ISLAMIC REFORM:
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN
THE TRADITIONALISTS AND REFORMISTS
CONCERNING MATTERS OF ‘IBĀDAH
IN CONTEMPORARY MALAYSIA

BY

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IN THE NAME OF ALLĀH
THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

DECLARATION

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY DECLARE THAT THIS THESIS IS
WRITTEN BY MYSELF AND ANY REFERENCES
MADE TO THE SOURCES
ARE DULY ACKNOWLEDGED

SAADAN MAN
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in matters of 'ibādah as a result of the emergence of Islamic reform in Malaysia. This thesis is divided into three major parts. Part One highlights the phenomenon of Islamic reform in general and its emergence and development in Malaysia, while Part Two focuses on the general concept of 'ibādah. Part Three serves as the most significant part of this study as it highlights the contents of the conflict and its analysis.

Part One is divided into two chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction dealing with the notion and terminology of Islamic reform, its brief historical development and some of its basic principles. It provides a basis for an understanding of the development of Islamic reform in Malaysia. Chapter Two reveals the background of the Malay Muslim community which has been an important factor that contributed to the advent of Islamic reform in Malaysia. It then discusses briefly the historical development of Islamic reform in Malaysia from its early days of emergence until the present day. The basic ideas which contributed to the growth of the conflict which involved the traditionalists and the reformists are also studied in this chapter.

Part Two comprises one chapter, i.e. Chapter Three. This chapter turns to the subject of the conflict, viz. 'ibādah. It explores the basic idea of 'ibādah, its concept, principles, relationship with the past forms of 'ibādah, its system and status in Islam. This chapter provides a basis for further understanding of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists discussed in the next chapters.

Part Three consists of two chapters, i.e. Chapter Four and Chapter Five. Chapter Four reveals in detail the content of the conflict between the two rivals in the realm of 'ibādah. It explores their respective standpoints as well as their argumentations on specific disputed issues. Chapter Five analyses the conflict between the two parties by studying the major reasons for the conflict and its impact upon the Malay Muslim community. It also views the future of conflict and suggests possible formulas in managing the conflict.
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NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION AND SPELLING

This study involves the use of Arabic and Malay words for which a general system of transliteration and spelling need to be devised. In the absence of a standard form for the spelling of various Arabic and Malay terms, some inconsistencies are unavoidable. The researcher, however, has decided, for the sake of convenience and to a certain extent uniformity, to adopt the following rules in dealing with these spellings:

Arabic/Islamic Terms

In this case, a modified version of the Encyclopaedia of Islam's system of transliteration as used by the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Edinburgh is adopted, except that words ending in ta’ marbutah are spelt with 'h', for example:

Bid'ah and not Bid'a
Qiblah and not Qibla
Shar'ah and not Shar'a

As for Arabic words, generally these have been quoted in an Arabic transliteration rather than the Malay version. For instance:

'Idah and not Ibadah
Ṣūfī and not Sufi
'Ālim/Ulama' and not Alim/Ulamak

In another case, Shaykh al-Islam is spelt as in Arabic contexts, not as Shaykhul Islam, while Qāḍī (religious judge) is spelt in this way rather than Kathi or Kadi.

Exception, however, is made for words which are popularly used in Malay, where even though they are originally Arabic, the local usage is adopted. For example:

Adat rather than 'Ādāt
Dakwah and not Da'wah
Hijaz and not Hijāz
Malay Words

Since the standardization of Malay spelling took place only a few decades ago, the new Malay spelling system is only used in recent and contemporary works. However, with regard to the particular names where the old method way of spelling were used, the Malay spelling used in this study is as found in the original sources. For instances:

Neracha and not Neraca
Bahtra and not Bahtera
Pilehan Timoer and not Pilhan Timur

Names of Malays and Local Muslims

For names of local Muslims and other personalities known locally, even though they were Arabic, the spelling used is according to local usages. For example:

Abdullah and not ʿAbd Allāh
Daud Fatani and not Dāwūd al-Fatānī
Muhammad Arshad Banjari and not Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī

Names of Middle Eastern Muslims

Names of such persons, despite the fact that some of them are known locally, are spelt with the proper diacritical marks as often as used in academic works. This exemption is made since the names are exclusively Middle Eastern. For example:

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and not Jamaluddin al-Afghani
Hasan al-Banna and not Hasan al-Banna
Rashīd Riḍā and not Rashid Redha or Rashid Rida.
INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Islamic reform has long been an entrenched and significant tradition in the Muslim historical experience. In the contemporary Islamic resurgence which prevails in the Muslim world, Islamic reform plays its dominant role. From the early days of Islam, Islamic reform has emerged in various forms depending on the changing circumstances of the Muslim community. However, in all these circumstances, Islamic reform has always stressed on the need to return to the first principle of Islam, namely the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Islamic reform is a response from within the Muslim community to their state of backwardness and decadence caused mainly by their departure from the straight path of Islam. In the modern era, Islamic reform, which was pioneered by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muhammad ʿAbduh, Rashīd Riḍā and ʿHasan al-Bannā, marks a response both to an internal decline of the community as well as to Western colonialism. In reversing the internal decline and countering Western colonialism, they called upon the Muslim community to return to the spirit of early Islam and to reinterpret the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet in the light of modern times. They believed that limited borrowing from Western ideas was permissible and that reason could not conflict with religious revelation.

The spirit of Islamic reform which spread prevalently in the Middle East extended its influence to all over the Muslim world, from Indonesia in the East, to Senegal in the West. As a Muslim country, Malaysia without exception has also been much influenced by the prevalent spirit of Islamic reform. The growth of Islamic reform in Malaysia had commenced since the early twentieth century, pioneered by some leading figures such as Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi, Syeikh Tahir Jalaluddin and Abbas Muhammad Taha. The advent of Islamic reform in Malaysia has resulted in various effects in the history of the Malay Muslim community. One of its greatest impacts has been the conflict of thought between the advocates of Islamic reformism, i.e. the reformists, and their adversaries, i.e. the traditionalists, as both parties hold firmly
to their opposing views with regard to certain issues in practising the religion. The conflict of thought between the two parties occurred in various domains of the religion, including faith as well as politics. Among them, the conflicting thought regarding the matters of 'ibādah has been an important one and is regarded as a microcosm of the general conflict between both parties.

Basically, the conflicting perceptions between the traditionalists and the reformists with regard to matters of 'ibādah is a juristic one. This conflict resembles the disagreements between the previous jurists in the established four Sunni madhhabs, namely, the Ḥanafī, the Mālikī, the Shāfī‘ī and the Ḥanbalī. Disagreements between the jurists of the madhhabs were the results of their differences in methods of inferring the rulings (qawā'id al-istinbāt) from the primary textual evidences, i.e. the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as their differences in the methods of ijtihād. However, the disputes between the traditionalists and the reformists do not revolve around the question of different methodologies very much, but rather the question of authority.

The traditionalists strongly hold to the authority of the past and thus adopt the principle of taqlīd in practising the religion and refuse to perform ijtihād. The reformists, while recognizing the authority of the past, denounce taqlīd, and instead, hold to the principle of āttibā’ and emphasize the authority of ijtihād. The reformists, though they strongly place great importance on the need for ijtihād in resolving modern day problems, do not propound a new methodology (manhaj) of ijtihād, but adopt the existing methodologies recognized by the Sunni madhhabs. For instance, the conflict between the two rivals occurs when the traditionalists in adopting the principle of taqlīd hold to one specific madhhab, i.e. the Shāfī‘ī madhhab, while the reformists do not restrict themselves to any specific madhhab, but choose from the strongest and the best standpoint of these madhhabs, or perform new ijtihād.

The sources of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in matters of 'ibādah are varied, but mostly result from the different principles held by the respective groups with regard to several issues relating to the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (usul al-fiqh), particularly the issues of ijtihād and its antithesis, taqlīd. Though the conflict is mainly manifested in a juristic form which does not
involve any of the fundamental principles of the religion, it frequently leads to a serious division of the Malay Muslim community. In such a case, the question of attitude is apparently relevant.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study attempts to analyse the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists as a major result of the advent of Islamic reform in Malaysia. For that purpose, this study will examine the notion and principles of Islamic reform itself which has been the point of departure of the study of this conflict.

This study also aims at revealing the aspects of conflicting thought between the two rivals with regard to matters of 'ibādah. In doing so, it will explore in detail the argumentations about the disputed matters, and at the same time will try to identify the major reasons that engender the conflict. Generally, the conflict over the issues of 'ibādah represents the whole conflict between the two groups. Thus, the study is important in terms of its findings with regard to the sources of the conflict, and it is hoped that it will provide an insight to better understand the conflict between the Malay traditionalists and reformists.

The conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists concerning matters of 'ibādah has had a tremendous impact upon the Malay Muslim community. On the one hand, one might say that the conflict has generated a negative impact upon the society, but, on the other, it has engendered several positive effects. It has been an important objective of this study to examine the major effects of the conflict on the Malay Muslim community.

Since the conflict between the two groups has obviously left some negative effects on the Malay Muslim community, particularly in causing the divide within the society, the study further attempts to formulate some possible ways of reconciling the two opposing parties. The study will additionally attempt to investigate the influence and extent of Islamic traditionalism and Islamic reformism as two major religious streams in the current Islamic resurgence in Malaysia. The knowledge gained could be used to make an assessment about the future development of the conflict and perhaps
may assist in prescribing the right course of action.

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study encompasses two basic discussions: Islamic reform in Malaysia and the conflicting schools of thought on issues of 'ibādah. The discussion of Islamic reform in Malaysia will focus on the general notion and principle of Islamic reform. A brief historical development of Islamic reform is included to provide a basis for understanding the phenomenon in the Malaysian context. In discussing Islamic reform in the Malaysian context, the study covers the background of its emergence, and its historical development in the Malay society, which is divided into two phases: before independence, i.e. from early 1900s to 1957, and after independence, i.e. from 1958 until the present day. This is important for understanding the background of the conflict.

This study of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists is confined to matters of 'ibādah. In doing so, the Islamic concept of 'ibādah is significantly discussed. The conflict between the two groups in matters of 'ibādah covers a wide range of issues, but this study is limited to the disputed matters in the five pillars of Islam and some supererogatory acts of 'ibādah which are important to the discussion.

As the conflict over issues of 'ibādah is a juristic one, it closely relates to the discussion of specific questions in the science of Islamic jurisprudence (usūl al-fiqh). Hence, in discovering the sources of the conflict, this study focuses its discussion on several important topics of usūl al-fiqh, such as the notions of taqlīd and ijtīhād.

A BRIEF SURVEY OF MAJOR SOURCES

Basically, works on Islamic reform in Malaysia are considerable, but none has done an in-depth study of the conflict over matters of 'ibādah between the traditionalists and the reformists as this study attempts to do. Thus, this study relies mostly on scattered materials written by both opposing groups or referred to by them in the related
disputed matters. These include both classical and contemporary sources.

The discussion on general Islamic reform and its relevant issues is based on the abundant references which are mostly written in English. On the general concept of Islamic reform and its manifestation in the contemporary Muslim world, the significant references include, for instance, Rashid Riḍā’s writings in his *Tafsīr al-Manār*; several writings of Fazlur Rahman, such as in his books *Islam* and *Islam and Modernity*, and his articles "Revival and Reform in Islam"; Ali Merad’s essay "Islāḥ"; John L. Esposito’s writings, such as in his *Islam the Straight Path, Islam and Politics, The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality* and his edited book *Voices of Resurgent Islam*; C. C. Adams’ *Islamic Modernism in Egypt*, Malcom H. Kerr’s *Islamic Reform*; H. A. R. Gibb’s *Modern Trends in Islam*; R. Hrair Dekmejian’s *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, Andrew Rippin’s *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (vol 2); Patrick Bannerman’s *Islam in Perspective* and so forth. These writings provide the general outline of Islamic reform and describe its emergence in various forms in modern times.

The discussion on Islamic reform in Malaysia and its historical development is based on various writings. Among them are William R. Roff’s oft-quoted book *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, his edited book *Kelantan: Religion and Society* and his numerous articles, especially "Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction amongst the Malays"; Mohd Sarim Mustajab’s writing "Gerakan Islah Islamiah di Tanah Melayu 1906-1940"; Ibrahim Abu Bakar’s *Islamic Modernism in Malaya: The Life and Thought of Sayid Shekh Al-Hadi 1867-1934*; Abu Bakar Hamzah’s *Al-Imam: Its Role in Malay Society 1906-1908*; Alijah Gordon’s edited book *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh Al-Hady*, etc. On its contemporary development it refers to several writings such as *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics and Islam in Malaysia from Revivalism to Islamic State of Hussin Mutalib; Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia* by Chandra Muzaffar, *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia* by Abdul Rahman Abdullah, and various works of current observers of Malaysian Islamic resurgence, such as the works of Judith Nagata, N. J. Funston, Fred Von Der Mehden and Clive S. Kessler.

On the conflict over matters of ʿibādah, this study refers mainly to the various *fiqh* writings which have been the important references of both groups. They include the classical Malay Muslim literature of *fiqh*, such as Dawud Fatani’s works of *Bughyat*.
al-Ṭullāb and Furūʿ al-Masāʾil, Muhammad Arshad Banjari’s Sabīl al-Muhtadīn and Muhammad b. Ismail Fatani’s Matlaʿ al-Badrayn which have been the most important texts of fiqh referred to by the traditionalists. The contemporary works of fiqh in the native language, written in the form of question and answer, such as K.H. Sirajuddin Abbas’ 40 Masalah Agama, Syed Alwi al-Haddad’s Fatwa Mufti Johor, Hasan Bandung’s Soal Djawab and Hashim A. Ghani’s Gelanggang Soal Jawab are among the significant references. The Arabic classical primary fiqh literature of the four leading Sunni madhhabs has also been an essential reference as they are frequently quoted in both argumentations of the two rivals. The reform-oriented fiqh works, such as Muhammad ʿAlī al-Shawkani’s Nayl al-Awtār, Sayyid Sābiq’s Fiqh al-Sunnah and Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī’s Fatūwa Muṣāḥarah have also been frequently referred to.

In clarifying the reasons for the conflict, in addition to the abovementioned works, the classical works of Dawud Fatani’s al-Jawāhir al-Saniyyah, Abu Bakar Ashaari’s writings such as Pembasmi Taqlid and Ibadah Rasulullah, and the contemporary works such as Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah’s Penutup Perdebatan Islam Alaf Kedua di Dunia Melayu, Ahmad Yusuf Amin’s works of Bid’ah and Taqlid, Basri Ibrahim’s Khilafiah, Bid’ah dan Maslahah Umum, Moenawar Chalil’s Kembali Kepada al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah are also among the important sources.

In referring to the verses of the Qurʾān in this study, the translations provided by Yusuf Ali, M. M. Pickthall and Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilālī & Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khān are specifically used. In quoting the ḥadīths of the Prophet, the writer refers mainly to the six books of prophetic traditions (sunan sittah) compiled by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad. For ease in finding the specific ḥadīths, the writer frequently uses the index of traditions available in the CD-ROMs of the Mawsūʿat al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawiyyah published by The Šakhr Corporation in 1996 and The Islamic Scholars published by Par Excellence Software in 1996. In referring to the ḥadīths in these CD-ROMs, the name of the ḥadīth book is mentioned first, followed by the title of the chapter and the number of the ḥadīth.
ISLAMIC REFORM: AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

In modern writings of Islam, there are a wide range of terms used in characterizing the heightening of Islamic consciousness among the Muslim community. The terms used are such as Islamic reassertion, reaffirmation, awakening, resurgence, renewal, renaissance, revitalization, rebirth, Islamic reformism, revivalism, puritanism, modernism, fundamentalism, activism, the return to Islam, the march of Islam and so forth. Though some of these terms may share common meanings, they may respectively be used in different contexts to denote different types of Islamic phenomena. In Arabic usage there are also several terms which illustrate such Islamic phenomena. One of the great concepts in the Islamic vocabulary of resurgence is ḥalāth. ḥalāth is a phenomenon that is frequently referred to in modern Islamic literature as Islamic reform.

This chapter will initially attempt to elucidate the general notion of Islamic

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reform and some terms which are significantly relevant in this study. It will then extend the discussion on several important issues pertaining to the sources, characteristic, orientation, and fundamental principles of Islamic reform.

The Concept of Islamic Reform

Reform, as stated by Hassan Saab, suggests change in form rather than substance.4 To reform is "to make or become better by the removal of faults and errors."5 In Arabic, the term "islāh" has been the word generally used by scholars for "reform." Islāh derives from aslāha which means "to correct, to redress or to purify from corruption."6 It corresponds to the meaning of the term "reform," which is "removal of faults or abuses." Islamic reform thus signifies efforts of restoration and purification of Islam from un-Islamic accretions to its pristine form.

The concept of reform (islāh) is a fundamental and deeply-rooted component of Islam's world-view. It has played an important part in the history of the Muslim community. From its earliest days, Islam has possessed a tradition of reform. This tradition lays special emphasis on the need for purification and revival by returning to the basic principles of Islam, in rectifying the social and moral decline of the community.7 It is believed that the fundamental failure of the community resulted from its departure from true Islam. Thus, its revitalization can be only achieved by returning to the straight path of Islam. Islamic reform reflects a continuing tradition of revitalization of Islamic faith and practice within the historic communities of

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Muslims. Over the centuries the efforts at reform have taken many different forms shaped by the special conditions of time and place. Over time, the specific meanings of reform might have changed depending on the evolution of Islamic thought and the changing circumstances of the Muslim community. However, in changing circumstances and with different implications, Islamic reform has always involved a call for a return to the basic fundamentals of Islam as presented in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Islamic reform in its various forms and terms is used in modern Islamic literature as antithesis of the term Islamic traditionalism or Islamic conservatism. Traditionalism is often used interchangeably with conservatism in referring to a tendency to cling to an old way of life. It is a reaction against deliberate reforming tendencies and characterized by almost fear of innovation. Islamic traditionalism or Islamic conservatism, as Andrew Rippin points out, maintains allegiance to past methods and has not dealt with the threat and attraction of the West. In this context, R. Hrair Dekmejian simply defines the traditionalists as those who "cling to traditional Islamic precepts and reject Western and other influences." William Shepard provides a more detailed description about the traditionalists. He asserts that a traditionalist is "one whose allegiance is to what many would consider the particular 'mix' of

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Sharfah and non-Sharī'ah elements characterizing his area on the eve of Western impact, and who has not significantly internalized the Western challenge, that is, who has not felt the attraction as well as the threat of Western ways, and thus has not fully appreciated the depth of the threat. He will probably be more 'otherworldly' and more given to traditional 'superstitions'.”

The basic orientation of traditionalism, according to Hisham Sharabi, is historicism, to use the term in a purely descriptive sense: that is, it derives its inspiration and strength from a historically evolved tradition and in its intellectual attitude always assumes a backward looking stance. It is obvious, then, that the traditionalists hold to the full authority of the past and that change should not and does not affect the traditions of the past. For the traditionalists, the past, rather than the future, was the locus of the Golden Age. The past was restorable and one day will be restored. The traditionalist thought, though it may not whole heartedly espouse the status quo, does not repudiate it. As the only concrete reality, the established order represents continuity and the only link with the past. The traditionalist group contains within it many learned scholars (‘ulamā’) and the traditional elites who might be thought to have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, many of the mystically oriented Şüfi groups, the lower classes, especially the peasants, and the vast majority of those who have not been exposed to modern education and thus to a great extent have not experienced the challenge of modernity to such a degree as to consider it a personal problem.

Having briefly explained the notion of Islamic traditionalism, we shall now clarify some terms used to denote Islamic reform. The most popular term used in

14Andrew Rippin, Muslims Their Religious Beliefs and Practices, op.cit., p. 29.
15Hisham Sharabi, Arab Intellectuals and the West, op.cit., p. 6.
antithesis to Islamic traditionalism is Islamic reformism. Islamic reformism has been a general term used to denote the Islamic ideology of reform. Those who uphold the ideas of reform are called reformists. In contemporary Islamic literature, Islamic reformism is specifically used to indicate the pre-modern revivalism and pre-modernist reform movements which swept over the larger part of the Muslim world during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These include the revival efforts of Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) and the reform movements led by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1703-1792) in Arabia, Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) in Nigeria, the Grand Sanusi (1787-1859) in Libya, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī (1564-1624) and Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762) in the Indian subcontinent.17 However, in referring to this pre-modern Islamic reformism, the scholars, in some writings, tend to preserve the terms pre-modern revivalism, pre-modern reformism or pre-modernist reformism rather than Islamic reformism.

Islamic reformism is sometimes used to indicate the modern reform movement which is different from Islamic modernism. This will be mentioned after discussing Islamic modernism itself. Islamic modernism refers generally to the modern reform movements especially those which emerged in the twentieth century. Islamic modernism, according to Charles C. Adams, constitutes an attempt to free the religion of Islam from the shackles of a too rigid orthodoxy, and to accomplish reforms which will render it adaptable to the complex demands of modern life.18 On this premise Fazlur Rahman defines Muslim modernists as "those who have made a conscious and articulate effort to reformulate Islamic values and principles according to modern thought or to integrate modern thought and institutions with Islam."19 Among the outstanding figures regarded as major catalysts of Islamic modernism were Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1897), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849-1905) and Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935) in the Middle East, and Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) and Muhammad Iqbal

Islamic modernism is often distinguished by scholars from pre-modern Islamic reformism. In this regards, John L. Esposito observes that pre-modern reformism was primarily a response from within Islam to an internal socio-moral decline of the community, whereas Islamic modernism was a response to both continued internal weaknesses and the external political and religio-cultural threat of colonialism. In distinguishing between Islamic reformism and Islamic modernism, Ira M. Lapidus states that "Islamic modernism was a nineteenth century doctrine of Muslim political elites and intelligentsia, and must be distinguished from Islamic reformism, which was the doctrine of ulama. The essential principle of modernism was that the defeat of Muslims at the European powers had revealed their vulnerability, and that the restoration of their political power required them to borrow European military techniques, centralize state power, modernize their economies and provide education for their elites." He further says: "More commonly, ulama resistance was expressed in reformist terms. Islamic reformism had its origin in the seventeenth and eighteenth century and preceded European domination."

Despite differences in context, there are some remarkable common features and links between pre-modern Islamic reformism and Islamic modernism. Pre-modern Islamic reformism responded to internal problems of the Muslim community, whilst Islamic modernism responded to both the internal and external threats to the community. Pre-modern Islamic reform movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had contributed to the pattern of Islamic politics and provided a legacy for twentieth century Islam. This is clearly explained in Esposito’s words: 

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22Ibid., p. 563.


"Pre-modern revival movements demonstrated the power of an appeal to Islam in providing rationale for community decline and initiating religio-political movements bent on social and moral reform. These pre-modernist movements left a legacy to modern Islam in their ideological interpretation of Islam and their activist methods and organization. Islam proved a potent force in both the response to internal decline and the reaction to European imperialism. Islamic modernists reinterpreted Islamic sources to obtain new answers and to assimilate some Western ideas and institutions. Islamic modernism influenced attitudes toward Islam regarding both its past significance and its modern relevance. Its emphasis on Islam as a progressive, dynamic, rational religion generated a sense of pride, identity, and conviction that Islam was relevant to modern life."

Though Islamic modernism has frequently been the term used to refer to Islamic reform in the modern era, the term Islamic reformism is also used, sometimes, to denote a form of Islamic reform that emerges in the modern age. In that case, Islamic reformism, for most scholars, is regarded as a synthesis between Islamic traditionalism and Islamic modernism. Islamic reformism, as Hisham Sharabi points out, has often been referred to as Islamic modernism, but reformism is modernizing only in special sense and a limited degree. At heart, he further maintains, Islamic reformism is traditional bound; its primary goal is to safeguard Islam and the institutional structures upholding it. As a revivalist movement, reformism is equipped with a more rational awareness of its situation and needs. The reformist position, in its fundamental premises and ultimate conclusions, opposes the secularization and westernization elements of social modernization more effectively than traditionalism ever did precisely because it is more rational. At the same time however, it opens the door for change within prescribed limits.

The reform movements established, whether by pre-modern revivalists, Muslim modernists or reformists, are also known as the Salafiyyah. The Arabic term

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26Hisham Sharabi, Arab Intellectuals and the West, op.cit., p. 7.

