Legacy of Ulama from the Malay World in Transforming of a Moderate (Wasat) and Harmonious Society with Special Reference of Hamka and Nik Aziz

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Abstract: The Malay world and her Islamic intellectual tradition arguably deliberated more moderate and substantial than any other part of the Islamic world (al ‘Alam al Islami) from Rabat to Indonesia and Sierra Leone to central Asia. This praiseworthy position (tradition) has been developed all the way through contribution to ulama and umara of this land. The transformation of Qur’anic concept of Wasatiyah has been grounded in the Malay Archipelago towards reforming of a moderate society overlooking the either excessiveness (ifrat) or laxity (tafrit). The Qur’an calls on people to apply the model of Wasatiyah. Wasatiyah is presented in the text in different forms and meanings such as excellence, justice and moderation. One such example from the Qur’an is, “Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves…” (Qur’an, al-Baqarah: 143). The religious life in the Malay world in general, and Malaysia and Indonesia in particular, is very conducive and tolerant; in line with the universality of Islamic teachings itself that focus on justly balanced, moderate, peace and harmony. Islam accepts the ideas of humanity as the philosophy of modern civilization and the culture of mankind. Malaysia and Indonesia, is a country, with multiple ethnic groups with multiple cultures, languages and religions, and the society is very communal, paternalistic, with high solidarity. Thus, the identity of Malaysia and Indonesia, as a majority Muslim society, can be summed up by two characteristics, namely moderate and harmony. This study aims at investigating the relevance to the concept al-Wasatiyah and the legacy of ulama and umara with reference of two scholars specifically Hamka and Nik Aziz. The both, Hamka and Nik Aziz a contemporary Muslim scholars leading Islamic da’wah and movement in the Malay Archipelago, and represent a comprehensive example of a Muslim group of trying to address the prevailing socio-cultural and politico-economic problems which Muslim nations face. This research first examines al-Wasatiyah from main sources - the Qur’an and Sunnah and the interpretation and approach of two contemporary scholars to formulate a balanced and peaceful society. This study finds that the concept al-Wasatiyah is used as an important means in their Islamic Dawah and Movement to revert the ultra-secular polity as well as liberal and extreme views not in favor of Islam. This study concludes that based on the true Islamic teachings, Hamka and Nik Aziz have the potential not only in promoting a ‘Balanced Approach’ as championed by Islam but also to develop a moderate and harmonious society based on the worldview of Islam. While achieving this goal, the need for political authority and a grassroots network of ulama is central to countering terrorism, extremism and liberalism in Muslim-majority country like Malaysia and Indonesia.

Keywords: Wasatiyah, Moderation, Harmony, Ulama, Hamka, Nik Aziz and Malay World

INTRODUCTION

At the present time, the world and mankind facing severe crisis of both spiritual and material developments - hunger, poverty, inferiority complex, depression, corruption, trauma, misbehaviour and many other human tragedies (Rahimah, 2016). It is believed that all these took place because of others’ violence, religious extremism and materialistic radicalism, terrorism and deviant teaching, economic and political instabilities as well as environmental disaster (Wani, 2017). Scientific achievements and technological revolution have rapidly advanced human life, however, it also become more sophisticated, critical and complicated. All these human tragedies, scientific achievements and technological revolution have led the world to hold a selfish desire, free will that caused to clash of civilization.
While it is the scenario of the whole world, the Muslim world also facing the absence of true nature of humanity, social justice and good-governance which led people to chauvinism and enmity among themselves. The Malay world considered relatively more comfort zone than the other part of the Islamic world (al ‘Alam al Islami) from Rabat to Indonesia and Sierra Leone to Central Asia. According to Hamka, Islam came to the Malay world from Arabian peninsula, contradicting the findings of Western historians that it came through the Indian sub-continent (Hamka, 1997). In fact, Islam has spread in this land by Muslim traders and Sufi saints than invaders who came from different part of the globe from Arab world to Indian Sub-continent (Islam, 2015). Therefore, the Islamic intellectual tradition arguably deliberated in this land more moderate and substantial than any other part of the Muslim world.

