.T.) and His Final Messenger (s.a.w.):

***Say: ‘Indeed my prayer, and all my acts of worship, and my living and my dying are for Allah (alone), the Sustainer of all the worlds. No one has a share of His divinity, and thus have I been commanded; and I shall be foremost among those who surrender themselves unto Him. (Q. al-An`ām 6: 162-163)***

## CHAPTER 10

### EQUIPPING THE NEW BREED OF MUSLIM POLITICAL LEADERS FOR MORE CHALLENGING RESPONSIBILITIES

We have emphasised above the necessity for a new breed of Muslim political leaders to provide the most desirable and appropriate leadership for the necessary transformation in Malay-Muslim political culture and behaviour national. We envisage that the new breed of *ummatic* leadership in the Malaysian socio-political context will shoulder heavier responsibilities particularly for those Muslims aspiring to be national and political leaders. This is because we believe the future of the world and Malaysia would be far more challenging and far more spiritually and ethically demanding. Already we are witnessing many of the Minor Signs of the Last Hour as described and prophesied by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) in many authentic *hadiths*. We have seen enough moral decay and chaos in Malaysian politics already because the people as a whole and the Muslim community and leaders have been operating in a political culture propped up by racial and communal leadership, and sustained by materialistic and pragmatic values.

Therefore, it is high time the Muslim intelligentsia and intellectuals in Malaysia demand that Malay-Muslim political leadership culture and values be spiritually and morally transformed so that the Muslim *ummah* could finally emancipate itself from the current toxic, demoralising and self-destructive political culture, not to speak of the more depressing trials to come in the future. This requires long-the construction of a new culture of justice, moral excellence, and balance between material and spiritual wellbeing – the main goals of *Ummah Wasat* that Allah SWT has clearly ordained for the Muslim Community. In this connection, budding politicians with ambition to be top political leaders, youthful aspirants for political leadership, and those seriously contemplating to enter the world of politics and national leadership among Muslims – of whatever ethnic origin, from East Malaysia or West Malaysia – must seriously consider acquiring the praiseworthy qualities of the new breed of leaders because of the more challenging future scenarios and the anticipated worsening global conditions.

Bearing in mind the failures and mistakes of current leadership culture and system the new leaders must not to repeat the mistakes, follies and treacherous acts of the current generation. In fact, they must resolve to become the future moral saviours of the *ummah* who shall redeem the lost dignity and honour of the Malay-Muslim community. Below are what I consider as among the most important spiritual, moral, psychological and intellectual qualities for future transformational Muslim political leadership:

**10.1. Possessing and practising the principles of justice (*`adl*), spiritual-moral values of goodness, benevolence and spiritual beauty (*khairiyyah*, *ihsān*), balance (*tawāzun*, *i`tidāl*), integrity (*amānah*, *istiqāmah*, *ṣidq*), humility (*tawāḍu'*), sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), humility, selflessness, accountability (*mas'ūliyyah*) to Allah SWT, high integrity, possessing sound knowledge and wisdom regarding complexities of the contemporary world and exposure to multi-ethnic and multi-religious dialogues. Their highest objective in life is to seek the good pleasure of Allah SWT (*ibtighā'* and *ittibā` riḍwāni`LLāh*) in addition to the principle of obedience (*ṭā`ah*) to Allah SWT, to Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w) and to the suitably and properly appointed or elected authorities (*ulu'l-amr*).**

10.2. Having professional knowledge and competency in different useful areas of specialisation, with relevant and appropriate skills that the time and changing circumstances call for, in addition to (i) having strong commitment to the *`Aqīdah*, *Sharī`ah* and *Akhlāq* of Islam, as well as to the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī`ah*, and (ii) having a good knowledge of the history of the nation and of the cultural, social, political, economic and religious development as well as the diversity of contemporary Malaysia;

10.3. Possessing the integrated personality and characteristics of *Mu'minūn* as highlighted in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, characterised by (i) good spiritual intelligence as the most important quotient, based on the values of *īmān*, *Taqwā*, *Ihsān* and *Maḥabbah*; together with (ii) good moral intelligence based on good character (*ḥusn al-khuluq*), including enjoining the *ma`rūf* and prohibiting the *munkar* together with other praiseworthy moral qualities (*ṣifāt maḥmūdah*); (iii) good emotional intelligence; (iv) good social intelligence with the values of love, empathy

and compassion; (v) good creativity intelligence to face new challenging circumstances (vi) good adversity quotient to cope and manage crisis or emergency situations and (vii) good intellectual quotient to be able to absorb new knowledge and acquire or cope with new technologies;

10.4. Having strong Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwwah Islāmiyyah*) principles, values and *ummatic* consciousness which transcend ethnic, linguistic or geographical identities or interests. With regard to relationship with non-Muslim individuals or communities, the strong Islamic brotherhood bond does not and should not lead to the weakening of peaceful and harmonious relations with them. In fact, prominent contemporary Islamic religious scholars around the world have been preaching and writing that, in light of the fact that the Qur'an enjoins peaceful and friendly relationship with fellow human beings of different religions under normal circumstances, and that non-Muslims are creatures of the same God and endowed with the same original primordial *fiṭrah*, Muslims should foster the brotherhood of common humanity (*ukhuwwah insāniyyah*) with their non-Muslim co-citizens in spite of the religious differences.

The new political leaders should also plan to cooperate or work together in peace and harmony with non-Muslims as neighbours, colleagues, co-citizens or foreigners, on the basis of respecting human dignity (*karāmah insāniyyah*) in spite of religious or ethnic differences; observance of the values of tolerance; respect for the rights of non-Muslims to believe in and practise their respective religions; acceptance of inter-religious and inter-cultural diversities; empathy, compassion and mercy – all of which are guided by the humanistic teachings of Islam (*insāniyyatu'l-Islām*), the compassion of Islam (*rahmāniyyatu'l-Islām*) and the excellent examples (*uswah ḥasanah*) of inter-religious communication and humanistic relationship bequeathed by the Prophet (s.a.w.) as well as following the Prophetic mission and method of *Raḥmatan li'l-`Ālamīn*. It is very important that Muslim political leaders of Malaysia remember and take lessons from the following decree of Allah SWT:

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ  
وَ اللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

***It may well be that Allah will implant love between you and those with whom you have had enmity. Allah is Most***



**Powerful; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Compassionate.**

لَا يَنْهَىكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الدِّينِ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَ تُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

**Allah does not forbid that you to be kind and just to those who did not fight against you on account of religion, nor drove you out of your homes. Surely Allah loves those who are equitable.**

إِنَّمَا يَنْهَىكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الدِّينِ قَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَنْ تَوَلَّوهُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

**Allah only forbids you to be friends with those who have fought against you on account of religion and who have driven you out of your homes and have abetted in your expulsion. And any who make friends with them, they are the wrong-doers. (Q. al-Mumtaḥinah 60: 7-9)**

The new Muslim political and national leaders in Malaysia also have the religious and national responsibility to spread the true message of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in the spirit of upholding the principle of justice and fairness, the principle of "knowing one another" (*ta`āraf*), religious tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*), respect for other people's rights, peaceful co-existence and spreading of compassion and mercy to all the worlds. Another important lesson from the Qur'an for Muslim leaders is that they should not follow or comply with the demands or pressures of the masses or of the followers if the demands and the pressures go against the tenets of justice, fairness and truth. They should realise that many popular demands or decisions of the grass-root leaders may conflict with Islamic religious principles or teachings. As good Islamic leaders they have to uphold justice and fairness even if their stand is disliked or rejected by the followers or grass-root leaders. They should be prepared to step down if they are pressured to compromise Islamic religious or ethical principles by the grass-root leaders or by their followers.

10.5. Readiness to strive and sacrifice time, money and energy for furthering the cause of Allah SWT (*fi sabīli'Liāh*); as exemplified by the early adherents of Islam and the Companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.). The new breed of political and national

leaders should also be ready to work collectively and unselfishly for the betterment of the nation and for the wellbeing of the people as a whole, and not just for their own religious, ethnic communities or parties. They need to learn how to balance their commitment to the commonly-shared national ideals and their commitment to the advancement of the *ummah*, to gain goodness and wellbeing in this world and in the Hereafter (*ḥasanah fi'd-dunyā* and *ḥasanah fi'l-ākhirah*).

10.6. Ability to establish and strengthen transnational network or collaboration as dictated by the principle of Islamic solidarity and brotherhood (*ukhuwwah Islāmiyyah*), without diminishing the spirit of patriotism and requirements of citizenship to Malaysia. In Southeast Asia, we would expect Muslim communities of Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore to be able to produce in the future Muslim NGOs or institutions which would be able to strengthen the social, educational, economic and political positions of the Muslim *ummah* in Malaysia. I foresee that in the next two to three decades, the globalising Islamic religious solidarity and trans-national collaboration efforts will play greater and more impactful roles in strengthening regional and global Islamic religious unity, and accelerating the growth of new and innovative Islamic educational, cultural, economic and political institutions in Malaysia and in Southeast Asia. The emerging Muslim culture and civilisation in Southeast Asia led and nurtured by the new breed of Muslim leaders in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand, Kampuchea and the Philippines in the next decade or more could well be the new model of peaceful multicultural and multireligious co-existence and cooperation within the context of a resurgent Asian continent.

10.7. With regard to the need to address the spiritual-moral development of would-be new politicians or leaders, it is crucial that suitably qualified and experienced experts in Islamic spiritual development and growth (*tarbiyah rūḥiyyah*) be employed, contracted, recruited or trained from within the human resources of the political party or organisation itself. Their job is to conduct specially-tailored spiritual education programmes on a regular basis and to play the role of moral-spiritual educators, moulders and coaches of good character (*Murabbūn*). Some of the more senior and more spiritual developed leaders could also be assigned the responsibility of assisting the *Murabbūn* in their spiritual-moral transformational programmes.

The spiritual-moral bonding that would grow out of these spiritual-moral transformational programmes, between the spiritually developed leaders and followers should become stronger, purer and more lasting than the party membership bonding of conventional political parties. Those programmes could also be integrated with appropriate political education modules. It is the sincere and genuine spiritual bonding, brotherly love and relationship of “*Bunyān Marṣūṣ*” (firmly joined structure, in Q. *al-Ṣaff* 61: 4) that would earn the guidance, blessings, protection and assistance of Allah SWT when such Divine grace and bounties are needed in the noble political struggle of true Believers, as indicated in many verses of the Qur’an, including Q. *Muḥammad* 47: 7-8; *al-Nūr* 24: 55; *al-A`rāf* 7: 96, 128; *Āl `Imrān* 3: 125; *al-Zumar* 39: 61; *al-An`ām* 8: 29; *al-Ṭalāq* 65: 2-5; *al-Mā`idah* 5: 35; *Yūnus* 10: 63-65; *Fuṣṣilat* 41: 18.

The Muslim followers and those aspiring to leadership roles in political parties should be trained and motivated by the experienced spiritual development experts and coaches, to undergo positively the process of inward transformation by several means -- one of which is the study of the lives and work of famous Muslim leaders known for their political probity, high ethical integrity, corruption-free personalities and servant-leadership models in the contemporary world. Both new leaders and followers also need to understand the phenomenon which the Qur’an describes as *Ḥizbu`sh-Shaiṭān* (lit. The Party of Satan), and *Ḥizbu`Llāh* (lit. The Party of Allah) in global or international ideological contexts. The following two verses contain references to the two opposing ideological or political communities or groups:

إِسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ ۗ  
 أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ

***Satan has taken hold of them, causing them to forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the Party of Satan. Surely Satan’s Party is bound to lose. [emphasis added] (Q.al-Mujādilah 58: 19. See also Q. al-Mā`idah 5: 56).***

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ  
 وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ كَتَبَ  
 فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ ۗ وَيَدْخُلُهُمُ جَنَّتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ

تَحْتَهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ  
حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

***You shall not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day befriending those who oppose Allah and His Messenger even though they be their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. He has inscribed faith in their hearts and has strengthened them with a spirit from Him, and He shall make them enter Gardens beneath which rivers flow. Therein they shall abide. Allah is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him. They belong to Allah's Party. Verily Allah's Party shall prosper. [emphasis added] (Q. *al-Mujādilah* 58: 22)***

In the above two verses, the Qur'an uses the word *hizb* which means “a group, a band, a clique or a party” in the modern sense of a political party. As political parties are the creation of modern Western society and they did not exist in the time of Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.), the term “The Party of Satan” in the Qur'an should not be understood as the Qur'an's endorsement of political parties. It refers to a group of people, community or organisation which struggles to oppose, and determined to prevail over or defeat the community or group that is committed to spread the teachings of Islam. Allah SWT promises that such groups would be among the “miserable losers in the Hereafter” (*al-Khāsirūn*). Similarly, the term “The Party of Allah” does not mean that Allah SWT endorses or has a political party. It refers to the community, band of people or group of Believers who are sincerely dedicated to the advancement of the cause of Islam and struggles for the cause, or objectives that are endorsed by the religion of Islam. It is this group of people who are assured by Allah SWT of being “people who are going to be truly successful, prosperous, happy and enjoying wellbeing in this world and in the next” (*al-Mufliḥūn*).