27The word salafiyyah is derived from the root "salaf" which refers to the salaf al-sālih (virtuous forefathers), i.e. the first three generations of Muslims, who were highly esteemed by later Muslims for their companionship with the Prophet and proximity to his time, and for their pure understanding and practice of Islam and contribution to it. The salaf is one who follows the methods and principles of the salaf al-sālih. See Muhammad Sa'id Ramadān al-Būtī, al-Salafiyyah Marhahal Zamanīyyah Mubārakah lā Madhhab Islāmī (Dīmāshq: Darr al-Fikr, 1996), pp. 9-23; Al-Mawsū'at al-Muyassarih fī al-Adyan wa al-
Salafiyyah is often used interchangeably with *islāh* (reform) and *tajdid* (renewal). The Salafiyyah is not confined to a specific group nor to a certain era, but it is used to generally denote the Islamic reform movements whose emphasis is on the restoration of Islamic doctrines to their pure form, adherence to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, rejection of blind imitation (*taqālīd*) and innovation (*bidāh*), and reform the moral, cultural and political conditions of Muslims. Among its adherents were reformers of the classical era, such as Ahmad b. Hanbal (780-855), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) and Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1292-1350) who were regarded as articulators of classic Salafiyyah; pre-modern reformists such as Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1703-1792), Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) and Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762); and modernists such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1897), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849-1905) and Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935), the founders and spiritual fathers of the modern Salafiyyah reform movement. The modern Salafiyyah are distinguished from the classical and pre-modern Salafiyyah by their essentially intellectual and modernist nature and by the diversity and expanse of their objectives. Against a legacy of stagnation, moral and social decay, political despotism, and foreign domination, the modern Salafiyyah seek to revitalize Islam, to bridge the gap between historical Islam and modernity, and to restore Muslim solidarity and vigour.

The teaching of the Salafiyyah continues to inspire later generations of Muslim activists. The influence of the Salafiyyah still prevails in modern Islamic movements, as observed in the Ikhwān Muslimūn founded by Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906-1949) in Egypt, and Jamaat-i Islami established by Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) in the Indian subcontinent. These movements, which Esposito describes as neorevivalist movements, uphold the centrality of Islam to future progress and are convinced of its

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adaptability to modern life. They are more sceptical and critical of the West, and, while accepting modernity, they believe in the self-sufficiency of Islam as the basis for society and state. They, however, do not attempt to build on the intellectual venture that the modern Salafiyyah had undertaken in legal, political and educational reform, or to devise a systematic intellectual framework for reform. Instead, through their organizational structures and populist appeal, these movements focus on reforming the morality and beliefs of Muslim individuals as a precondition for the reform of the society as a whole. The Ikhwan Muslimun and the Jamaat-i Islami movements set the examples for many subsequent movements. However, their ideological orientation, activism, and sometimes militant tendency, distinguished them from the modern Salafiyyah, and hence, earned them the label of fundamentalist.

Islamic fundamentalism is another term that closely relates to the discussion of Islamic reform. Islamic fundamentalism, as Andrew Rippin maintains, is applied, mainly by Westeners, to those who call for a strict implementation of the Sharifah including the call for an Islamic state, while opposition to Western ways and to the perceived corruption of society have been its important characteristics. Islamic fundamentalism is also referred to as radical Islamism by some scholars.


33The term fundamentalism is originally applied in Christianity. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines fundamentalism as 'strict maintenance of traditional Protestant beliefs such as the inerrancy of Scripture and literal acceptance of creeds as fundamental of Christianity.' This term is also used to denote 'strict maintenance of ancient or fundamental doctrines of any religion, especially Islam.' See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, op. cit., p. 549. Islamic fundamentalism, in general means "a return to the fundamental principles of Islam, a return to the pure moral ethics of morality and positive integrity, a return to balanced relationship between God, man and society, and man and his inner self." See Patrick Bannerman, *Islam in Perspective*, op. cit., p. 156. However, in current Western media the term Islamic fundamentalism is used to signify abhorrent extremism, religious narrow-mindedness and militant radicalism, and sometimes eroded to become associated with violence, terrorist bloodshed and political assassination. See ibid., pp. 155-156; John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op. cit., p. xiii.


Choueiri in his *Islamic Fundamentalism* states that:36

"Islamic fundamentalism is a vague term currently in vogue as a catchphrase used to describe the militant ideology of contemporary Islamic movements. ....Whereas the term 'fundamentalism' has an obvious Protestant origin, denoting the literal yet creative interpretation of the Bible, it is redefined here, for lack of better word, in order to convey a less rigorous connotation. Its direct meaning is assumed to indicate a certain intellectual stance that claims to derive political principles from a timeless divine text."

In its contemporary expression, the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism, as R. Hrair Dekmejian points out, represents the culmination of accumulated revelation, tradition, and practice going back to the Prophet Muḥammad. Thus, the content of modern fundamentalist ideology and its legitimization is consciously based on the selective interpretation of Islamic historical epochs. The present day fundamentalist society and movements seek to justify their very existence and mission by referring to divinely ordained duties and historical precedents combined with a deterministic self-view and worldview.37

Fundamentalism in the current Islamic world is often linked to the pre-modern revival movements, especially those led by Ibn Taymiyyah and the Wahhabis, for it shares some common characteristics with the latter.38 The pre-modern revival movements were characterized by Fazlur Rahman as having the following characteristics:

i. A deep and transforming concern with the socio-moral degeneration of Muslim society.

ii. A call to go back to original Islam and shed the superstitions inculcated by popular forms of Sufism, to get rid of the idea of the fixity and finality of the traditional schools of law, and to attempt to perform *ijtiḥād*, that is, to rethink for oneself the meaning of the original message.


iii. A call to remove the crushing burden of predeterministic outlook produced by popular religion but also materially contributed to by the almost ubiquitous influence of Ash'arī theology.

iv. A call to carry out this revivalist reform through armed forces (jihād) if necessary.\(^3\)

This is a platform which many of the fundamentalist movements in contemporary Islam have inherited or, at least rely on for inspiration and analysis.

Among the contemporary Islamic groups which were frequently associated with Islamic fundamentalism were the Ikhwan Muslimūn of Egypt and Jamaat-i Islami of the Indian subcontinent, while Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Abul A`lā Mawdudi (1903-1979) were regarded as key figures of the fundamentalist movements.\(^4\) For these fundamentalist groups and individuals, Islam is all-encompassing, as it is for the modernists, but the emphasis is far more on the legitimacy of past solutions to modern problems. They agree with the modernists that Islam is flexible, non-superstitious and encourages *ijtihād*, but they are likely to grant it less scope and they emphasize that it must be done in an authentically Islamic way, and not as a covert means of copying the West. In line with this, the fundamentalists tend to accept more of the past *ijtihād* of the scholars and to emphasize somewhat less the failings of the community in pre-modern times, and somewhat more the distortions caused by Western colonialism.\(^4\) In the view of the fundamentalists, Islam is unique and distinctive, and comparisons of Islam to the West, as made by many modernists, are false. This is not to be seen as a rejection of the West as such, for this group is generally ready to adopt modern technology and political organization.\(^4\) They accept change in a controlled

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fashion, and use the authoritative sources of the past to legitimize changes in the present.

Reviewing the above-mentioned terms, it can be concluded that all the different terminologies for Islamic reform as they are used by scholars denote in specific contexts the varying shapes, patterns and degrees of Islamic reform which have taken place throughout the history of the Muslim community. The usage of these terminologies in various contexts may imply different meanings and connotations, but they generally refer to the same substance, namely, Islamic reform, which in any circumstances denotes an effort to purify the community from accretions and social evils by calling them to return to the basic principles of Islam.

The Origin of Islamic Reform

As previously stated, reform or islāḥ is a deeply rooted tradition in Islam and in the Muslim historical experience. The term islāḥ is always used in conjunction with the term tajdīd (renewal).43 The concepts of islāḥ and tajdīd indicate a call for a return to the fundamental principles of Islam, i.e. the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Both concepts, which constitute a basic component in the world-view of Islam, derive their origins from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah.

The term islāḥ is used in some verses of the Qur’ān to signify the reform preached by the prophets when they warned their sinful communities and called on them to return to God’s path by redirecting their lives, both as individuals and as a community, within the norms of the shari‘ah.44 Those who work for islāḥ, the musliḥūn (reformers) are regularly praised in the Qur’ān, and they are described as being


44 For example, see Q: 11: 88 which mentions that Prophet Shū‘ayb told the people to whom he was sent: "I only desire islāḥ (reform) so far as I am able, to the best of my power." See also, Q: 4: 114.
engaged in the work of God. This Qur’anic mandate which is epitomized in the lives and preaching of the prophets, especially that of Muhammad, coupled with God’s command to enjoin good and prohibit evil, have provided the time-honoured rationale for Islamic reform. The concept of *tajdīd* is derived from the tradition of the Prophet which says: “God will send to this ummah (Muslim community) at the head of each century those who will renew its faith for it.” The activity of renewal is *tajdīd* and the person who brings it about is called *mujaddid* (renewer). The *mujaddid* of Islam is believed to be sent at the beginning of each century to restore true Islamic practice and regenerate the Muslim community that tends, over time, to start departing from the path defined by the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

The tradition of reform and renewal is a permanent feature in the religious and cultural history of Islam. It represents, on the one hand, the individual and communal effort to define Islam clearly and explicitly in terms of its authentic sources, namely the Qur’an and the Sunnah and, on the other, an attempt to work towards a situation in which the lives of Muslims, in personal and social terms, would conform to the norms and values of Islam. The historical development of reform and renewal is related to the spirit of opposing various religious deviations, evils and blameworthy innovations (*bida‘*) which emerged throughout the cultural evolution of the community. The major tasks of the reformers and renewers were to refute these errors of their century, to combat the various sects that are believed to have

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45 See for example, Q: 7: 170: “And as those who hold fast to the Book and perform prayers perfectly, certainly, We shall never waste the reward of the muslihūn.”
47 See *Sunan Abī Dawūd*, in "Kitāb al-Malahīm," 3740. The renewers were believed to appear periodically in each century after the first epoch (*al-āsr al-awwal*) of Islam. According to Rashid Ridā, the “first epoch” (*al-āsr al-awwal*) indicates the first three best generations, namely, the generation of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, then their followers (*taḥfūn*), and then the successor of the latter (*otbā‘ al-tāḥfīn*). See Rashid Ridā, *Taḥṣīl al-Manāẓir* (Syria: Dār al-Fikr, n. d.), vol.2, p. 81, vol. 7, pp. 143 & 198. This refers to the hadith: “The best people are those of my generation, then the following, and then those who come after,” narrated by al-Bukhārī and others. See *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī*, in "Kitāb al-Manāẓir," 3377, 3378.
introduced blameworthy innovations into Islam, to bring the faithful back to the purity of the original faith, to return to true Islamic practice and worship, and to restore the Sunnah by the study and imitation of the Prophet’s tradition. This process of reform and renewal involves, at least, two major aspects: the first being a return to the ideal pattern as revealed in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah; and the second, the right to practice *ijtihād* i.e. to reinterpret the sources of Islam in order to purify and revitalize the society.

Throughout the history of the Muslim ummah, there were several figures who appeared as the reformers and renewers of Islam. A great figure of Islam who was well known as the first *mujaddid* in the history of Islam was ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (681-720), the eighth Caliph of the Umayyad Caliphate. Other prominent figures who were recognized as the reformers and renewers of their centuries were: the four Imams of the Sunnī schools of law, viz., Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Mālik b. Anas (714-798), al-Shāfiʿī (767-854) and Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Hanbali (780-855); al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), Ibn ʿArabī al-Asqalānī (d. 1449), Muhammad ʿAlī al-Shawkānī (1760-1834) and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhab (1703-1792). Shāykh Ahmad Sirhindī (1564-1624) and Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762) of the Indian subcontinent, Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) and Muḥammad ʿAlī b. al-Saʿūdī (1787-1859) of Africa were also regarded as the reformers and renewers of their societies. The primary concern of these reformers and renewers of the pre-modern era was the socio-moral reconstruction and reform of society. They were conscious of Muslim degeneration and tried to rectify social evils among Muslims and to raise their moral standards by calling them to return to pristine Islam.

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52See for example, S. Abul A’la Maududi, A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam, op.cit., pp. 45-81.

The modern era has also witnessed the birth of some great reformers. The Middle East and South Asia have produced some reformers who led various Islamic modernist movements. Among them were Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1897) and Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849-1905), the great thinkers who were revered as fathers of Islamic modernism; Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935) and ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Kawākibī (1854-1902) of the Middle East. In the Indian subcontinent the Islamic modernist movement was led principally by two great Muslim figures, namely Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) and Muḥammad ʿIqḥābāl (1875-1938). These reformers proclaimed the need to revitalize Islam. They blamed the internal malaise in Muslim societies, their loss of power, backwardness and inability to respond effectively to European colonialism, on a blind and unquestioned clinging to the past (taqlīd). Islamic reformers stressed the dynamics, flexibility and adaptability that had characterized the early development of Islam, notable for its achievements in law, education and the sciences. They pressed for internal reform through the reinterpretation (ijtihād) and selective adaptation or Islamization of Western ideas and technology. They emphasized internal self-criticism, a struggle to redefine Islam and to demonstrate its relevance to the new situations in which Muslims have found themselves in their modern societies.

The modernist reform and renewal movement constitutes one of the most remarkable phenomena in the evolution of Islam since the end of the nineteenth century. It was a result of the cultural renaissance movement (nahḍah), which marked the reawakening of the Muslim world in general and the Middle East in particular as a consequence of the influence of Western ideas and civilization and also as a reaction to imperialism. Its influence spread to most Muslim countries, including

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54For more about these figures, see for example, Ahmad Amin, Zū ʿamīr al-Īslām, op.cit.; Ali Rahnema, Pioneers of Islamic Revival (Kuala Lumpur: S. Abdul Majeed, 1995); Malcolm H. Kerr, Islamic Reform, The Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966); Aziz Ahmad, Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia.

The spirit of reform and renewal has continued to be a significant factor in the modern history of the Muslim community. The reform and revival spirit that emerged in the post-modernist reform in the twentieth century history of Islam was in the form of what is referred to as neorevivalism or Islamic fundamentalism, i.e. the new religious societies, in particular the Ḥikwān Muslimūn established by Ḥasan al-Bannā in Egypt, and the Jamaat-i-Islami founded by Abul Aʿla Mawdudi in the Indian subcontinent.56 These movements perceived the Muslim community of the twentieth century to be at a critical crossroads. Like the Islamic modernists, they acknowledged the internal weaknesses of the community, the external threat of Western colonialism, and the value of science and technology. However, the Ḥikwān and the Jamaat were more extensive in their condemnation of the West and assertion of the total self-sufficiency of Islam. For them Islam was not restricted to personal piety or simply a component in social or political life, but was a comprehensive ideology for personal and public life, the foundation for Muslim state and society.57

Despite distinctive differences in their movements due to local conditions, both Ḥasan al-Bannā and Abul Aʿla Mawdudi, the chief architects of recent worldwide Islamic revivalism, combined religion with social activism. They shared a revivalist ideology and established activist organizations that remain vibrant today and have served as an example for others throughout much of the Muslim world. Following revivalist logic, they called for a return to the Qurʾān, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the practice of the early community to establish an Islamic system of government. They rejected taqlīd, upheld the right of ijtihād, and criticized Śūfī excesses, saint worship and the backwardness of the ʿulamāʾ. While open to science and technology, they denounced Muslim intellectuals and governments for their dependence on the West. They did not seek to address modern life by demonstrating the compatibility of Islam with the West, but, instead, they claimed that Muslims could adapt to the

56 Sometimes these group were referred to in contemporary writings as neotraditionalist. See John L. Esposito, Islam the Straight Path., op.cit., pp. 198-199.

57 Ibid., pp. 147-148.
demands of modernity by reference to Islam alone. They believed that the renewal of Muslim society and its social transformation or modernization must be rooted in Islamic principles and values. Neorevivalism blended the worldview that informed the activism of premodern revivist groups, like the Wahhabî movement, with the holistic vision of Islam articulated in theory by modernists, like al-Afghâni, I Abduh and Iqbal. The result was an ideology grounded solely on Islam, an Islamic alternative that presented Islam as a timeless, rational, comprehensive faith whose transcendent message was relevant to this life as well as the next.\textsuperscript{58}

The Ikhwân and the Jamaat were obviously the ideological movements which advocated an Islamic government based on shûrâ or consultation under the leadership of the ‘ulamâ‘ and committed to applying the Sharî'ah in public affairs. Their leadership was often lay rather than clerical, as in the case of leaders such as al-Bannâ himself, Sayyid Qutb and Umar al-Tilimisâni of the Ikhwân, and Mawdudi and Khurshid Ahmad of the Jamaat-i-Islami.\textsuperscript{59} Given their wide appeal, the influence of Ikhwân and Jamaat movements spread not only to the neighbouring countries, but to all over the Muslim world. The Ikhwân's branches, for example, are established in most Arab countries, such as in Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The succeeding Ikhwân's leaders, Sayyid Qutb, Abd al-Qâdir Awdah, Hasan al-Hudaybi, Mustafâ Mashhûr, Sa'îd Hawwâ and Fâthî Yakan have been the spiritual fathers and the ideologues of current advocates of Islamic resurgence. Their writings were very influential and had an electrifying effect on the minds of the activists of present-day Islamic revivalism. The Ikhwân and the Jamaat have been the models for the establishment of most Islamic reform movements in the Muslim world.

Besides the growth of neorevivalism or fundamentalism in the present prevailing Islamic resurgence, the Islamic reform spirit is also seen in those who are called the neomodernist group.\textsuperscript{60} They are activists who also look to the early Islamic

\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., pp. 148-153.

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., p. 198.

\textsuperscript{60}This group is also referred to as modern Islamic reformers. See John L. Esposito, Islam the Straight Path, op.cit., pp. 199-200.
period as embodying the normative ideal. Although they overlap with neotraditionalists, with whom they are often grouped, the neomodernists distinguish more sharply between substance and form, between the principles and values of Islam’s unchangeable revelation and the historically and socially conditioned institutions and practices that can and should be changed to meet contemporary needs. They perceive the regulations enshrined in the law books as representative of the understanding and interpretation of early jurists who applied the principles and values of Islam to their societies. For them the revealed immutable Sharī‘ah principles and laws contained in the corpus of traditional law should be distinguished from those regulations in Islamic law that are contingent and relative. The latter, according to them, need to be reformulated in the light of the needs of modern society.

The figures in this group include Iran’s Ali Shari‘atī, Palestine born Ismā‘īl al-Farūqī, Tunisia’s Rashīd Ghannoušī, Saudi Arabia’s ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Abū Sulaymān, Sudan’s Ḥasan al-Turābī and Malaysia’s Anwar Ibrahim. Most of them, despite obtaining their advanced degrees from major universities in the West, neither opt for a Western secular orientation nor are they Western-oriented in their views as the earlier generation of Islamic modernists were. Unlike Muḥammad ʻAbduh and Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the neomodernists do not see themselves as responding to the West, but instead as seeking in a more independent, authentic manner to meet the changing needs of their societies. They have learned from the West but do not wish to Westernize Muslim society. They remain Islamically oriented and focus on commitment to "Islamic modernization," a future in which political and social development are more firmly rooted in past history and traditional values. In contrast with the fundamentalists, their rhetoric is not as critical of the West, and they are open to a selective process of assimilation. They also emphasize Islamization, a process by which Islamic principles and values are reapplied to meet the conditions of a new social milieu.

61 Ibid., pp. 199.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., p. 200.
As Islamic reform is deeply rooted in the basic soil of Islam, it will continue to be a significant element in the history of the Muslim community. From a contemporary perspective, Islamic reform is a catalyst of Islamic resurgence that prevails in all the Muslim world. It might emerge in various forms such as Islamic fundamentalism and neomodernism as can be seen today, but the substance and objective are similar. All advocate a return to the basic principles of Islam, though the modes may vary. The following sections will highlight some key principles of Islamic reform.

The Ideology and Method of Islamic Reform

The long tradition of Islamic reform, which includes notions of political and social activism, dates from the early years of Islam to the present day. Down through the ages, the reformists, both individuals and organizations, have undertaken the renewal of the community in times of weakness and decline, responding to the apparent gap between the Islamic ideal and the realities of Muslim life. At the heart of the reformist world-view is the belief that the Muslim world is in a state of political, economic and religious decline. The cause is identified as the Muslim’s departure from true Islamic values, brought about by the infiltration and assimilation of local, indigenous, un-Islamic beliefs and practices as well as the Westernization and secularization of society. Its cure is a purification by a return to true Islam in personal and public life, which will ensure the restoration of Islamic identity, values and power.

For the reformists, Islam is a comprehensive way of life as stipulated in the Qur’an, exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad and the first Muslim community, and embodied in the all-embracing nature of the Sharī‘ah. Thus, the reconstruction of

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Muslim societies and governments requires the reimplementation of Islamic law, the
basis for an Islamically guided and socially just state and society. It is a return to
Islam, that is, to the fundamentals of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the
eye Islamic community - that offers the model for Islamic reform.

The key ideological components of any Islamic reform programme include: (1)
Islam as the solution; (2) a return to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet as the
method; and (3) a community governed by God's revealed law, the Sharī'ah, as the
goal. Based on this premiss, scholars have identified several continuing themes of
ideology and methods of Islamic reform. The essential ones are as follows:

1. In addressing the weaknesses and socio-moral corruption of the Muslim
community, Islamic reform provides the diagnosis and cure: the cause is a
departure from true Islamic belief and practice; and the cure is a return to the
fundamentals of Islam.

2. Islamic reform emphasizes total submission to God, which is an important
component of Islamic totalism. Islamic reform reasserts a belief that Islamic
monotheism means the unity and totality of God's will for both the individual
Muslim and the Islamic community. Religion is integral to all realms of life:
social, political and moral.

3. Islamic reform also maintains that the restoration of true Islam necessitates
personal interpretation (ijtihād), which is based on the sole authoritative
foundations of Islam: the Qur'ān and prophetic practice as found in the early
community.

66Ibid., p. 50.
John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History," in Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, op.cit.,
p. 35.
69Ibid.
4. Islamic reform firmly rejects the blind acceptance (taqlīd) of past traditional doctrinal authorities, for the medieval synthesis of Muslim life is claimed to include un-Islamic historical accretions or unwarranted innovations (bida’). Instead, Islamic reform reasserts the right of independent analysis (ijtihād), rather than the reliance upon the opinions of the preceding generations of Islamic scholars. The elimination of superstition and obscurantism, and the reform of Sufism are also emphasized.

5. Islamic reform also re-emphasizes the belief that the socio-moral revival of Islamic society requires political action, as epitomized by jihād, the exertion to realize God’s will by moral self-discipline and, when necessary, military combat.

6. Regarding modernity, Islamic reform affirms the necessity of reviving the Muslim community by the reinterpretation or reformulation of its Islamic heritage in the light of the contemporary world, responding to the political, cultural and scientific challenges of the West and modern life. It attempts to show the compatibility, adaptability and flexibility of Islam when applied to modern ideas and institutions, whether they be reason, science and technology or democracy, constitutionalism and representative government. However, the pace, direction and extent of change are to be subordinate to Islamic beliefs and values in order to guard against the infiltration of Western values and excessive dependence on them.

The above characteristics are apparently common to all Islamic reform movements. Their ideologies and methods, which are constructed on several basic doctrinal principles, will be examined in the next section.

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The Doctrinal Principles of Islamic Reform

The Return to First Principles: The Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet

The need for a return to first principles is justified by canonical and historical arguments.73 Regarding the former, the reformists' standpoint is that Islam in its entirety is contained in the Qur’ān, and the God-inspired teachings of the Prophet are the natural complement of revelation. The Qur’ān says: "This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and chosen for you Islam as your religion" (5: 3); "We have neglected nothing in the Book" (6: 38); "He (the Messenger) does not speak of (his own) desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired" (53: 3-4). The reformists affirm that religion can be received only from God and his Messenger, and Muslims must abide by what the Messenger has transmitted regarding authorization and interdiction. The Qur’ān states: "O you who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority" (4: 59); "And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids you, abstain (from it), and fear God" (59: 7). Thus, for the reformists, adherence to Islam is defined by reference to the revelation, i.e. the Qur’ān and the Prophet's Sunnah.