BACKGROUND

This praiseworthy position and tradition have been developed all the way through contribution to ‘ulama and umara’ (ulu al-amr)of this land. Hence, the transformation of Qur’anic concept of Wasatiyyah has been grounded in the Malay Archipelago towards reforming of a moderate society overlooking the either excessiveness (ifrat) or laxity (tafrit). The Qur’an calls on people to apply the model of Wasatiyyah. Wasatiyyah is presented in the text in different forms and meanings such as excellence, justice and moderation. One such example from the Qur’an is, “Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves…” (Qur’an, al-Baqarah: 143).

In the context of the Qur’anic expression “ummatan wasatan”, the interpretation of the Mufassirun (Qur’anic exegetes) and the views of the early Islamic scholars refer to the term al-Wasatiyyah to imply the Islamic community or nation having the attributes of justice, excellence, and balance. Yusuf al-Qaradawi interprets the phrase Ummah Wasat as the Just (al-’Adl) and Chosen (al-Khair) or best nation. He highlights Wasatiyyah approach alongside classical and contemporary scholars and as such articulates, “Islam, therefore, recommends Wasatiyyah and balance in everything: in ‘aqidah (belief), ’ibadah (worship), akhlq (conduct), muamalat (transicion) and ahkam (legislation). This is the straightforward path that Allah (SWT) has prescribed al-Sirat al-Mustaqim. Therefore Wasatiyyah, or the balanced path, is not only a general characteristic of Islam, it is also a fundamental landmark”. (Al-Qaradwi, 2010).

The religious life in the Malay world in general, and Malaysia and Indonesia in particular, is very conducive and tolerant, in line with the universality of Islamic teachings itself that focus on justly balanced, moderate, peace and harmony. Malaysia and Indonesia, is a country, with multiple ethnic groups with multiple cultures, languages and religions, and the society is very communal, paternalistic, with high solidarity. Thus, the identity of Malaysia and Indonesia, as a majority Muslim society, can be summed up by two characteristics, namely moderate and harmony (Khalek Awang, 2012).

Although the Arabic term al-Wasat (more often al-Wasatiyyah in the contemporary Islamic epistemology), as a theme and field of Islamic scholarship is relatively recent, most probably dating back to the early twentieth century but the conception and essence of this Islamic principle has a longer history and it occurs in Islamic epistemological discourses from the very beginning when Muslim Scholars showed a great zeal in the field of knowledge and went beyond their territories to receive it wherever they found (Wani, 2017).

THE WASATIYYAH MODEL

The Qur’anic concept of al-Wasat/Wasatiyyah

The idea or attitude of Wasatiyyah could be conceptualized as a attribute of Muslim Ummah that has been infinitely expounded in the Qur’an. Accordingly, when Allah describes Muslims as "ummatan wasatan" (justly balanced ummah), the impression thus conveyed is that Islam is a religion of peace, moderation and impartiality, not of extremism, prejudice and intolerance (Spahiq Omer, 2013). In spite of the concept of wasatiyyah, the practice of excessiveness (ghuluww) of previous nations has also revealed in the Qur’an. The followers of Prophet Musa and ‘Isa (a.w.) for instance, and the nature of their deviation from the true teachings of religion is a significant discourse took place in the Qur’an in order to comprehend the attributes of Ummah Muhammad (s.a.w). Allah (SWT) said:

O people of the Book, be not excessive in your Faith, and do not say about Allah anything but the truth. The Masih ‘Isa, the son of Maryam, is only a Messenger of Allah, and His Word that He had delivered to Maryam, and a spirit from Him. So, believe in Allah and His Messengers. Do not say “Three”. Stop it. That is good for you. Allah is the only One God. He is far too pure to have a son. To
Him belongs what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. And Allah is enough to trust in. (The Qur’an, 4: 171)

According to Taqi Usmani, the original word used by the Qur’an for excessiveness is ghuluww which means to exceed the proper bounds. It is normally used in a situation where one is over indulged in something that is good in principle, but his excessive involvement makes it reproachable. The ghuluww of the Jews was that they had taken certain lawful things unlawful, while the ghuluww of the Christians was that they exceeded the bounds in showing respect to ‘Isa (a.s.) when they took him as God or Son of God. (Taqi Usmani, n.d.)