Having said that, it is also expected of the experienced Islamic spiritual experts and guides, to help train the followers or cadres and aspiring young political leaders to understand, prevent and overcome the variety of devious and deceptive ways of Satan which are aimed at destroying Muslim leaders – young or old – spiritually or morally by using the baits of worldly temptations and by corrupting the heart. It is common knowledge that many young aspiring leaders and even well-established political and national leaders – who were well-known to be practising

Muslims and full of idealistic aspirations and visions in the early stages of their political career – have fallen victims to Satanic guiles, deceptions, stratagems and traps. The 1 MDB scandal, for instance, is just the tip of the iceberg, or the summit of a mountain which grew out of layers of accumulated unethical practices which have been going on for years in the country, but they have been hidden from the eyes of the masses.

I like to mention here that when I was appointed by His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to be a member of the Advisory Board of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission for five years (2010-2015), I became aware of the extent of the culture of corruption and abuse of power among state leaders and federal ministers of Malaysia. Unfortunately, MACC officers could not go after the “big fishes” even when they had strong evidences, because the power to prosecute was in the hands of the Attorney General and, in such high profile cases, he would normally have to get the “go ahead” or “no objection” signal from the Prime Minister’s office. If for some reasons, the signal did not come down from the PM’s office, the “big fish” will continue to enjoy swallowing the “small fishes” even if his subordinates in his office knew what was going on under the table. But the officers in his office and other government servants who might be aware of the unethical acts of the big boss would not be inclined to reveal to MACC what was going on, because they too had been benefitting from the crumbs that had been falling from the table of the big boss. I also came to know that another reason why it was difficult to catch “big fishes” was that those big bosses were not stupid idiots. Since the stakes were very high, they were very smart in erasing or covering their tracks well, which made it extremely difficult for MACC to pin them down.

## CHAPTER 11

### ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF QALB PURIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE THEOCENTRIC LEADERSHIP PARADIGM

The agenda for *ummatic* and political culture transformation of the Malay-Muslim community, must necessarily include the proper political education and training for cadres, supporters and leaders in the political party or organisation, for which I am not qualified to speak and therefore it is not included in this little book of mine. What I would like to highlight here has to do with a special education and training programme arising from the absolute necessity and urgency of purifying the soul (*nafs*) or cleansing the spiritual heart (*qalb*) from becoming rusted, corrupted or hardened as a result of being infected by psycho-spiritual diseases, or from becoming hard (*qast*). The process of purification and development on a regular basis, is to prevent the heart from being deceived by worldly delusions, by aiming to reach the level of the “sound heart” (*qalb salīm*, in Q. *al-Shu`arā`* 26: 89, *al-Şāffāt* 37: 84), the “contrite heart” (*qalb munīb*, in Q. *Qāf* 50: 33) or, better yet, the state of “the peaceful, tranquil and satisfied soul” (*al-nafs al-muṭmainnah*, in Q. *al-Fajr* 89: 27-30).

One of the spiritual and religious responsibilities of the *Murabbūn* as well as specially-trained senior Muslim political or national leaders is to guide, advise and protect the followers and the party or organisation from becoming preys or victims of the traps and machinations of Satan with his array of delusions and deceptions (*ghurūr*), enticements (*waswasah*), footsteps (*khuṭuwāt*), seductions and illusions. Those political leaders who have reached higher levels of spiritual-moral development should be able to enlighten the followers, cadres and supporters to understand and be alert to the different types of unislamic environments and challenges such as: different forms of political corruption and hypocrisy, psycho-spiritual distress problems, negative social media, dangerous peer pressure, misleading traditions, obstructive cultures, false systems and subversive ideas, trends and institutions, as seen from the perspective of the worldview of *Tauḥīd*, in comparison with the prevailing secular ideologies, worldviews and systems.

With regard to the inner spiritual or emotional challenges emerging from the dangerous “diseases of the *qalb*”, I believe this challenge is best addressed and handled by qualified and experienced experts in Islamic spiritual development and growth who I would like to call “spiritual doctors” who could be engaged or employed from external sources to lead such spiritual-transformation sessions. Being experienced and qualified spiritual doctors, they should be able to make the party rank and file, the cadres as well as would-be new leaders to understand and overcome the impact of *al-nafs al-ammārah* and the disastrous effects of following the dictates of passion (*ittibā’ al-hawā*), lust or sensual desire (*shahwah*) upon the *qalb*. They should also be able to impart relevant and useful Islamic spiritual concepts, principles, practices and values from the works and experiences of great *Sunnī* Sufi masters and reputable Islamic reformist movement leaders in the past and in contemporary Muslim countries.

I share the view of Shaikh Dr. Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī that this spiritual training and education programme should be organised by all Muslim political parties, organisations or institutions and handled by experienced spiritual doctors. [emphasis added] They may be assisted by the *Murabbūn* personalities discussed earlier, or by qualified motivators or counsellors, towards the construction and development of a transformed political culture and behaviour that no longer tolerate, let alone sustain or reward, the old and current politics of corruption and hypocrisy. The Islamic spiritual doctors should, of course, be carefully selected not only by assessing their religious credentials, experience or track record. They should be spiritual experts who understand well the contemporary Malaysian socio-political contexts and are able to relate the spiritual and ethical teachings of the Qur’an, the *Sunnah* and the classical savants (*ḥukama’*) or great Sufis to the realities of Malaysian society, culture and politics.

The levels of knowledge, understanding, internalisation, enculturation and institutionalisation will have to be suited and tailor-made for party members at the basic, intermediate and advanced levels of spiritual-moral development. For the group of members who have been identified and selected to be among the top leaders of the party or organisation, a higher and more challenging training program within the parameters of the Theocentric Leadership Paradigm should be developed, instituted, upgraded and sustained as it is the most important level of leadership training. It is not possible to go into the details of such programmes which have to

be adjusted to suit different political parties and organisations. Moreover, there are a lot of materials to cover; therefore, the nature and structure of specific modules aimed at achieving specific targets of spiritual purification and growth within different organisations are best left to the leaders of the parties, organisations and the relevant spiritual doctors to decide.

What I would like to focus below is to explain the unique conception of the *qalb* in the Qur'an so that Muslim leaders and followers can fully understand and appreciate the central place of the *qalb* in Islam and its indispensability in Islamic spiritual and moral development of Believers and Islamic leadership. The expected outcome of this spiritual-moral purification and cleansing (*tazkiyah, taṭhīr*) process is the production of the new breed of corruption-free Muslim political leaders of high moral integrity together with other necessary attributes which I have discussed earlier.

First and foremost, both the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* assert that the fundamental religious values of *īmān, taqwā, iḥsān, maḥabbah*, seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT (*ibtighā' marḍāti'Liāh*), the Believer's attitude of looking forward to meeting Allah S.W.T. in the Hereafter, the willingness to die for the sake of Allah S.W.T., and the spiritual-emotional joy of performing all kinds of supererogatory devotions for the pleasure of Allah S.W.T. -- all proceed from the *qalb* of the Believers. The ability to resist the temptations of worldly pleasures and enjoyments (*matā` al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*) or the pressures of passion, base desires or the whisperings, devilish insinuations of Satan or the selfish inclinations of the ego via the negative and reprehensible emotions of envy, jealousy, ostentation or desire for human appreciation or praise (among what the Muslim spiritual doctors call *amrāḍ al-qalb*, diseases of the spiritual heart) – depends upon the spiritual-moral purity and health of the *qalb* at the centre of the human soul, personality and identity. It is for this reason that the focus of Allah's attention upon human beings is to the *qalb*, not the brain, or the physical appearances of His servants, as is stated in the *ḥadīth*:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ  
وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ



**Indeed, Allah does not look at your appearances and your wealth. But He looks at your hearts and your actions.** [emphasis added]\_(Muslim)

The *qalb* is therefore the most critical spiritual organ of human beings. If it is purified and cleansed on a regular basis and becomes healthy and sound, it can attract and receive the light of Divine knowledge, guidance and wisdom, and -- with those spiritual resources -- lead human personalities to True Wellbeing (*al-Falāḥ*), Paradise (*al-Jannah*) and Goodly Pleasure (*Riḍwān*) of Allah SWT. But if it is diseased, corrupted, hardened or afflicted with all kinds of spiritual and moral viruses, then it will lead the human personality to all kinds of immoral, unethical or criminal acts which constitute True Loss and Misery (*al-Khusrān*) in this world and in the Hereafter. For that reason, the task of cleansing, purifying, polishing, protecting and elevating the *qalb* has been made a fundamental religious duty (*farḍ `ain*) by Islamic spiritual doctors and savants upon all Muslims. Muslims should know that the inner struggle to control and dominate the passion (*hawā*) and the lower soul that incites to evil (*al-nafs al-ammārah bi's-sū'*) is known as "struggle against the soul" (*jihād al-nafs*) which is regarded by most Islamic scholars as "The Greater *Jihād*" (*al-jihād al-akbar*). They should be made to understand via the spiritual transformation programmes and training at the hands of the experienced spiritual doctors as well as *Murabbūn* that the *qalb* that is obedient, sincere, God-fearing, purified and truly loves Allah S.W.T., the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), and is ready to sacrifice for humanitarian causes, purely for gaining the favours and goodly pleasure of Allah SWT, is the strongest shield and protector of the Believer against all kinds of wrong ideas or self-destructive motivations which are bound to lead to unethical behaviour in political or economic activities, such as lying, cheating, corruption, bribery, nepotism, cronyism, treachery and collusion with business or industry tycoons.

The Qur'an explains that when the *qalb* is enlightened by the light of Divine guidance, knowledge and wisdom, and attains the qualities of spiritual-ethical integrity, *iḥsān* and *taqwā*, it becomes highly resistant, resilient and effective to withstand and overcome all the subtle means, impulses and devices used by several agencies --Satanic, capitalistic, materialistic, political or business forces or agents in the country to corrupt the Muslim leaders, politicians, bureaucrats or law-

enforcement officers. The hearts of the Believers which, according to the Qur'an, produce the good and praiseworthy attributes and righteous behaviour may be classified into the following types:

A). Fearing and apprehensive of Allah's displeasure or anger as reflected in: Q. *al-Anfāl* 8: 2; *al-Ḥajj* 22: 35; *al-Mu'minūn* 23: 57-60;

B). Tranquil, patient and vigilant as reflected in: Q. *al-Ra'd* 13: 28; Q. *al-Naḥl* 16: 106; Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 124-126, 200;

C). Sound, healthy, purified as reflected in: Q. *al-Ḥijr* 15: 47; *al-Shu'arā'* 26: 87, 88, 89; *al-Hashr* 59: 10; *al-Mā'idah* 5: 41;

D). Having *taqwā*, *wara`* (reticent piety) and *ṣalāḥ* (virtue) as reflected in: Q. *al-Ḥajj* 22: 32; *al-Ḥujurāt* 49: 3;

E). Soft, gentle and merciful as reflected in: Q. *al-Ḥadīd* 57: 27; *al-Taubah* 9: 128; *Āl `Imrān* 3: 159; *al-Zumar* 39: 23;

F). Intimate, loving and brotherly as reflected in: Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 103; *al-Anfāl*: 62, 63;

G). Guided by Allah S.W.T., conscientious, wide awake as reflected in: Q. *al-Taghābun* 64: 11; *al-Mujādilah* 58: 22;

Those positive and desirable qualities of the Believers' hearts have to be nourished, developed and refined through proper and systematic processes of:

(a) correct and systematic spiritual education (*tarbiyah rūḥiyyah*) and discipline (*riyāḍah*);

(b) character discipline and refinement (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*), purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and

(c) various aspects of *mujāhadah* (systematic measures taken to control, purify or refine the lower soul) which are meant to control and keep in check the base desires and passions.