Concerning the historical tradition, it is believed that the basis of the historical success of the Arabs was Islam, whose sources are the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.74 Like their distant predecessors (Salaf), Muslims of today could achieve worldly power and enjoy moral well-being, if they armed themselves with those moral convictions that constituted the strength and grandeur of the Salaf, and if they strove to demonstrate to contemporary Muslim society the values of faith and steadfast obedience to the teachings of Islam.75 This is clearly stated in a maxim attributed to Mālik b. Anas: "The later success of this community will only ensue from those

73 A. Merad, "Islāh," op.cit., p. 145.


75 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 339-441.
elements which made for its initial success.76

The following section will briefly highlight on the reformists' doctrines regarding the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

The Qur'ān

The reformists' position concerning the Qur'ān is similar to that of the Salafīs. The Qur'ān is identified as the Word of God and not a human creation. It is intangible, not subject to alterations and it contains an eternal and universal message. It is regarded as the primary canon and foundation of the religion. Moreover, it constitutes the religion in all its richness, whether in faith ('aqā'id), legal injunctions (ahkām), or ethics (ādāb). Generally, the Qur'ān contains the prototype of everything needed for the life of the community.

As the Qur'ān is the supreme authority of Islam, the reformists assert that its exegesis and understanding are most important. This is apparent from the problems of its interpretation (ta'wīl) and commentary (tafsīr). The reformists' view of the obscure verses (āyāt mutashābihāt), is that believers must accept the revealed facts as they are presented in their most literal sense, with a wholehearted trust in the truths they contain, truths which transcend messages taken at face value.77 In the eyes of the reformists, only God knows the reality of the āyāt mutashābihāt, and the correct attitude of the believers is unquestioning recognition (taslīm) of and trust (tafwīd) in God. According to Muhammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā, this act of faith is a canonical obligation.78

The reformists strongly denounce the subjective interpretation (ta'wīl), which claims to find a hidden meaning behind the literal message, as the Qur'ān states:

76As quoted by Rashīd Riḍā, in ibid., vol. 2, p. 443.
According to the reformists, *tawil* is a typical example of innovation (*bid'ah*), for it cannot be justified either by the Sunnah or by the tradition of the Salaf, who used to avoid interpreting the *āyāt mutashābihāt* according to their own understanding. The reformists' criticism of *tawil* includes all esoteric and mystical interpretations as well as the extreme rationalists. Throughout the *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Rida condemn many types of *tawil*, such as the tendentious exegesis by the people of innovation (*ahl al-bid'ah*), for example, the Jahmiyyah, Qadariyyah, Khawārij, etc.; the heretical exegesis by the Bāṭinīyyah and excessive Sufism; exegesis biased towards one sect or another, giving an arbitrary sense to the revelation; and pseudo-erudite commentaries which embroider the text with false legends and superstitions (*abāţ al wa khurafāţ*) in the style of the *Isrā' iyyāt*. These forms of *tawil* are considered a distortion (*tahrīf*) of the revelation, a criticism originally applied in the Qur'ān to the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*), and applied by the reformists to stigmatize the use of Qur'ānic exegesis for biased goals.

Instead of *tawil*, the reformists are in favour of simple commentary (*tafsīr*), and they lay down the principle that, apart from verses containing a certain mystery, concerning the divine attributes and the states of the hereafter, for example, Qur'ānic revelation can be made just as comprehensible to contemporary Muslims as it was to the Salaf. For the reformists, the *tafsīr* serves to explain the moral values and spiritual guidance (*hady*) which nourish religious feeling and guide the piety of the faithful. It is also a preparation for reading, understanding and meditating upon the Qur'ān, and should be freed from its historico-legendary wrappings and grammatical

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and rhetorical commentaries. It should not be seen as a demonstrative discipline capable of establishing scientific and verifiable truths and satisfying the modern mind which is avid for rationality.\textsuperscript{81} Rashid Rida, in his \textit{Tafsir al-Manar}, deplores the tendency amongst his contemporary commentators to display so much seemingly scientific erudition in their \textit{tafsir}s that they succeed in diverting the reader from the object of revelation.\textsuperscript{82}

With regard to the biblically inspired stories mentioned in the Qur'an, the reformists criticize those who base the truth of the Book on the authenticity of the facts it offers for meditation by believers. The Qur'an is neither a historical work (\textit{tārikh}) nor a narrative work (\textit{qasas}), but it is a moral guide and a source of edification.\textsuperscript{83} The historicity of the Qur'anic story is less important than its moral content and virtue as a source of inspiration. The role of a \textit{tafsir} is to bring the Qur'anic message as close as possible to the minds and hearts of Muslims, and to establish the meaning of the verses as accurately as human understanding permits, which implies a profound knowledge of Arabic philology.

Regarding the methodology of \textit{tafsir}, the reformists emphasize, in some cases, \textit{tafsir al-Qur'an bi-al-Qur'an}, that is, certain verses can be explained more precisely by other verses in the Qur'an. Elsewhere, clarification comes from the version given by the Prophet Muhammad's Companions and their principal disciples (\textit{tabfūn}) often following the explanations given by the Prophet in person. Therefore, any \textit{tafsir} which is not based on evidence in the Sunnah in the absence of specific scriptural reference is suspect and unacceptable.\textsuperscript{84}

To sum up, instead of esoteric interpretation (\textit{ta'wīl}), the reformists insist on straightforward commentary, arguing that difficult texts should be accepted as a matter of faith without attempting to interpret them. They believe that the Qur'an

\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., vol. 1, p. 25, A. Merad, "Islāḥ," op.cit., p. 147.
\textsuperscript{82}Rashid Rida, \textit{Tafsir al-Manār}, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 75.
\textsuperscript{83}Ibid., vol. 2, p. 471.
\textsuperscript{84}Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 174-175; vol. 3, p. 327; Muḥammad ʻAbduh, \textit{Risālat al-Tawḥīd}, op.cit., p. 117.
is not hard to understand as long as its primary objective, that is to give moral guidance and direction, is kept in mind.

The Sunnah

The reformists place great importance on the Sunnah as the second canonical source after the Qur’ān. However, they are not in complete agreement on whether it is a constitutive source like the Qur’ān or only an explanation of it. Some of them maintain that the Sunnah is of the same essence as the Qur’ān. This is the standpoint of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bādis (1889-1940), an Algerian reformist who asserts that the religion in its entirety is a revelation of God, and what is meant by the revelation is the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, as stated in Q. 53: 3-4: "Nor does he [the Prophet Muḥammad] speak of his own desire." It is only a revelation that is revealed.” Rashīd Riḍā does not totally agree with this viewpoint, but he admits that revelation is not limited to the Qur’ān. According to him, some of the Prophet’s teachings on the inspiration of the rūḥ al-qudus (the holy spirit) have the same importance as the Qur’ān, although they lack its inimitable expressions.

The reformists agree that the role of the Sunnah is to explain the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān says that the Prophet’s mission is to clarify to men its true meaning: "And We have sent down unto you the Reminder [Qur’ān] that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them” (16: 44). The Sunnah is second in importance to the Qur’ān for it is an explanatory instrument. Muḥammad ʿAbduh maintains that the Qur’ān constitutes the totality of the religion, whereas the Sunnah is an intergral part of it only in the sense that it explains what was revealed. That is why the Sunnah is regarded as the second canonical source.

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85As quoted by A. Merad, in "Islāḥ," op.cit., p. 147.
87Ibid., vol. 4, p. 18.
88Ibid., vol. 9, p. 326.
In their approach to the Sunnah, the reformists reassert the traditional emphasis on the practice of the Prophet as the indisputable standard for belief and behaviour. For them, the departure from the Sunnah is viewed as the critical illness afflicting Islam. However, their adherence to the Sunnah relies only on those hadiths whose authenticity has been duly established.

The authenticity of the hadiths is very important from the reformists’ point of view for it is the basis of their authority as a canonical source. The reformists recognize the normative value of only a very small number of hadiths which are held to be unquestionably authentic, that is, mutawatir hadiths. Muhammad ʿAbduh, for example, in his Risālat al-Tawḥīd suggests that only mutawatir hadiths are definitively binding. As for hadiths with only a single narrator (ḥadīd), he says

"He to whom the Sunnah has come, who has satisfied himself of the truth of what it contains, is obliged to believe it. But he to whom it has not come, or on receiving it has had misgivings about its validity, cannot be blamed as an unbeliever if he witholds acceptance of it, since it is not verified by sustained narration."89

ʿAbduh thus opened the door to personal judgement in deciding which hadiths to accept or reject. However, he makes it clear that he does not reject the authority of the Sunnah as such, for "he who denies something that he knows the Prophet said or affirmed, impugns the truth of his message and characterizes it as lies."90

ʿAbduh’s view on this matter is apparent to later writers. Muhammad Ḥusayn Al-Dhahabi, for instance, reports that ʿAbduh was reluctant to accept any ḥadīd hadiths as the basis for tafsīr. He was especially critical of the so-called isrāʿīliyyāt91, and he also rejected other hadiths normally considered authentic.92 Rashīd Riḍā also

89Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Risālat al-Tawḥīd, op.cit., p. 203.
90Ibid.
91Isrāʿīliyyāt traditions are traditions and reports that contain elements of the legendary and religious literature of the Jews. They were introduced into Islam by some transmitters about whom the biographical literature has never reached complete agreement. On ʿAbduh’s rejection of isrāʿīliyyāt, see for example, G. H. A. Juynboll, The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature: Discussions in Modern Egypt (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), in Chapter 10.
confirms that 'Abduh rejected certain categories of tradition outright, especially the isra'iliyyat and fitan\textsuperscript{93} traditions, even when these were found in the sahīḥ collections of hadīth.\textsuperscript{94}

For Rashīd Riḍā himself, the only source of the Sunnah that is beyond dispute is of ṣamaliyyah Sunnah, which has been practised and passed on by each generation of Muslims in mutawātīr fashion. This includes, for instance, details of the prayers and other important rituals. However, the Sunnah that has been transmitted verbally by a single line of reporters (āhād) must be re-examined according to new criteria. Such a re-examination must encompass even the Sunnah in the sound collections.\textsuperscript{95}

Sayyid ʿĀḥmad Khān, the reformist of the Indian subcontinent, has come to reject almost all hadīths as unreliable.\textsuperscript{96} He is severely critical of the classical methods of hadīth criticism, including those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, on the grounds that they are based on the personal reliability of the individuals in the isnād (chain of narrators) and not on a logical or rational criticism of the matn (text) of a hadīth itself. Influenced by Western scholars such as William Muir and Aloys Sprenger, his questioning attitude towards even the six great classical collections of hadīth is apparently similar to the conclusions reached by Western orientalists like Goldziher and Schacht.\textsuperscript{97} According to him, the hadīths in the great classical collections of hadīth constitute, generally speaking, not so much an infallible source of law as a historical reflection of the ideas and attitudes of the first few generations of Muslims.\textsuperscript{98} He eventually has come to believe that only traditions dealing with spiritual matters are

\textsuperscript{93}Fītan (sg. fitnah) traditions are traditions that contain news or prophecies about temptation or civil strife which will befall the Muslim community.

\textsuperscript{94}G. H. A. Juynboll, The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature, op.cit., p. 18.

\textsuperscript{95}Daniel W. Brown, Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 41.


\textsuperscript{97}Aziz Ahmad, Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857-1964, op.cit., p. 49.

\textsuperscript{98}ibid., p. 50.
of relevance to contemporary Muslims, whereas the traditions dealing with worldly matters are non-binding. Without altogether rejecting the authority of the Sunnah, he severely curtails its scope, calls for new methods of evaluating it, and insists on its subordinate position vis-a-vis the Qur'ān.99

In the eyes of most reformists, Islam cannot be reduced to matters of faith and canonical obligation (ʿibādāt) which are held to be true only because they originate from the Qur'ān and a very small number of hadiths shown to be authentic (mutawātir). Islam is also a political and social system, a complex of ethical values, and a culture. In usage (ʿādāt) and human relations (muʿāmalāt) determined by a socio-cultural framework which is not ruled by scriptural disposition (nass), the Sunnah and also the traditions of the Salaf are helpful and instructive. They are indeed exemplary and worthy of the attention of Muslims as an excellent reference for both action and moral life.100

The Promotion of Ijtihād and Rejection of Taqlīd

The reformists vigorously emphasize the necessity and legitimacy of ijtihād, that is, personal judgement, based on the interpretation of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah to decide on a point of law. At the same time they criticize taqlīd, the blind acceptance or servile dependence upon traditional doctrinal authorities. Ijtihād is perceived as "a life-force in religion" (hayāt al-dīn) whereas taqlīd is a source of error and contrary to the spirit of Islam.101 They strongly deny the fiction of the "closing gate of ijtihād" which has constricted the religion, and thus, declare the "reopening of the gate of ijtihād."102 However, they do not consider the opening of the mind to ijtihād

99Daniel W. Brown, Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought, op.cit., p. 33.
100A. Merad, "Islāh," op.cit., p. 148.
102Ibid., vol. 8, p. 317.
to be absolute freedom for the critical spirit to call everything into question, for freedom of conscience in religious matters would lead to speculation without end, which is not what the reformists want.\textsuperscript{103}

The reformists' idea of *ijtihad* has its limits: *ijtihad* is not applicable to intangible matters, including the fundamental faith (*'aqā'id*), acts of worship (*'ibādāt*) and canonical prohibitions (*tahrīm dān*) which are based on scripture, either because of their explicit and formal nature or because of the irrefutable authenticity of their interpretation (*qā'î al-riwāyah wa al-dalālah*).\textsuperscript{104} Beyond these sacred realms, the use of *ijtihad* is permitted.

The reformists hold that the reason for *ijtihad* concerns both the individual and the community. *Ijtihad* is generally an effort to understand the Qur'ān and the Sunnah\textsuperscript{105} and it is a part of the right and duty of all Muslims to seek and understand for themselves the revelation and the Sunnah.\textsuperscript{106} Muslims must feel personally concerned with the Word of God and the teaching of the Prophet which illuminates it. Constant meditation on scripture, patient efforts to analyze and understand all the resources that they offer should permit all Muslims to steep themselves in the divine message and draw from it principles of moral and spiritual conduct (*hidāyah*). This internal form of *ijtihad* helps to nourish the Muslims' spirituality and guides their conscience in their moral judgements and practical choices. *Ijtihad* is also essential for the community in interpreting the two sources to determine the general principles in political, social and economic matters in accordance with the fundamental commands of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.\textsuperscript{107}

The reformists strongly denounce the illegitimate (*butlān*) and illicit (*tahrīm*)

\textsuperscript{103}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{104}See ibid., vol. 1, pp. 118-119; vol. 3, p. 399; vol. 11, pp. 265-268.

\textsuperscript{105}Ibid., vol. 2, p. 399.

\textsuperscript{106}Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 118-119.
nature of taqlīd and stress its negative effects on Islamic teachings and ethics. They blame taqlīd for the cultural stagnation of Islam and the passive submission of the Muslim masses to the traditional religious structures, i.e. the ‘ulamā’ and shuyūkh. Reformists like ‘Abduh assert that Islam will have no dealing with taqlīd, against which they campaign relentlessly to break its power over people’s minds and eradicate its deep-seated influence. To them, Islamic teachings also encourage people to move away from their clinging attachment to the world of their fathers and their legacies, indicting as stupid and foolish the attitude of those who always want to know what their predecessors said. Further, in the reformists’ viewpoint, Islamic teachings reprove the slavish imitation of the ancestors which characterizes religious leaders, with their instinct to hold to tradition-sanctioned ways, saying, as they do: "Nay! We will follow what we found our fathers doing" (31: 21), and "We found our fathers so as a people and we will stay the same as they" (43: 22).109

The reformists’ rejection of taqlīd is due to both its mindless conformism and the deliberate support given to social and political structures which obstruct progress and personal initiative in the name of a static vision of religion and culture. They regard the religious life of the muqallid as only the expression of acquired habits and the passive acceptance of the status quo. Moreover, the reformists think that the muqallid’s worship is reduced to verbal formulae which have no profound meaning, and their religious rites dwindle to mechanically repeated acts which have no reforming and sanctifying value.110

The criticism of taqlīd, which has been the major theme of reform, is based on the spiritual and ethical demands made by the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān contains many statements condemning mindless submission to the shirk of those who went before, that is, to their fathers (ābā’):

"And when it is said to them: 'follow what God has sent down,' they said:

108See ibid., passim.
'Nay, we shall follow what we found our fathers following.' Even though their fathers did not understand anything nor were they guided.” (2: 170);

"And when it is said to them: 'come to what God has sent down, and unto the Messenger,' they say: 'enough for us is that which found our fathers following.' Even though their fathers had no knowledge whatsoever and no guidance.” (5: 104);

"And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Verily, the hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned” (17: 16)

Apart from the condemnation based on the Qur'an, taqlid is also criticized for several other reasons as frequently stated by Muhammad ‘Abduh and Rashid Rida in the Tafsir al-Manar. For them, taqlid is strongly discouraged by the Salaf and the first great thinkers. Taqlid is regarded as a source of error, an obstacle to personal meditation (tadabbur) on revelation and it encourages a new form of idolatry, that is, the excessive veneration of authorities and masters. It is also seen as a form of following whims (ittibâ’ al-hawâ) which leads to sectarianism and fanaticism and thought to be a cause of disunity and weakness in the community.  

The Encouragement of Ijtihad and Condemnation of Ibtidâ’

The reformists’ criticism of taqlid does not mean that they wish every Muslim to be a scholar capable of practising ijtihad. What is obligatory for Muslims is to meditate on, understand, and receive guidance from the Qur’an as much as they can. The reformists wish the Qur’an to be the source of the Muslims’ religious life, and they should not be permitted to cling to other sources other than the Qur’an. Ordinary people are permitted to refer to the scholars (Q: 16:43; 21:7) so as to understand the Qur’an and the Sunnah but this does not imply they can regard the scholars as

111See the same condemnation in Q: 7:28; 26:74; 31:21; 43: 22-23.
112See Rashid Rida, Tafsir al-Manâr, op.cit., passim.
113Ibid., vol. 5, p. 297.
114"Ask of those who know the Scripture, if you do not know."
In this case, the word ittibā (active fidelity) is used instead of taqlīd. Ittibā, the reformists point out, denotes following the religious authorities with knowledge of evidence (adillah), whereas taqlīd signifies the passive acceptance of dogmas from religious authorities without asking for proof, and without thinking of a persons' right of free examination and personal initiative.\(^{116}\)

Ittibā, according to the reformists, is the attempt to reach authenticity, and it is the opposite of the spirit of heretical innovation (ibtidā) resulting from taqlīd. Ittibā is also the way to approach the Sunnah of both the Prophet and the Salaf, whereas ibtidā or bid'ah is a deviation from and the antithesis of the Sunnah. Following the Sunnah and avoiding bid'ah are canonical obligations, as stated frequently in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah: "O you who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger..." (4:59); "Say: If you love God, follow me, God will love you and forgive your sins" (3:31). The Prophet said:

"Whoever innovates something which is not in harmony with the principles of our religion, that thing is rejected"\(^{117}\);

"Those of you who live after me will see great disagreement. You must then follow my Sunnah and that of the rightly guided caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it. Avoid novelties (muḥdathāt al-umār), for every novelty is innovation (bid'ah), and every innovation is an error (dālālah)."\(^{118}\)

The Prophet in his sermon also stated:

"The best speech is that embodied in the Book of God, and the best guidance is the guidance given by Muhammad. The most evil affairs are their novelties (muḥdathatu-hā), and every innovation (bid'ah) is an error."\(^{119}\)

\(^{115}\)Rashīd Riḍā, Tafsīr al-Manār, op.cit., vol.5, pp. 238-239.

\(^{116}\)Ibid., vol. 5, p. 288 and passim.


The reformists uphold a principle that all *bid'ah* in religious matters, as indicated in the *hadiths* are errors. There is no good *bid'ah* (*bid'ah hasanah*) in the religion as maintained by some scholars. *Bid'ah* should also be distinguished from *masālih mursalah* (overriding importance of public interest) or *istiṣlah* which is held to be among the sources of Islamic law. *Bid'ah*, they define, is an invented religious practice that has the resemblance of lawfulness (*al-shafiyyah*) whose purpose is the excessive (*mubālaghah*) worship of God, or which has a purpose similar to those of the lawful practices; whereas *masālih mursalah*, which denotes a textually unrevealed benefit or utility to people inherent in a principle of conduct or judgement, is a legal doctrine held to ensure the benefit to the community concerning *mu'āmalāt* and *'ādāt*.

*Bid'ah* mostly occurs in the fundamentals of the religion, namely *'aqīlah* and *'ibādah*, which have been thoroughly taught by the Prophet Muhammad in the prescribed manner and of the non-sensible meaning (*ghayr ma'qūlat al-ma'nalā*); while *masālih mursalah* concerns *mu'āmalāt* and *'ādāt* which are non-fundamental and have sensible meaning (*ma'qūlat al-ma'nalā*), and only the general principles (*aṣl 'ām*) of which were laid down by the Prophet. Rashīd Riḍā says:

"Creed and ritual were completed in detail so as to permit neither additions nor subtractions, and whoever adds to them or subtracts from them is changing Islam and bringing forth a new religion. As for the rules of *mu'āmalāt*, beyond decreeing the elements of virtue such as the necessity for justice in laws and equality in rights etc. etc..., the Lawgiver delegated the affair in its detailed applications to the leading scholars and rulers, who according to law must possess knowledge and moral probity, to decide by consulting one another what is most beneficial for the community according to the circumstances of the times."

Furthermore, the reformists assert, the purpose of *masālih mursalah* is to preserve imperative matters (*amr darjīyy*) and to avoid difficulties (*rafʿ al-haraj*) as emphasized in the doctrine of *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* for the benefit of the community;


121See preface by Rashīd Riḍā in ibid., vol. 1, p. 6; and al-Shāṭibī himself, ibid., vol. 2, pp. 111-112.

122As quoted by Malcolm H. Kerr, in *Islamic Reform*, op.cit., p. 188.
whereas bid'ah contradicts masâlih mursalah, for it creates hardship by exceeding the limits laid down by God. Moreover, masâlih mursalah concerns the methods (wasâ'il) approved by the legal maxim "if something is required in accomplishing an obligation, that thing is also considered an obligation."; whereas bid'ah concerns the objectives (maqâṣid) completely designated by God.124

Hence, the reformists see no compatibility between bid'ah and masâlih mursalah since masâlih mursalah is an instrument used for the benefit of the community, while bid'ah destroys the religion. Thus, the reformists insist that in practising the religion, a Muslim should be either mujtahid or muttabf, not muqallid or mubtadi'.
CHAPTER 2

ISLAMIC REFORMISM IN MALAYSIA

Islamic Reformism in Malaysia: A Background Review

The current renewed interest in the Islamic ethos and the return to the teachings of the Qur’an and Sunnah is a worldwide phenomenon. Malaysia with its large population of Muslims has also been swept by this phenomenon. The current rise of Islamic revivalism in Malaysia, in fact, can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century. The advent of Islamic reformism in Malaysia (Malaya at that time) is evident in the birth of a monthly Malay periodical Al-Imam which made its first appearance in Singapore in 1906. This Islamic reformism has been a great milestone in the history of Islam in Malaysia and thus, it has also become an important subject of study by both Western and local scholars. In examining the essence of Islamic reformism in Malaysia, it is imperative to include its background in the study. The following sections will highlight some important issues which are relevant to the discussion of Islamic reformism in Malaysia.

The Legacy of Islamic Traditionalism

One of the major factors which has also been a significant issue in the birth of Islamic reformism in Malaysia is the nature of Islamic traditionalism itself. Islamic traditionalism has been discerned as an obstacle for the Malays to perceive the true and pristine Islam, and is blamed as a cause of rigidity and sluggishness in Malay
Despite the fact that Islam has been embraced by the Malays for several centuries, it has apparently failed to transform Malay society into an ideal Islamic society observing all God’s commandments, as was successfully done by the Prophet Muhammad to Arab society during his prophethood. It is said that though on the one hand Islam has been a fundamental factor of the Malay worldview, on the other, it has played a limited role in Malay socio-political life. The following sections shall deal with this particular question briefly.

The Role of Islam in Traditional Malay Society

The Malay Archipelago was part of the Buddhist Sri Vijaya Empire in 9-14th centuries before the latter was overthrown by the Majapahit, Java’s last Hindu Kingdom. During this period of Indian influence, the Malays were known to have professed Hinduism apart from their previous beliefs in primitive animism. With the advent of Islam which came through several gradual and complex processes, the Malays embraced Islam and gave up their previous Hinduism and animism. This new faith did not only transform key aspects of Malay values and norms, but also became a key factor of Malay self-identity and Weltanschauung. On this premise, some scholars such as Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas maintain that Islam marked a crucial stage in the modernization of the Malays, and it was Islam that gave new and positive universal values to the Malays. Islam had made some drastic changes to the Malay social stratification system by introducing new Islamic values into Malay culture.