Muslim Ummah and its cultures and civilization, which have been established and molded by the vitality of Islam, are to be decorated with the same attributes and traits. Moreover, Islam is a religion of amity, justice, harmony and moderation with the Creator, people and at once built and natural environments. These ideals of total balance and steadiness are to be transmitted and practiced at each and every tier of Muslim without compromising on honesty, integrity and truth. Indeed, this dimension of Islam is critical because so long as there is no peace, harmony or justice with God, there could be no peace, harmony or justice with self either (Spyhie Omer, 2013).

In our time when religious ghuluww or extremism and also materialistic radicalism have been emerged as one of the biggest challenges the World is facing and as such advancement and propagation of the Qur’anic concept of Wasat is the call of the time to confront the monsters of religious extremism and materialistic radicalism. At this point, scholars of sound knowledge and intellect arose to deal with religious extremism and also materialistic radicalism, and inviteded people towards the moderate and balanced teachings of Islam (Wani, 2017).

Whenever immoderate tendencies have been found in the society, the ulu al-amr- both umara and ‘ulama (just leaders of the society and scholars of the religion) promoted and propagated the basic concept of Islam, known as al-wasatiyyah, through their epistemological discourses based on the Qur’an and hadith. For example, Ibn Taimiyyah has uphold this model (wasatiyyah) in his fatawas and other works, and called it as al-sirat al-mustaqim. He has also written a book on the subject entitled with Iqitiza al-Sirat al-Mustaqim. His disciple, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah has also stimulated it in the concept al-tariq al-haq (Wani, 2017). Moreover, Al-Shatibi calls it qasd al-sabil when he explains the verse 9 of Surah Al-Nahl, Chapter 16 as “a system of life which is free from exaggeration and shortening.” Imam Ghazali has termed it al-Qistas al-Mustaqim in his book al-Iqtisad fi al’I’tiqad (Islam, 2016). The above mentioned conversation has obviously suggested that while Muslim Ummah and its society faced the challenges of ghuluww in their socio-political and religio-cultural domain, in the meantime, the ulu al-amr, leaders of the society and the scholars of the religion have also directed them to uphold the true teachings of Islam in their life.

**WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE TO BE REGARDED AS ULU AL-AMR (THOSE CHARGED WITH AUTHORITY)?**

The Qur’an distinguishes some people those charged with authority and they are recognized as the ulu al-amr (Abbas and Hussein, 2017). The discussion of ulu al-amr as a Qur’anic epistomology relating to an intellectual institution or[and] leaders and scholars in the context of Muslim society. This is consistent with the tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w) as he said: “There will come to you leaders who are good and bad, the good will command the good deeds, while the wicked will enjoing the evil deeds. You must obey them if they are on the right path. And follow them, if they do good, because the reward is for them and for you, but if they act wickedly, the punishment is for them alone.” [Narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (r.a.)]. In addition, Imam Ibn Taymiyyah’s interpretation on the Qur’anic term of ulu al-amr is also a good deliberation in the above mentioned hadith as he demonstrated:

> “People who have authority (ulu al-amr) are of two kinds: rulers (umara’) and scholars (‘ulama’). If they are right, the masses will also be right. Both should obey Allah and His Messenger and adhere strictly to His Book in all that they say and do. [Selected writings of Ibn Taymiyyah on Islamic Faith, Life and Society, and Fatawa 28: 386-387].