One of the most important functions of the *qalb* is described in the Qur'an as the process of understanding, comprehending, reasoning, intellection and intuiting arising from the cognitive faculty of the spiritual heart. This cognitive or

thinking faculty and function of the heart is called in Arabic and religious literature as `aql (intellect, reason, intelligence), although the Qur'an does not use the term. This means that Allah SWT wants human beings to understand that it is the qalb that produces right thinking, rational understanding or rational comprehension (the Qur'an uses the verbal forms of na`qilu ("we understand"), ya`qilun ("they understand"), and yafqahūn ("they understand"). It is assisted by the five senses which provide knowledge input or data for the qalb to use by means of its cognitive faculty (`aql). The following verses illustrate this fact:

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ  
يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۚ فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ  
الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ

***Have they not travelled in the land, so they have their hearts by which they might understand and their ears might listen? For indeed it is not the eyes that are blinded; it is rather the hearts in the breasts that are rendered blind. [emphasis added] (Q.al-Hajj22:46)***

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ ط □ لَهُمْ  
قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا □ وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا □  
وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ط أولئك كالآنعام بل هم أضلُّ  
ط أولئك هم الغفلون

***And certainly We have created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind; they have hearts with which they fail to understand; and they have eyes with which they fail to see; and they have ears with which they fail to hear. They are like cattle - indeed, even more astray. Such are utterly heedless. [emphasis added] (Q. al-A`raf 7: 179)***

The role of the sound intellect or reasoning which is the function of qalb, nevertheless, is very crucial for the qalb to make right and wise decisions which produce right and wise actions or behaviour. A full Islamic understanding of the complex nature of the soul and the proper relationship of the four elements of the soul, namely 1) rūḥ 2) qalb 3) `aql and 4) nafs can be read from al-Ghazali's *Book of*

*Knowledge* (tr. Nabih Amin Faris, 1962) and *Marvels of the Heart* (tr. Walter J. Skellie, 2010) which are found in his *magnum opus*, *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (translated from his *Iḥyā' `Ulūm al-Dīn*). Dr. Abdullah Rothman, a contemporary Muslim psychologist who is associated with the Cambridge Muslim College explains:

[.....] The *qalb*, which is the spiritual center of the person, and where the faculty of intellect is located as the *`aql*, has the potential to turn in either of two directions which shapes the relative, transient outcome of this conflict [between the Spirit and the Lower Soul]. It [the *qalb*] can turn toward the lower impulses of the *nafs* and become further misaligned with *fiṭrah* [natural disposition to Godliness] by the influences of the *dunyā* and *shayṭan*, resulting in increased negative characteristics of the *muhlikāt* [destructive elements] and a state of *ghaflah* [negligence or forgetfulness] ...Or it can turn toward the higher, Godly nature of the *rūḥ* with the remembrance of Allah and the *ākhirah*, resulting in increased positive characteristics of the *munjiyāt* [the elements of salvation] and come more in alignment with the soul's state of *fiṭrah*.

Dr. Abdullah emphasises the importance of cleaning the *qalb* by saying:

The work of self-improvement or personal development is the work of constantly staying engaged in the effort to uncover the blocks on the heart, essentially cleaning the heart, and striving and struggling to stay in remembrance of Allah amidst the distractions and downward pulls of the *dunyā*. One aspect of the structure of our souls that can help us in this struggle is the *`aql*, which can be conceived of as the cognitive function, but which is a more Divinely connected kind of reasoning.

His explanation on the *`aql* as the cognitive, intellection and reasoning function of the *qalb* is very important for Muslims to understand:

In the Islamic model of the soul, the *`aql* is not understood as the central driving aspect of the self but is actually better understood as a function of the *qalb*. In addition to the normal kind of logical reasoning that we attribute to the mind, the *qalb* has the ability to perceive and to see things as they are...It is in using this ability to perceive that the *qalb* possesses that we can effectively turn our hearts away from the veils of the *dunyā* which result in a state of *ghaflah*, and turn it toward Allah and the *ākhirah*, accessing through the point of Divine connection within us, the *rūḥ*. (Abdullah Rothman, Adrian Coyle, "Toward a Framework of Islamic Psychology: an Islamic Model of the Soul" in *Journal of Religion and Health* 57, 1731-1744 (2018).

Informed and nurtured by the knowledge and wisdom of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, the true Believers' hearts inspire, motivate, strengthen and spur the Believers to greater heights of spiritual-ethical development and progress, against the tide and forces of disbelief, polytheism, corruption, anarchy, depravity, immorality, falsehood, nihilism, delusion, atheism, individualism, racism and secularism. A corruption-and-hypocrisy-free political leadership of the Muslim community in the future has to be anchored upon the purified hearts and sound intellects of the new breed of Muslim political or national leaders, otherwise there is not going to be a transformation and history will repeat itself.

The social sciences and humanities disciplines of agnostic or atheistic societies in the West and in the East will not concur with this Islamic approach to societal transformation because the religious or theistic worldviews are pushed out of scientific or scholarly discourse by the reigning secular humanistic paradigms. For Islamic scholars, this is the correct and proper approach as it is based on Divine revelation, knowledge and wisdom. However, the sad part is that this approach is not followed or adopted in mainstream or governmental socio-political institutions of many Muslim countries. It is not surprising if those countries, including Malaysia, keep having political crisis and chaos, one after the other, as they fail to liberate their minds and souls from the Western "lizard's hole".

Individuals who possess the right kind of intellects, intelligences or reasoning are described by the Qur'an as *Ulu'l-Albāb* (possessors of sound intellects) in 16 verses of the Qur'an. These are also the intellects or intelligences of the God-fearing scholars (*al-'ulamā'* as in Q. *Fāṭir* 35: 28). Equipped with this kind of intellect and being well-versed with the Qur'anic worldview and paradigms, the knowledgeable new Muslim political or national leaders will be better able to engage intelligently and confidently in dialogue or in parliamentary debates with the secularised non-Muslim leaders or elites on issues related to power, development, progress, wellbeing, sustainability, success, prosperity or happiness as their understanding and interpretation of those key concepts differ significantly from the secular humanistic or atheistic paradigms. In this connection, we would like first to quote from Muhammad Asad's *The Message of the Qur'an* the following verses:

***Therefore, avoid those who turn away from all remembrance of Us and desire nothing but the life of this world. (29) That***

***is to them the only thing worth knowing [alternatively: “That is their sum-total of knowledge”, or “This is as far as their knowledge will take them”]. Indeed, your Sustainer is fully aware as to who has strayed from His Path, and He knows best those who follow His guidance. (30) Indeed, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth: and so He will reward those who do evil in accordance with what they did, and will reward those who do good with ultimate good. (31) As for those who avoid the [truly] grave sins and shameful deeds even though they may sometimes stumble, know that your Sustainer is abounding in forgiveness....” (32) (Q. al-Najm 53: 29-32).***

Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s commentary on verse 30 above is as follows:

Men with a materialist turn of mind, whose desires are bounded by...material things, will not go beyond those things. Their knowledge will be limited to the narrow circle in which their thoughts move. The spiritual world is beyond their ken. While persons with a spiritual outlook, even though they may fail again and again in attaining their full ideals, are on the right Path. They are willing to receive guidance and Allah's Grace will find them out and help them (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur’an: English translation of the meanings and Commentary*, 1999: 1640).

### **11.1. The Permanent Struggle Against the Deceptions, Delusions and Machinations of Satan, the Avowed Enemy of Human Beings**

Now we come to another important matter related to the inner spiritual transformation efforts of Muslim political leaders i.e. the disruptive role of the unseen but invisible Forces of Evil (*Iblīs* and Satan) which have the ability to lead Muslim leaders of all kinds -- traditional rulers, political leaders (including Prime Ministers, Ministers, and Members of Parliament), policy makers, business and industry players, senior civil servants, law enforcement (including the judiciary) or immigration officers, etc. to be involved in practices of cheating, fraud, scandalous deals, various forms of corruption, abuse of authority, cronyism, collusion, favouritism and nepotism.

The avowed aim of Satan, according to the Qur’an, is to take all human beings, if they could, along with them onto the outwardly attractive, appealing and seductive trajectories of human, societal or civilisational development which are

designed to lead humans into the deep chasms of miseries in life on earth and life after death. Therefore, Muslim leaders need to study and understand profoundly some relevant verses of the Qur'an regarding our antagonistic relationship with the unseen evil force. Allah SWT declares that Satan is an *'Aduwwun Mubīn* (An Obvious Enemy) in the following verse:

***O mankind! Partake of what is lawful and good on earth, and follow not Satan's footsteps: for, verily, he is your obvious enemy [aduwwun mubīn] and he bids you only to do evil, and to commit deeds of abomination, and to attribute unto God something of which you have no knowledge. (Q. al-Baqarah 2: 168-169)***

Although Allah SWT has given the permission to *Iblīs* and his army to tempt human beings and cause havoc and discord in inter-human relations, (Q. *al-Isrā'* 17:64) they would have no power to seduce those who are truly conscious of God and the sincere servants. Allah SWT gives His assurance by saying: “[And yet,] behold, you shalt have no power over [such of] My servants [as place their trust in Me]: for none is as worthy of trust as your Sustainer.” (Q. *al-Isrā'* 17:65, *al-Hijr* 15:40)

It is useful to know that Imam al-Ghazālī states that there are seven physical organs of the body which are capable of becoming tools for generating sinful acts which serve as the external gates to the heart of man. Those organs are (1) tongue; (2) eyes; (3) ears; (4) hands; (5) private parts; (6) stomach; and, (7) feet. But there are eleven major invisible inner gates of the heart by which Satan gains deeper penetration into the soul of human beings to corrupt and create diseases in it. Those major non-material gates are: 1) anger and appetite; 2) envy (*ḥasad*) and greed (*ḥirṣ*); 3) satiety (*shaba'*) of food; 4) love of material adornment; 5) covetous desire (*tama'*); 6) haste and lacking steadfastness; 7) love of material wealth and possessions; 8) stinginess and fear of poverty; 9) sectarian and partisan prejudices; 10) inducing the common people to indulge in abstract theological issues about the essence and attributes of God; 11) thinking ill of other Muslims (*sū' al-ẓann bi'-muslimīn*). Al-Ghazālī says that the way to overcome these personal shortcomings is to close the gates by cleaning the heart and through the constant remembrance of Allah SWT (al-Ghazālī *Wonders of the Heart* (tr. Walter Skellie), 2007: 106-135).