Though Islam has indeed had a great impact on the life of the Malays, it has

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1 This claim was prevalent in the reformists’ early writings in Al-Imam. See for example, Al-Imam, vol. 2, no. 2 (August 1906), pp. 56-63; vol. 2, no. 1 (July 1907), vol. 2, no. 8, (February 1908); pp. 225-260; pp. 25-31; vol. 2, no. 10 (April 1908), p. 327.


had to grapple with traditional norms and practices, commonly referred to as adat or customs, that were already well entrenched in Malay culture. The question of adat has been a frequently debated issue as it is always perceived to be in opposition to the principles of Islam. The relationship between adat and Islam is also dialectical because of continuous ambiguity that has characterized these two mutually related forces. As a result, the Malays have adopted a kind of hybrid Islamic doctrine, consisting of a heavy mixture of both Islamic and un-Islamic practices. For example, the practice of Adat Temenggung and Adat Perpatih, the two dominant un-Islamic socio-political systems which characterized Malay life before the advent of Islam, are said to have been Islamized with the Islamization of the Malay Archipelago. However, the Islamization process was selective and did not include matters involving inheritance, succession, divorce and family law. As the influence of adat upon the society was very strong, the Malays continued to adhere to these adat norms, while at the same time acknowledging them to be complementary to Islamic principles. Meanwhile, the deeply-entrenched old beliefs and practices based on primitive animism, such as magic, superstitions, spirit-worship, taboos, the power of shamans and medicinemen (pawang and bomoh), evil spirit (jin and syaitan) were also prevalent in Malay society, especially amongst those who live in rural areas.

5Though many aspects of the adat tend to be un-Islamic, it is not totally true to refer to adat in general as if it is necessarily always in direct contrast to Islamic law, as is the tendency of many scholars, such as Josselin de Jong, M.B. Hooker. See Josselin de Jong, "Islam versus Adat in Negeri Sembilan," in Bijdragen Tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde, vol. 116, 1960, pp. 158-203; M.B. Hooker, "Adat and Islam in Malaya," in Bijdragen Tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde, vol. 130, 1974, pp. 69-90; Cf. Hamka, "Hubungan Timbal Balik antara Adat dan Syarak," in Pandji Masyarakat, vol. 9, no. 61.


8This is shown by the well-known Malay sayings: Adat bersendikan hukum, hukum bersendikan Kitabullah. Kuat adat tak gaduh hukum, kuat hukum tak gaduh adat (Customary law is based on religious law, religious law is based on the Scripture. If custom is strong, it does not upset religion, if the religion strong, it does not upset custom). See M.B. Hooker, "Adat and Islam in Malaya," op.cit., p. 76; Othman Ishak, Hubungan antara Undang-Undang Islam, op. cit., p.90.

strong Malay attachment to their adat values and traditions is shown quite clearly by the popular proverb: "Biar mati anak jangan mati adat (Let the child perish but not the adat.)" As the adat was integral to Malay life, it thus cannot be neglected without misgivings from the community.

The vitality of indigenous culture over Islamic faith in Malay society in fact resulted from circumstances that characterized the early proliferation of Islam in this region. As stated by many scholars, though Islam was well embraced as a new faith by the Malays, it was, to some extent, accepted as a continuation of their previous beliefs and traditions. A. H. Johns, and also the exponents of his theory, maintain that the proselytization of Islam in the Malay Archipelago was influenced by Šūfism, which was also one of the facilitating factors in the successful promulgation of Islam in this region. According to them, the syncretic and mystic background of the Malays before the coming of Islam provided a good basis for Islam to grow in the region. Johns asserts that the Šūfis taught a complex syncretic theosophy largely familiar to the inhabitants of the region that they made subordinate to the fundamental doctrines of Islam. In this manner, the Šūfī teachers “were prepared to preserve continuity with the past, and to use the terms and elements of pre-Islamic culture in an Islamic context.” Šūfism’s “moderate” religious demands, incorporation of local pre-Islamic beliefs, and similarity to certain existing spiritual practices are seen as positive factors in the Malays’ general acceptance of Islam. It was believed that this compromising


13For most Malays, for instance, the Šūfī recitation of prescribed prayer formulae (awrād, sing, wārd) was regarded as resembling local incantations to the spirit; the trance-inducing Šūfī sessions of the dhikr were similar to the seances of the local shaman (pawang); and the healing powers attributed to the Šūfī were
attitude was undertaken probably in order to ensure that Islam would be peacefully and easily accepted by the Malays, and to avoid any possibility of violent objection. Hence, the Ṣūfī teachers usually did not attack the previous traditional beliefs and practices, but preferred to redefine them under the covering canopy of Islamic faith. The result then was the absorption of Islamic elements into the society with the old traditional un-Islamic elements very much preserved whether in their original forms or in new altered outlooks. In short, though the introduction of Islam was a break from the complete Indian dominance of previous centuries and weakened the force of traditions and culture, it could not totally displace them. Given the strength and persistence of these un-Islamic values and norms in the Malay culture, it is not to be surprising that the role of Islam in Malay life, in general, is necessarily limited.

The Nature of Islamic Traditionalism

The limited role of Islam is also said to be result of the nature of Islamic traditionalism itself whose emphasis was on the strict and unquestionable allegiance (taqālīd) to the legacy of the past. What is usually referred to by the legacy of the past is Islam's Golden Age before the fall of Baghdad in 1258, which generally denotes Islam after the foundation of various madhhabs and after the proclamation of the 'closing of the gate of ijtihād,' or, in a more specific way, Islam in the era of taqālīd. Islamic traditionalism is believed to have been established in the Malay Archipelago as early as the advent of Islam in this region, for it is believed that the Islam brought by the foreign propagators at that time was Islam in its traditional form. It is known that the mass a trait also associated with the traditional village doctor (bomoh). See L.Y. Andaya, "Malay Peninsula" in The Encyclopedia Of Islam, vol. VI, pp. 234-235.

14For examples, as stated by J. F. Cady, "Arab fairies took over for older spirits, and the heroes of the Hindu epics took on Sassanid Persian names; a Ṣūfī pantheistic sect gained wide acceptance for a time in both Malacca and Java under presuppositions not very different from Brahmanism. Adaptable Malay spirits mediums (shamans) managed to find the same stimulation for their magical capacities under the Islamic regimen of austerity, fastings, and abstinence which the older Hindu rituals had previously provided." See J. F. Cady, Southeast Asia: Its Historical Development (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 170.

conversion of Malays to Islam took place in the 13th century, though Islam was said to have arrived in this region earlier. The 13th century marked a decline in the history of Islam with the fall of Islamic Empire to the Mongols, but for the Malays, this century had been a great milestone since the mass conversion of the Malays took place then. Many scholars contended that after the destruction of Baghdad in 1258, the activity of propagating of Islam had been heightened, especially in Southeast Asia, including the Malay Archipelago, and this task was undertaken mostly by Sufi propagators. Since Sufi preachers played a significant role in converting the Malays to being Muslims, it is inevitable that Islamic traditionalism was passed on to the Malays, as the Sufis were traditionalists.

It seems possible to postulate that the establishment of Islamic traditionalism in the society rests mostly on the type of Islamic teachings brought by the Sufis and adopted by the Malays. In general, the Islam brought to the Malays was an orthodox Islam of the Sunnî sect, adopting the laws of the Shâfi'i madhhab, and practising various Sufi orders (tarîqah), such as the Qâdiriyyah, the Naqshbandiyyah and the Ahmadîyyah. The adopted Sunnî schools of theology were both the Ashârî and the Mâturîdî, whose greater emphasis was on the doctrine of the Twenty Qualities of God. The most significant in-depth work on the doctrine, that is, al-Sanûsî’s Umm al-

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16The earliest date identified by the historians was 674 A. D. See S.Q. Fatimi, Islam Comes to Malaysia, op. cit., pp. 37-70; Idem, “Two Letters From Maharaja To the Khalifah,” in Islamic Studies, vol. 2, 1963, pp. 121-141. According to the historians, the spread of Islam in the Malay Archipelago can be divided into three phases: The first phase is known as a visiting phase, in which the earliest contact had taken place, according to Fatimi, since the period of Khulafâ’ al-Rasyidîn. The second phase is a placement stage, also known as an incubation phase. This stage occurred within the period of the Umayyads and ‘Abbâsids before the 13th century. The third phase is a mass conversion phase which took place after the fall of Baghdad in the 13th century. Within this last stage Islam proliferated widely among the Malays and was embraced by all of them. See, S.Q. Fatimi, Islam Comes to Malaysia, op. cit., in Chapter IV. Cf. Syed Naguib al-Attas, Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, op. cit., pp.29-30; M. A. Rauf, A Brief History of Islam with Special Reference to Malaya (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 81-85.

17This was due to the fact that, as Majul asserts, “the missionary activities of the Sufis represented an attempt, conscious or otherwise, to make up for the political decline of Islamic world, which could have implied at that time the reduction of the territorial gains of Islam. See C. A. Majul, "Theories on the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia," op. cit., p 369. S.Q. Fatimi put the emphasis on the same thesis. See S. Q. Fatimi, Islam Comes To Malaysia, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

Barāḥīn had been given various translations and commentaries by local scholars.\textsuperscript{19} There was also a wide range of literature on the subject written by local eminent scholars over the 17\textsuperscript{th} to 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, and most of these books were taught everywhere in the region.\textsuperscript{20} The teaching of the doctrine of the Twenty Qualities of God had later been an important subject of criticism by the reformists who claimed that the teaching of such a doctrine did not give Muslims a clear understanding of the rudimentary creeds of Islam, nor did it strengthen his conviction in God; on the contrary, it gives rise to doubt.\textsuperscript{21}

The propagators of Islam were mostly followers of the Shāfi‘ī school of law (madhhab), and so the natural choice of Islamic law for the Malays is the Shāfi‘ī madhhab.\textsuperscript{22} The Shāfi‘ī school of law has been generally accepted as an official madhhab by the Malays.\textsuperscript{23} It is believed that the legal thought of the Shāfi‘ī madhhab began with the teaching of Islamic law (fiqh) based on al-Nawawī’s famous legal manual Minhāj al-Tālibīn. It is also said that teaching of this book started as early as the 13\textsuperscript{th} century, i.e. in the early development of Islam in the region.\textsuperscript{24} Later, the other major fiqh books of the madhhab were also taught.\textsuperscript{25} In addition, local scholars

\textsuperscript{19}Among the major exegesis were Muhammad Zain Faqih Jalaluddin Ashi’s Bidāyat al-Hidāyah, written in 1757; Abdul Samad Falimbani’s Zuhrat al-Murid fi Bayān Kalimat al-Tawḥīd, written in 1764, and Sheikh Nawawi Bentan’s Dharfat al-Yaqīn.

\textsuperscript{20}Such as Sirāj al-Huda written by Muhammad Zainuddin Sambawi, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Najīn by Zainal Abidin Muhammad Fatani, and al-Durr al-Thamīn written by Sheikh Daud Fatani.


\textsuperscript{22}It was maintained by the scholars that most propagators were the Arabs of Ḥadramaut and Muslims of Gujarāt who belonged to the Shāfi‘ī madhhab. See C. A. Majul, ""Theories on the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia," op.cit., pp. 338-345; G. E. Marrison, "Persian Influences in Malay Life," in JMBRAS, vol. XXVII, pt. 1, 1955, pp. 52-54; S. Q. Fatimi, Islam Comes to Malaysia, op.cit., pp. 33-36.

\textsuperscript{23}See for example, M. A. Rauf, A Brief History of Islam with Special Reference to Malaya, op.cit., p. 85.


also produced a wide range of *fiqh* treatises based on the Shafi'i madhhab. The teaching of the *fiqh* literature of the Shafi'i madhhab in the traditional pondok institutions, madrasahs and suraus reinforced the Shafi'i legal thought among the society. In addition to this, the implementation of the rulings of the Shafi'i madhhab in local legal compendia, such as in the Undang-Undang Melaka, Hukum Kanun Pahang, Undang-Undang 99 Perak and many others strengthened the establishment of the Shafi'i madhhab in this region.

As the influence of the Shafi'i madhhab was entrenched in the society, the influence of other madhhabs had no place in it, and adopting the different rulings of the latter would be regarded as strange and, to some extent, a heresy. This attitude has been criticized by the reformists who emphasize the freedom to choose rulings from any authoritative madhhab by using the *tarjih* method and rejecting the need of being bound to a specific madhhab. The methods of teaching of *fiqh* in the traditional pondoks and madrasahs which are based on the *taqlid* approach, such as using of the *tadah kitab* method (reading the book) and *hafaz* (memorizing), have also been a significant target of the reformists' criticism. The reformists allege that those methods have only nourished the *taqlid* culture in the society and hindered the ability of performing *ijtihad*.

Sufism also played a vital role in characterizing Islamic traditionalism in Malay society, and as mentioned earlier, it was also one of the facilitating factors in

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26 For example, in the 16th and 17th centuries, the eminent local scholars such as Nuruddin Raniri, Abdul Rauf of Singkel and Jalaluddin Tursani had respectively written some important works on *fiqh*. Raniri wrote his famous *al-Sirr al-Mustaqim*, a book which is identified as the first work of *fiqh* written in Malay; Abdul Rauf of Singkel wrote *Mis'at al-Tullab*, while Jalaluddin Tursani produced *Sofmat al-Hukum*. In the 18th century, a lot more *fiqh* books were produced, such as Muhammad Arshad Banjari's *Sabill al-Muhtadn*, Daud Fatani's *Furq al-Masal', Munyat al-Musall/ and Bughyat al-Tullab*, Ismail Dawud Fatani's *Matf ar al-Badrayn*, Abdul Samad b. Muhammad Saleh's *Rijayat al-Bawram* and *Hijayat al-Ta'an* and others. See Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Pemikiran Umat Islam*, op. cit., pp. 138-140.


successful promulgation of Islam in this region. It is believed that some form of mysticism was introduced simultaneously into the Malay Archipelago with the introduction of Islam.\textsuperscript{29} According to Syed Naguib al-Attas, the foundations of Şûfîism had already been well laid in Malacca as early as 1488, for the Sultan of Malacca himself, i.e. Sultan Mansur Shah, at the time was the disciple of a mystic.\textsuperscript{30} However, he is certain "that Şûfîism and its orders must already have been well established in the Eastern Archipelago, particularly in Sumatera between the 15\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} centuries, for within that time we already find men whose comprehension of the doctrines of the Şûfî, and of Muslim theology and metaphysics, revealed a maturity found only within a society in which Şûfîism flourishes."\textsuperscript{31} Hamzah Fansuri (16/17 century), Shamsuddin Sumatrani (d. 1630), Nuruddin Raniri (d. 1661) and Abdul Rauf of Singkel (d. 1693), were among the great figures of Malay Şûfîs who taught various Şûfî doctrines and had a large circle of disciples in their respective orders.\textsuperscript{32} Doctrines such as the Unity of Existence (\textit{Wahdat al-Wujûd}) introduced by Ibn al-\textsuperscript{3}Arabî (d. 1165), the Perfect Man (\textit{al-Insâân al-Kâmîl}) indoctrinated by cAbd al-Karîm al-Jîlî (d. 1365) and the Seven Degrees (\textit{al-Marââtib al-Sab'âh}) taught by Ibn Faḍl Allâh al-Burhanpûrî (d. 1029) were among the famous ones which had a great influence on the Malays.\textsuperscript{33}


\textsuperscript{30}Syed Naguib al-Attas, \textit{Some Aspects of Şûfîism}, op.cit., p. 22. It is recorded in the \textit{Sejarah Melayu} that when a book dealing with mystics called \textit{al-Durr al-Manzûm} written by Abu Ishaq in Mekka was brought to Malacca, it was received with a great pomp and respect, and drummed all the way to the Malacca Court. Sultan Mansur Shah himself took a keen interest in the study of this book, and he had it sent to Pasai, the center of religious learning, to Makhudum Patakhan who was instructed to interpret all its inner meaning. See William Shellabear (ed.), \textit{Sejarah Melayu or Malay Annals} (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, new ed. 1977), pp. 125-130.


\textsuperscript{32}Among these figures, Hamzah Fansuri was the most celebrated Malay mystic first mentioned in the chronicles of Malay mysticism, who can be regarded as a veritable Ibn\textsuperscript{3}Arabî of the Malays. See \textit{ibid.}, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibn al-Arabî's Unity of Existence and al-Jîlî's Perfect Man doctrines were spread in the Malay Archipelago by Hamzah Fansuri and Shamsuddin Sumatrani, while al-Burhanpûrî’s Seven Degrees was disseminated by Nuruddin Raniri and Abdul Rauf of Singkel. Treatises on the respective doctrines can be found in various writings, such as Hamzah Fansuri's \textit{Shurb al-\textsuperscript{3}Ashiqîn} and \textit{Marââtib al-Wujûd}, Shamsuddin Sumatrani’s \textit{Nûr al-Haqqîq}, Nuruddin Raniri's \textit{Hill al-Zîl} and \textit{Ma‘rifat al-Thâ铌yah}, and Abdul Rauf’s \textit{Umûdat al-Muhtâjîn}. As the doctrine of the Unity of Existence had been a controversial subject, Hamzah
The strong influence of Sufism among Malay Muslim society was also seen in the spread of various Sufi orders (turuq, sg. tariqah) between the 16th and 19th century in the region, such as the Qadiriyyah, Rifaiyyah, Shattariyyah, Shadhiliyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, Samaniyyah and Ahmadiyyah orders. Each order had its own leader (shaykh) and practiced certain religious exercises involving particular rites, such as ratibs, awrads and dhikrs. Meanwhile, orthodox Sufism based on al-Ghazzali’s (d. 1111) thought became very popular and propagated by most of the local scholars. His great treatise Ihya’ Ulum al-Din was taught everywhere and was given various translations by several eminent local scholars including Daud Fatani (d. 1845) and Abdul Samad Falimbani (b. 1700). Though most scholars were keen to adopt orthodox Sufism, at the same time they also belonged to a particular Sufi order, and it was unusual to see any scholar who was not also associated with a specific order.

With the mystical background that Malay society had before the advent of Islam, it is understandable how Sufism has had a tremendous influence on Malay Muslim society. Regardless of its various doctrines of metaphysics, the Sufi’s mystical elements such as the miraculous power (karâmah) of the shaykhs and wals, and supernatural powers of those performing certain spiritual exercises and dhikrs were among the popular factors attracting the Malays. The entrenched influence of Sufism in the Malay Muslim community was however, claimed as the main cause of the Malay

and Shamsuddin were regarded as “heterodox” mystics and as such, most of their works were thrown into flames by their persecutors. Nuruddin Raniri was among those who severely criticized Hamzah Fansuri and Shamsuddin, while Abdul Rauf was never explicitly found to criticize the latter, but implied in much of his writings which condemn their ‘heresies’. See Syed Naguib al-Attas, Some Aspects of Sufism, op.cit., pp. 25-29.

34The Qadiriyyah order was the oldest, fostered by Hamzah Fansuri (16/17 century). The Rifaiyyah was founded by Nuruddin al-Raniri (d. 1661), while the Shattariyyah was spread by Abdul Rauf of Singkel (d. 1693) and Ibrahim Kurani (d. 1690). Later, new orders appeared, such as the Shadhiliyyah, founded by Abdul Malik b. Abdullah (d. 1736) of Terengganu, the Naqshbandiyyah propagated by Ismail Khalidi (d. 1844) of Minangkabau, the Sammaniyyah spread by Abdul Samad al-Falimbani (b. 1700), and the Ahmadiyyah disseminated by Tuan Tabal (d. 1875). See Wan Muhd Shaghir Abdullah, Perkembangan Ilmu Tasawuf, op.cit., pp. 10-21. At present days, the Qadiriyyah and the Naqshbandiyyah are the most popular orders practised among the Malays. See Naguib al-Attas, Some Aspects of Sufism, op.cit., pp. 51-67.

35Daud Fatani had translated parts of al-Ghazzali’s voluminous Ihyâ’ in his Bidâyat al-Hidayah and Minhâj al-Abidîn, while Abdul Samad Falimbani did so in his Hidâyat al-Sâlikîn.

36M. A. Rauf, A Brief History of Islam, op.cit., p. 83.
Muslims’ backwardness and stagnation. This claim was of course made by the reformists who perceived that the Sufis’ concern with various doctrines of metaphysics, philosophy and theosophy, and high adoration of the shaykhs and waifs with their miraculous power had usually led them to their abandoning of the more significant matters especially regarding the interests of the ummah. According to them, the Sufis’ ‘negative’ attitude towards mundane life had paralyzed the development of the Muslim community. Moreover, many Sufi doctrines and practices were considered as heresies and blameworthy innovations as they were allegedly in contrast with the original teachings of Islam.

The Role of the Religious Establishment

It is known that Islam was disseminated in the Malay Archipelago at the outset by foreign preachers, mostly from Arab countries, Persia and India. This task was later perpetuated by local scholars. Most of the Malay religious scholars undertook their religious studies in the Middle East, particularly in Mecca and Cairo. There they enriched their religious knowledge from teachers of various disciplines of Islamic studies for several years before returning to their homeland. Returning as Malay Muslim scholars, they were highly revered by the locals and regarded as superior and possessing high status, authority and great influence in the society. Some became

39The reasons for choosing Mecca and Cairo, or, to be more specific, the Masjid al-Haram and al-Azhar mosque (later university) were various, partly because they were regarded as the most reputable centres of Islamic studies, and also because they were dominated by the Shafi'i madhhab. The latter seemed to be an important criterion for the Malay students as they were of the same madhab, and when they returned to their motherland they would teach Islamic teachings based on this madhab as required by the society. Before the Muwahhidun revolution led by the reformist Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab (1792), Mecca was under the rule of the Ottomans who were of the Hanafi madhab. However, Mecca itself at that time remained on the Shafi'i madhab (see Snouck Hurgronje, Mekka In The Latter Part Of The 19th Century (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), p. 182). After the Wahhab revolution which took place in 18th century, the Shafi'i madhab was replaced by the Hanbali madhab. After that, the Malay students who previously converged on Mecca, went more frequently to the al-Azhar, which is distinguished by Hurgronje as "the Athens of Shafi'i learning." See Ibid., p. 185.
Qādīs, Muftis and religious teachers, while others became Imāms and Khātibs of mosques. Appointed by the rulers, they had a special position in the social hierarchy, equal to that of dignitaries and officials. Besides them, the Ḥājis i.e. those who had performed ḥajj in Mecca, and the Lebais, i.e. the pious men in the society, also held high positions and had their own influence on people especially in the rural community. Despite high status, the religious establishment maintained a good relationship with the society, and became an important reference for help and advice. They maintained worship, taught Islamic lore, presided over ceremonies of marriage and death, arbitrated disputes, healed the sick, controlled communal property and collected zakāh.

The religious establishment also held the responsibility of carrying out da’wah and propagating the teachings of Islam, their most significant role in the society. In the beginning, their teaching took place in mosques, suraus (prayer houses) or in their own houses. On the eve of the 17th century the system of religious education was institutionalized in the madrasah, adopting the kuttāb institution mushrooming in Western Asia at the time. This educational process became more advanced with the emergence of pondok institutions in the late 18th and early 19th century. The knowledge taught here consisted of all aspects of Islam such as theology, Islamic law, Sūfism, Arabic and others, and it employed the method of recitation and exegesis by a teacher as the principal means of imparting such knowledge to the students. The


Ibid.

Madrasah is a type of religious school modelled on Arab prototype, known as pesantren in Jawa and rangkang in Sumatra.


students were both local and people from various places of the region. The teachers, as well as the pondok students were respected by the community for their religious scholarly pursuit and also for their religious character. Having completed their religious studies and being recognized by society as scholars, they returned to their home towns and established their own pondoks or madrasahs there. Until the middle of the 20th century, the pondok institution was the most popular religious educational system which could be found almost everywhere in this country. The pondok institution was recognized as significant in propagating Islam in the region apart from reinforcing the Islamic traditionalism in the society. It is also a fact that the popularity of this institution was a credit to the traditional religious scholars in maintaining their reputation among the Malay Muslim community.

