“REMEMBERING A VERY DEAR FRIEND, DRS. H. MOHAMAD SIDDIK M.A. (1942-2021), *MUJAHID AL-DA`WAH*, GLOBAL ISLAMIC WORKER AND STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF IIUM SINCE 1983”

(Speech delivered online by M.Kamal Hassan at the Special Webinar on Contributions of Drs. Mohammad Siddik M.A., on Saturday 10 July 2021, organized by IIIT in Kuala Lumpur)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، بسم الله الذي نستعين به في السراء والضراء، بسم الله الذى نتوكل عليه في كل أمورنا، ونصلى ونسلم على النبي الامي الذى علم العالم فكان أفصحهم لسانا وأكثرهم بيانا.

Dear Sisters and Brothers, Assalaamu alaikum.

With the return of our beloved brother, *al-Marhum* Br. Drs. H. Mohamad Siddik M.A. on the 29th of June 2021/18 *Dhu’l-Qa`dah* 1442 H to the mercy of Allah SWT, the Muslim community of Indonesia and the Malay world have lost a great *Mujahid al-Da`wah al-Islamiyyah*, an indefatigable global worker, intellectual, activist, motivator, strategist, thinker and reformist of Islam. From his teenage years as an active leader of *Pelajar Islam Indonesia* (PII, or Association of Muslim Students of Indonesia) until the last days of his earthly sojourn, *al-Marhum* Br M. Siddik never stopped working for the progress, wellbeing and upliftment of the Muslim *ummah* in Indonesia and worldwide, following the advice, the example and the footsteps of his beloved mentor, inspirational teacher and ummatic leader of modern Indonesia, *al-Marhum* Bapak (Dr.) Mohamad Natsir (1908-1993), the first Prime Minister of the united Republic of Indonesia and the founder-chairman of *Dewan Dakwah Islamiah Indonesia* (1967), the Indonesian Council of Islamic Dakwah. *Al-Marhum* Br Siddik worked for the *Dewan Dakwah* in many capacities, the last being as its Chairman from 2015-2020, the position held by the highly revered Pak Natsir for many decades. Apart from being the Chairman of DDII until a year ago, he was also one of the founders of *Partai Amanat Nasional* (PAN, or The National Amanah Party, which was first led by Dr Amien Rais) and the party has also conveyed its condolences to the family of *al-Marhum.*  The chairman of the PAN party in the parliament (DPR), Mr Saleh Partaonan Daulay remarked that “Bapak M. Siddik was a highly respected figure…and was active in several dynamic ummatic programmes” (*Detiknews*. 29 June 2021)

According to Br. Hadi Nur Ramadhan who is in charge of historical documentation at DDII, *al-Marhum* Br. Mohammad Siddik, whose parents came from Pakistan to Indonesia in the in the late 1930s, was born in Kuala Simpang, Acheh province in North Sumatera on January 15, 1942. He loved to contemplate on words of wisdom which were printed in the local newspapers or magazines. One of the words of wisdom he liked most is “Live before you are born and die before your death”. Raised in a modest family circumstances, he grew up in an environment which was very concerned about education and Islamic *da`wah*. He was already involved in the *da`wah* activities of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Students (PII) at the branch and district levels when he was in high school.

In 1962, *al-Marhum* migrated to Jakarta and settled in Condet, East Jakarta. After his father, who was a pious and strict man, passed away in December 1963, *al-Marhum* took up the role of his father taking care of his mother, siblings and four children. *Al-Marhum* recalled that although his father was a small-time entrepreneur and did not leave behind much wealth, yet he bequeathed to his eight children, Mohammad Siddik being the eldest son, the habit of savings and the valuable and lasting legacy of religious education and commitment for which Br Mohammad Siddik expressed his gratitude and perennial appreciation. Thanks to his highly disciplined daily routine that he inherited from his father, he raised his four children (at the time) on the basis of a holistic Islamic educational paradigm which integrates faith, knowledge, action and ethics and they are doing very well as successful professionals with Islamic values and raising wholesome families of their own in U.S.A. and Jakarta. Having personally witnessed how he raised his family and guided his younger brothers and sisters while I was in Indonesia for eight months, I take my *songkok* off at the way he systematically planned and strategized for the future wellbeing of his siblings as well as all his children. The children have produced 12 wonderful grandchildren with some of them becoming *huffadh al-Qur’an* at a very young age. Of course, we have to give a lot of credit to his good wife, *al-Marhumah* Mdm Sa`diah for all her dedication, perseverance and sacrifices.