Political leaders, cadres, followers, supporters and those young Muslims who aspire to be political or national leaders in the future of Malaysia need to understand how and in what way the delusions and deceptions (*ghurūr*) of this world, the evil forces of Satan and the temptations of base desire mislead, corrupt and finally destroy leaders and followers alike. The following reminders from the Qur'an about worldly deception that all Muslims – especially leaders and elites -- must know and take heed are as follows:

- اَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ وَرِيبَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

**Know that the life of this world is only play, and idle talk, and adornment, and boasting among you, and rivalry in increase of wealth and children. like the example of rain whose (resulting) vegetation pleases the tillers, then it dries, then you see it turn yellow, then it becomes straw. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment, and forgiveness from Allah, and (His) good pleasure. And this-worldly life is nothing but a deceiving enjoyment (Q. al-Ḥadīd 57:20).**

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَإِنَّمَا نُوفُّونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ فَمَنْ زُحِرَ حَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ ۗ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

**Everyone is bound to taste death and you shall receive your full reward on the Day of Resurrection. Then, whoever is spared the Fire and is admitted to Paradise has indeed been successful. The life of this world is merely an illusory enjoyment. (Q. Āl `Imrān 3: 185)**

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَلِلْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ ۗ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

**The life of this world is nothing but a sport and a pastime, and the life of the Hereafter is far better for those**



**who seek to ward off their ruin. Will you not, then, understand? (Q. Al-An`ām 6: 32)**

Commentary by Abul A`la Mawdudi:

This does not mean that earthly life has nothing serious about it and that it has been brought into being merely as a sport and pastime. What this observation means is that, compared with the true and abiding life of the Hereafter, earthly life seems, as it were, a sport, a transient pastime with which to amuse oneself before turning to serious business. Earthly life has been likened to a sport and pastime for another reason as well. Since Ultimate Reality is hidden in this world, the superficially minded ones who lack true perception encounter many a thing which causes them to fall a prey to misconceptions. As a result of these misconceptions such persons indulge in a variety of actions which are so blatantly opposed to reality that their life seems to consist merely of sport and pastime....There are still others who think that they have the power either to bestow honour and dignity on human beings or to degrade them, either to confer benefits or to harm them. Such people go about trumpeting their own glory but their own foreheads bear the stamp of their humble bondage to their Creator. By just one twist of fortune such people may fall of their pedestals and be trampled under the feet of those upon whom they have been imposing their God-like authority. All these people come to a sudden end with death. As soon as man crosses the boundaries of this world and steps into the Next, the reality will be fully manifest, all the misconceptions that he has entertained will be peeled away, and he will be shown the true worth of his belief and actions. (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ  
الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ مَتَاعُ  
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ ۗ قُلْ أَوْبَيْنَاكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذَٰلِكُمْ  
لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ  
مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ۗ

**Men are naturally tempted by the lure of women, children, treasures of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle and plantations. These are the enjoyments in the life of this world; but with Allah lies a goodly abode to return to. (3:15) Say: 'Shall I tell you of things better than these? For the God-fearing there are, with their Lord, gardens beneath which rivers flow; there they will abide for ever, will have spouses of stainless purity<sup>11</sup> as companions, and will enjoy the good pleasure of Allah.' Allah thoroughly observes His servants.[emphasisadded](Q. Āl `Imrān 3: 14-15)**

Allah SWT has made it crystal clear that human beings are easily tempted by a variety of materialistic pleasures, forgetting that the future pleasures that Allah SWT reserves for the God-fearing (*li'lladhīna'ttaqau*) are purer, lasting and elevating, such as “the good pleasure of Allah”. Muslim leaders who are among those God-fearing servants – leaders who are driven by *Īmān*, *Iḥsān*, *Taqwā* and *Maḥabbah* -- aim for the final goal of the good pleasure of Allah SWT and will not sacrifice lasting happiness in the Hereafter for the glittering deceptions of *Dunyā*, the tantalising promises of Satan. or the forthcoming delusions of mankind's Arch Enemy among the Major Signs of the Last Hour, the False Messiah al-Dajjal

Modern and contemporary history has revealed stories of many impressive national leaders and scandalous smart politicians who have been struck down, spiritually and morally, from their high pedestals and became objects of public derision, shame and rejection due to the influences of the destructive but delusionary forces described by the Qur'an. Hence, the necessity and urgency for Muslim political leaders, parties and organisations to institutionalise the spiritual education and training programmes or modules which are specially designed to promote good consciousness, awareness, and comprehension of the different challenges coming from external forces of evil including that of Satan, in addition to understanding the challenges from the inner forces of *nafs*, *hawā* and *shahwah*, and the well-established methods of overcoming such challenges

## CHAPTER 12

### **DHIKRU'LLĀH (REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH SWT) AS A FUNDAMENTAL HABIT OF MUSLIM LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS**

One of the indispensable spiritual preoccupation of the all Believers is to maintain, sustain and develop the intimate relationship with the Compassionate Creator, Sustainer and Master which is called *Dhikru'LLāh* (Remembrance of Allah SWT). Remembrance of Allah SWT is a holistic and comprehensive methodology that Allah SWT Himself ordained and commanded all Believers to obey. It is to be manifested in a variety of forms – audible verbal remembrance; silent remembrance in the heart; reciting, studying or discussing the Qur'an individually or in groups; prayer, supplication, contemplation and meditation; and involving or participating in educational, social, cultural or political programmes or activities which are aimed at increasing one's good deeds and socially-beneficial acts. Those good deeds have to be done for the sake of seeking Allah's pleasure, or at making oneself or others better, stronger and more sincere servants of Allah SWT, or better, more effective and more committed workers of Allah's causes in several areas of personal, organisational and community life, including the political.

*Dhikru'LLāh*, according to al-Ghazālī, is necessary for the cleansing of the *qalb* because it fills the *qalb* with God-consciousness and *taqwā*, leaving no space for toxic viruses to enter or to survive in the spiritually-charged environment. In the broadest meaning of the concept, *dhikru'LLāh* refers to any act that connects the Believers' hearts to Allah SWT and binds the sincere and humble Believers to the Compassionate Master and Sustainer Who loves to be in intimate relationship with His sincere servants. He has made it clear in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* that He is ever present to guide, assist, bless, motivate, protect, and provide for the God-fearing servants in ways that could not be predicted by the recipients. As His servants, vicegerents and Believers, we are forever in need of His guidance, sustenance, protection, support, compassion, mercy and love.

It is necessary for all Muslim leaders and would-be leaders to internalise *Dhikru'LLāh* so as to become part of their habit, personality and nature. To help them remember this obligation, let them ponder upon some of relevant verses of the

Qur'an which follow and understand the implications for their personalities, professional carriers and behaviour:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا وَ سَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

**O you who believe, remember Allah much, and glorify Him morning and evening. [emphasis added] (Q. al-Ahzāb 33:41-42)**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَلْهَكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

**O you who believe, let not your possessions and your offspring make you negligent of remembrance of Allah. For whosoever does that, they will be the al-Khāsirūn (true losers, truly miserable in the Hereafter). [emphasis added] (Q. al-Munāfiqūn 63: 9)**

Commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi:

The mention of the possessions and the children, in particular, has been made [because] man mostly turns away from the demands of the faith for the sake of their wellbeing and interests and becomes involved in hypocrisy, weakness of faith, or wickedness and disobedience; otherwise, it implies everything of the world that allures and absorbs man so completely that he becomes heedless of the remembrance of God.

This heedlessness in respect of the remembrance of God is indeed the root cause of all evil. If man only remembers that he is not free but the servant of One God, and that God is fully aware of all his actions and deeds, and he will be held accountable one day before Him for all his actions and deeds, he would never be involved in any deviation and wickedness, and if ever he commits an error due to a human weakness, he will immediately rectify it as soon as he comes to realize his wrongdoing and repent. [emphasis added](Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ  
وَ اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

***But when the Prayer is ended, disperse in the land and seek Allah's Bounty, and remember Allah much so that you may gain al-falāh (true success, wellbeing and prosperity). [emphasis added] (Q. al-Jumu`ah 62: 10).***

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ  
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَشِيعِينَ وَالْخَشِيعَاتِ  
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ  
فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ  
مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

***Surely the men who submit (to Allah) and the women who submit (to Allah), the men who have faith and the women who have faith, the men who are obedient and the women who are obedient, the men who are truthful and the women who are truthful; the men who are steadfast and the women who are steadfast, the men who humble themselves (to Allah) and the women who humble themselves (to Allah), the men who give alms and the women who give alms, the men who fast and the women who fast, the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard their chastity, the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember Allah much: for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and a mighty reward. (Q. al-Ahzāb 33: 35)***

Commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi:

[Believers] do not rest content with mere belief but are obedient practically also. They are not the sort of the people who would honestly believe that what Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have commanded was true but would violate it in practice: that they would sincerely regard what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden as bad but would go on following the same in practical life.

[T]hey are truthful in their speech and honest in their dealings. They do not deal in lies, deceptions, frauds and forgeries. They utter with their tongues only what their conscience approves as true. They practice and perform only what they honestly find to be in accordance with righteousness and truth, and they are honest in all their dealings with others.

[T]hey patiently and steadfastly bear and face all the obstacles, dangers, difficulties and losses that they might have to encounter in following the right way taught by Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and in establishing Allah's religion in the world; no fear and no temptation and no desire of the self can succeed in diverting them from the right way.

[T]hey are free from pride, vanity and haughtiness: they have full understanding of the reality that they are servants and they have no other position than that of servitude. Therefore, their hearts as well as their bodies remain bowed before Allah, dominated by fear of Him. They never display the attitude which is the hallmark of the lives of those who are fearless of God and are involved in arrogance. From the sequence it appears that the mention of Khushu (expression of humility) in particular along with the general attitude of the fear of God implies the Prayer, for the mention of the practice of charity and fast has been made just after it.....

Remember Allah much means that one should mention Allah's name in one way or other at all times in every business of life. Man cannot develop such a state of the mind unless the thought of God becomes deeply embedded in his heart. When this idea has passed beyond his conscious mind and settled deep in his subconscious and unconscious mind, then only he will remember and mention God's name in whatever he does and in whatever he says...He will seek [Allah's] mercy in every affliction, and turn to Him in every trouble. He will fear Him on encountering every evil, and ask for His forgiveness when he happens to have committed an error and will pray to Him for fulfillment of every need. In short, in every state and in every business of life his function will be to remember Allah.

This, in fact, is the essence of the Islamic life. For all other acts of worship there is a prescribed time when they are performed, and one is free when one has performed them. But this is the worship which has no special time; it has to be performed constantly so that it links up the man's life with Allah and His service permanently. The other worships and religious acts themselves also become meaningful only when the heart of man remains inclined to Allah not only at the time when the act is actually being carried out but at all times when the tongue is uttering Allah's name constantly. In such a state as this worship

and religious acts develop and flourish in a man's life precisely in the same manner as a plant grows in a congenial climate and environment. Contrary to this, the example of the religious services and worships which are carried out only on special times and occasions in the life which is devoid of this constant remembrance of Allah is of the plant which has been planted in an uncongenial climate, and which is growing only due to the special attention and care of the gardener. This very thing has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a Hadith, thus:

Muadh bin Anas Juhani relates that a person asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah, "Who among those who fight in the way of Allah will get the highest reward?" He replied: "The one who remembers Allah the most." The man asked: "Who among the observers of the fast will get the highest reward?" He replied: "The one who remembers Allah the most." The man then asked the same question about the performer of the Prayer, the payer of the Zakat and charities and the performer of Hajj and the Prophet (peace be upon him) in every case gave the same answer, saying: He who remembers Allah the most. (Musnad Ahmad). [emphasis added] (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ  
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا  
تَصْنَعُونَ

***(O Prophet), recite the Book that has been revealed to you and establish Prayer. Surely Prayer forbids indecency and evil. And Allah's remembrance is of even greater merit. Allah knows all that you do.*** [emphasis added] (Q. *al-Ankabut* 29: 45)

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ۗ

***(13:28) Such are the ones who believe (in the message of the Prophet) and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in Allah's remembrance do hearts find rest.*** [emphasis added] (Q. *al-Ra'd* 13: 28)

Commentary of Abul A`la Mawdudi:

Now (Believers) are being told to recite the Quran and establish the Salat as a practical device, for these are the two things which endow a Believer with a strong character and a wonderful capacity by which he can not only brave successfully the most violent storms of evil and falsehood but can even subdue them. But man can acquire this power from the recitation of the Quran and the prayer only when he does not remain content with the mere recital of the words but also understands well the Quranic teachings and absorbs them in his soul.

And his prayer does not remain confined to physical movements but becomes the very function of his heart and the motive force for his morals and character. The desired quality of the prayer is being mentioned by the Quran itself in the next sentence. As for its recitation, one should know that the recitation which does not reach the heart beyond the throat, cannot even give man enough power to remain steadfast to his faith, not to speak of enabling him to withstand the furies of unbelief. ...