Al-Tabari, in the context of the term ulu al-amr, provides four definitions; referring to; (a) the religious scholars (‘ulama’), (b) the learned in religion and thought (al-fiqh fi’ al-din wa al-‘aql), (c) the knowledgeable (al-‘ilm) and (d) the leaders of war (wulah fi al-harb). (Al-Tabari, 1997), and Fadzli Adam, 2001. Furthermore, al-Tabari underlines some significant roles of ulu al-amr in the Muslim community. They are considered to be the third most fundamental source to be consulted, after the Qur’an and the Prophet Muhammad, in the case of any question or dispute arising. Also any news, good or bad, should be reported to them before all others because of their knowledge, learning and judgement (Fadzli Adam, 2001).
Al-Zamakhshari, in his interpretation of the term *ulu al-amr*, agrees with al-Tabari’s point of view, as he considers that it has the meaning of *umara*’ *al-haq* (the true and pious leaders or rulers). These kinds of leaders, in all situations, are responsible for guiding the people to submit to Allah (SWT). (Al-Zamakhshari, n.d.). Likewise, they should not only concern themselves with the material fulfilment of their people, but also their spiritual needs, so that a balanced and impartial approach can be established in their worldly life (Fadzli Adam 2001).

**WASATIYAH TREND IN THE MALAY WORLD**

It is true that the discourse of wasatiyyah as well as moderation narrative has become the dominant description in the world and very particularly in the Malay world after the circumstances of 9/11, 2001 (Kamal Hassan 2011). There are many perceptions and definitions on moderation have emerged. For example, the “Enlighten Islam” proposed by Parvez Mosharraf, then President of Pakistan, “Islam Hadhari” by Tun Abdullah Badawi, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, “Global Movement of Moderates” by Najib bin Tun Razak, the current Prime Minister of Malaysia, “Moderate Islam, and Pancasila” in Indonesia and so on. Moreover, there are exist elsewhere similar institutions engaging in the promotion of moderation. The Al-Qaradawi Center for Islamic Moderation and Renewal, at University of Qutar, and the Moderation Assembly for Thought and Culture was established under the patronage of King of Jordan and The Royal Academy of Jordan were two examples (Hanif Hassan, 2014).

However, it is quite challenging to maintain the authenticity and the original dynamics behind the discourse on the moderation narrative with the presence of Western powers, which also have similar agenda of promoting their idea of moderation and free-will in the Muslim World (Kamal Hassan, 2011). In addition to that, Kamal Hassan has reservations about the close association between wasatiyyah and moderation. Similarly, he was also not inclined to the interpretation of wasatiyyah as merely wholesale manifestations of non-violence or non-radical or non-militant as often used by political leaders in the West as well as in Muslim countries. To him, wasatiyyah is more than just moderation, non-violence, non-radical and non-militant (Hanif Hassan, 2014). For example, Kamal Hassan (2013) argues that as a concept, wasatiyyah must encompass three key attributes—justice, excellence, and balance or moderation. The inclusion of the attribute of justice is based on a Hadith or Sunnah that was reported by Ahmad on the authority of Abu Sa’id al-Khudri that the Prophet interpreted the word *wasat*, from which wasatiyyah is derived, to mean justice or al-*‘adl* (Fauzi Yaacob, 2014).

Nevertheless, the concept of Wasatiyyah has always been uttered in the Muslim society and the bequest of *ulu al-amr* (*umara* and *ulama* of Islam) in this context is undeniable. Hence, the two scholars, precisely Hamka and Nik Aziz, could be pondered one of the well respected and admired leaders and scholars of Islam in the context of time and society. The both, Hamka and Nik Aziz a contemporary Islamic scholars and leaders who were leading Islamic *da’wah* and movement in the Malay Archipelago, and signifying a comprehensive example of a Muslim group of trying to address the prevailing socio-cultural and politico-economic problems which Muslim Ummah faces. Hamka and Nik Aziz have the potential not only in promoting a Wasatiyyah model or ‘Balanced Approach’ as championed by Islam but also to develop a moderate and harmonious society based on the worldview of Islam (Islam, 2016).

**BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF HAMKA AND NIK AZIZ (EDUCATION, INVOLVEMENT IN DA’WAH AND SAHWA AL ISLAMIYYAH)**

**Hamka**

Hamka was a great son and one of the greatest Da’is in the Malay world whose works have left a significant impact not only in Indonesia but throughout the other part of the Malay world including Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Pattani and Champa. He is well known for Malay and Islamic literature, creative writing, culture, politics and philosophy (Rosnani Hashim, 2010).

Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, known as HAMKA was born in West Sumatra February 17, 1908 - and died in Jakarta July 24, 1981 during the month of Ramadan. He was a prominent Indonesian author, ‘*Alim* and politician. His father, sheikh Abdul Karim Amrullah, known as Haji Rasul, led and inspired the reform movement in Sumatra upon his arrival from the holy land Makkah in 1906 (Fatimah Abdullah, 2011). His father was among the founder of the *Kaum Muda* movement in Minangkabau who struggle to eradicate deviant beleif, *khurafat* and *bidah* among the community that was very much inspired in the life of Hamka (Rosnani Hashim, 2010). In 1970’s, HAMKA was the leader of Majelis Ulama Indonesia, an extra government Muslim organizations in Indonesia which, have power to produce *Fatwa*, and contains ‘*ulama* and scholar from Nahdatul ‘ulama and Muhammadiyah.
Hamka strongly believe that the strength and unity of the Malays were due to their faith, Islam. Most Malays were Muslims and he felt that Islam united them in their spirit as a nation. Hamka was very much influenced by the fresh revivalist ideas of Muslim reformers such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida and Amir Shakib Arsalan from the Middle East (Rosnani Hashim, 2010).

HAMKA puts a greater emphasis on the discussion of moderation when he devotes on moderation in his “Falsafah Hidup”. His believes in moderation and that reflected in his all works (Rosnani Hashim, 2010). He mentions three groups of people with regard to their desire. First, the one who follows his desire and does not handle it properly until he sacrifices his wealth, his good names, his nation and his country. He neither cares about the rights of others nor does he care about God’s rights. Consequently, his physical and spiritual is destroyed and he lives in humiliation. Second, the one who neglects totally his desires, such as marriage. However, he explains, between the two of them there is the third group who stands in the middle. He does not succumb to his desire but only fulfills it in a lawful manner without excessiveness of any kind. The first two groups were criticized by HAMKA because one is too excessive and the other is too deficient. Both these approaches according to him are dangerous for man. The latter group was praised by HAMKA for being moderate and just (Fatimah Abdullah, 2011).

For HAMKA, moderation also means istiqamah (steadfastness). Istiqamah means to stand firm and by that, man should not allow himself to follow or to be misled by desires as it will lead him astray and cause him to deviate from the right path. HAMKA adds that man’s actions are to be in line with the way determined by Islam which promotes moderation for the betterment of human being in this world as well as in the Hereafter. HAMKA divides moderation into several types: moderation in terms of man’s intention and mission, thinking, needs, happiness, wealth, name, position and training (Fatimah Abdullah, 2011).

HAMKA also explained the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) brought the teachings to develop ummatan wasatan, a people who take the middle path. Believe in the hereafter, and then do good deeds in this world. Seek wealth to defend justice, physical and spiritual health conscious, because health associated with the other one. Conscious intelligence, but with prayer strengthens to smooth feeling. Seek wealth as much as possible, because wealth is a tool for doing well. Throughout the people is still on this path, then they will remain a middle of the balanced people (Norsaleha Mohd Salleh et. al., 2015).