In Jakarta, *al-Marhum* became a member of the Central Committee of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Students (PII). He entered University of Indonesia (UI) to study economics, but could not complete his studies there because of the demise of his father, which forced him to spend time earning a living to support his mother and the family. Besides, the university curricula were being infiltrated by President Sukarno’s political ideologyof Guided Democracy which was in fact a Dictatorship. He was against the political indoctrination in the university, so he joined the National University (UNAS) which was headed at the time by independent intellectuals. By the grace of Allah SWT, President Soekarno’s Old Order backed by the powerful Indonesian Communist Party, the third largest in the world, was toppled by the army led by Lt. General Soeharto and the 1966 Generation which was spearheaded by Muslim youth and student organisations, and the New Order came into being. The Islamic leaders who were detained by the Old Order including *al-Marhum* Mohamad Natsir and Buya HAMKA were released by the new military administration. Unfortunately, they were not allowed to revive the Islamic party MASJUMI or play active political roles. This led *al-Marhum* Mohamad Natsir to form the *Dewan Dakwah Islamiah* *Indonesia* in 1967, thus heralding the new dawn for *Islamic da`wah* in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Finishing his undergraduate studies in 1967, *al-Marhum* M. Siddik offered his services to his mentor and teacher Bapak Mohammad Natsir when *Dewan Dakwah Islamiah Indonesia* was established in the premises of Masjid Al-Munawarah, Tanah Abang, Jakarta.

Dear sisters and brothers.

Since the 29th June 202, many brothers and colleagues in Indonesia have been narrating in the print media and online their memorable recollections of him. The narratives have served to bring to the surface the many dimensions of his Islamic and ummatic personality, dedication, commitment, contributions and sacrifices for the Muslim *ummah* in Indonesia and many other parts of the world. Many people know that *al-Marhum* had been away from Indonesia for many years, working and travelling in different capacities in the USA, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia. In all these countries, he gave priority to the advancement of Islam and the Muslims in Indonesia and in many Muslim minority countries, using his good command of the English, Arabic and Malay languages as well as his excellent communication, diplomatic, negotiation and management skills to mobilise local Muslim intellectual, religious, cultural, professional and economic resources for the sake of developing and actualising ummatic educational and transnational projects.

One of the educational and ummatic projects close to his heart was the International Islamic University Malaysia project in which he was involved as the official representative of the O.I.C. in the University’s Council since 1983. He knew very well the pre-establishment development of the IIUM project in the agenda of OIC foreign ministerial meeting in 1982. He was most appreciative and highly supportive of the unique IIUM model which uses English and Arabic as the official media of instruction and which integrates Islamic revealed knowledge with professional disciplines in Engineering, Medicine, Allied Health Sciences, Pharmacy, Natural Sciences, Economics, Business, Accountancy, Information Communication Technology and Architecture and Environmental Design, etc. He told me a couple of times in Malaysia that the IIUM was an indirect embodiment of one of the major educational visions of *al-Marhum* Bapak Mohamad Natsir, namely a higher education institution which integrates worldly sciences with Islamic religious sciences. I was informed by *al-Marhum* Br. Siddik that the original model of such an integrated institution was initiated by *al-Marhum* Pak Natsir in the *Sekolah Tinggi Islam,* established in June 1945 in Jakarta, and later transferred to Yogyakarta to become the *Universiti Islam Indonesia* in 1947. As the first private Islamic university in Indonesia which combined worldly sciences and Islamic religious sciences. UII was the result of efforts by Mohd Hatta, Mohd. Natsir and many other Muslim leaders who wanted to create an alternative to the secular Eurocentric Dutch educational system.

When *al-Marhum* Br. Siddik was in Malaysia, he was very popular among the Indonesian students in many Malaysian universities and he never failed to encourage many Indonesian students to study in IIUM. On many occasions he was instrumental in securing financial assistance from Arab philantrophic organisations in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to finance the postgraduate studies of Indonesian students in IIUM. He continued to assist foreign students by getting philantrophic sponsorships for them to study in IIUM when he became the IDB representative for Asia-Pacific region based in Kuala Lumpur for four years.