As a matter of fact, the recitation which does not affect any change in a man's way of thinking, and his morals and character, and he goes on doing what the Quran forbids, is not the recitation of a Believer at all. About such a one the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: "He who makes lawful what the Quran has declared unlawful, has not believed in the Quran at all." (Tirmidhi). Such a recitation does not reform and strengthen a man's self and spirit, but makes him even more stubborn against Allah and impudent before his own conscience, and destroys his character altogether. (*Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari)

One of the benefits of being engaged in *Dhikru'LLāh* is that we become aware of what Allah SWT commands and prohibits, His likes and dislikes, the *ḥalāl* and the *ḥarām* elements in life, and His promises as well as His threats, so that we will be able to increase deeds and actions which will earn His favour and avoid doing anything that goes against His teachings, thus averting His displeasure or wrath, particularly in the Hereafter. With *Dhikru'LLāh*, Muslim leaders and would-be leaders would also experience the meaning of living at the levels of *Taqwā* and *Iḥsān*, the



levels when they become conscious that Allah SWT always sees them in whatever situation they may be. Their hearts become more vigilant against Satanic delusions or becoming prone to committing immoral or unethical acts. Their *RASA MALU* consciousness and attitude are forever present and become more sensitised than before. They will be included – by the grace and mercy of Allah SWT -- among the pious servants (*muttaqūn*) who are liked by their Compassionate Master. The Qur’an mentions several types of personalities which Allah SWT loves and those which Allah SWT does not love. Let us refer to some of the relevant verses of the Qur’an:

1. “Indeed, Allah SWT loves the *Muhsinūn*” (Believers who are doers of good. who strive for moral, spiritual and social excellence), in Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 195; *Āl `Imrān* 3: 134, 148; *al-Mā'idah* 5: 93.
2. “Indeed, Allah loves the *Muqsiṭūn* (Believers who act justly, judge in equity and act equitably) in Q. *al-Mā'idah* 5: 42; *al-Hujurat* 49: 9; *al-Mumtaḥinah* 60: 8.
3. “Indeed, Allah SWT loves the *Muttaqūn*” (Believers who have piety, fear of Allah’s wrath, behave righteously and are imbued with God-consciousness) in Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 76; *al-Taubah* 9: 4, 7.
4. “And Allah loves the *Muṭahhirūn*” (Believers who make themselves pure), in Q. *al-Taubah* 9: 108.
5. “And He loves the *Mutaṭahhirūn*” (Believers who purify themselves and keep themselves pure and clean), in Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 222.
6. “Indeed, Allah loves the *Tawwābūn*” (Believers who turn to Allah SWT constantly in repentance) in Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 222.
7. “And Allah loves the *Ṣābirūn*” (Believers who are firm, steadfast, patient and persevere in adversity) in Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 146.
8. “Indeed, Allah loves the *Mutawakkilūn*” (Believers who place their full trust in Allah SWT) in Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 159.
9. “Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in the Way of Allah in solid ranks (*ṣaffan*), as though they were a firm and compact structure (*bunyān marṣūṣ*)” in Q. *al-Ṣaff* 61: 4.

Among the personalities that Allah SWT does not love are the following:

1. "And Allah does not love the *Zālimūn*" (the wrongdoers; the evildoers; those who commit injustice or are being cruel to themselves, to God and to others) in Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 32, 140; *al-Shūrā* 42: 40.
2. "Indeed, Allah does not love the *Mu`taḍūn*" (the transgressors; the aggressors; those who commit aggression) in Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 190; *al-Mā'idah* 5: 87; *al-A`rāf* 7: 55.
3. "Indeed, Allah does not love the *Kāfirūn*" (the rejectors; the unbelievers; the disbelievers; those who reject the teachings of Islam) in Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 32; *al-Rūm* 30: 45.
4. "Indeed, Allah does not love the *Mufsidūn* (those who do mischief; those who cause corruption; the spreaders of corruption) in *al-Qasas* 28: 77; *al-Mā'idah* 5: 64. In Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 205, the Qur'an says "And Allah does not love *al-Fasād*" (mischief, corruption, decadence, depravity, immorality, wickedness). This verse refers to the work and acts of the *Mufsidūn*.
5. "Indeed, Allah does not love *man kāna Mukhtālan Fakhūrā*" (any of those who are arrogant boasters; the arrogant; the self-conceited person who acts in boastful manner) in Q. *al-Nisa'* 4: 36; *Luqmān* 31: 18; *al-Ḥadīd* 57: 23.
6. "Indeed, Allah does not love every *Khawwānan Athīman* (a betrayer of trusts and persistent in sins) in Q. *al-Nisā'* 4: 107.
7. "Indeed, Allah does not love the *Fariḥūn*" (those who exult in richness or vain things) in Q. *al-Qaṣaṣ* 28: 76.
8. "Indeed, He [Allah SWT] does not love the *Mustakbirūn*" (those who are arrogant; those who are given to arrogance) in Q. *al-Naḥl* 16: 23.
9. "Indeed, He [Allah SWT] does not love the *Musrifūn*" (those who are extravagant; those who like to waste; the wasteful people" in Q. *al-A`raf* 7: 31.
10. "And Allah does not love anyone of the *Kaffār Athīm* (those who are stubbornly ungrateful and persist in sinful ways) in Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 276.
11. "Indeed, Allah does not love the *Khā'inūn*" (treacherous people) in Q. *al-Anfāl* 8: 58.

It should be pointed out that the above verses which highlight the likes and dislikes of Allah SWT do not exhaust the list of good (*ma`rūf*) deeds as well as ethical

behaviour that Believers should be engaged in, nor the list of bad (*munkar*) deeds as well as unethical behaviour that Believers should refrain from. For example, we do not find a specific verse which says that Allah SWT does not love the *Mushrikūn* (people who commit *Shirk*, i.e. association of partners or partakers of Divinity other than Allah SWT), whereas He has stated in many places in the Qur'an that *Shirk* is the worst sin and it is unforgivable without true repentance. Similarly, we do not find a verse which specifically mentions that Allah SWT indeed loves Believers who struggle for the sake of Allah SWT with their selves and their possessions, and who sacrifice their lives in the Path of Allah SWT, although the Qur'an praises and elevates those sincere Believers who struggled in God's causes and those who died as Martyrs (*Shuhadā'*) in such causes. At any rate, if Muslim leaders were to read the Qur'an regularly with understanding (*tadabbur*) and contemplation (*tafakkur*) of the meanings and implications of its major teachings and messages, in order to translate them into action (*'amal*) they would have a wider knowledge of the do's and the don'ts, and of the highest and the lowest values as far as ethical behaviour and conduct are concerned.

This additional knowledge, understanding and consciousness will help them to strengthen their own moral fibre and ethical discipline as well as of the organisations they lead in this age of global moral decay and scandals. As Muslim leaders who are aware of the likes and dislikes of Allah SWT, they would know that Allah SWT does not like those who are deluded by the pleasures of worldly life and forget the eternal life of the Hereafter, and therefore are forgetful of the consequences of death. In this regard, Muslim leaders should be reminded of the Prophet's prediction, given below, that the root cause of Muslim failures and helplessness at the end of time is their love of the mundane worldly pleasures (*ḥubb al-dunyā*) and, because of that, they are not prepared to see the end of their worldly pleasures when death occurs. Muslim societies would then be easy prey to global anti-Islamic forces who collaborate to dominate, contain or control Muslim countries as prophesied by the Prophet (s.a.w.) in the following *ḥadīth*:

Thawbaan, the freed slave of the Prophet (s.a.w.) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said:

يوشك الأمم أن تداعى عليكم كما تدعى الأكلة إلى قصعتها , فقال  
قائل: و من قلة نحن يومئذ قال: بل أنتم يومئذ كثير و لكنكم غناء  
كغناء السيل و لينزع عن الله من صدور عدوكم المهابة منكم و  
ليقذفن الله في قلوبكم الوهن , فقال قائل يا رسول الله و ما الوهن  
قال حب الدنيا و كراهية الموت

*There will come a time when Nations call upon each other to set upon you, just as diners are invited to a plate of food. It was said: "Will it be because of our lack of numbers that day (i.e. will we be small in number)?" He (s.a.w.) said: "No, rather you will be many on that day, but you will be like the scum foam (that floats) on the flowing river. Allah will remove the fear of you from the hearts of your enemies and put Wahn into your hearts." It was said: "O Messenger of Allah, what is Wahn?" He (s.a.w.) said: "Love for the Dunyā and hatred for death." (Abū Dāwūd)*

## **CONCLUSION**

In this small and humble work of mine, I am contributing -- by the grace of Allah SWT – my thoughts towards the ultimate goal of putting an end to the cancer of political corruption, the pandemic of hypocrisy and the resulting shameful disunity that has plagued the Malay-Muslim community for quite some time and has peaked since the last few years. The whole process of socio-political transformation of the community will, undoubtedly, require many greater concerted efforts, coordinated planning of NGOs and proper operationalisation on the ground by qualified, concerned and committed Muslims in the country. There is also the long overdue need for legal reform in the nation so that new legislation could be crafted by the Parliament to prevent or eliminate the corrosive syndrome of money politics and party-hopping which have fuel to the political turmoil. But under current circumstances, it will presumably take a long time to get majority support in Parliament for such laws to be passed. Some feasible political reforms could be proposed by good political and sociological scientists to reduce the incidence of political corruption and hypocrisy, such as recommendations for political mergers, reconciliations, cooperation among dissenting parties or the observation of a new code of political ethics among all political parties, etc.

Nevertheless, legislative measures or laws alone cannot stop followers or leaders from lying to the public or deceiving the nation, or prevent the following diseases -- greed for wealth, worldly pleasures, power, influence and status, egoism, self-serving strategies of local state warlords, narcissism, hypocrisy, cliqueism, cronyism, nepotism, chauvinism, tribalism, sense of ethnic superiority (ultra *kiasu*) and condescending mindset, excessive adoration (*ta`aṣṣub*) to a leader or party believed to be charismatic, ethnic-oriented and nationalistic fanaticism (*`aṣabiyyah*) and kleptocracy as the latest and worst political scandal in the nation's history. Neither can the law put an end to the Machiavellian politics of "the end justifies the means" which happens all too often under different guises. These moral and ethical crises with deep roots in the "diseased hearts" (*kalbu, hati*) and the *al-nafs al-ammārah* (the soul that incites the doing of sinful and evil deeds), in my humble opinion, require nothing less than spiritual-moral transformation, without excluding

legal, economic, structural, cultural, educational or political solutions. At any rate, Covid-19 pandemic signals the need for major resets of the many ways our leaders mismanaged the economy and mismanaged the God-given natural bounties which the secular civilisation labelled “Mother Nature.” Obviously, the cancer of political corruption and the pandemic of hypocrisy in Malay-Muslim politics demand an urgent reset and transformation of the political party culture, structure and system.

But as I indicated at the beginning of this book that, at this initial stage of the complex reform process moving forward to the major transformation objective – I need to be realistic and not be naïve to think that the major and fundamental transformation can be achieved overnight -- it is my hope that some of the decent, honourable and sincere Malay-Muslim political leaders, cadres, followers and supporters would feel compelled by the current political scandal, duplicity and hypocrisy as well as Muslim political disunity, if not disintegration, to do some serious soul-searching, self-introspection (*muḥāsabah*) and rethinking to bring about within the next few years, if possible:

- (a) Major changes, reforms and (finally) transformations of their respective political parties, cultures and behaviours in the near future.
- (b) The strengthening and unification of Muslim religious community (the Islamic *ummah*) which transcend ethnic, cultural, linguistic, geographical or colour distinctions, as a **Divine commandment** and embody the Prophetic universal mission of *Raḥmatan li'l-`Ālamīn* (“Compassion and mercy to all the worlds”, ref. Q. *al-Anbiyā’* 21: 107).

I have emphasised that this long-term Muslim socio-political transformation has to be consciously and deliberately based upon the worldview of *Tauḥīd*, a Divinely-revealed worldview which transcends racial, linguistic, geographical, social, and nationalistic differences. This worldview provides a proper, stable and permanent philosophical framework upon which new holistic and political party ideologies of the Muslim community can be reconstructed and developed to meet the new or even radical changes in the coming decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But the transformed Muslim political culture and behaviour that I am proposing is to operate within the framework of parliamentary democracy (which accommodates the Islamic political principles of mutual consultation, *shūrā*, independence of the judiciary and the freedom of the people to choose its leaders), and constitutional monarchy which

protects the special position of Islam as the religion of the federation, until and unless the Malaysian people decide to change it in the distant future.

As far as the ethics of disagreement in Malaysian politics is concerned, I am afraid we have a long way to go. I hope a time will come in the near future when Malaysian politicians and Members of Parliament have reached a high level of emotional and intellectual maturity to make the adversarial parliamentary system – transplanted lock, stock and barrel from the British, minus the etiquette and intellectual finesse – and the debates in it more decent, more respectable, less raucous and more elegant as demonstrated by the British parliamentarians.