Nik Aziz
Tuan Guru Dato’ Bentara Setia Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat (10 January 1931 – 12 February 2015) could be pondered one of the well respected and admired leaders and scholars of Islam in the context of his time and society. He was a legendary thinker, guru and Islamic scholars in Malays Islamic movemnt and politics regardless of his political identity. He was the Menteri Besar (Chief Minister) of Kelantan from 1990 to 2013 and the Mursyidul ‘Am or Spiritual Leader of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) from 1991 until his death in 2015. Overall, his career as an elected politician lasted for some 48 years following his election to the Parliament of Malaysia in 1967 (Zulkifli Sulong, 2010).

Nik Abdul Aziz was born in Kota Bharu in 1931 as the second of five siblings. He was raised by a single father (Tok Kura) who was an aspiring blacksmith. Nik Aziz’s Islamic studies began in pondok schools in Kelantan and Terengganu. He went on to study at Darul Uloom Deoband in Uttar Pradesh, India for five years. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts in Arabic Studies and Master of Arts in Islamic jurisprudence from Al-Azhar University, Egypt. During his university studies, he was one of the witnesses and a civilian to have lived in the heat of the Arab-Israeli Conflict. Having returned from Egypt, Nik Aziz began as a teacher at various religious schools in Kelantan, hence his popular nickname “Tok Guru.” (PAS, 2010).

Nik Aziz joined PAS in 1967. He contested and won the Kelantan Hilir parliamentary seat by-election in that same year, and held the seat (later renamed Pengkalan Chepa) until 1986. In 1982, he was part of a movement by young members to bring change to the party eadership. PAS had lost the Kelantan state elections in 1978 and, as PAS state commissioner, Nik Aziz began to question president Asri Muda's leadership. Finally, in the PAS Muktamar (General Assembly) that year, Asri was forced to resign. After stepping aside from federal politics, Nik Aziz won a seat in the Kelantan State Assembly in the 1986 general elections. In 1990, PAS managed to wrest control of Kelantan back from Barisan Nasional. In his capacity as party leader in the state, Nik Aziz became Menteri Besar of Kelantan. He succeeded Yusof Rawa as spiritual leader of PAS in 1991 (PAS, 2010).

WASATIYAH APPROACH VS HARDLINE VIEWS
Moderation in Personal Conduct and Behavior

The interpretation of wasatiiyah, as mentioned earlier, is not a merely wholesale manifestation of non-violence or non-radical or non-militant as often used by political leaders in the West as well as some leaders
in Muslim countries. According to the President of Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), Abdul Hadi Awang (n.d.: 7) asserts that the meaning of wasatiyyah is not performing Islam poorly or selectively or in patchwork. It is not just building a beautiful mosque but not praying there, establishing Bank Islam without the power to prevent usury, holding competition of the Qur’an (Musabaqah) just to listen without making guidance in practice and probation, loss of property to corruption and abuse of power and mismanagement greater than aid to the right and in conclusion upholding good imperfect, and growing disobedience. Then it is not eligible to show the model of wasatiyyah in Islam and not qualified to be a witness in this world and the hereafter (Mazlan Ibrahim et al., 2013). Nevertheless, Nik Aziz has propagated and signified the true nature of wasatiyyah in his words and actions. It is well-established to his proponent and opponent that Nik Aziz was always very humble, good in personal conduct, and also to follow a balanced course and moderate way of life. He was instructing Muslims on the best way of behavior and personal conduct, as Quran says: “And be moderate in your walking, and lower your voice.” (Surah Luqman, 39:19).

He was very balanced in economic consumption and very simple in life style. Islam teaches human beings the middle course in expenditure and urges them to be moderate in spending too. It is evident that the term Iqtisad (derived from al-gasd) which is the Arabic word for the science of economics, essentially signifies moderation in spending as opposed to either extravagant or niggardliness (Wani, 2017). Therefore, he demanded support from a large number of non-Muslims in Malaysia and played a leading role during PAS’ increase in popularity among non-Muslims.