I am happy to hear from Dr Adrian Husaini that all the narratives of al-Marhum’s memorial are going to be part of the biography of *al-Marhum* being planned by Dr. Adian Husaini and his colleagues. I would like to propose to my dear Brother Dr Adian and my younger brother Dr Mohamad Noer, the younger brother of *al-Marhum* to collect the hundreds or more of important letters *al-Marhum* which he wrote in English, Indonesian and Arabic -- knowing that he was a prolific letter writer – together with important e-mail messages he sent to many people (including his children in the USA), over the last decade or so, to be published as a separate book. Since he did not bequeath to us his rich, innovative and important Islamic ideas in a single written work that I know of, the critical analysis of hundreds of his official and personal letters –including e-mail communications to his children in USA -- in those three languages which are related to Islam, Muslims and the world, it could even be a Ph.D research project on Islamic intellectual history of contemporary Indonesia.

Let me now share with you all my own small narrative. Five decades ago in 1968, I became a graduate student at Columbia University, New York. In 1970 *al-Marhum* Br. Mohamad Siddik came to New York to participate in an international youth conference at the United Nations on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the UN. *Al-Marhum* was the spokesman for the Indonesian delegation in the conference. My first impression of him at the time was that of “an Islamic youth movement in motion” who was trained by the dynamic and optimistic Islamic movements of Indonesia to create a “Brave New World.” I developed an instant rapport with him -- who was several months older than me – and the spiritual and emotional bond that Allah SWT forged between the two of us grew and blossomed till the end of his physical journey eleven days ago.

Always looking for opportunities to further his studies and improve his English language competency, he managed to enrol in the master’s program at Fairleigh Dickension University in New Jersey, working part-time as a dish washer at night to pay for his studies and living expenses. After getting his master’s degree from the university, he returned to Indonesia, only to go back again to New York when he secured a job at the UNICEF office. This time he was able to bring his wife *al-Marhumah* Mdm Sa`diyyah and three children, Ahmad Fachri, Faisal and Aisyah (all of them including the fourth child Afifah now live as American citizens with their families in USA) to live with him in New York. In the meantime, he was also trying to learn Arabic, a language he later mastered after living in Saudi Arabia for many years when working at OIC and IDB, and studying it in evening classes at the King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah.

I must confess that I am most indebted to *al-Marhum* Br M. Siddik and his family for several reasons:

First, since I met him in 1970 and after being enlightened by him about many things going on in Indonesian society, state and cultur , I became highly motivated to know more about Indonesian history, culture, politics and the Muslim *ummah* in the post-independence period, the period known as Orde Baru, the New Order under the military regime of Lt. Gen Soeharto. Being attracted to fascinating world of Indonesia, I decided to write my PhD dissertation on the Muslim intellectual responses to New Order modernization. I had to do field research for eight months in Indonesia.

This decision became the second reason for my indebtedness to *al-Marhum*. Writing to me from Jakarta, *al-Marhum* Br. Siddik offered me and later my wife to stay in their house in Salemba Bluntas in Jakarta to conduct my research in Indonesia.

Thirdly, while I was in Jakarta with my newly-married wife, it was al-*Marhum* Br. Siddik who took the trouble to drive me on his Vespa scooter to meet and interview many Muslim leaders, thinkers, intellectuals and scholars in and around Jakarta in 1973. Thanks to his excellent arrangements and his reputation among the Muslim leaders, I had no problem interviewing the great Islamic leaders and intellectuals of contemporary Indonesia who were in Jakarta, such as Pak Mohamad Natsir, Buya HAMKA, Prof. Mohammad Rasyidi, Dr. Anwar Haryono, and many others.

Fourthly, *al-Marhum* gave me access to many of the historical documents including past newspapers he had collected and stored in the attic of his Salemba Bluntas house.