The transformation agenda I am advocating is not to change the Malaysian political system – God-forbid -- to an “Islamic theocracy” with infallible religious power concentrated in the hands of an infallible *Imām* who acts as the supreme representative of God on earth. The Roman Catholic Popes in medieval Europe held such awesome authoritarian power, while revolutionary Iran since 1979 introduced a theocratic and authoritarian system of government under Khomeini’s concept of *Wilayat-e-Faqih*. My aim is to see the soul being brought back or revived, as it were, in Muslim politics by urging politically-minded elites, leaders, cadres, followers and supporters to revive, rejuvenate and reinvigorate the spiritual-moral principles and ethical values and norms of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* in the arena of Malay political culture, systems and behaviours. It is a way of implementing the great religious obligation of “enjoining that which is good and right, and prohibiting that which is bad and wrong” that is required of those who have been endowed with authority and power to rule, as stated in the following verse of the Qur’an:

أَلَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا  
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

***(Allah will certainly help) those who, were We to bestow authority on them in the land, will establish Prayers, render Zakah, enjoin that which is good and right, and prohibit that which is bad and wrong. The end of all matters rests with Allah. [emphasis added] (Q. al-Ḥajj 22: 41).***

I have reiterated that the centre of the Malay-Muslim socio-political transformation agenda within the framework of the Theocentric Leadership

Paradigm is the all-important spiritual education (*tarbiyah rūḥiyyah*) programme which hopefully will be incorporated in Malay-Muslim political parties' overall education programme. At the core of the spiritual education programme is the heart purification and cleansing *jihād*, the Greater *Jihād* (*jihād al-nafs*). The unique conceptions about the Muslim *ummah* and the Believers in the worldview of *Tauḥīd*, including the ultimate goal of actualising the *Ummah Wasaṭ* in the Malaysian context of religious and ethnic plurality, have to be given special attention in the holistic and transformative paradigm shift that is envisaged in this monograph. What I would like to recommend is that from the spiritual *tarbiah* programmes, participants will be taught and instilled with the knowledge of and from the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* regarding the meaning and implications of being Believers as distinguished from being mere Muslims.

The *tarbiah* programmes and curriculum will highlight the spiritual, moral and ethical characteristics that Believers have to possess, and the great benefits to be accrued by them in this world and in the Hereafter. Instilled with the Qur'anic knowledge of the identity and "Way of Believers" (*sabīl al-mu'minīn*) and driven by the virtues of *iḥsan*, *taqwā* and *maḥabbah* of Allah SWT, the participants of the programmes will realise that their political or ethnic identities have to be subservient to and in harmony with the transcendent and supreme identity of *Mu'minūn*. The anticipated moral-ethical transformation shall follow from the altered states of spiritual consciousness and the newly acquired knowledge of the *Tauhidic* worldview in which good moral-ethical conduct is the necessary outcome of being a religious person.

The spiritual *tarbiah* curriculum will make it very clear that efforts of reconciliation between people (*islāḥ dhāt al-bain*), being more important than the rank of voluntary fasting, prayer and *ṣadaqah* (charity), are the primary religious responsibility of all Believers and therefore the goals of reconciliation, reunification or solidarity among Muslims must be urgently addressed in the *ummatic* transformation agenda. The renewed consciousness that good moral conduct and ethical behaviour are the true purpose of Islamic religion and its necessary product has to be re-entrenched into the new political culture of the Muslim community so that Muslim politics and politicians of the future can no longer be manifesting, reflecting or behaving with unethical values, interests or



behaviour which have brought shame, indignity, ridicule and contempt to the Muslim community.

Politics, as I have humbly submitted in Chapter 4 of this book, could become the new zone of Muslim *`ibādah*, under “**Politics as `ibādah**” Paradigm: a new moral space and opportunity to be filled with sincere service and dedication to the welfare of the people and the nation, for the sake of gaining the good pleasure of Allah SWT. It is politics not as the path to moral decay and Hellfire, but the path of moral goodness, beneficence, benevolence, altruism and spiritual beauty (*iḥsān*) leading to true wellbeing and *al-Jannah*. (Incidentally, Dr M.A. Muqtedar Khan, an American Muslim scholar has written a good book that Muslim politicians should read and benefit from, entitled *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*, 2019).

Just as economics, from the worldview of Islam, is a vital area of Islamic *`ibādah* in terms of managing and servicing the material and physical needs of society in *ḥalāl* and ethical ways, such that the virtuous merchant could earn the high spiritual status of being with the Prophet (s.a.w.) on the Day of Judgement, so could ethically-clean politics and *iḥsānī* governance bring the Malaysian society closer to the goal of the Just-Best-Balanced Community (*Ummah Wasaṭ*), which will be good not just for Muslims but for the non-Muslim communities as well, because they are not predicated upon ethnic, linguistic or cultural interests or criteria. The evil of intra-religious and intra-ethnic disunity shall be eliminated when Muslim leaders and followers – exposed to systematic and well organised internal spiritual education programmes -- understand fully the mistakes they have made, and how self-destructive the disunity sentiments are, however much they are being justified and legitimised.

With the new breed of sincere, selfless and God-fearing leadership at the helm of Muslim political parties, organisations and institutions – amply equipped with the many new prerequisites of leadership needed to navigate the highly demanding future Malaysian politics -- the larger picture and the larger interest of the *ummah* as a whole shall be prioritised, while the narrow-minded ethnic-based unity sentiments (*`aṣabiyyah*) or ultra-*kiasu* attitude or behaviour shall have no place in the transformed Muslim socio-political culture and system.

The new breed of leaders shall be champions of the *da`wah* paradigm of *Raḥmatan li'l-`Ālamīn* and shall be privileging the global ethic of Islamic compassion (*Raḥmāniyyat'ul-Islām*) and Islamic humanism (*Insāniyyat'ul-Islām*) to all communities in Malaysia based on the *wasatiyyah* principles of Justice, Goodness, Moral Excellence and Balance (the Golden Mean). The new breed of leaders know that power or authority is a Divine *amānah* (trust) from Allah SWT, not a favour, a privilege or an honour, and those vested with leadership position, power or authority carry upon their shoulders a grave responsibility for which they shall surely be called to account before Allah SWT on the Awesome Day of Judgement.

Therefore, it is most important that they should not forget the profound messages in the brief but powerful inaugural speeches of the second and the third Caliphs of the Prophet (s.a.w.), namely Sayyidina Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq and Sayyidina `Umar al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with them both) which manifested their self-lessness, humility, sincerity, probity, integrity, their willingness to be corrected or criticised openly for any wrongdoing on their part and their paramount consciousness of their direct accountability to Allah SWT. They had those rare qualities because the Theocentric Leadership Paradigm under which they were trained at the hands of Allah's Beloved Messenger (s.a.w.) was a new alternative to the *Jāhiliyyah* paradigm of leadership. *al-Falāḥ* in the Hereafter and *Riḍwāna'Liāh* were their ultimate goals. Similarly, the early Muslim icons of moral integrity and ethical leadership were the products of the theocentric leadership paradigm. The tide of corruption and moral decay came after the paradigm was changed to hereditary leadership with the goal of worldly glorification and dynastic continuity.

The leaders of moral and ethical integrity lived in and engaged the world as Allah's trustworthy vicegerents. They assisted the construction a great civilisation of knowledge *par excellence* (as analysed in the brilliant work of Franz Rosenthal (2007), *Knowledge Triumphant*), which benefitted humanity for nearly a thousand years, but they – unlike the worldly-oriented Caliphs and monarchs who became corrupted political rulers of the Muslim empire -- were not seeking the magnificence of *al-Dunyā*, nor distracted or deluded by its glittering ornaments or dazzling embellishments. They craved only after the

good pleasure of their Compassionate Master and Nourisher and were most spiritually and morally vigilant lest any of their thoughts, words or actions would displease their Compassionate Master and Nourisher.

The new breed of Islamic leaders has to emulate the Prophetic model and the models produced by what I would call the Theocentric Leadership Paradigm of the early generation to achieve the much-needed transformation in the Muslim *ummah* now and in the future. It is a formidable but not an impossible task. It can start with a group of Believers in different areas of specialisation working purely and sincerely for the sake of the pleasure of Allah SWT. Imbued with honesty, humility, dedication, selflessness and compassion, together with proper planning, cooperation, coordination and collective decision-making, this noble civilisational renewal (*tadjīd ḥaḍārī*) task can get off the ground in a few years with snow-balling effects, as long as those perennial spiritual principles and values remain untarnished by egoistic, individualistic, narcissistic, materialistic, ethnic, nationalistic or myopic considerations.

The new breed of leaders should be inspired and highly motivated by the lofty leadership principles contained not only in those inaugural Caliphate speeches, but also from the wise counsels on leadership and good governance given by Sayyidina `Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (may Allah be pleased with him) in speeches attributed to him as they are presented in the famous *Shī`ah* literary masterpiece, *Nahj al-Balāghah* (The Way of Eloquence). For those young and sincere Muslims who aspire for political or governmental leadership position in their future career, they have to plan to be God-fearing and trustworthy when they hold leadership position, after knowing well the model of Prophetic leadership and what the Prophet (s.a.w.) had advised his beloved Companion Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (may Allah be pleased with him), upon being approached by the latter enquiring if he could be considered for some kind of public office or authoritative position, in the following *ḥadīth*:

يا أبا ذر إنك ضعيف، وإنها أمانة، وإنها يوم القيامة خزي وندامة إلا  
من أخذها بحقها وأدى الأمانة عليه فيها

***O Abu Dharr, you are (physically) weak person, whereas it (leadership or authority) is a trust (amānah from God) , and on the Day of Judgement it will be a cause of***

***humiliation and remorse, except for one who is able and competent to fulfil its obligations, and (properly) discharges the entrusted duties attendant upon it. (Muslim)***

They should learn how to give priority to ideas, plans, policies and strategies that would attract the blessings (*barakāt*), care (*ʿināyah*), assistance (*naṣr, taufīq*), protection (*ḥimāyah*) and compassion (*raḥmah*) of the Compassionate Master and Nourisher of the Universe, not the praise or applause of secular humanistic forces or those with hypocritical hegemonic agenda in the world. They should realise that the last sixty years of Malaysian political history have brought to the surface the bitter truth that when Malay-Muslim political parties and leaders began to deviate from moral and ethical principles and values due to personal, pragmatic or utilitarian considerations, or in trying to gain non-Muslim political or financial supports, the doctrine of *amar makruf nahi mungkar* began to be compromised and later marginalised. Under such circumstances it was most improbable that those politicians and political parties would gain Divine favour or blessings. On the contrary, they would have to expect Divine displeasure for their immoral actions opened the door for the virus of political corruption, intrigue and hypocrisy to creep in and shut the window for the inflow of the light of Allah's blessings and guidance.

Working under new and more challenging scenarios in the future, our new breed of leaders has, no doubt, to be equipped with a high quotient in a variety of intelligences and skills, including emotional and adversity-coping quotients, but their personalities have to be nurtured and developed on the basis of the purified theocentric *qalb* under the Theocentric Leadership Paradigm in order to sustain the socio-political transformation momentum and acquire the necessary mindset of constancy, consistency, resilience and integrity which are the constituents of the Qur'anic virtue of *istiqāmah*.

The spiritual education and transformation programmes that the Theocentric Leadership Paradigm necessitates have to make the objective very clear, namely to produce and sustain a generation of a new breed of Muslim leaders, not a few gifted or charismatic individuals. With the existence of this new generation of ummatic, selfless servant-leaders, the Muslim *ummah* will be led by trustworthy and competent leaders who are products of the special leadership paradigm. This group of *ummatic* and selfless leaders shall be the

future Islamic political stewards and custodians of the Muslim *ummah*, without an iota of infallibility or *keramat* aura emanating from them. As humble and unassuming God-conscious leaders, their ultimate loyalty is to Allah SWT, and to them all political parties or organisations are non-infallible desacralised tools, not as means for self-promotion or ethnic glorification at all, but as new avenues for sincere service to the community, the people and the nation – in the name of *ʿibādah* to Allah SWT.