The position of the religious establishment was strengthened by the British interference. Following the introduction of a centralised bureaucratic by the British for the governance of the Malay states, the sultans in the last two decades of the 19th century created a religious administration modelled on this. By the second decade of the 20th century, most states had some form of centralised Islamic bureaucracy. This newly formalised religious hierarchy further strengthened the long-standing, mutually supportive relationship between the religious and secular Malay authority. The interdependent relationship between these two groups was a well known aspect of political and religious development in Malaya. In this context, W.R. Roff says, "a direct effect of colonial rule was thus to encourage the concentration of doctrinal and administrative religious authority in the hand of a hierarchy of officials directly dependent on the sultans for their position and power".45 This alliance had also, as expressed by L. Y. Andaya, "guaranteed that any Islamic reform movement which threatened to weaken the established religion would find little favour among the ruling classes."46 Because of the traditionally supportive role between the religious and secular authorities, the reformists' attacks on the religious officialdom were


viewed as attacks on the ruling class, which would necessarily find a very strong resistance.\textsuperscript{47}

Regardless of this resistance, they were endlessly challenged by the reformists. Besides claiming that the traditional religious elite were responsible for the backwardness of Malay society because of their 'improper' teachings of Islam, the reformists also criticised the pondok educational system. The reformists believed that the system did not contribute to the development of Malay Muslim society since the religion was studied here according to the old traditional methods based on the taqlid approach.\textsuperscript{48} They also made a claim that the traditional religious establishment, including the pondok teachers were not genuine scholars and not knowledgeable for they made some distortions, falsehoods and deviations in the teachings of Islam. They alleged that the pondok students were not real seekers of truth as they mainly aimed for mundane rewards by accruing donations from the society by participating in religious functions. Thus, according to the reformists, the pondok teachers only deserved to be labelled as "the hawkers of the religion,"\textsuperscript{49} whilst the pondok graduates were called "lebai pondok." Nevertheless, such attacks failed to weaken the forcefulness of the traditionalists' influence among the masses because of their traditional ties with the existing secular authorities.

**The Impact of Colonialism**

The colonization of Malaya by the Portuguese (1511-1641), Dutch (1641-1824) and British (1824-1957) had some impact on Islam and the Malay cultural life. However, it was the British occupation that was of greatest significance for subsequent developments in Malaya especially in shaping the course of Islam in Malay society. British policies, when compared to those of the Portuguese and the Dutch, were more

\textsuperscript{47}ibid., p. 237.

\textsuperscript{48}See Al-Imam, 11, iv, December 16, 1927, p. 188.

sympathetic to the Malays and Islam. The British policies, as stated by Roff, were based on a mutually profitable alliance with the Malay ruling class, particularly with the individual rulers of the state and their aristocratic establishments. Nonetheless, the rulers or Sultans, the traditionally undisputed leaders of Malay culture and religion, became only symbols of the Malay political sovereignty and without any authority over decision making. This was because of the Pangkor Engagement in 1874 whereby the Sultans had to receive British Residents or advisers whose advice had to be accepted in all matters except matters affecting religion and customs.

Though the symbiotic relationship between the British and Malay ruling class had deprived the Malay Sultans of much of their policy-making or decision making power, it was furthered with a tact which carefully preserved the fiction that the Sultans were autonomous rulers acting under advice from Residents who were in some sense their servants. Thus, within Malay society itself, the rulers not only remained supreme, but had their position considerably strengthened by the improvement, under the aegis of British, of the centralized apparatus of government, by the reduction of previously competitive territorial chiefs to the status of titled pensioners or government-paid bureaucrats, and by the strengthening of their customary but previously frequently unexercised control over religion.

The British policy of non-interference in matters regarding religion and customs, however, proved impossible to uphold in practice as the creation of a modern governmental administration and other reforms by them invariably meant that they had to regulate many aspects of indigenous life, including religion and customs. Thus,

52 According to Clause VI of the Pangkor Engagement 1874, "the Sultan shall receive and provide a suitable residence for a British Officer to be called Resident who shall be accredited to his Court and whose advice must be asked and acted upon in all questions other than those touching Malay religion and customs." Quoted in Sir William George Maxwell and William Summer Gibson, Treatises and Engagements Affecting the Malay States and Borneo (London: Jas. Truscott & Son Ltd., 1924), pp. 28-30.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
even if, under the engagement, matters affecting religion and customs were placed under the jurisdiction of the Sultans, in the end, they were also controlled and regulated by the British.\(^{55}\) By managing matters concerning Islam ingeniously in the service of British interests, the officials were able to placate the Malay Muslims, despite some intermittent and minor confrontations with Malay Muslim groups in the first three decades of the 20th century.\(^{56}\)

Under the British administration, the status and role of Islamic law was made subservient to British legal codes and enactments, and so too were the status and power of Sultans who were subject to the control of British advisers. Islam became highly bureaucratised, and this occurred with the introduction of written constitutions, codification of the oral adat and the Sharī'ah, and legislation on other matters in all the Malay states.\(^{57}\) The official position of Muftī, Qādi and Imām were also introduced as well as some form of organised class of ‘ulama’ who were formally engaged in government offices at state levels. A centralised religious authority, the Majlis Agama or Religious Council was also formed to monitor Islamic affairs in all states.\(^{58}\) In some ways, it should be noted that British rule did assist the development of Islam in the Malay society. For example, administrative reforms led to the coordination and regulation of Muslim institutions such as the collection of zakāt, the Islamic court system and pilgrimage procedures. However, the extent of British control in Malay Muslim affairs also meant that much of the influence of the Islamic law on Malay life was curtailed.\(^{59}\)

Furthermore, the British policies on ethnic communities, and the economic and education system generated a feeling of cultural insecurity among the Malays. One of.

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\(^{58}\) Ibid., pp. 93-109.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., pp. 141-144.
the major outcomes of the British occupation in Malaya was the emergence of a multiracial society which resulted in the importation of immigrant labourers, namely the Chinese and Indians, on a large scale into Malaya from China and the Indian subcontinent to work in the tin industry and on the rubber plantations. Inasmuch as these immigrant groups were principally brought in to serve British economic interests, they were not integrated into the mainstream of the indigenous Malay environment. As a result, the Malays, Chinese and Indians were left much to themselves within their ethnic enclaves, in residence, type of work and education, and this eventually retarded inter-ethnic relations. The unrestricted entry of immigrant labourers increased the size of the Chinese and Indian communities in the peninsula. In the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Malays found themselves outnumbered by this open door immigration policy. In the 1921 census, the Malays had become a minority in their own country, constituting less than half of the total population.60

One of the major impacts of the British control of Malaya was the relegation of the Malay population to the bottom rung of the economic ladder. British policies were meant to preserve the Malay way of life, but these policies also consigned the Malays to the lowest strata of economic life. The history of British policy in the peninsula is one of keeping the Malay population in the farm, while they exploited the rich natural resources of the country. Though it was undeniable that some Malays later had opportunities to participate in the modern economy, on the whole, the British view was that the Malays should limit their horizons to pursuits such as agriculture and fishing. The British believed that the Malays had no inclination nor the necessary traits to succeed in Malaya’s modern economy. A stereotype was accepted by many colonial administrators, which portrayed the Malays, despite their charm, as indolent, fun loving, shiftless and resistant to change and progress, and lacking in the ability to be successful businessmen or wage earners.61 The Malays, however, would have been better off economically if they had produced more, of greater variety and of more

value, from the land. Some colonial administrators, such as Hugh Clifford (1866-1941) who served as Governor of Straits Settlement from 1897 to 1909, felt that the purpose of preserving the culture of the Malays was not at odds with improving their economic position. Clifford argued that the answer was to make the Malays better and more efficient farmers. Nonetheless, his view that the standard of living of the Malays could be raised while they remained primarily rural was not reflected in administrative policies and there was little serious effort to improve and modernize the Malay agricultural sector of the economy.62

With the rapid growth of the surplus economy, the British carried out several development projects in areas of economic activity, namely around mining and rubber estate areas, and these included roads, railways, medical services, electricity, telephones and so forth. As these infrastructural facilities were only concentrated in areas whose inhabitants were mostly non-Malays, the facilities were not beneficial to the Malays. As these areas grew and prospered, the Malays benefited very little from that progress and they were outstripped economically in their own country by immigrant races.63 While the new urban society became richer and was provided with all the material comforts of civilization, the rural Malays remained in poverty. The Malays had a money economy thrust upon them, but they had little means of earning the same money to buy the goods that came with a money economy. While the British were deliberately creating a modern economic system consonant with world commercial development, the Malays were driven more into the backwoods of economic progress.64 L. A. Mills sums it up aptly when he states that, "when the British came, the Malay was a poor man in a poor country; when they left he was a poor man in a rich country."65

As regards to education, traditionally, the first formal education for Malay

63Ibid.
64Ibid, p. 274.
children was primarily religious, beginning in the suraus or mosques, and later moving to the pondoks. Under British rule, the educational policy toward the Malay community reflected the facade of indirect rule and attempted to preserve Malay life and culture. Two educational systems evolved: one for the Malay elite in whose name the British ruled, and one for the Malays whose culture they preserved. The need for Malay officers in the civil service to facilitate governance in Malaya had led the British to provide English education to selected Malays. The sons of Malay aristocrats and the ruling class were offered facilities and opportunities to acquire English education to the highest level, including tertiary education in Britain. This chosen lot, equipped with English education, assumed positions in the civil service or royal courts. For the rural Malays, the British had provided them with vernacular education which aimed at only the achievement of literacy and simple skills in arithmetic that were "sufficient for the ordinary requirements of Malay boys who will become bullock-wagon drivers, padi growers, fishermen, etc."\(^6\)

The British believed that the expectations of the Malays should not be unduly raised and that they were best suited to agricultural occupations. The British administrators viewed education for Malays as a means to reorientate and prepare them to accept their place in colonial society.\(^6\) Nonetheless, as Roff states, "in fairness it must also be said that many Englishmen, as well as Malays, felt a genuine affection for the values and virtues inherent in Malay rural life and were reluctant to see it radically disturbed, holding that this was against the best interests as well as the wishes of the peasants themselves."\(^6\) The education for Malays in general was thus, in the words of Frank Swettenham (1850-1946), the British Resident in Malaya from 1896 to 1901, "to make the children better farmers rather than offer them any wider views of life. The longer the Malay is kept away from the influence of


civilization the better it will be for him."69

The dualism in the British educational policies, in general, not only contributed to the relative passivity of the Islamic factor in the life of the Malays, but also added a new and unsettling dimension to Malay education in the country and created a cultural schism among the Malays. The Malay aristocracy responded favourably to the opportunity of English education to secure a secular education. Admittedly, this education had tended to further isolate the ruling class from the common Malays. The Malay vernacular education was responded to with a good deal of unpopularity and suspicion. This was because education among the rural Malays had traditionally revolved around the study of Islam, and many parents and religious leaders were highly suspicious of these new secular schools, as they feared that their children would be seduced to embrace the alien faith with which the British were associated.70 Though these fears were counteracted by adopting the Qur’an class, the vernacular education to most parents represented government intrusion into a rural value system as well as the loss of necessary labor on the farm.

Generally, the changing circumstances of the Malays during the colonial period, such as the spread of modern bureaucracy, secular educational policies, new forms of economic activity and urbanization, contributed to their consciousness of themselves as an ethnic group vis-a-vis others. Against the background of this state of bewilderment and frustration over their general backwardness and plight, came proposals to alleviate their problems from a group of concerned Muslims in the country, i.e. the reformists.

69Frank Swettenham, British Malaya (London: John Lane, 1907), p. 53.
The Emergence of Islamic Reformism in Malaysia

Islamic Reformism in the Pre-Independence Era

The origin of the Islamic reform movement in Malaya can be traced to the Middle East, i.e. the heartland of Islam, especially during the late nineteenth century when Islam was generally on the decline in the face of Western imperialism. It was there that Islamic reformism emerged. As mentioned earlier, Islamic reformism, which was intensively propagated by its leading figures such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍa, principally called for the revitalisation of the ummah from being in a state of stagnation to regaining their excellence by returning to a pristine Islam and equipping themselves for the challenges of the modern world. Though the calls to regenerate the Islamic spirit and identity were also pursued by reformists outside the Arab lands, it was the radicalism of al-Afghānī and his followers in particular that deeply touched the Islamic world from the last quarter of the 19th century. The dynamism of Islam and the promise of the future which these men conjured up acted like a cleansing wind in much of the Islamic world including Malaysia.

Extensive journeys for religious study in Arabia and Egypt and pilgrimage to Mecca brought Malay Muslims into contact with reformists. The scholars were especially significant because of their exposure to Islamic reformism whilst there and their contribution to the spread of the ideas upon their return to Malaya. In this respect, Egypt, or in particular, the al-Azhar University in Cairo, was particularly important as this centre of highly developed academia was not only regarded as a reputable centre of religious learning, but it had also served as the pivot of Islamic reform ideas. Here, the students had the opportunity to listen directly to ʿAbduh who spread the ideas of reform through his lectures on various religious topics. Consequently, the ideas of Islamic reform found their way into the student body,

which also comprised students from Malaya. At the same level, the pilgrimage to Makkah had its own significance in assisting the spread of reformism in Malaya. In Makkah and Madinah, the Hajjis were exposed to the ideas of Islamic reform which spread widely in Arabia. For the more educated, going to the pilgrimage was also an opportunity to renew contacts with personalities and events in the Muslim world and a time for reflection about the affairs of Muslims back home. Hence, one would find in the writings of some colonial officials a certain suspicion towards returned pilgrims, viewing them as well as the institution of pilgrimage itself as a political danger. Those Hajjis, along with the Azharite scholars, brought back Islamic reformism, a commitment to the improvement and intensification of Muslim religious life, a desire to arouse their people from torpor and misguidance to a proper Muslim worship, as well as a commitment to political autonomy.

The key leaders of the Malay reformists, such as Saiyid Shaykh al-Hadi, Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin, Hj. Abbas b. Mohd. Taha and Mohd Salim Kallali were among those who were directly influenced by the Islamic reform movements in the Middle East of the late 19th century as they had spent a considerable part of their lives there, particularly in Cairo and Makkah where they had opportunities to meet and to listen to Muhammad 'Abduh, Rashid Ridhâ and other reformist personalities of the local reform movement. Their contribution to the spread of Islamic reformism in the Malay world lay mainly in their role as founders and editors of reformist journals and newspapers at that time, the most notable of which was Al-Imam, a monthly periodical founded by al-Hadi in 1906. With the birth of Al-Imam, Islamic reformism in Malaysia was clearly and officially discerned. As the organ of an Islamic reform


75On these reformist figures, see for example, ibid., pp. 59-65; Ibrahim Abu Bakar, Islamic Modernism in Malaya: The Life And Thought Of Sayid Syekh Al-Hadi 1867-1934 (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1994).
movement, Al-Imam was, to a great extent, similar both in content and form to Al-Manar, a periodical published eight years earlier by the Egyptian reformist Rashid Ridhā, promoting the ideas of Islamic reform of his master Muḥammad ʿAbduh.76 Al-Imam was regarded as the most vocal, radical, and vigorous Malay language periodical, whose birth was "a bombshell on the quiet Malayan scene of Islam."77 Roff in his oft-quoted book, The Origins of Malay Nationalism, observes that this periodical was "a radical departure in the field of Malay publications, distinguished from its predecessors both in intellectual stature and intensity of purpose and in its attempt to formulate a coherent philosophy of action for a society faced with the need for rapid social and economic change."78

Emerging against the background of a traditional and conservative-oriented Malay society, Al-Imam served as an official medium by the Malay reformists in propagating the spirit of Islamic reformism. Though Al-Imam's principal concern was with the religion itself,79 as the religion is the proven cure for the ills of the Muslim community,80 it also considerably dealt with matters of politics and social affairs.81 As regards the religious aspect, Al-Imam committed itself to:82

1. Preach Islam in its pure and original form;
2. Promote religious knowledge amongst the Muslim community in the Malay world;
3. Encourage intellectual activities amongst the knowledgeable people by

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77Ibid, p. 57; Abu Bakar Hamzah, Al-Imam, op.cit., p. 29.
80Abu Bakar Hamzah, Al-Imam, op.cit., p. 30.
sponsoring discussions and constructive criticism;

4. Cleanse the existing religious corruption and correct the misconception of Islam as perceived in the Malay world;

5. Fight against all religious innovations imported into Islam in the region; and,

6. Call upon the Rulers and Chieftains to apply Islamic teaching in their practical life so as to become examples for their subjects.

Though the publication of *Al-Imam* survived only for a short period, i.e. from July 1906 until December 1908, it successfully achieved its aim and objectives in disseminating Islamic reformism in the Malay world. The message and mission of *Al-Imam* was constantly continued throughout the time by the reformist group. Various periodicals were published as a continuation of *Al-Imam*. Among them were the periodical *Neracha*, published in Singapore from 1911 to 1915; *Tunas Melayu*, published in 1913 in association with *Neracha*; *Majallah al-Islam*, published in 1914; *Al-Ikhwan*, published in Penang in the period from 1926 to 1931, and *Saudara*, also published in Penang from 1932 to 1941.

The ideas of Islamic reform were not only expressed through the publications of various journals, but were also channelled through the *madrasah* (religious school) system, a system borrowed from Egypt. A number of *madrasahs*, such as Madrasah Al-Iqbal Al-Islamiyyah in Singapore, Madrasah Al-Hadi in Melaka and Madrasah Al-Mashhor in Penang, began to be established introducing a more modern curriculum than that offered by the *pondok* schools. The establishment of *madrasahs* were intended to put into practice the ideas advanced in the reformists’ publications. Instruction was by no means confined to Islam, and such modern subjects as mathematics, English, history, business and others were also introduced to prepare a good Muslim to survive and flourish in a modern society.

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contemporary knowledge. However, due to a lack of funds to run the madrasahs, most of them were closed\(^85\) and al-Hadi himself, according to one writer, discovered that none of the madrasahs had become a fertile ground for propagating Islamic reformism.\(^86\)

As mentioned earlier, the reformists principally called for a return to the true principles of Islam, based on the Qur’ān and Sunnah as the only solution to Malay backwardness. They emphasized the importance of education and modernity for the Malays, and the need for them to eliminate un-Islamic practices in their daily lives. They were particularly incensed at the ‘ulamā’is passivity, their failure to perform their role to free Islam from un-Islamic aspects of adat, which consequently led to the perpetuation of Malay decadence.\(^87\) The reformists, consequently, attempted to substitute the rudimentary and repetitious theological learning, clouded in a haze of doctrinal misunderstanding and superstitious practice, with a new kind of Islamic teaching based on an intelligent re-appraisal of the truths contained in the Qur’ān and Sunnah, combined with a programme of modern education properly adapted to the pressing needs of the world into which the Malays were emerging.\(^88\) Nonetheless, in pursuing this aim the reformists found themselves in conflict with all the forces of traditionalism, i.e. the rural ‘ulamā’ and much of peasant society, the religious hierarchy in the States, and the traditional ruling class.\(^89\)

The root of the conflict between the reformists, who were frequently referred to as the Kaum Muda (the Young Faction), and the traditionalists, who reserved for themselves the more respectable appellation of Kaum Tua (Old Faction), though expressed in doctrinal and ritual controversies of varying substance, was seen, as Roff

\(^85\)Madrasah al-Mashhor in Penang was the only one that survived until present days. On this madrasah, see for example, Rahim b. Osman, “Madrasah al-Masyhur al-Islamiyah,” in Khoo Kay Kim, et.al., Islam di Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980), pp. 75-85.

\(^86\)Ibrahim Abu Bakar, Islamic Modernism, op.cit., p. 73.

\(^87\)See for example, Al-lmam, vol.1 no. 1 (July 1906); and vol. No. 3 (September 1906).


\(^89\)Ibid.
states, in the threat offered by the former to the very basis of customary authority. Cardinal among the principles of the reformists was the contention that man must use his reason to determine the truth about religion as about all else and abjure the blind acceptance of intermediary authority. They believed that the fundamental truth had been set down in the Qur’an and the Sunnah, and that in every age these truths had to be applied anew to current conditions. They held that this could best be accomplished through *ijtihād*, which they defined as the examination of the Qur’an and Sunnah to discover the legal prescriptions and moral teachings contain therein, and through reason, apply them to contemporary situations. The traditionalists, on the other hand, maintained that the human mind is generally incapable of grasping the patterns and intricacies of God’s command without a reliable guide. They also perceived that the truth expressed in the teachings of the great Muslim scholars of classical and medieval Islam, including the four major madhhabs did not change. They believed that the truth did not ever need to be brought to trial since it was not ever altered by the change of time and conditions. According to them, reason was, in general, limited to the application of the existing teachings of the major madhhabs in the special problems of life in any particular period of time.

In maintaining their respective standpoints, both parties came into deep conflict with each other on a wide range of issues, particularly pertaining to doctrinal and ritual, as well as educational, social, economic and political matters. The content of disputes revolved around these issues, which in particular consisted of such questions as those concerning the teaching of the doctrine of God’s Twenty Attributes, the propriety of reciting the *talqîn* over the dead at burial and uttering the *niyyah* before the prayer, to the question regarding the permissibility of wearing trousers and ties, the lawfulness of saving bank interest, and the possibility of giving Malay women

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91 See Al-Imam, vol. 3, no. 1 (July 1908).

the freedom to receive education and participate in social affairs. In these disputes, both parties had strongly insisted on their respective views which were in sharp conflict to each other. The conflict was an obvious manifestation of the clash of paradigms between two major groups in Malay Muslim society. The Kaum Muda represented those Muslims with a more intensive experience of metropolitan Islam in attempting to purify ritual and belief from purely local innovations, as well as reformulate Islam in response to the economic and social pressures of contemporary life, while the Kaum Tua represented the religious elite and traditional establishment and peasantry in their defence to preserve the orthodoxy of Islam as they had practiced it for centuries, as well as to secure the traditional values of the Malay Muslim society.

The disputes between the Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda could be seen not only through the columns of the local newspapers and journals, but also at the village level. The effects of the new ideas brought by the Kaum Muda among the villagers were considerable. The new ideas did not only receive opposition from the Kaum Tua, but also led to serious division among the Malay Muslim society. As Roff stated, it needed only one haji to return from the Middle East fired with reformist ideas, or one religious teacher to study at a Kaum Muda madrasah in Singapore, Perak or Penang, to divide a village temporarily into two rival factions. It was common then to observe, for instance, the adherents of one side of the factions refusing to pray with the adherents of the other in the mosque. The refusal also extended to weddings and other ceremonies. The schism was particularly pervasive during the first two decades after the launching of Al-Imam and it was observed that 'there was hardly a village in Malaya where the Malays did not argue and discuss the teachings of the Kaum

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94Ibid., p. 79.
95Ibid., p. 86.
Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, the debates between both factions on certain aspects of Islamic principles had become a common scenario that characterized the Malay Muslim community at large.97

The Kaum Muda's criticisms of the Kaum Tua was violently opposed by the latter by using arguments or direct use of authority. In order to neutralize the influence of ideas of reform on the society, for instance, the Kaum Tua channelled their defence and counter arguments through their own journals and newspapers, such as Pengasuh, Lidah Benar, Suara Benar and Panduan.98 A fatwa was also issued denouncing the new ideas as against Islamic teachings, infidel (kafir), and similar to that of the Qâdiyâni, a deviant sect originating from India.99 The Kaum Muda was also condemned as worse than idolaters and Christians.100 To check the spread of the reform ideas, the Kaum Tua use their authority to forbid reformist leaders from speaking in some mosques, and their periodicals and other publications were officially banned in some states.101

Though the conflict between the Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua was a striking characteristic of Islam in Malaya from the first decade of the twentieth century, the former movement seemed to be declining in the 1930's as it was checked by various factors. The reformist movement was also seen as having failed to win over Islamic traditionalism and create or lead a mass movement among Malays.102 The major explanation for this was that it had to struggle against Islamic traditionalism which

98Ibid., pp. 126-127.
101Ibid., p. 254.
dominated the Malay Muslims long before the coming of Islamic reformism into Malaya. Islamic traditionalism was advocated by the traditional establishment including religious teachers and 'ulamā', the traditional Malay chiefs and aristocrats, and the Sultans. To reform would mean to antagonize the establishment. To gain mass support in this situation was an extremely tough task since the Kaum Tua held the loyalty of the majority of the Malays, and had power and various means to defend their status quo. In addition, since the traditional religious institutions such as pondok, madrasah and the mystical orders were all controlled by the Kaum Tua, Islamic traditionalism had always been the more influential and dominant force among the Malays. Moreover, the Kaum Muda reformist philosophy had to grapple with a culture which, as noted earlier, was influenced by traditional values such as some Hindu aspects of the adat and other syncretic Sufi practices. The radical nature of the reformists' orientation and virulent attack against the status quo leadership of the time, i.e. the Sultans, tok guru and traditional 'ulamā', naturally were not well received by the society who had given their unquestioning loyalty to the Rulers.