The fifth reason has to do with the establishment and development of IIUM which I have mentioned above. In this regard, I wish to add that *al-Marhum* and Pak Mohammad Habib Chirzin became the two most important promoters and protagonists of one of the seven missions of IIUM. i.e. the mission of Islamicisation and Integration of human knowledge when both of them were appointed as the country representatives of IIIT in Indonesia. I and my colleagues in IIUM are most grateful to both *al-Marhum* Br Siddik and Pak Habib Chirzin for their remarkable efforts, initiatives and sacrifices of time, energy and money to institutionalise the study and application of Islamic epistemology in the curricula of several private and public universities in Indonesia. In this regard both *al-Marhum* Br. Mohamad Siddik from Jakarta and our dear Br. M. Habib Chirzin from Yogyakarta are not just *Mujahids* of *Dakwah* but Indonesian intellectual advocators of Islamic Holistic and Integrated Higher Education in the 21 century, together with Dr. Adian Husaini, Dr. Arif Shamsuddin, Prof Dr Anis Malik Thoha, Prof Dr. Hamid Famy Zarkasyi, Rector of Universitas Darussalam Gontor (UNIDA) Gontor), Muhammadiah Universities and INSIST (institute for the Study of Islamic Thought and Civilisation) scholars. I am very impressed indeed with the Islamic intellectual development in Indonesia and the impact of the two IIIT *Mujahids* as well as the progress of the Islamic epistemology consciousness and discourse in current Indonesian academia.

I won’t be surprised that in the post-pandemic era and by 2030, Indonesia would be the leading country in Asia-Pacific region – with Malaysia in the second place -- in the area of applied Islamic epistemology and Islamicisation of the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences, just as Islamic banking and finance, insurance and endowments (*awqaf*) would be the mainstream socioeconomic trends in Indonesia before and after the collapse of the heartless global capitalism. In the following pages, I will relate and summarise what some Indonesian colleagues and friends of *al-Marhum* Br. M. Siddik wrote in the last several days in his memory, as reported in an article by Iqbal Setyarso, “Mohammad Siddik: Through Organisation, He Bequethed his Work” published in *Panji Masyarakat* ten days ago.

The current chairman of the Indonesian Islamic Dakwah Council (DDII), Dr. Adian Husaini, recalled that a few days before *al-Marhum* was admitted to the hospital, he had the opportunity to discuss over the phone with *al-Marhum* matters related to an online meeting on June 15 2021 with all the members of the working committee of DDII. Dr Adian Husani said that in several meetings held in DDII, the spirit of *al-Marhum* Br Siddik was comparable to a youth with full of energy. Imagine, he said, at the age of 78, he managed to get a child from his second wife who is a widow. He continued saying that every time *al-Marhum* Br Siddik visited *Pesantren al-Taqwa* in Depok, he told Dr Adian Husaini who was heading the *Pesantren* that he hoped his latest daughter of two-year old, Baby Fairuz, would be able to be a resident student of the Islamic residential school when she grows up. According to Dr Adian and his colleagues, *al-Marhum* Bapak Siddik was simply extraordinary as an Islamic leader. At 79 years of age, he never seemed to stop struggling for the interest of Islamic *dakwah*. He was not only good in communicating his views: he was a seasoned negotiator and effective lobbyist for getting funds from inside or outside of the country to finance *dakwah* related projects, as testified by Mr Zulkifli Hassan, the Deputy Chairman of the Parliament of Indonesia who was approached recently by *al-Marhum.* In the Islamic University Syarief Hidayatullah in Jakarta, an Islamic Epistemology and Integration of Knowledge program was initiated a few years ago by *al-Marhum* and Prof. Mulyadhi Kartanegara, the well-known expert on Islamic philosophy and Islamic Science. It is most gratifying that the current Rector of UIN Syarief Hidayatullah, Prof. Amany Lubis is most supportive of the application of Islamic epistemology and integration of knowledge throughout the university curriculum.

It was *al-Marhum* who informed me in 2008 that a good book on cosmic signs in the Qur’an (*Ayat-ayat Semesta: Sisi-sisi al-Qur’an yang Terlupakan*) was published by Dr Agus Purwanto (who was promoted to a full professor of physics in 2015) and he got me to speak to Dr Purwanto from his house in Jakarta. In 2015 he published *Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta: Menjadikan al-Qur’an sebagai Basis Konstruksi Ilmu Pengetahuan*. After I invited him to visit IIUM and give some lectures in ISTAC, Prof. Agus Purwanto became a good friend of IIUM and IIIT in Indonesia. It was only 10 days ago that Prof Agus Purwanto revealed to the public what many people did not know, that *al-Marhum* Mohamad Siddik had personally donated a substantial amount of money to enable Prof. Purwanto to buy a piece of land in Sragen, Central Jawa, to build the first-ever *Pesantren Sains* (Science-based Traditional Islamic Boarding School) in Indonesia.