With regard to the role of charisma in Islamic civilisation, I would like to mention that according to the well-known British orientalist Montgomery Watt (whose book on this subject I read four decades ago, but I cannot remember its title), who had made a good comparative study of *Sunnī-Shīʿī* theological rift, it was the *Shīʿī* community which developed the doctrine of “charismatic individuals” in the persons of the so-called infallible (*ma`ṣūm*) *imāms* and in the long-awaited Mahdi in Islamic history, while the *Sunnī* community has developed the doctrine of the “charismatic community” (“the *ummah* shall not collectively agree upon an error”) and that the right to independent, authoritative juristic reasoning (*ijtihād*) is not restricted by spiritual status or hierarchy. Knowing full well that power or authority is not an honour to oneself or the ethnic group, the new breed of leaders shall not become fanatic disciples of extraordinary individuals or worshippers at the altar of worldly power or material affluence, nor become addicted to power, status, authority or privilege because they know full well that those positions do not bestow true honour or nobility, let alone immunity from legal persecution.

To them the positions of power, authority or affluence are nothing more than weighty Divine *amānah* with serious permanent consequences on the Day of Judgement, if not punishment in the grave, misery on the Day of Resurrection and severe suffering (*ʿadhāb*) in Hell. Therefore, this type of leadership which, in the *Sunnī* community, is geared for constructing a “charismatic community” in the name of *Ummah Wasaʿat* or *Khair Ummah*, must carefully develop leadership succession plans based on objective and transparent criteria. The system has to be institutionalised so that the process of succession to leadership positions in the organisation or in the party will be transparent, equitable and

unpredetermined, while senior leaders know when they should allow the younger blood to replace them as they would not want to overstay their welcome.

Finally, I wish to reiterate that when Believers as political leaders and followers have made *Dhikru'LLāh* as a regular habit in their lives, they will become more mindful and more conscious of what deeds of theirs that will earn the *barakah* and the *riḍwān* of Allah SWT and what would draw forth His displeasure, wrath or punishment in the Hereafter. Knowing that Allah SWT is always watching them and knowing what goes on in their hearts, the sense of **RASA MALU** or *ḥayā'* (shamefulness, bashfulness and humility before Allah SWT) in their hearts would deter them from involvement in any immoral or unethical acts of their political parties, organisations or groups. Together with the mindset of *taqwa'LLāh* (Piety and God-fearing consciousness) and the conscience of **RASA MALU** which all Believers must have, they will not be easily deceived or swayed by Satanic temptations, worldly delusions of *Dajjāl* forces or by their own low desires (*hawā'*) – however big, beautiful, glittering or seductive are the baits dangled before them in their private moments or through the demonic proxies using the most sophisticated ways to seduce the Believers.

If we assume, at this juncture, that one of the positive results of the major transformation efforts to change the political culture and behaviour of the Muslim *ummah* in Malaysia – say from 2023 onwards – is the reduction of the number of Muslim political parties to one, two or three at the most, this change is a good beginning for the Muslim *ummah* and for the nation. Greater changes and reforms could come in the next few decades if the transformation efforts are sustained and reinforced as I have discussed in the preceding chapters.

As for the possibility of reduction of the number of Muslim parties, I would like to give my views as a layman here, with the hope that political scientists with a good understanding of the worldview of Islam would come up with better solutions or strategies. It will be good if the Muslim community can agree – say, in the next five years -- that there should be only two Muslim majority parties, not based on worldview differences or rivalry, but on two alternative programmes or alternative approaches of developing the country and the Muslim community. For example, we have the model of USA, a huge country and population with only two major parties,

one Republican, the other Democratic, or the UK model with Labour and Conservative as the major parties. In Indonesia, the Muslim community has been divided for a long time into two major Islamic approaches – the Traditionalist approach represented by *Nahdlatul Ulama* and Reformist-Modernist approach represented by *Muhammadiyah* -- with major influences on the political life of the Muslim communities. However, it is most unfortunate that the restoration of democracy in post-Suharto Indonesia opened the flood-gates of fragmentation of the Muslim community as more and more political parties were formed by rival political elites. This has resulted in agonising political setback for the *ummah* when secular nationalist parties managed to win successive general elections despite the fact that 85 percent of the population of Indonesia is Muslim. I do hope that in the future, Indonesian Muslim political elites will use democracy as the gateway to stronger Islamic brotherhood, solidarity and finally Islamic unity, while at the same time promoting peaceful co-existence and cooperation with other faith communities.

Coming back to the future political scenario in Malaysia, I would like to appeal to the Muslim politicians, in the name of wisdom, maturity and sobriety, not to increase the number of existing parties, but to decrease it as much as possible while increasing the spiritual-moral-ethical integrity of politicians. They could work towards a two-party scenario to begin with, provided they do not further disunite the *ummah*, by agreeing to cooperate politically or to exist in a coalition in facing the general elections. Their primary difference should be in their political programmes, priorities or in their political focus, such as “Struggling for Justice for All” versus “Struggling for Peaceful Coexistence and Shared Prosperity”; or “Struggling for Civilisation of Knowledge and Ethical Virtues” versus “Struggling for Holistic Sustainable Development”; or “Struggling for a Moral-Ethical Society” versus “Struggling for Happiness in This World and in The Next”. The two Muslim majority parties should develop friendly relations with one another on the basis of *Islamic ukhuwwah* principles, ummatic solidarity and certain common interests. They must eschew all the toxic, immoral or unethical attitudes, practices, behaviours and manipulative politics of the past sixty years of Malaysian political degeneration as they move into a new era of non-ethnic based political system.

Another Islamic condition that a Muslim party, alliance or coalition should adhere to is that the top leaders or presidents are practicing Believers who are known to be upholders of the principles of moral-ethical integrity and are committed to the goals of the *ummah* as ordained by the Qur'an. In such a situation, there should emerge the Islamic ethics of disagreement (*adab al-ikhtilāf*) which encourages decent, respectful and rational political dialogues and debates among the political parties which are conducted in the most ethical and mature way, as new opportunities for the people or the electorate to assess the strengths or weaknesses of political candidates.

Looking ahead in the next several decades, no one can predict the type of scenarios that would unfold in the Malaysian political landscape. But I sincerely hope that Muslim political elites and leaders will be wise and sober enough to realise that increasing the number of Muslim political parties in the future, due to political frustration or personal agenda, is not a sign of progress or maturity or rationality. It might even be suicidal in the long run. Muslim leaders in Malaysia have enough examples and lessons to be drawn from the political tragedies of Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey, Bangladesh, Sudan, Nigeria, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Mindanao, Southern Thailand, etc.

Democratic wisdom, I believe, does not lie in perpetuation of, or accentuating political fragmentation or divisiveness, but in the ability to reduce the petty differences to work together on the basis of commonalities rather than differences. If, in the near future, there is going to be an increase in the number of Muslim political parties, or in the perpetuation of political animosities, or in the inability to establish some kind of political cooperation, grand coalition, collaboration, alliance or win-win formulae, then these self-defeating follies which will only work to the advantage of anti-Islamic forces in the country or internationally, with the loss or withdrawal of Divine blessings, protection and assistance, a great loss with dire consequences upon the *ummah*.

The Malaysian Muslim *ummah* should rather be moving forward towards some kind of grand political reconciliation so that there could emerge at the end of the day a coalition or alliance or, at least, a win-win cooperation mechanism of Muslim majority parties which cease to fight against one another. Such coalition/



alliance/cooperation is more in keeping with Islamic ummatic desiderata, and it will help towards unifying the different groups in the Muslim community. Under this new scenario, Muslim political groups will learn to respect differences of opinion, while at the same time they could contribute cooperatively to a holistic development of the people and the nation. Under a corruption-hypocrisy-free leadership which embraces the plurality of the democratic nation and the necessity of living together with non-Muslim communities in the spirit of peaceful co-existence, cooperation in areas of common interest and *Rahmatan li'l-`Ālamīn*, the Muslim coalition/alliance/alliance will be able to compete democratically with other political forces, or work out mechanisms of cooperation, collaboration, or alliance with suitable non-Muslim parties, so that together they can offer better services or better development programmes for the nation as a whole. In this way, the Muslim-non-Muslim political cooperation or partnership could venture into reforming the unsuitable adversarial “government-versus-opposition-forever” system which Malaysian founding fathers imported – perhaps with the “advice” of erstwhile colonial masters in London -- from the Westminster secular democratic tradition, and which has killed the traditional Malay system and spirit of *musyawarah* (mutual and respectful consultation) and *gotong royong* (collective voluntary cooperation or work for community service or development).

With the unity and solidarity of the Muslim *ummah* restored and strengthened, the fragmentation and wastage of resources are avoided, thus paving the way for the amelioration of the economic and political position of the Muslim community, without depriving the non-Muslims of their economic and political freedom and resources to strengthen their respective communities. I pray to Allah SWT to make wisdom, rational thinking and rational behaviour prevail in the Muslim community in Malaysia in the challenging years ahead, and to remember the ancient adage “United we stand, divided we fall”. Unity of Muslims, I repeat for the last time, as a single religious brotherhood and *ummah*, is a Divine commandment and that the unifying mindset and conviction of true Believers should lead the future Muslim *ummah* to consider the development of a grand Muslim political coalition or alliance -- that is multi-ethnic, inclusivistic, democratic, ethical, and broad-minded enough to cater to and accommodate the diverse but not conflicting needs and aspirations of the majority of Muslims in the country. In this way, Malaysia’s Muslim community

will be able to show, in the future, a good example of wise and mature Islamic political culture, system and democracy for other Muslim nations who have been struggling with endless political strife and shameless disunity.

In conclusion, it is my conviction that the combined impact of the application of the Theocentric Leadership Paradigm in Muslim political parties and organisations, which integrates contemporary leadership competencies, knowledge and skills with the spiritual-moral habits of *Dhikru'LLāh*, *Taqwa'LLāh* and *Ḥusnu'l-Khuluq* upon the new breed of leaders, will serve the Muslim *ummah* and the nation well in facing the future of uncertainties, turbulence, trials and tribulations. The systematic instilling of the *Tauhidic* worldview and the effectiveness of the spiritual education programmes, I have been stressing, shall provide the revelational and ideological rationale and framework of the Paradigm. As products of the new leadership Paradigm, the new leaders' final goal shall not be political power or worldly glory but the good pleasure of the Compassionate Sustainer and Master.

They can rest assured that the Compassionate Sustainer and Master would guide and protect such leaders as He SWT has promised in several places in the Qur'an. With their hearts imbued, nourished and sustained by the principles and values of *īmān*, *iḥsān*, *taqwā* and *maḥabbah*, their intellects elevated by the mindset of *Ulu'l-Albāb* and their personalities manifesting the attributes of *'Ibādu'r-Raḥmān*, our new breed of leaders in the coming years shall no longer tolerate – whether they are holding political power or not -- immoral or unethical ideas, acts, policies, decisions or conduct as manifested in hate-speeches, lying, cheating, back-biting, slander, libel, character assassination, deception, hypocrisy, self-conceit, bribery, nepotism, treachery, corruption, conspiracy, transgression, injustice, cruelty, authoritarianism, oppression, kleptocracy, etc, either in political parties and organisations, public administration, government-link companies, the private sector or in the media, *bi-idhni'LLāh!* (with Allah's permission).

May the Compassionate Creator, Controller, Master, Sovereign, Ruler, Provider, Nourisher and Sustainer (*Subḥānahū wa Ta`ālā*) of all that exist, open the right ways and provide the effective means for the Muslim *ummah* of Malaysia to reach the objective of major transformations of its politics, political culture, system and behaviour – including the agenda of intra-*ummatic* political cooperation,

solidarity and unity -- within the next two to ten years or more, as the *ummah* shall be led and guided by the new breed of leaders towards the realisation of the Divinely-ordained goal of *Ummah Wasaʿ*, latest by the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2076 C.E. which will coincide, *in shā' Allāh*, with the 1<sup>st</sup> of *Muḥarram* 1500 H. Therefore, by the first dawn of the 16<sup>th</sup> *Hijriyyah* Century, the Muslim *ummah* of Malaysia should have achieved many of the targets of the *Ummah Wasaʿ* in order for it to become – at least in Southeast Asia -- the new Witness of justice, goodness, spiritual-moral-ethical excellence, right balance between the needs of this world and the needs of the Hereafter. *Āmīn, yā Rabba'l-`ālamīn!*

By that time, the ubiquitous presence of a multi-ethnic Muslim community with its leaders of Chinese, Indian, Sikh, Orang Asli, Iban, Kadazan, Melanau, Malay and other ethnic origins, shall be the new socio-religious reality of new Malaysia. The multi-ethnic Muslim *ummah* embodies the brotherhood and the equality of Believers of all races which will sincerely contribute – materially and morally -- to the betterment of the Malaysian society as a whole, while it reaches out with genuine empathy, compassion and mercy to other fellow-creatures of the same God – human, animal and natural environment – in Malaysia and in the rest of God's excessively-plundered planet Earth.