The Issue of Word “Allah”

In 2012, there was an issue of Catholics in Malaysia using the Arabic term for "God": "Allah" in their Christian Bible. Initially, Nik Aziz stated that the word "Allah" can be used by non-Muslims as the origin of the word itself is evidently pre-Islamic. The Qur’an acknowledges the pre-Islamic use of Allah by ancient Arab polytheistic society. Allah (SWT) said: “and if you ask them as to who has created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, “Allah.” Say, “Alhamdulillah " (Praise be to Allah). But most of them do not know.” (Surah Luqman, 31: 25). Remarkably, his stance in this regard was very much allied and sound to the views of the Qur’anic concept of wasatiyyah. However, the issue caused a stir in the Muslim community in Malaysia and particularly the Malays. The PAS, the largest Islamic political party, was almost divided into two blocs; one that supported the use of the word, and one that did not. Aiming to restore unity in PAS, Nik Aziz took back his words and disapproved of the word "Allah" being used by non-Muslims that was regarded as an U-turn from a moderate and balanced approach to a fractional approach. Furthermore, the implications of the notion of al-wasatiyyah for contemporary Muslim society include balancing between the permanent principles of Islamic law and the changing conditions of the time; the coupling of religious duty with the social reality; engaging in dialogue and coexistence with other people, and practicing tolerance with those who differ; as well as presenting Islam as a balanced, integrated civilizational mission for the revival, liberation and unification of the ummah (Spahic Omer, 2013). Besides, Nik Aziz drew some criticism for his hardline Islamic views. His advocacy of Islamic shari’ah law for all Malay Muslims drew criticism, as did his suggestion that women would be at a lower risk of being raped if they abandoned using their lipstick and perfume (The Star, 5 Januari 2013).

CONCLUSION

Al-wasatiyyah as a multidimensional model deals with psychological, intellectual and spiritual aspects. It is at once a philosophy and a way of life and comprehensive, in that it integrates and balances the requisites and delights of this world and the Hereafter. It is universal, in that it affects the total wellbeing of Muslims and then of all people and indeed of all animate and inanimate beings. The interpretation of wasatiyyah, as mentioned earlier, is not a merely wholesale manifestation of non-violence or non-radical or non-militant as often used by political leaders in the West as well as in Muslim countries. Moreover, the meaning of wasatiyyah is not practicing Islam poorly or selectively or in patchwork. It is not just building a beautiful mosque but not praying there, establishing Bank Islam without the power to prevent usury, holding competition of the Qur’an (Musabaqah) just to listen without and carrying out in practice, loss of property to corruption and abuse of power and mismanagement greater than aid to the right and in conclusion upholding good imperfect, and growing disobedience. Then it is not eligible to show the model of wasatiyyah in Islam and not qualified to be a witness in this world and the hereafter.

The justly balanced Muslim ummah, characterized as truthful, altruistic, cultured and sophisticated, is thus to serve as a witness over others, to selflessly intervene in the cause of peace and justice and to function as mankind’s ultimate source of optimism, luminosity and hope. Hence, following the pronouncement in the first of the five above-quoted Qur’anic verses that Muslims are "ummatan wasatan" (justly balanced ummah),
Allah proclaims next that such is the case so "that you might be witnesses over the nations". (Qur’an, al – Baqarah, 2: 143).

It is a matter of fact that the Malay world is experiencing racial stability, peace, tolerance and freedom of religion even though Islam is the official religion of the country but it does not ignore the role of other religions. Thus, Islam was given the position of the highest legislative and administrative, other religions still be assured by the Constitution and freely practiced in peace and harmony. Whenever immoderate tendencies have been found in the society, the ulu al-amr- both umara and ‘ulama (just leaders of the society and scholars of the religion) promoted and propagated the basic concept of Islam, known as al-wasatiyyah, through their epistemological discourses based on the Qur’an and hadith. Thus, the Islamic intellectual tradition perhaps considered in this land more moderate and substantial than any other part of the Muslim world.

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