Our dear Br. M. Habib Chirzin, who had a long relationship with *al-Marhum* since his student days, related that Br M. Siddik was selected in 1966 as the Secretary General of Indonesian Youth Committee (KPI) which was affiliated to the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) with headquarters in Brussels. As the Chairman of The Students Council of Gontor Institute of Education, Br. Habib Chirzin met *al-Marhum* in a WAY conference in Jogya. In 1978, Br Habib again met *al-Marhum* who was working for UNESCO in Kathmandu, Nepal. Since then their relationship, including that of their spouses, continued to grow with mutual visits to each other’s residence – one in Yogyakarta the other in Jakarta-- after both of them became co-representatives of IIIT in Indonesia. Br M. Habib Chirzin shall never forget the contribution of *al-Marhum* M. Siddik in facilitating and expediting the the international recognition of IIFTIHAR (*The International Islamic Forum on Sciences, Technology and Human Resources Development*) and the signing of the document of its establishment in Jeddah and in Makkah in June 1996. At the time Br. Br Habib Chirzin together with *al-Marhum* Dr. Ir. Imaduddin Abdulrahiem dan Prof. Jimly Asshiddiqie and others were sent by *al-Marhum* B.J. Habibie who became the 3rd President of Indonesia in 1998 to meet the President of IDB, Dr. Ahmad Mohammed Aly in Jeddah in order to get his signature of endorsement for the establishment of IIFTIHAR. *Al-Marhum* M. Siddik who was working at IDB facilitated not only the process of getting the official signature at IDB but also the signing of the Document of Establishment of IIFTIHAR in front of the Ka`bah in *al-Masjid al-Haram*.

For ten years both *al-Marhum* M. Siddik and Br. M. Habib Chirzin worked hard together to promote the educational transformational agenda of IIIT. Every year they had to attend the annual meeting East and South East Asia representatives, with regional representatives from Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Kampuchia, Thailand, Filipina, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore. They also brought several of IIUM professors in psychology (*al-Marhum* Prof Malik Badri), economics (Prof Aslam), sociology (Prof Hazizan), education (Prof Rosnani) and Islamic thought (Prof Ibrahim Zein, Prof. M. Kamal Hassan) to Indonesian universities to share Islamic perspectives in those disciplines. They came to IIUM many times to work together with IIUM or IIIT in Gombak in textbook writing projects. They were also instrumental in bringing Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr Abdulhamid AbuSulayman to Jakarta to give his advice on the Indonesian proposal for the establishment of the Indonesian International Islamic University.

We have been informed that when *al-Marhum* M. Siddik was appointed to lead *Dewan Dakwah Islamiah Indonesia* in 2015 until his period of leadership ended a year ago, he had to face newer and greater challenges because the *dakwah* scenario in Indonesia had become more complex, beginning with the rise of the spread of publicly assertive *Shi`ah* propagation among the Sunni communities; the resurgence of LGBTQ movement and discourse within the Muslim community, especially among the elites; more extensive and sophisticated Christian evangelisation tactics to entice and seduce the Indonesian Muslim masses: political attempts to revive Communist ideology among some quarters and overtures from Communist Chinese corporations, in addition to the emergence of several deviant religious teachings and sects. But with the commitment and assistance from many Islamic scholars, intellectuals and *da`is* throughout Indonesia, and by the grace and mercy of Allah SWT, *al-Marhum* was able to respond effectively to those challenges. Now that *al-Marhum* has left the earthly sphere, we hope and pray that his legacy of complete and wholehearted dedication to the cause of Islamic *da`wah* in Indonesia, sincere commitment and passion for the promotion of Islamic epistemology and Islamicisation of thought, culture and society in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, will continue to be enriched and expanded by his successors in *Dewan Dakwah* and fellow *mujahidin* outside of DDII.

*In the end, We beseech Allah SWT to shower His infinte grace, compassion and mercy upon the soul of al-Marhum Muhammad Siddik. May Allah SWT bestow His manifold blessings, forgiveness, magnanimity and clemency upon al-Marhum in the `aalam al-Barzaakh, while his soul is elevated to be among the souls of the Saalihuun, the Muttaquun and the Mujaahiduun, to prepare for final entry – bi-fadhli’Llaah -- into the coveted Gardens of Jannatul-Firdaus, aamiin, yaa Rabbal-`Aalamiin.*

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ (الحشر:10)

"أكثروا ذكر هادم اللذات - يعني الموت - فإنه لم يذكره أحد في ضيق من العيش إلا وسعه عليه ولا في سعة إلا ضيقها عليه"(الحديث)