In the end, let us all be reminded of the obligations that Allah SWT has placed upon all true Believers -- politicians and non-politicians alike --; our role as Witnesses for all mankind; our duty as His servants and vicegerents chosen by Him to hold fast to His Way, Path, Book and Wisdom; and our conviction in His assurance that He SWT is the Best of Protectors and the Best of Helpers under all circumstances, in the following verse:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۗ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۗ مَلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۗ هُوَ  
 سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۗ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ  
 الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ  
 ۗ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ  
 هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۗ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

**Strive in the cause of Allah in a manner worthy of that striving. He has chosen you (for His task), and He has not laid upon you any hardship in religion. Keep to the faith of your father Abraham. Allah named you Muslims earlier and even in this (Book, al-Qur'an), that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over all mankind. So establish Prayer, and pay Zakah, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector. What an excellent Protector; what an excellent Helper! [emphasis added] (Q. al-Hajj 22: 78)**

وبالله  
التوفيق والهداية والسلام عليكم  
ورحمة الله وبركاته

## GLOSSARY

1. *amar makruf nahi mungkar*

-- The Malay-Indonesian adaptation of the Arabic expression *al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'n-nahy 'an al-munkar* with Malay-Indonesia pronunciation.

2. *al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'n-nahy `an al-munkar*
  - Commanding/enjoining that which is good and right, and prohibiting that which is bad and wrong, a duty made obligatory by Allah SWT upon the Believers and particularly the Muslim community.
3. *Dajjāl*
  - The False Messiah, the Master Deceiver and the Arch Enemy of mankind, though the name *Dajjāl* is not mentioned explicitly in the Qur'an. According to authentic *hadiths*, his appearance in the world will be among the ten Major Signs of the approaching Day of Judgement. The trials generated by him is regarded in one of the *hadiths* collected by Muslim as the greatest of all trials in human history, due to his overwhelming power of delusion, oppression, and claim of being the Real God which will be believed by many people as a result of his ability to demonstrate supernatural powers.
4. *da`wah*
  - Literally, it means a call or invitation. Technically, it means preaching, spreading, propagating and proselytizing the message of Islam.
5. *al-Falāḥ*
  - True success, gain, wellbeing, prosperity and happiness ensuring goodness in this world and goodness in the Hereafter.
6. *fasād*
  - Mischief, corruption, decadence, destruction, oppression.
7. *fiṭrah*
  - The primordial and inherent nature of man which Allah SWT has created in human beings to be naturally inclined towards Allah SWT and goodness.
8. *ghurūr*
  - Deception, delusion, illusion from this-worldly life, or from Satan, or from one's own base desires.
9. *ḥadīth*
  - A narration or tradition which contains a saying of Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w), description of his acts, or of his tacit approval or disapproval.
10. *ḥadīth qudsī*
  - A *ḥadīth* from the Prophet (s.a.w.) containing the direct speech of Allah SWT, and not of the Prophet (s.a.w.).
11. *ḥarām*
  - Prohibited or forbidden according to the *Sharī`ah*.
12. *hati*
  - The Malay word which generally means the human heart. It also means human or animal liver.
13. *ḥayā'*
  - Shyness, bashfulness, sense of shame, modesty, dignity, humility.

14. *Hizbu'LLāh* -- Literally, "The Party of Allah", meaning the group of Believers who are most obedient and sincerely devoted to Allah SWT and love Him the most. They are willing to die for His sake. See Q. *al-Mujādilah* 58: 22, *al-Mā'idah* 5: 56.
15. *Hizbu'S-Shaiṭān* -- Literally, "The Party of Satan" as the opposite of "The Party of Allah". This refers to the followers of Satan who are deadly opposed to the message and teachings of Allah SWT, and conspire to undermine the progress of Islam and Muslims. See Q. *al-Mujādilah* 58: 19.
16. *Husnu'-khuluq* – Good character, excellent moral conduct.
17. *'Ibād al-Raḥmān* -- Servants of the Most Compassionate God. The characteristics of these Servants of the Most Compassionate are described in Q. *al-Furqān* 25: 63-77. Believers are supposed to possess those qualities.
18. *Ijtihād* -- Independent and authoritative juristic reasoning or thinking on issues not covered by Divine revelation or the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.).
19. *in shā' Allāh* -- If Allah wills, or God-willing.
20. *irshād* -- Spiritual or religious instruction given by a spiritual instructor, the *Murshid*.
21. *Jāhiliyyah* -- The period or culture of Ignorance of the religion and culture of *Tauḥīd* in the Arabian peninsula before the advent of Islam in the peninsula. See Q. *al-Mā'idah* 5: 50, *al-Aḥzāb* 33: 33 and *al-Fath* 48: 26.
22. *Jihād* -- Striving or exerting one's energies for the sake of Allah SWT.
23. *al-jihād al-akbar* -- "The Greater *Jihād*", i.e. striving against one's own base desires.
24. *kalbu* -- The Malay synonym of *hati*, a Malay linguistic adaptation of the Arabic *qalb*.
25. *khalīfah* -- Vicegerent, representative, successor or steward of the earth in the name of Creator and Owner of the earth. The Muslim Caliph in history is also derived from the word *Khalīfah*.
26. *khilāfah* -- Vicegerency, stewardship. Caliphate.

27. *al-Khusrān* -- True loss, misery, damage, depravity in this world and in the next world. It is the antonym of *al-Falāḥ*.
28. *Kufr* -- Disbelief in the teachings of Allah SWT or any act of denial, ridicule or rejection of any of the fundamental tenets or teachings of Allah SWT or the Prophet (s.a.w.).
29. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*  
-- Higher objectives of the Divine Way and Law, consisting of five principles: Preservation of the Religion of Islam, Life, Intellect, Progeny and Wealth. Contemporary Muslim scholars have added other important objectives to the original five or six objectives.
30. *ma`rūf* -- That which is known or recognized by Allah SWT as good, right, acceptable, proper, acceptable.
31. *Muḥibbūna'Liāh*-- Lovers of Allah SWT from among the Believers, with a higher stage of spiritual development.
32. *munāfiq* -- A hypocrite.
33. *munkar* -- The opposite of *ma`rūf*; that which is bad, wrong, detestable, objectionable, or immoral.
34. *nifāq* -- Hypocrisy.
35. *qalb* -- The spiritual heart of human beings as the core of the human personality. It possesses intuitive, emotional, intellectual and spiritual faculties. When purified or cleansed, it can receive the light of Divine knowledge, wisdom and intuition.
36. *qiblah* -- The direction of Muslim prayer to Allah SWT represented by the *Ka'bah* in the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* of Makkah al-Mukarramah.
37. *Raḥmatan li'l-`Ālamīn*  
-- "As a mercy and compassion to all the worlds," a phrase which occurs in the Qur'an, verse 107 of S. *al-Anbiyā* (21) which explains one of the main objectives of Allah SWT sending the Prophet(s.a.w.) to the world.
38. *Rasa Malu* -- In Malay culture, it represents one of the most important cultural and social value, the sense of shame or loss of honour and dignity.
39. *Riḍwāna'Liāh* -- The Good Pleasure/Approval of Allah SWT, as the loftiest goals of the Believers.

40. s.a.w. -- (*ṣalla`Llāhu `alahi wa sallam*), meaning “May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him”, a prayer and salutation to be used after mentioning or writing the name of Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.).
41. *Sharī`ah* -- Literally, “the path leading to water,” The Divine Way or Path of Allah SWT leading man to ultimate salvation. In a narrow sense, the term refers to the Divine Law based on the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.)
42. *Shirk* -- Polytheism or any belief in beings other than Allah SWT having a share or part of the Divine powers of the One True God. In Islamic theology, this is the greatest sin committed by humans.
43. *Sunnah* -- The normative way of life, legacy or tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.) which Muslims should follow or emulate. The *Sunnah* is the second most authoritative source of knowledge of Islam and Islamic law after the Qur’an.
44. SWT -- *Subḥānahū wa ta`ālā*, meaning “Glorified and Exalted be You”, the proper expression and phrase used after the name of Allah SWT.
45. *ta`dīb* -- The imparting and inculcating of proper teachings, knowledge, wisdom, relationships and manners with Allah SWT, with fellow human beings and with other creatures.
46. *ta`līm* -- The imparting of knowledge, wisdom or skills to students by the teacher, a *Mu`allim*.
47. *Taṣawwuf* -- The Islamic religious discipline and knowledge which deal with the proper development of Islamic conduct, ethics, spirituality and mysticism. It is the science of Islamic spirituality and purification of the heart.
48. *Tauḥīd* -- Affirmation of the absolute oneness or unicity of Allah SWT and the belief that His power, sovereignty, will, knowledge, law and revelation cover all aspects of human life, culture, society and civilization. Islam is the religion of *Tauḥīd par excellence*.
49. *tazkiyah al-nafs* -- The process of purification, cleansing and development of the soul and the heart of Believers which is a fundamental religious obligation.
50. *Ulu’l-Albāb* -- Believers or people who possess sound and intuitive intellects.



It is an expression of adulation used by Allah SWT in the Qur'an in 16 different verses.

51. *Ummah* -- The Arabic word for a community or a nation. The Muslim community is also called *ummah*, but it is not based on race, colour, culture, language or geography. It is based solely on belief in and adherence to Islam or the religion of *Tauḥīd*. However, all Muslim communities throughout the world are supposed to belong to and are part of the universal *Ummah* of Islam.
52. *Ummah Wasaṭ* -- Literally, it means “a middle nation”, but according to Prophetic definition and commentaries of traditional Qur'an exegetes it has a comprehensive meaning as “A Community of Justice, Best Moral Quality, Excellence and Justly Balanced”. It is Allah SWT who declared and appointed the Muslim Community as the *Ummah Wasaṭ*, to become Witnesses for mankind as stated in Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 143.
53. *wasatiyyah* -- The qualities of Justice, Best Moral Standards, Excellence and Justly Balanced that Muslim individuals, organisations, communities, societies, or states ought to possess. The quality of Islamic moderation as a consequence of striking the right balance between the extreme of excessiveness and the extreme of liberality is just one of the conditions of the *Ummah Wasaṭ*.

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**MY CV AS THE BLURB ON THE BACK COVER PAGE OR IN THE  
INSIDE FLAP OF THE BACK COVER (PLEASE LET IT REMAIN THAT  
WAY WITHOUT ANY EMBARRASING EMBELLISHMENT!)**

Born in 1942 in Pasir Mas, Kelantan, Prof. Emeritus M. Kamal Hassan obtained his B.A. (Hons., First Class) from University of Malaya in 1966 and his M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D from Columbia University in New York in 1970, 1973 and 1976 respectively. He was appointed in 1999 as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rector of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and served as first Holder of the Malaysia Chair for Islam in Southeast Asia at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. from 1997-1999 where he taught two postgraduate courses. His career as an academic and administrator in IIUM began in 1983 and officially ended in 2017. His main research interest is on the issue of Islamicisation or tauhidisation of human knowledge. He has been appointed by the Rector of IIUM (Tan Sri Dzulkifli) as an Honorary Advisor to the Centre for Islamisation (CENTRIS) in 2019 and he continues to contribute intellectually and academically towards the betterment of IIUM in fulfilling its vision and mission. His most important research and publication are represented in the 3-volume NATURAL SCIENCE FRM THE WORLDVIEW OF THE QUR'AN (2018) he produced as the Chief Editor and a writer with several Muslim scientists from 2011 until 2014. His important work, *Voice of Islamic Moderation from the Malay World* was published by EMIR Sdn Bhd in 2011. His latest book is on *The Malay Concept of Sejahtera from an Islamic Perspective* published by IIUM Press in 2021.