Despite its downturn in the 1930's, Islamic reformism had some positive impact upon Malayan history. For one thing, Islamic reformism generated the emergence of a modern religious elite and intelligentsia who intensively attempted to diagnose the changing circumstances that arose among the Malays due to the modernization process introduced by the British. This emergence of a modern religious elite and intelligentsia was but a clear proof of the success and contribution rendered by Islamic reformism. The reformist movement was also a vital force that successfully awakened Malay political consciousness. It was seen as the first attempt to mobilize public support and was the first uprising against what was perceived as decadence and backwardness,

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104Ibid., p. 171.
and the first serious expression of defying authority. It had formally launched an active tradition of Islamic dissent which had been a significant element of future Malay Muslim politics. The force also brought new ideas which were also a vital source of future debates, and above all, it overtly proposed Islam as a significant paradigm in Malay politics and society generally.¹⁰⁸

Islamic reformism sowed the seeds of nationalism among Malays through the idea of pan-Islam originating from the Egyptian reformists. It is plausible to regard the Islamic reform movement as a crucial transforming element in awakening nationalism among the Malay Muslims in Malaya. The impact of the reformist ideas of the Kaum Muda movement and its implication in the construction of the Malay nationalist movement have been well elucidated in Roff’s The Origins of Malay Nationalism. According to Roff, during the 1925-28 period, the Malay students in Cairo who had had an introduction to anti-colonialist ideas in Egyptian Islamic reform circles, had published two monthly journals, namely, Seruan Azhar (1925-28) and Pilihan Timur (1927-28). These journals, aside from their concern with religious topics, appeared in a new and aggressive spirit of overt political discussion, which centered around three main concepts: Pan-Islamism, Pan-Malayanism (union between Indonesia and Malaya), and anti-colonial nationalism.¹⁰⁹ On their return to Malaya, they joined the nationalist forces of the secular Malay-educated intelligentsia in fighting for Malayan independence. Islamic reformism was overwhelmed by the spirit of anti-colonial nationalism. The basic orientation of Islamic reform had finally expanded and developed into the Malay-Muslim political organizations such as Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (KMS) (1926), Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM) (1938), Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM) (1945), United Malay National Organization (UMNO) (1946), Hizbul Muslimin (HAMIM) (1948), etc. which strived to gain the independence of Malaya from the British.¹¹⁰ In becoming so, as Roff says, "reformism was losing or shedding much of its religious basis. A new generation of nationalists was appearing. Though


they might have obtained their introduction to nationalism in the wider world by way of the Islamic renaissance, they were to pursue their goals largely independently of any avowed religious framework of ideas.111

Although it was the reformists who were instrumental in germinating the seeds of Malay nationalism, it was this same nationalism which held back the growth of Islamic reformism in Malaya. The reason for this was that, according to one writer, even if the defence of both Islam and Malay interests coexisted in the nationalist struggle for independence, the struggle was more ethnic-based, rather than religious.112 Perhaps, from the point of view of the Muslim reformist movement, much of what they had fought for and sowed during the first half of the twentieth century in Malaya had vanished, or at least was submerged, when the leadership of community was assumed by the Malay leaders with a strong ethnic nationalist tendency, especially under the aegis of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) after 1946. UMNO was founded as a direct result of Malay opposition to the British proposal of "Malayan Union."113 Its leadership pledged its commitment to pursue the goals of Malay ethnic nationalism, which meant essentially the educational, economic, social, cultural and political upliftment and dominance of the Malay community in Malayan affairs. Although UMNO initially had a Department of Religious Affairs and Education, the latter only played a limited role in influencing the leadership towards any kind of

113The British in 1944 had proposed to incorporate the Federated Malay States (FMS), Unfederated Malay States (UMS), Penang and Malacca into a Malayan Union. The plan was to create a unitary state comprising these states with a central government, governor, and legislative and executive councils. The Malay Sultans were to retain their position but sovereignty was to be transferred to the British Crown. All citizens of the new Malayan Union would have equal rights, including admission to the administrative civil service. Finally, Malayan citizenship was to be extended to all without discrimination as to race or creed. This had resulted in strong opposition from the Malays as they felt that they would totally loose their own land to aliens. The Malayan mass opposition to the scheme was manifested by the founding of UMNO. When this plan was inaugurated in 1946, the opposition was so effective, that the plan was never brought into effect. Through negotiations between the British, UMNO and the Malay Sultans, the substitution of the new concept of a Federation of Malaya for the unpopular Malayan Union scheme was accomplished. In the Federation created in 1948, the sovereignty of the Sultans, the individuality of the states and Malay special privileges were upheld. See Andaya and Andaya, A History of Malaysia, op.cit., pp. 254-257.
Islamic aspirations. It was observed that UMNO's commitment to Islam was of a limited nature which manifested most clearly in the overwhelming opposition to a proposal by the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (KMS) that UMNO should strive for the establishment of an Islamic State.

During this time, even though the spirit of Islamic reform had been replaced by Malay nationalism which had successfully mobilized public support, it in no way meant the demise of the former. The influence of Islamic reformism was apparently considerable in shaping Malay views, attitudes and approaches in the resolution of their plight. This could be seen, for instance, through the extent of the Islamic reformism influence upon several political figures such as Burhanuddin al-Helmy Mohd Nor, the leader of Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM), and Islamic leaders in UMNO itself, such as, Ahmad Fuad, Syed Amin Hadi, Syed Nasir Ismail, Abdullah Pa'him, Syed Jaafar Albar and Syed Sheikh al-Hady's son, Syed Alwi, who was appointed as UMNO's liaison officer in the Department of Religious Affairs and Education. Some of UMNO's Islamic-oriented leaders, together with PKMM's leaders and those related to Ma'ahad al-Ihya' al-Sharif, the Islamic college in Gunung Semanggol, Perak, founded the Islamic party of Hizbul Muslimin in 1948. Under the chairmanship of Sheikh Abu Bakar al-Baqir, the renowned reformist of the time and also the founder of the college, Hizbul Muslimin became the first Islamic party in the country whose major aims were, inter alia, to fight for Malayan independence, to build a Muslim society based on Islamic principles, and to form Malaya as an Islamic

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114 The concern of the UMNO with religion could be seen in the articles of the party Constitution of 1960, stipulating that one of the UMNO's aims was "to promote the advancement of Islam and foster its growth as the modus vivendi for all Muslims living in the Federation of Malaya." See Safie Ibrahim, "The Islamic Elements in Malay Politics in Pre-Independent Malaya, 1937-1948," in Islamic Culture, vol. 52, 1978, p. 189.


116 On this institution and its significant role in sowing the Islamic reformism, see Nabir Abdullah, Maahad Il Ihya' Assharif Gunung Semanggol 1934-1959 (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1976.)
While it is known that Hizbul Muslimin drew a great deal of its inspiration from the Indonesian reformist groups, i.e. the Muhammadiyah and Masjumi, it was to some extent modelled upon the Ikhwan Muslimun of Egypt founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna. It is known that the Ikhwan Muslimun began as an Islamic reform movement and became increasingly political in its activities revealing a strong element of anti-British xenophobia. The establishment of Hizbul Muslimin and its activities had stirred the British worry, and thus, its leaders were later arrested and the party disbanded before it was proscribed. Its spirit, however, was reborn in 1951 when the Pan-Malaya Islamic Party (PMIP), later known as PAS (Parti Islam Se-Tanah Melayu), came into being after some leaders of the Religious Bureau of UMNO revolted against the party’s leadership on the grounds of the party’s secular-nationalist leanings. However, prior to the country’s independence, the spirit of Malay ethnic nationalism held a stronger grip on the society. It was this nationalism, together with opposition from the ruling establishment, namely, the Sultans, the traditionalist ‘ulama’, or the Kaum Tua, as well as the colonialists, that checked the growth of Islamic reformism in Malaya at the time.

Islamic Reformism in Post-Independence Era

Though the influence of Islamic reformism was checked by many factors that lay in its path, its seeds continued to grow and played a vital role in the Malayan scene of Islam. Even though it had temporarily been stagnant during the phase of independence, Islamic reformism had a significant impact that could be obviously seen in the era after independence. Among the major impacts brought about by Islamic reformism in Malaya was that it had resultant consciousness among Malays. It had


introduced a new sort of Islamic thought that attempted to break up the wall of stereotyped Islamic conservatism. One may observe that the impact of Islamic reformism in the early stages was moderate, but in the long run, particularly in the post-independence period, the impact became greater. Islamic reformism was seen as having finally been successful in achieving some of its prescribed objectives. Above all, it had been gradually accepted by the Malay masses, including the so-called Kaum Tua themselves, penetrating the thick wall of religious orthodoxy, and creating a paradigm shift in the Malay Muslim community. Islamic reformism was eventually seen as a strong force which was able to cope with the new challenges of post-independence eras.

In the post-independence era Islamic reformism had met its new carriers. This era witnessed the re-emergence of Islamic reformism conveyed by various reform groups. This reform movement could be found everywhere in the Malay peninsula, from the state of Perlis in the north to the state of Johore in the south. Through formal organizations registered under the religious authority or informal ones, these groups intensively promote the ideas of reform to the Malay masses, just as their predecessors had done.\textsuperscript{119} Organizations such as the Persatuan Al-Islah in Perlis, the Muhammadian in Penang, Ittiba' As-Sunnah in Negeri Sembilan and Ansar As-Sunnah in Melaka were mainly influenced by the former Kaum Muda movement that was inspired by the Egyptian reformists as well as the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia. However, these groups were quite small, having membership and supporters of less than 5,000 respectively, and operated at the state level. They shared common ideas, but were seen as separate movements which thus were not able to increase their influence on the masses and to mobilize public support.

Nonetheless, among these groups, the Al-Islah reform movement in Perlis was seen as the most successful one since it had successfully influenced the authorities and the religious establishment of the state. The idea of Islamic reform was approved

by the state government including the Ruler of Perlis himself. Following such a triumph, this movement had developed into the recognized state organization dominating the whole Islamic activities in Perlis. Generally, the other Malay states had approved the Shafi’i madhhab as an official madhhab. The religious administration law of the states provides a clause stating that the Islamic law practiced in the states is based on the Shafi’i madhhab. However, this clause is not included in the Perlis law of religious administration, meaning that this state did not bind itself to any specific fiqh madhhab. Instead of holding to the Shafi’i madhhab or any other madhab, they allowed a fresh ijtihadic approach by stating that any religious practice as well as any state fatwa must be referred directly to the textual sources, i.e. the Qur’an and Sunnah. This method was similar to the former Kaum Muda’s idea which contended that Malay Muslims should refer any cases in Islamic law to the textual sources.

Islamic Reformism: The Islamic Resurgence and The Dakwah Movement

Besides those locally operated reform groups which resembled the previous Kaum Muda reform movement, the rebirth of Islamic reformism in this period was also

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121 Detailed information regarding this movement can be explored in Mohd. Nasir Abd. Hamid, “Islamic Reform (Islah) with Special Reference to the Islah Movement in the State of Perlis, Malaysia,” M.Phil thesis for CSIC, Faculty of Arts, the University of Birmingham, 1996.

122 This is mentioned in the Law of Administration of Islamic Affairs in every state in Malaysia. See for example, Administration of Muslim Law Enactment of Selangor, No. 3, 1952.

123 Undang-undang Tubuh Kerajaan Perlis, 1974 (Ammended), 5 (1) states that the religion of the state is Islam of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jam‘ah, with no mention of being bound to any madhhab. Sect. 7 (4) of the Perlis Law of Administration of Islamic Affairs, 1963, allocates that the Majlis (Council of Islamic Affairs) and the Committee of Shar‘iah, in giving a fatwa or opinion, must refer to the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. None of the laws mention that the state follows any specific fiqh madhhab. In its fatwa dated 18 April 1988, the Perlis Council of Islamic Affairs, in defining the term Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jam‘ah clearly states that it is not bound to any specific fiqh madhhab. See "Definasi Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah," in Keputusan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Shar‘iyyah Negeri Perlis, 18 April 1988.

124 See Sect. 7 (4) of the Perlis Law of Administration of Islamic Affairs, 1963.
reinforced by the phenomenon of Islamic resurgence in the early 1970s. The Islamic resurgence, which has been taking place almost everywhere in the Muslim world since the time, has been described as the most significant religious development in the Malay peninsula in the period after independence. Islamic resurgence, as Chandra Muzaffar suggests, is a description of the endeavour to re-establish Islamic values, Islamic practices, Islamic institutions, Islamic laws, indeed Islam in its entirety, in the lives of Muslims everywhere. It is an attempt to re-create an Islamic ethos, an Islamic social order, at the vortex of which is the Islamic human being, guided by the Qur’ān and the Sunnah.” In that sense, one might say that the notion of Islamic reformism which denotes the heightening of Islamic consciousness by returning to the fundamentals of Islam, namely the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, is in fact a key element in the Islamic resurgence phenomenon.

Islamic resurgence in Malaysia has been interpreted by several analysts in a number of ways. The main sociological studies assert that the major force underlying Islamic resurgence in Malaysia has been ethnic, while some analysts assert the primacy of underlying class contradictions. Other analysts offer a complementary sociological interpretation: the shifting of a large section of the Malay population from traditional village life and settlement in the burgeoning cities created an identity and cultural vacuum that an assertive Islam filled. Other observers link it to the spiritual alienation felt by some Malays confronted both with accelerated urbanization and Westernization in social mores. Some other writers interpret the Islamic resurgence phenomenon by placing it in the context of the modernizing of the Malaysian state.


For them, an ideology of defense of Malays engendered related religious manifestations. Based on these viewpoints, it might be possible to postulate in general that the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia is a cultural response, or more precisely, the sum of various cultural responses, to the rapid social and economic change which characterizes Malaysia’s contemporary development, in which the political dimension has become crucial to many Malay Muslims.

In order to have a better picture of Islamic resurgence in Malaysia, a brief review of its development is worth noting. The resurgence of Islam as a factor to be reckoned with in Malaysian society, other than being precipitated by international or external sources, was primarily due to the dynamics of local domestic circumstances. For one thing, the origins of Islamic resurgence can be traced directly to government policies after the 1969 ethnic riots which aimed to redress the socio-economic imbalance of ethnic communities, or, in other words, to improve the Malays’ economic plight. The government’s attempts to redress the conditions that led to Malay-Chinese rioting had, in fact, witnessed a reassertion of Malay Muslim identity, the growth of Islamic activism, and the expansion of Islamic institutions in public life.

The government’s pro-bumiputra policies such as the New Economic Policy (NEP) and New Education Policy (NEDP) launched shortly after the riots led to a

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132These were racial riots between the two largest ethnic communities, the Malays and the Chinese, started on 13 May 1969. This riots was described by Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister at that time, as the darkest period in Malaysian history (see Leon Comber, 13 May 1969, Hong Kong: Henemann Asia, 1983, p. 82). Official figures gave the toll of the rioting which followed (from 13 May to 31 July 1969) as 196 dead, most of them Chinese, and 1,109 injured. More than 10,000 were arrested and thousands lost their homes. However, it was observed that the figure of death toll could have been four times as high (see John Slimming, Malaysia: Death of Democracy, London: John Murray Press, 1969, pp. 47-48). For more detailed information on this ethnic riot, see for example, Tunku Abdul Rahman, May 13: Before and After (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Melayu Press, 1969); F.V. Gagliano, “Communal Violence in Malaysia, 1969: The Political Aftermath,” in Papers in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series, no. 13, 1970.

133Bumiputra, a Malay word which literally means 'prince of the soil' or indigenous, used mainly to refer to the Malays as well as other local indigenous people of Malaysia including those in Sabah and Sarawak.
considerable number of Malay youths and students being accorded opportunities to further their education up to tertiary level, in both national and overseas institutions of higher learning. Most of them were sent abroad to study in the science disciplines.\textsuperscript{134} Shifting from their rural settings in the village, to one completely different and alien, namely overseas universities in the West, these youths felt a sense of alienation and 'anomie'.\textsuperscript{135} Over-awed and ill-equipped to face the cultural shock of Western society, with its attendant liberal values and norms, these Malay youths tended to develop a sense of disillusionment, and at times, revulsion against things associated with Western values and lifestyle. The conflict of this change of environment, and new and difficult educational standards resulted in a return to Islam. For them, studying overseas had brought about a strengthening and better articulation of Islamic sentiments in them.\textsuperscript{136}

This Islamic orientation developed mainly among the Malay students because of their exposure to the influence of global Islamic revivalism disseminated by foreign Muslim student activists, especially from the Middle East and Indian subcontinent. This influence was spread through various Islamic activities and a wide range of Islamic literature. Among the Islamic literature that highly attracted them were those which were associated with Islamic reform. This included the ideas and works by the leaders of Ikhwan Muslimun and the Jama‘at Islami, namely Hasan al-Banna, Saiyid Qutb, Sa‘id Hawwā of the former; Abul A‘la Mawdudi and Abu Hasan Ali al-Nadwi of the latter. These leaders were regarded by them as their spiritual fathers, and their works, such as the works of Saiyid Qutb, \textit{Ma‘ālim fi al-`Tarq} and \textit{Fi Zilāl al-Qur‘ān}, for

\textsuperscript{134}According to the government’s statistics, by 1975, there were 31,500 Malaysian students (both private and government-sponsored) in Western Universities. See \textit{Third Malaysia Plan}, 1976, p. 406. This was more than twice the combined total enrolment of all the universities in Malaysia, although the non-Malay proportions overseas was also high.


\textsuperscript{136}Hussin Mutalib, \textit{Islam and Ethnicity}, op.cit, pp. 62-63.
example, had an electrifying effect on their minds. Furthermore, the inspirational work undertaken by the Islamic Centre in Geneva had assisted them to expand their understanding of Islam through the distribution of booklets and brochures, and the publication of its periodical, *Al-Muslimoon*.

There were various student associations which actively organized a variety of Islamic activities and programmes for their members. In the United Kingdom and Eire, the most renowned Muslim students association which was essentially responsible for instilling a sense of Islamic consciousness was the Federation of the Students’ Islamic Societies (FOSIS). In the United States and Canada, Islamic activities for Muslim students were carried out by the Muslim Students Association (MSA) of America, whilst in Australia, the same activities were organized by the Australian Federation of Muslim Students Association (AFMSA). Besides such associations which were open to all Muslim students, there were also many associations formed by the Malaysian students exclusively for Malay Muslim students. These included associations such as Islamic Representative Council (IRC) and Malaysian Islamic Study Group (MISG). Through various Islamic activities undertaken by these organizations, such as an Annual Conference, a Winter Gathering, Islamic Training Camps, seminars and weekly discussion in small groups (*usrah*), the students were able to enhance their spiritual understanding of Islam. At the Annual Conference or Winter Gathering, the Malay students also had the opportunities to meet Muslim scholars and personalities from the Middle East or Pakistan, who gave talks about various facets of Islam.

It was from all these exposures and experiences that the desire came to re-

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establish an Islamic society in its complete form: through values, laws, institutions, and the behaviour of Muslims. With consciousness that this desire would not be achieved unless every single Muslim commits himself to the Faith, the Malay students devoted a good deal of their time to inculcating a full understanding of Islam among their fellow Malay students. This endeavour of inviting their counterparts to understand and practise Islam better was described as part of *dakwah* (Ar. *da'wah* means missionary work) activities, whose explanation will follow in due course. Returning to Malaysia upon graduation, and holding various leadership positions in government ministries, these Islamic-oriented graduates joined the local Islamic organizations like Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM or Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia) to participate in *dakwah* activities and disseminate Islam to the Malay masses.

Within the Malaysian context, the *dakwah* activities among the students of local universities developed in a similar scenario. It was observed that in the wake of the 1969 riots, the government found that it was necessary to impose stringent curbs on political activities and freedom. However, the clamp down on student activism on the campuses and the promulgation of the revised Sedition Act of 1970 boosted Islamic activities instead of dampening them.\(^{142}\) The irony is that religion or religious issues were, in general, not regarded as 'sensitive,' thereby enabling Muslim students to resort to Islam as a strong vehicle for expressing Malay-Muslim grievances and ideas. At least within the campuses, Islam was the only tool for dissatisfied Malay youth to resort to.\(^{143}\) On the campuses, these students were actively involved in *dakwah* activities through their participation in various student societies, such as the Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar-pelajar Islam Malaysia (PKPIM or Malaysian National Association of Muslim Students) and Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam (PMI or Muslim Students Union). In the University of Malaya, Persatuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya (PBMUM or Malay Language Society of University of Malaya) led by the most notable student leader at the time, Anwar Ibrahim, was a major catalyst of *dakwah* activities.

\(^{142}\)Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., p. 60.

\(^{143}\)Ibid.
activities among Muslim students on the campus. The *dakwah* activism among the students within the campuses had consequently developed into a national Islamic movement by the formation of an organization operating at national level, namely, Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM or Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia) in 1971. Founded by several alumni of PKPIM, ABIM has been acting as a platform for the graduating students from the respective universities and colleges who had been active in *dakwah* activities on the campuses to continue their Islamic activities among Muslim masses.

The 1969 riots and the subsequent launching of policies aimed at restructuring the socio-economic imbalance of ethnic communities have also accelerated the urbanization of the Malay community. About 30 percent of Malays, who, by historical accounts, have always been a rural people, had moved towards the inner cities by 1979 to achieve their economic aspirations.\(^{144}\) This migration had inevitably affected the lifestyle and ethos of the Malay population in general. The challenges posed by the metropolis setting in urban centres had led to a spiritual emptiness, and as a consequence, a tendency for the new urban Malays to return to Islam for solace and comfort.\(^{145}\) Many joined various Muslim organizations and participated in Islamic activities. Besides the university student activism, it was this very circumstance that kept the *dakwah* activities alive in the urban centres.

As the *dakwah* activities rapidly developed and gained acceptance by the masses, it became a mainstream that greatly characterized the Malaysian scene of Islam at that time. The emergence of numerous *dakwah* organizations as well as a number of new government policies which gave greater emphasis to Islam were observed as the most significant manifestations of the rise of Muslim consciousness, or in other words, the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia. Given its significance, much has been written on this subject by both Western and local scholars. It should be noted that although *dakwah* is loosely translated as missionary activities, in the Malaysian

\(^{144}\)Hussin Mutalib, *Islamic Revivalism*, op.cit., p. 29.

context this term refers to the task of making Muslims better Muslims rather than converting non-believers.\textsuperscript{146} Hence, dakwhah is the propagation of the Islamic message and a call on Muslims to upgrade their Islamicity. The dakwhah movement manifests itself in the activities of various Muslim organizations throughout the country. There are at least five eminent dakwhah organizations which have been the important contributors to Islamic resurgence in Malaysia, namely Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), Parti Islam Semalaysia (PAS), Darul Arqam, Jamaat Tabligh and Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM). The following sections shall briefly review these groups and their role in generating the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia.

\textbf{Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM)}

ABIM was launched in 1969 and was officially approved as a registered organization by the Malaysian government in 1971. ABIM was formed to defend and propagate the message of Islam especially its comprehensive, universal and humanistic content, and its feasibility in resolving issues of nation-building.\textsuperscript{147} Its role primarily was to generate an Islamic movement as the path to Islamic revival in Malaysia.\textsuperscript{148} Holding to its motto to strive towards building a society which is based on the principles of Islam and, in particular, presenting Islam as a way of life,\textsuperscript{149} ABIM has been most vociferous in propagating the ideals of Islam, and its activities have greatly contributed to the nationwide Islamic awakening among the younger generation Malays. The combination of ABIM leaders which include those with secular and religious education from the local universities and abroad, had enabled ABIM to influence a wide cross-section of


\textsuperscript{147}Husin Mutalib, Islam and Ethnicity, op.cit., p. 75. Detail information on ABIM’s history, its principles and objectives can also be explored in its official internet website at http://www.abim.org.my/.


\textsuperscript{149}Siddiq Fadil, Mengangkat Martabat Umat Koleksi Ucapan Dasar Muktamar Sanawi ABIM (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Pustaka Salam, 1989), pp. 4 and passim.
people. ABIM’s appeal was further enhanced from 1974 to 1982 when it was led by the charismatic leader, Anwar Ibrahim.

ABIM’s version of Islam has claimed ideological and even organisational affinity with the established Islamic reform movements and their leaders abroad, especially the Ikhwan Muslimin and Jama’at Islami, both of which have emphasized the establishment of an Islamic state. ABIM’s stature as a highly organized and motivated Muslim organization was well accepted in Malaysia. Its declaration to uphold and strive for the realization of Islamic objectives, as well as to champion the cause of Islamic justice for everyone, gained considerable attention on the part of both the Malaysian government and the public as the movement’s reputation began to spread at home and to Islamic organizations abroad. However, ABIM’s eminence began to decline when Anwar departed to UMNO in 1982. His resignation from the organization created some confusion and depression within ABIM, and thus, caused some of its outstanding leaders, such as Fadzil Nor and Abdul Hadi Awang to join PAS. ABIM thereafter was seen as having lost most of its momentum and settling in to a more docile existence, espousing a moderate and more innerworldly religious viewpoint conveniently compatible with that of UMNO’s own public religious posture. Though the movement lost its momentum, it still plays an important role in the growth of Islamic resurgence in Malaysia until the present day.

Parti Islam Semalaysia (PAS)

PAS is the oldest and best-known Islamic political party in the country. It is known as the continuation of the Islamic reformist party Hizbul Muslimin which was established

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in 1948 and was later proscribed by the British. PAS was established in 1951 by several former members of UMNO's religious bureau who left UMNO in order to form their own party after a dispute over the type of state to be established following independence from the British. For PAS, the new state was to be Islamic in nature and not secular as envisaged by UMNO. According to PAS, religion could not be confined solely to a bureau in a political party, but should instead encompass all aspects of life including politics. From the very outset, PAS's goal has been the establishment of an Islamic state based upon the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is committed to an untainted, un tarnished Islam and opposes secularism, capitalism and all Western ideologies. It drew a great deal of its inspiration from the Ikhwan Muslimun and the Jama'at Islami, and has a direct connection with their leaders.

In the early stages, PAS had its strong influence among the Malay peasant society, particularly in the states of Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah. Despite its limited influence, PAS had been able to form the state government in Kelantan and Terengganu for several times since the first general election of 1959. The participation of several ex-ABIM leaders in the party in 1982 afforded PAS a new line of leadership which is known as the 'ulama' leadership. Under its new leadership PAS has had a stronger influence as it is increasingly accepted by Malay Muslims of all


155Ibid., p. 63.

156PAS has been always, from time to time, inviting the leaders of Ikhwan Muslimun, such as Sayf al-Islām b. Hasan al-Bannā, Fathi Yakan etc. for consultation and giving talk on various issues to its members. On Ikhwan's influence in PAS, see Sapian Daud, "Ikhwan Muslimun: Pengaruhnya dalam Pengerakan Islam di Malaysia, Tinjauan Khusus kepada ABIM dan PAS," unpublished B.A. thesis, University of Malaya, 1990.

157At the time this thesis is being written, Kelantan and Terengganu are under the PAS government.

social strata. As a political party, PAS has largely been responsible for generating Islamic political consciousness in the Malay Muslim society. Hence, the significance of PAS in Malaysian resurgent Islam lies mainly on its vital role in the political arena, since it sees that obtaining political power is crucial for the establishment of an Islamic state.

Darul Arqam

Darul Arqam was established in 1969 by a religious teacher, Ashaari Muhammad and his disciples, with the aim of putting into practice the teachings of Islam. Its centre of activities was at Sungai Penchala near Kuala Lumpur whilst its branches could be found throughout the country. Though a structured organization like any other, Darul Arqam was unique in that it was an actual community at the same time. It was indeed a traditional commune with its own land, houses, mosque, schools, clinics, shops and factories. In the commune, the rules which have become the hallmark of Darul Arqam were strictly obeyed, in dress, manners of greeting, and the segregation of sexes. At the beginning, Darul Arqam was mainly concerned with cultivating personality, emphasizing on becoming good Muslims in the ritualistic sense. This group succeeded in attracting numerous followers, given their novel approach to Islam in the Malaysian context, maintaining that the struggle to establish an Islamic state must be preceded

159Mustafa Ali, "The Islamic Movement," op.cit., p. 120.

160Darul Arqam (dgr al-Arqam or the house of al-Arqam) is named after a Companion of Prophet Muhammad, al-Arqam b. Abi al-Arqam, who gave away his house to be used as a center of Islamic missionary activities in the early days of the prophethood of Muhammad. See Abdul Rahman Abdullah, Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia Sejarah dan Pemikiran Jamaat Tabligh & Darul Arqam (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Kintan, 1992), p. 71.


162Formal dress which had also been the Arqam’s identity was traditional green jubbah (robe) and turban for men, whilst their women wore black jilbab (gown) and veil.

by creating an Islamic society such as that pioneered by Darul Arqam settlement in Sungai Penchala. Darul Arqam was very conservative in its outlook, but its approach, popularly viewed as anti-establishment, succeeded in attracting many of the young and educated.

Darul Arqam was basically less involved in politics, though it used to criticize most Islamic movements, both local and abroad, including the Jama'at Islami and Ikhwan Muslimun, viewing them as only theorising and shouting slogans rather than putting the struggle to establish an Islamic state into practice. Darul Arqam was better known by its active involvement in numerous economic programmes, from producing halal foodstuffs and toiletries to organizing various commercial enterprises. The main goal of the establishment of these economic ventures was to inculcate among the Malay Muslims a spirit of economic independence from non-Muslim control, despite the apparent difficulty in a situation like Malaysia. It believed that in an evolving Islamic community, an autonomous economic base was crucial. Since Darul Arqam had a commitment of sorts towards strengthening the economic position of the Malays via traditional Islam, it had not given itself an explicit political role in order to achieve this aim. Its leadership was convinced that by confining itself to grassroots economic and social activities, it would eventually be able to create an Islamic social order. Despite its excellence in economic programmes, Darul Arqam was involved in several theological controversies which led to its downfall.

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169 Among the main theological controversies involving Darul Arqam were the doctrine of Imam al-Mahdi and some issues in their adoption of the Muhammadiah sufi order, such as the doctrinal principle of Aurad Muhammadijah. With regard to Aurad Muhammadijah, Asaari claims in his book, *Aurad Muhammadijah Pegangan Darul Arqam* that the founder of Muhammadijah order, Sheikh Muhammad Suhaimi b. Abdullah, known as Syeikh Suhaimi (died in Klang, Selangor in 1925), had been given the owrad (sing. wurd means specified dhikrs recited at certain times at day and night in specific manners) by the Prophet Muhammad in a meeting within the Ka'bah. He claimed that Syeikh Suhaimi has met the Prophet and spoke to him in person within the Ka'bah with complete consciousness and not in a dream. He also claims that Syeikh Suhaimi did not physically die in 1925, but has been transcendentally vanished, and will return some day.
National Fatwa Council, this group had adopted some theological heresies and spread deviationist teachings which were a threat to public order.\textsuperscript{168} It therefore recommended the banning of Darul Arqam. Consequently, the government had officially banned this group in August 1994. Though it has now diminished, Darul Arqam is still remembered for its significant role in Malaysia’s resurgent Islam for about 25 years.

Jamaat Tabligh

Jamaat Tabligh is a missionary movement which originated from Delhi, India and has since spread throughout the world. This group has been in Malaysia since the early 1950s as a result of efforts by Indian missionaries, and this movement has become more active since the 1970s under the impact of Islamic resurgence.\textsuperscript{169} Initially, its adherents consisted of Malaysians of Indian descent, but afterwards, with the growth of the Islamic resurgence, it succeeded in penetrating the Malay community, both in the urban and rural areas.\textsuperscript{170} Established with the aim of undertaking the \textit{dakwah} mission by calling people to the path of God,\textsuperscript{171} this group seems to be informal, loosely structured without any clear nucleus and does not operate as an organization.

\textsuperscript{168}See the \textit{fatwa} given by National Council for Islamic Affairs in August 1994, as published in \textit{Utusan Malaysia}, 6 August 1994. Following the ban, its leaders including Ashaari Muhammad were detained under the terms of the Internal Security Act (ISA). Not long after their release from detention, there were some efforts made by Darul Arqam’s former members to revive the group under new organization such as the Rufaqa’ group. These attempts were however broken-up by the government authorities. In recent development, Ashaari himself was exiled from his residence in Rawang, Selangor to Labuan Island in Sabah for his attempt to revive his group. See Berita Harian, 12 March 2002.


\textsuperscript{171}Abdul Rahman Abdullah, \textit{Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia}, op.cit., p. 18.
It is a much less open organization, places heavy emphasis on rituals, and requires all its followers to go round the country to undertake missionary activities at least a few days each month. Some of them even go overseas, such as to India and Indonesia for that purpose.172

The Tabligh's missionary activities consist mainly of organizing informal religious talks in mosques and at the homes of friends and acquaintances. Its concern seems to be confined to the aspect of individual religious life. It emphasizes self-reform such as observing various religious rituals, being pious, kind and considerate, and developing one's personal integrity. Its political ambitions, therefore, relate essentially to a desire to "convert" politicians, which is considered sufficient to ensure that they will not thereafter act unjustly.174 The simple and inoffensive approach of the Tabligh movement has attracted many Malay Muslims of all strata, from the village youth to the professionals and highly educated individuals. Because of its apolitical stance, Tabligh is rarely viewed with suspicion. Some people however feel uneasy about the apolitical Indian orientation of the movement, and undiplomatic manner in which some of its members have tried to propagate Islam.175 The government stance towards this movement is ambivalent. Some state governments, such as Melaka, imposed a ban on this movement on the grounds that it caused negative effects to the society.176 The federal government, however, gave permission to this group to conduct their activities as long as it is not involved in religious heresy and devianist

172Chandra Muzaffar, Islamic Resurgence, op.cit., p. 44.

173Abdul Rahman Abdullah, Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia, op.cit., pp. 17-24; Chandra, Islamic Resurgence, p. 44.


176The Fatwa Committee of Melaka officially banned the Tabligh group and its activities in the state in March 1992. This fatwā was based on the reason that the Tabligh followers subscribed to a kind of Ṣūfism that totally neglect worldly materialism. The followers of Tabligh, according to the fatwā, were only interested in attending gatherings in mosques and suraus to the point of neglecting their jobs and families. Many Tabligh followers even left their wives and children behind for 40 days to attend the Tabligh activities. See New Straits Times, 12 March 1992.
teachings. The Tabligh’s apolitical stance is really seen as favouring the status quo, thus benefiting the government.

Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM)

Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM), a reform-oriented organization, was officially established in 1991 by former members of the oldest Malay Muslim students group in the United Kingdom, i.e. Islamic Representative Council (IRC), who joined PAS and ABIM after returning to Malaysia and held some important positions in these organizations. Following disagreements over certain issues around 1988, they quitted and formed their own group. Aptly named, this group aims at reforming (islah) the society in order to enable Islam to be fully practised among them. JIM is strongly influenced by the Ikhwan Muslimin and closely resembles that organization and so is sometimes considered as an Ikhwan branch in Malaysia. Like ABIM and PAS, JIM also has a close connection with the Ikhwan’s leaders. Though JIM emphasizes all aspects of life in its reform programmes, its most outstanding success may be seen in its education programme. JIM’s school education programme implemented in its nationwide prominent Islamic school ‘Al-Amin,’ has been regarded as the most advanced Islamic education system in Malaysia. Holding to its philosophy to lead and popularize dakwah and changes in society, JIM has succeeded in attracting the Malay Muslim masses of all segments especially the youth and university students.

From these five major dakwah organizations, it is significant to note that only

177See Berita Harian, 21 March 1992.
180Ibid.
three of them, namely ABIM, PAS and JIM, consistently appear as the agents of Islamic reformism in this era of Islamic resurgence. They mostly adopt the reform ideas taught by al-Banna and Mawdudi and learn the methods of Ikhwan Muslimûn and Jama`at Islami in disseminating their dakwah mission to the masses. In addition, ABIM, PAS and JIM also have personal contact with several leaders of the Ikhwan, whom they frequently consult with. Though Darul Arqam and Jamaat Tabligh were also responsible in generating Islamic resurgence in Malaysia, their appearance was rather perceived, as stated by some observers, as the resurgence of neo-traditionalism, in the case of Darul Arqam, and reformational traditionalism, i.e., in the case of Jamaat Tabligh. This is because both Darul Arqam and Jamaat Tabligh were apparently seen as neither espousing the ideas and methods of Islamic reformism as brought by al-Afghani and ‘Abduh nor having any link with the foreign Islamic reform movements such as the Ikhwan and Jama`at Islami. Both Darul Arqam and Tabligh have their own way of spreading the message of Islam to the Malay masses, i.e., by adopting traditionalism in progressive and reformational ways. They are traditional, which in this context specifically means that they have an uncritical attachment to ideas, values and life-styles from the past. However, all these five major organizations, ABIM, PAS, Darul Arqam, Tabligh and JIM share the same objective, namely the resurrection of classical Islam. Towards that end, all seek to persuade Malaysians to adopt the Islamic perspective. Thus, although they adopt different approaches to the attainment of their goal, they are all revivalists who may be subsumed, according to some writers, under the category of "fundamentalist" in view of their Islamic orientation and rejection of Western materialism and secularism.

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183 See Chandra Muzaffar, Islamic Resurgence, op.cit., p. 46.
184 See for example, Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism," op.cit., p. 1046.
The UMNO and the Government's Policy of Islamization

The resurgence of the holistic Islamic consciousness spearheaded by the *dakwah* movement since the 1970s with its call for Islamic alternatives continues to exert its influence on the Malay community as well as the state authorities. The strong demand for the establishment of more Islamic institutions in the country and the greater Islamic identity of the Malay community from the *dakwah* movement has created a pressure on the UMNO-led government to adopt policies and strategies which are supportive of Islam.\(^{185}\) Under the leadership of Dr. Mahathir Mohamed who began his prime ministership in 1981, the government decidedly took on a more conciliatory stance and adopted a positive approach towards the demands of the *dakwah* movement. Anwar Ibrahim’s entry into UMNO and the government encouraged Mahathir even further in launching numerous policies of ever-increasing boldness in support of Islam.\(^{186}\) This government’s supportive attitude is manifested mainly through various Islamic programmes under its Islamization policy. The government’s Islamization policy can be described as building up the centrality of Islam and the government’s legitimacy as its patron, by accommodating to selected aspects of the demands of the *dakwah* movement. Islamization itself, in a sense, is a process of legitimate restoration of the central place of Islam as a comprehensive way of life of the Muslim populace, as well as a process of desecularization of Malaysian culture, government, law, economy and education in the post-independence era.\(^{187}\)

In realizing the Islamization policy, a wide range of Islamic programmes have been implemented in various aspects which could be seen throughout the 1980s and 1990s. These include, for example, the establishment of Islamic Banks, International Islamic University and International Institute of Islamic Thought, the

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\(^{186}\)Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., pp. 139-140.

institutionalization of concrete Islamic programmes within the government, inculcation of Islamic values in government administration, encouragement of Islamic intellectual discourse in government departments and institutions of higher learning, reform of national education by incorporating Islamic perspectives and moral values, initiation of changes in the legal system to facilitate the growth and expansion of Islamic sharfah court administration, removal of un-Islamic practices in official ceremonies of government departments, infusion of Islamic values in government major policies such as in the National Development Policy and Vision 2020, eradication of the practice of charging interest in government loans for Muslims, establishment of an Islamic insurance company, establishment of Institute of Islamic Understanding and creation of interest-free banking facilities in conventional commercial banks.¹⁸⁸

At the international level, the Malaysian government has strengthened its constant pro-Muslim policy which can be seen, for instance, through its pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel policy, pro-Mujahideen during the Russian invasion in Afghanistan, pro Bosnian Muslims during the Serbian attacks, its active role in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), and consistent criticisms of the Super Powers.¹⁸⁹

The underlying reasons behind the government’s Islamization policy are various. The first may have been the pressures coming from the collective force of the dakwah movement, and the desire to outwit PAS and check the latter’s Islamic appeal among Malays.¹⁹⁰ From the government’s perspective, the Islamic resurgence is potentially destabilizing for it has very tangible political consequences. UMNO found itself increasingly in competition with PAS. In order to reduce the electoral appeal of its opponents, the UMNO-led government felt obliged to take the initiative in an

¹⁸⁸The list of major Islamization programmes under Mahathir’s administration can be found, for example, in Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., pp. 133-139.


Islamization process. The former Prime Minister, Tun Hussein Onn had openly admitted that UMNO’s Islamization drives were mainly precipitated by the political threat that PAS posed to the government. Some observers allege that as the government’s Islamization policy is seen as not based on genuine Islamic consciousness, it will thus, not bring about any genuine transformation that will herald a more just Islamic social order. On the contrary, it will merely reinforce the existing social structure with all its flaws. This is part of the reason why PAS and ABIM reject the concept of Islamization pursued by the government. ABIM sees it as a form of patchwork within a system alien to Islam, whilst PAS views it as cosmetic Islamization, as a sort of label stuck onto a system that has nothing to do with Islam.

In spite of these claims, the government’s Islamization programme appears to be genuine since Mahathir himself sometimes seems to be a veritable Islamist. Mahathir has also admitted that he himself is an Islamic fundamentalist as he subscribes to the fundamental principles of faith. Moreover, the significant role of Anwar Ibrahim as the architect of the Mahathir-led government Islamization programme proves that the government is serious to support the Islamic cause, and the policy is not a mere political gimmick. Anwar himself, the former ABIM president and a prominent Malaysian Islamist figure who is known by his strong Islamic


192In Hussein Onn’s words: “You may wonder why we spend so much money on Islam.... if we don’t, PAS will get us. The party will and does claim, that we are not religious, and the people will lose faith.” See Berita Harian, 21 October 1979.

193Chandra Muzaffar, Islamic Resurgence, op.cit., p. 82.

194Ibid.


196Mahathir made this admission in an Annual Lecture series organised by Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore in 1988, as cited in the Strait Times, 15 and 16 December 1988. As far as his Islamic thought and orientation is concerned, which is supportive of modern Islamic thought and critical on Islamic traditionalism, Mahathir might be also regarded as an Islamic modernist or reformist.
background, image and commitment, believed that Mahathir is supportive of Islam, and this had been his major reason for joining UMNO and the government. Though he admitted that there was no guarantee that the Islamization policy would eventually make Malaysia an Islamic state, Anwar believed that the policy would do good for the country, and it would enrich the overall quality of life of Malaysian society. The Islamic state, in his point of view, will be a natural outcome if Islamic values and policies could gradually seep into people's lives.

To make the Islamization process successful, Anwar, during his ministership in the government had appointed several ABIM figures to hold various important positions in the government machinery. ABIM itself, though in the early stage was sceptical of the government's Islamization policy, later perceived it as a positive sign and viewed that its members' participation in the government and UMNO was commendable as they could contribute to Islam in their different significant positions in the civil service, private sector, business and higher learning institutions. ABIM as a non-political organization believed that the infiltration of UMNO and government by its identified members would be an effective means to Islamize the party and the government. This approach seemed to be working at the beginning and it was said that this success relied mostly on Anwar's success in the government. However, when Anwar was dismissed from the government and UMNO in 1998, ABIM's infiltration

197 See Hussin Mutalib, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia*, op.cit., p. 92. This reason might be valid until Anwar was tragically dismissed by Mahathir from his position of Deputy Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Deputy President and member of UMNO in September 1998, as upon the dismissal he accused Mahathir as un-Islamic and anti-ulama. See for example, Harakah, 10 Sept. 1998.


201 On infiltration as a strategy of ABIM's dakwah, see Badlihisham Mohd Nasir, "Infiltrasi Sebagai Metode Dakwah," op. cit., pp. 71-89.
effort reached a deadlock.\textsuperscript{202}

The absence of Anwar in UMNO and the government cabinet has also brought the Islamization policy into question. As UMNO and the government had disposed of their Islamic champion, their commitment to Islam and Islamization policy was doubted. For certain people, especially the PAS' leaders who have consistently been sceptical of the government's policy of Islam, this has proven the hypocrisy of UMNO and government whose very purpose of pretending to be Islamic is to keep out Islam from state policy.\textsuperscript{203} ABIM itself, at one stage when it felt that Anwar was not fairly treated by the government over his dismissal, detention and trial, showed its strong disagreement with the government, whilst many of its figures in UMNO quitted the party and joined the Parti Keadilan Nasional (KeADILan), the newly-founded party established by Anwar's supporters.

From this analysis, it is plausible to say that UMNO and the government were seen to be serious in their Islamization policy only when Anwar and his fellows in ABIM participated in the party and the government. With the loss of Anwar and his Islamist companions, the catalysts of the government's Islamic pursuits, the UMNO and the government appear awkward in managing its Islamic policies. Moreover, to a certain extent, the government seems to have employed a more combative approach in responding to the pressures from Islamic groups and the Malay Muslim masses. This is evident in instances such as the recurrent detention of Islamic activists under the ISA,

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{202}Anwar was dismissed by Mahathir on the allegation of behavioural misconduct. He was brought to trials in court on accusations of abuse of office and sexual misconduct. In this so-called politically tainted trial, he was found guilty on both accusations and sentenced to imprisonment for 15 years. Anwar’s supporters strongly believe that he had been a victim of the political conspiracy of Mahathir and several UMNO corrupt leaders who wanted to check Anwar’s influence in the party, since the latter is said to have planned to topple Mahathir’s leadership. Anwar’s case has been a subject of criticism on Mahathir’s government, locally and internationally. His dismissal resulted in a big political impact of the country, witnessing frequent massive demonstrations and nationwide public protest against Mahathir, UMNO and government; the emergence of political reform movement ”reformasi”; the unity of all opposition parties in the front of Barisan Alternatif; the formation of Gerak by most NGO groups to support Anwar; the establishment of Parti Keadilan Malaysia led by Anwar’s wife to fight for justice for Anwar; and above all, UMNO itself severely lost its influence among the Malay populace. On this subject, see for example, John Hilley, 

\textsuperscript{203}See Harakah, 16-31 January 2002.}
the restriction imposed on the publishing of PAS' newspaper Harakah, the issuance of strict rules governing public talks (ceramah) by PAS, the massive detention of alleged Islamic militants, and the attempts to relate PAS with militancy and so-called Islamic terrorism. This combative approach has further strengthened the criticism against the government of its commitment to Islamic policy.

Notwithstanding the criticism, the government’s Islamization programme proceeds in its existing form, without anything new, but rather with more emphasis on the economic development of Muslims due to the economic downturn in 1997. One of the latest government efforts in this sense is the proposal of the establishment of gold-based Islamic dinar currency as a world currency which is to be used in trade transactions between Muslim countries. Though this scheme is still under study, it is regarded as a great effort in reducing the Muslim countries’ dependency on the US Dollar, as well as opening up “a new path in the Islamic communities which would be the beginning of the Islamic world.” As far as the present time is concerned, the culmination of the government’s Islamization policy, perhaps, or the boldest attempt to prove the government’s commitment to Islam, is the public declaration made by the Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, in September 2001 that Malaysia is an Islamic State which is based on the principles of Islam. Dr. Mahathir perceives Malaysia as an Islamic state by definition since Article 3 (1) of the Malaysian

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204 PAS is frequently linked to some Muslim militant groups such as Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, known also as Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM) and Al-Ma’ unah group, as many of their activists were members or supporters of PAS. Both groups were said to have a plan to overthrow the current government by jihad and create an Islamic state by revolution. Their members were detained under the Internal Security Act as they were regarded as a threat of nation’s security. See for example, Utusan Malaysia, 24 July 2000; 4 August 2001; 5 January 2002.

205 See Utusan Malaysia, 24 July 2001. The establishment of a gold-based Islamic dinar currency in the present time was initiated by the Scotland-based Murabitun Worldwide Movement founded by the renowned Muslim scholar Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir Al-Šufi. This movement has been promoting the Islamic gold dinar since it was first minted in 1992. Malaysia, according to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir is seen as a potential Muslim country to promote this currency at international level, since its Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir has “realistic approach and modern thinking towards the Islamic currency, and has courage in voicing his opinions on the inadequacy of the capitalist monetary system.” See Utusan Malaysia, 13 August 2001.

206 Dr. Mahathir Mohamad is quoted in Utusan Malaysia, 13 August 2001.

207 This declaration was made by him when opening the 30th Gerakan Delegates Conference on 29 September 2001. See Utusan Malaysia, Berita Harian, and New Straits Times, 30 September 2001.
Constitution recognizes Islam as a state religion, and Malaysia has been following the Islamic path since independence; and in addition, all development programmes of the government are based on the principles of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.\textsuperscript{208} PAS however rejected this view saying that Dr. Mahathir was only playing to the gallery, and trying to restore public confidence in his leadership which was severely eroded after Anwar’s case.\textsuperscript{209} To PAS, one of the prerequisites of an Islamic state is placing the Sharīʿah law as the supreme source of all laws of Malaysia, and this is not enshrined in the Constitution as yet.\textsuperscript{210} Dr. Mahathir, however, perceives that there is no need for Malaysia to amend its constitution to make it an Islamic State as it is already one such nation.\textsuperscript{211}

Upon analysis, it is obvious that the government’s policy on Islam, from its Islamization project to the Islamic state declaration, is decided under the pressure of circumstances, i.e. the considerable political pressure by various Islamic groups. As a result of its rivalry with these Islamic groups, and its desire not to be beaten in championing the cause of Islam, the present government is constantly driven to adopt its own Islamic policies and strategies. In doing so, however, the government leaders have frequently referred to its Islamic policies in a broad sense without actually reducing it into specific plans or concrete measures. The general and, in some ways, non-committal aspect of Islamization in Malaysia has enabled critics and commentators to raise questions about the credibility, and even existence of an Islamization policy in Malaysia.\textsuperscript{212} The government’s Islamization, according to an observer, is not a formal policy; it has no definite starting date and it is undocumented. Its contents have been

\textsuperscript{210}See Utusan Malaysia, 31 Sept. 2001.
\textsuperscript{211}See Utusan Malaysia, 6 Oct. 2001.
mostly made known by verbal statements of UMNO leaders. Though the Islamization project has manifested in a wide range of Islamic products, they are seen as mere symbols which are not truly based on the fundamentals of Islam. In Chandra Muzaffar’s words, Islamization is seen as having been “concerned more with the symbols rather than the substance of the religion, with what is peripheral rather than fundamental to Islam.”

Though Malaysia was recently declared an Islamic State, this declaration seemed very ambiguous and inconsistent with the character of Malaysia which is well-known as a secular country that mostly adopts the Western system in governing the country.

In a positive perspective, nonetheless, it must be admitted that the Malaysian government has been playing an important role in the current stream of Islamic resurgence. In responding to the pervasive Islamic resurgence phenomenon in the country it has adopted its own relevant Islamization policy which is manifested in the various forms of valuable Islamic programmes. In doing so, the government does contribute to the Malaysian experience of Islamic resurgence. From the fact that the government is encouraging a modern Muslim culture in the Malay Muslim community, despite the critical attitude toward conservative Islam by most government leaders, especially Dr. Mahathir himself, it can be assumed that the Malaysian government is an advocate of Islamic reform. Thus, as the Islamic resurgence continues to develop in Malaysia, it is expected that Islamic reformism will increasingly be growing in Malaysia in years ahead.


215For many people, this declaration is seen merely as Mahathir’s political statement which is made to meet PAS President Fadzil Noor’s challenge for him to do so. See Utusan Malaysia, 6 Oct. 2001. It is said that if Mahathir was really serious to make such declaration, he would declare Malaysia as an Islamic State officially in the Malaysian Parliament, not in the conference of small Chinese political party, the Gerakan, as he did. See Utusan Malaysia, 1 Oct. 2001.
CHAPTER THREE

THE ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF 'IBĀDAH

The Concept of 'Ibādah

The Lexical Meaning of 'Ibādah

The Arabic term 'ibādah is derived from the root 'abada which means to serve, obey, worship, adore and venerate. The expression 'abada Allāh (to worship Allah) means to deify Allah as God (ta'allaha lahu). Lexically 'ibādah (plural 'ibādāt) means obedience (ṭā'ah),2 submissive obedience to a master,3 the ordinances of divine worship,4 adoration, veneration, act of worship, act of devotion and religious observance.5 The terms 'ubūdiyyah and 'ubūdah which are derived from the same root also have the same meaning as 'ibādah, i.e., obedience,6 humble veneration, homage, adoration and worship, obedience with humility or submissiveness.7 In the Qur'ān, the
term 'ibādah is usually found in this sense: "Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, so worship Him (fa-'bud-hu) and be constant and patient in His worship (li-‘ibādatih)" (19: 65); "Whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship (bi-‘ibādat) of His Lord" (18: 110).

In Arabic usage, there are many words which originate from the root word ʿabada which signify various meanings. For example, the word ʿabd (plural ʿabdūn, ʿabkūn, ʿabd, dībud, ʿibādah, ʿibād etc.), literally means slave or servant (mamlūk) and it is used metaphorically to mean human being (al-insān) as the servant of God, whether he is free (ḥurr) or bonded as a slave (raqiq) by assuming that all mankind are the servants of God.9 The verb taʾabbada (noun ṭabbud) means to lead a devout life (tanassaks, noun tanassuk),10 and it also means to take someone as a slave (ittakhadha fulānan ʿabdān).11 The word al-muʿabbad also has various meanings. On the one hand, it is used to imply someone who is being adored and revered (al-mukarram, al-muʿazzam, al-makhdūm), and on the other, it means passable (of road),12 tame (of

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9 Ibn Manẓūr and al-Zabīdī cited Sibawayh as saying that, originally, the word ʿabd is an adjective but then is used as a noun. See Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 270; al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-ʿArūs, vol. 8, op.cit., p. 327; Aḥmad Riḍā, Muḥjam, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 8. Some scholars say that the word ʿabd is used to indicate a black male slave and the word mamlūk is used for a white slave. See for example, Encyclopaedia of Islam, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 13; Gibb and Kramer, The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, op.cit., p. 3; Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, op.cit., book 1, part 5, p. 1935. The word abd is also used to denote a type of plant which camels like, a type of wide short sword and a mountain, see Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, vol. 3, p. 276; al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-ʿArūs, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 333.


11Same meaning with verbs ʿabada, dībada, ṭabāda and istābāda, see Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, vol. 3, p. 272; al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-ʿArūs, vol. 8, p. 341; Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, book 1, part 5, p. 1934. Apart from those meanings it also means obstinate and wild (limtand a waṣū ṭiba) and it is commonly used of an animal which cannot be domesticated, as the Arabs say, 'taʿabbada al-baʿrē', which means to chase away the camel so it becomes wild, or 'al baʿr al-mudʿābbid' which means camel which cannot be domesticated. See Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, vol. 3, p. 274; al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-ʿArūs, vol. 8, p. 341; Aḥmad Riḍā, Muḥjam Matn al-Lughah, vol. 4, p. 8.

animal), the place that has no sign (athar), distinguishing mark (‘alam) or water (mâl), and other meanings. Yet, for instance, the phrase “‘abada bih” means to annoy someone (ādhāhū) and to keep close with someone and never part (lazimahū wa lam yufārighū). The phrase “mā‘abadaka ‘annī” means “what has withheld you from me” (mā habasaka ‘annā) and ‘abada yā’dū represents to speed up (asrā’ a bā da isrā’).

Although such words share the root ‘abada with ‘ibādah, their meanings seem somewhat far from the real meaning of ‘ibādah used in Islamic literature. Regardless of those words which might not have had a related meaning with ‘ibādah, we shall look particularly at the definition of ‘ibādah in Islamic literature.

The Concept of ‘Ibādah in Islamic Literature

The term ‘ibādah gives us both the widest and most fundamental Arabic words for the approach of man to God. It is commonly used in Islamic literature and frequently

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17 Al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-‘Arūs, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 344.


19 Al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-‘Arūs, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 344.
mentioned in the Qur‘ān and Ḥadith. During the Jāḥiliyyah period,20 the term ‘ibādah was used to mean obedience (tāh) in general and religious observance (al-ṣ ibādah) in particular.21 In this period, most of the Arabs, as well as believing in God, were idol worshippers. Therefore, it was customary to name children with appellations incorporating the name of God or the idols;22 such as ‘Abd Allāh (servant of God) and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (servant of Al-Raḥmān)23, ‘Abd al-Uzā (servant of al-ṣ Uzzā - the Banū Thaqīf’s idol of Ṭā‘if) and ‘Abd Yaghūth (servant of Yaghūth - the ancient idol). Hence, although the word ‘ibādah in the Qur‘ān is usually used for God, it is also used for something else, such as for idols (al-ṣaṭān or al-ṣāghūt) (14:35; 5:60), for Satan (al-shayṭān) (36:60), and for Pharaoh (Fir‘awn) (23:47). However, according to most Qur‘ānic commentators, ‘ibādah is originally used only for God, and if it is used for anything else they would simply interpret it as obedience to or worship of those things.24 The meaning of ‘ibādah in Islamic literature will be examined in the following paragraphs.

As an Islamic technical term, the term ‘ibādah has been variously defined, depending on various scholars’ perceptions. In Qur‘ānic exegesis, apart from conveying

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20Details of ‘ibādah in the period of Jāḥiliyyah will be given in the next section. See pp. 116-139.


22Or servant to other creatures, such as the sun, that they worshipped. However, those names might be their nicknames, not the real name, as it was customary at the time that one person had more than one name. In as much as slavery was a usual phenomenon within this period, there would have been some people whose names were connected to their master, but it might be their nicknames and not their proper names. It was mentioned that the name of the Prophet Muḥammad’s grandfather, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (Ibn Ḥāshim) was given to him because he was mistaken for the slave of al-Muṭṭalib. However, this statement is not acceptable as his family, Banū Ḥāshim was known as noblemen among the Arabs of Makkah. See W. Montgomery Watt, “Abd al-Muṭṭalib” in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, new ed., vol. 1, p. 80.

23Al-Raḥmān: one of God’s names means “the Most Gracious”

24See for example, Jār Allāh Tāj al-Islām Fakhīr Khāwārizm Muḥāmmad Ibn ’Umar al-Zamakhshārī, al-Kashshāf ‘an Ḥaqā‘iq Ghawānīd al-Tanzīl wa ‘Uyūn al-Aqāwil fī Wujūh al-Ta‘wil (Anonymous place: Maṭbā’ al-Šarqīyyah, no date), vol. 1, p. 8 and passim; Nāṣīr al-Dīn Abī Sa‘īd ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Umar Muḥammad al-Shirāzī al-Baḍī‘wī, Tafsīr al-Baḍī‘wī al-Musammāt Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta‘wil (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1988), vol. 1, p. 9 and passim. All commentators used to give special meaning for the word ‘ibādah which is used for God and usually relate it with tawḥīd (the doctrine of the singularization God). However, everytime they came across the word ‘ibādah which is not regarded to God, they simply interpreted it as obedience (tāh) or worship (the word used is also ‘ibādah).
the basic and general meaning of 'ibadah, i.e. obedience (ṭ̣̅aḥ), the commentators tend to interpret 'ibadah by its connotative meanings. Al-Ṭabarānī, in interpreting Q. 1:5, (iyya-ka nā'budu wa iyya-ka nastīʿ) - You [Alone] we worship and You [Alone] we ask for help), says that 'ibadah means humility (khusha), submissiveness (tadhallul) to God and humbleness (istikān). Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī in his al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr defines 'ibadah as the ultimate glorification (nihayat al-tāżīm), as this is not suitable for anybody except for God and because such glorification is not appropriate for anybody except for the one from whom ultimate bestowal (nihayat al-in'ām) comes, and such bestowal comes only from God. Al-Qurtūbī simply defines 'ibadah as obedience (ṭ̣̅aḥ) and submissiveness (tadhallul). In another place, he clarifies it as the acknowledgement of the divinity of God and submission to His commandments and wishes. Ibn 'Arrānī in his commentary of Q. 2: 21 says, the phrase "wā'budū rabbakum" (worship your Lord) signifies the call to profess the unity of God. Ibn Kathīr cites Ibn ʿAbbās as saying, in interpreting Q. 1: 5, that the word nā'budu means "we profess the unity of God (nuwahhidu), we fear (nakhāfu) and we hope (narrjū)."

Al-Baghawi defines 'ibadah as obedience (ṭ̣̅aḥ) with submissiveness (tadhallul) and humility (khuḍa). He also cites Ibn ʿAbbās as saying, "every time the idea of 'ibadah is mentioned in the Qurʾān it refers to the singularization of God.


29Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, Taṣfīr al-Qurʾān al-Karīm, edited by Muṣṭafā Ṣahīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Andalūs, no date), vol. 1, p. 27.


(tawḥīd).” \(^{32}\) Then, in his commentary on Q. 51: 56, he mentions that Mujāhid said that the word ʿli-yāʾbudūn (for them to worship Me) means “for them to know Me” (li yaʿrīfūn). \(^{33}\) Al-Zamakhsharī\(^{34}\) and al-Bayḍawī\(^{35}\) define ʿibādah as ultimate humility and submission (aqqāṣa ʿghāyat al-khuṭṭā wa al-tadhallul) towards God and this word should not be used for anything else except God as He is the Great Master (al-mawṭā al-aʿẓam), and so He is the only one who should be obeyed. According to Muḥammad ʿAbduh, \(^{36}\) the term ʿibādah is a special word and no other word shares its meaning. The words such as khuṭṭā (humility), khānūf (servility), ṭāʿah (obedience) and dhull (humbleness) which have a close meanings with ʿibādah could not replace the meaning of ʿibādah itself. He furthermore defines ʿibādah as a kind of ultimate submission (dārbun min al-khuṭṭā bālīgh ḥadd al-nihāyah) which grows from a consciousness of God’s majesty. \(^{37}\)

Sayyid Qūṭb\(^{38}\) asserts that the concept of ʿibādah, as the main purpose of a human being and his first duty, consists of two things: the first is the establishment (istiqrār) of the meaning of submissiveness (ʿubūdiyyah) in the soul (nafs), i.e. the establishment of the feeling (shuʿūr) that there are servants and a Lord: a servant who worships (ʿabdun yāʾbud) and a Lord who is worshipped (rabbun yūʾbad), and nothing in this existence (al-wujūd) except servant and Lord, i.e. only one Lord and the others are His servants. The second is turning one’s intention towards God (al-tawajjuh ila Allāh) for every single motion (bi kulli ḥarakat) of heart, body and life, and this intention should be accompanied by the appreciation of the meaning of worship.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., vol. 1, p. 55; see also, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd. (Cairo: Muṭbāṭ al-Manār, 1346H), p. 219.


\(^{34}\) Al-Zamakhsharī, al-Kashshāf, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 8.


\(^{36}\) See Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Taṣfī al-Qur’ān al-Ḥakīm al-Shahīb bi Taṣfī al-Manār (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, no date), vol. 1, p. 57.

\(^{37}\) Ibid, pp. 57-58.

\(^{38}\) Sayyid Qūṭb, Fī ḽīlāl al-Qurʾān (Cairo: Dār al-Shuruq, 13th edition, 1993), vol. 6, p. 3387)
(ta'abbud) itself. The manifestation of 'ibādah is realized by these two things.

According to Abul A`la Mawdudi,39 the term 'ibādah is used in three senses: the first is the sense of worship and adoration; the second is in the sense of obedience and submission; and third is the sense of service and subjection. In his commentary on the Q. 1: 5 (iyyā-ka na'budu), he notes that the term 'ibādah in this particular context carries all these meanings simultaneously, as if we were to say to God “that we worship and adore Him, that we are obedient to Him and follow His will, and also that we are His servants.”40 He furthermore says, “moreover, man is so bound to none save God, that none but He may be the subject of man’s worship and total devotion, of man’s unreserved obedience, of man’s absolute subjection and servitude.”41 In his al-Muṣṭalāḥāt al-Arbā'ah fī al-Qurʾān,42 after conveying the meanings of 'ibādah according to various scholars’ perceptions, Mawdudi finally comes to the conclusion that 'ibādah is a noun indicating what God loves and is pleased with, whether it is word or deed, obvious or hidden.

Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies that 'ibādah should consist of a combination of the meanings of submissiveness and love, i.e., ultimate submission and love towards God.43 Based on Ibn Taymiyyah’s point of view, Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī44 insists that 'ibādah should consist of two main elements: first, the commitment to what God legislates and what His Messengers order which constitutes obedience (tā'ah) and submission (khudāf) to God; and secondly, the feeling of love (ḥubb) for God from which such a commitment must arise.

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40Ibid.

41Ibid.

42Mawdudi, al-Muṣṭalāḥāt al-Arbā'ah, op.cit., p. 22.


The jurists generally define 'ibādah as a sort (jins) of submissiveness (khudū) which is only worthy of God. In particular, 'ibādah is defined by the Hanafi madhhab as the deed of an obligated person (mukallaf) which is in opposition to his own desire (‘alā khilāf hawā nafsīh) in aggrandizement of his God. Similarly, the Shāffi madhhab define 'ibādah as the deed obliged by God on His servants contrary to their natural disposition as a trial for them. In the works on jurisprudence (fiqih), 'ibādah is often referred to as the ordinances of divine worship, i.e. the specific prescribed rites by which mankind expresses his creatureliness, submissiveness and obedience to God, such as prayer, alms giving, fasting and pilgrimage.

The Sufis' perception of 'ibādah is apparently unique. Among the Sufis, the meaning of 'ibādah differs with what is understood by the generality. For example, Ibn 'Arabi, a great Sufi who introduced the doctrine of the unity of existence (waḥdat al-wujūd), states that true 'ibādah is what is implemented with an absolute need on the part of servant, and an absolute independence on the part of God. For him, that which is worthy of worship (al-ma‘būd) is the eternal and sempiternal Nature (al-jawhar al-azal/al-qadīm), the Erector (al-muqawwim) of all forms of existence, while the worshipper (al-‘ābid) is the form erected (al-ṣūrah al-mutaqawwamah) from the Nature (al-jawhar). According to him, the true and supreme type of 'ibādah is the realization of the unity of nature (al-taḥaqqūq bi-al-waḥdat al-dhātiyyah) between the worshipper and God, i.e., the realization by experience (al-taḥaqqūq dhawqan), that "you are He and He is you: you are He by your form (min ḥaith šūratika)" and so

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46Ibid.
The Sufis tend to emphasize the inner dimension of 'ibādah, and therefore, they always distinguish between ordinary 'ibādah and real or true 'ibādah. In doing so, they normally classify 'ibādah into three divisions, namely 'ibādah, 'ubūdiyyah and 'ubūdah. According to 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d.1329), 'ibādah, i.e. the utmost self-abasement, is associated with the common people. 'Ubūdiyyah is for the Elect (al-Khāṣṣah) - those who have corrected their relationship with God - their veneration lies in the sincerity of their intent and the manner in which they follow his path. 'Ubūdah is for the Elect among the Elect (Khāṣṣat al-Khāṣṣah) - those who have experienced themselves established in Him their adoration - they worship Him for Himself in the stage of the oneness of union and separation.51 Similarly 'Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 1072) says:52

"'Ubūdiyyah is nearer perfection than 'ibādah. First comes 'ibādah, then 'ubūdiyyah, then 'ubūdah. 'Ibādah is for all believers, 'ubūdiyyah for the inner circle, and 'ubūdah for the innermost circle. I have heard Abū 'Alī al-Daqqaq says, 'ibādah is for those who posses the certainty of intellectual proof, 'ubūdiyyah is for those who posses the certitude of immediate knowledge, 'ubūdah is for those who are possessed by certitude. I have heard him say, 'ibādah is for him who fights the good fight; 'ubūdiyyah is for those who endure hardness, and 'ubūdah is a quality of the people of vision."

In distinguishing 'ibādah from 'ubūdiyyah, it is said that 'ibādah is to carry out what God is pleased with whilst 'ubūdiyyah is to be pleased with what God does. It is also said that 'ibādah consists of three things: obeying the commandments of God; having them uncealed; and to be satisfied with them; whilst 'ubūdiyyah consists of four things: fulfilment of promises, feeling pleasure with God's promise, preservation of divine laws and patience during lack.53 In other words, 'ibādah is a physical practice, i.e. the accomplishment of God's injunctions; 'ubūdiyyah is a

50Ibid., vol. 1, p. 33.
53Ibid., p. 91.
spiritual activity, i.e. the pleasure with God’s laws, while ‘ubūdah is a secret substance.

From the various definitions mentioned above, it is apparent that ‘ibādah is an all inclusive term used to indicate what God loves and is pleased with. This comprises the internal and external actions of a person, including belief as well as rituals, social activities and others, which will be elaborated in the forthcoming section.

‘Ibādah in the Qur‘ān

In the Qur‘ān, there are about 415 verses that concern ‘ibādah: 140 verses pertain to the practices of ‘ibādāt (‘ibādāt ‘amaliyyah) and its regulations (ahuqām)54 including purity (tahārah), prayer (salāh), alms (zakāh), fasting (siyām), pilgrimage (hajj), supplication (du‘ā’), remembrance (dhikr), and so forth; and 275 verses consist of expressions mentioning ‘ibādah55 in various forms such as the commandment of ‘ibādah, the nature of ‘ibādah, the act of ‘ibādah, and that of the person who performs ‘ibādah. 222 of the verses are Meccan and 53 are Madinan.56 These 275 verses can be divided into several grammatical categories. The first is the verb category that contains words indicating the act (fi‘l) of ‘ibādah, whether in the forms of present tense (fi‘l muḍārī), past tense (fi‘l māḍin), or in the form of a command (fi‘l amr). These words can be found in 123 places in the Qur‘ān. The second is the noun category, which appears 9 times in the Qur‘ān. The third category refers to the person who does the act of ‘ibādah (‘ābidūn or ‘abd); or humans who are addressed as the servants of God (‘ibād, sing. ‘abd); or slave (‘abd), and these are mentioned in 143 places in the Qur‘ān.

Regarding the use of the term ‘ibādah and its meaning, there are at least three meanings of ‘ibādah used in the Qur’ān. Firstly, the word ‘ibādah is used in the sense of service and servitude. In this sense, the usual word used is ‘abd (pl. ‘abīd or ‘ibād means servant or slave), and it is also used to denote human beings as they are considered as servants of God. Among the verses suggesting the meaning in this sense are:

"And this is the favour with which you reproach me, that you have enslaved (‘’abbad-ta) the Children of Israel" (26: 22).

"O you who believe, qiṣāṣ is prescribed for you in case of murder: a free man for a free man, a slave (‘abd) for a slave (‘abd), and a female for a female..." (2: 178)

"Whoever does righteous deeds, does so for (the benefit of) his own self, and whoever does evil, does so against his own self, and your Lord is not unjust to (His) servants (‘abīdī)” (41: 46).

"Alas for mankind (al-‘ibād), there never came a Messenger to them but they used to mock at him" (36: 30).

Secondly, the term ‘ibādah is used in the Qur’ān to mean obedience and submission.57 On the one hand, it is used to mean obedience and submission to God, which is usually obscured by the meaning of worship, and on the other, it is used to mean obedience to others such as Satan and other human beings, which is sometimes hidden by the meaning of worship also. ‘ibādah in this sense is often used in relation to the latter rather than God. The Qur’ān commentators usually interpret ‘ibādah of Satan or human beings as obedience (ţāfah) to them, and not to mean worshipping them in specific rites,58 for it is very rare to find one who really worships Satan59 or human beings in a form of particular rites. The Qur’ān mentions:

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59According to the Qur’ān, one is either in the party (jizb) of God or in the party of Satan (Q. 58: 19-22), and there is no third party. Whoever turns away from the party of God will be in the party of Satan, and vice versa. Hence we can say that one who does not worship God is a worshipper of Satan, whether he is aware of it or not. Obedience to Satan means that one refuses to obey God’s commandments, and in this case Satan will be his master and his companion, as signified by the following verses: "Verily, We made the Satans guardians (awlyā‘) for those who do not believe (in Us),” (7: 27); "And whoever turns away from the remembrance of the Most Beneficient (God) We appoint for him Satan to be an intimate companion (qarrān) to him” (43: 36-37).
"And among mankind are some who obey (ya'bud) God as it were, upon the very edge (tā'ā ḥarf) (in doubt); if good befalls him, he is content therewith, but if a trial befalls him, he turns back on his face. He loses both this world and the Hereafter. That is the evident loss" (22: 11).

"(Abraham said), 'O my father, do not worship (obey) (tā'bud) Satan. Verily, Satan has been a rebel against the Most Beneficient (God)'" (19: 44).

"Did I not ordain for you, O children of Adam, that you should not worship (obey) (ta'budu) Satan. Verily, he is a plain enemy to you" (36: 60).

"They (Pharaoh and his chiefs) said, 'Shall we believe in two men (Moses and Aaron) like ourselves, while their people are obedient to us (fā'idūn)'" (23: 47).

Thirdly, the term 'ibādah is used in the Qur’ān to denote worship or devotional practice, which is used for both God and something else, especially idols. This meaning is used more frequently in the Qur’ān than the first and the second meanings:

"O mankind, worship (ifbudu) your Lord who created you and those who were before you, so that you may become pious" (2: 21).

"Verily, I am God (Allāh), there is no god but I, so worship Me (fā budnī), and establish the prayer for My remembrance" (20: 14). 

"(Abraham said) You worship (ta'budū) besides God only idols, and you only invent falsehood. Verily those whom you worship (ta'budūn) besides God have no power to give you provision. So seek your provision from God, and worship Him (wa-'budūn), and be grateful to Him. To Him you will be brought" (29: 17).

"And they (disbelievers) worship (ya'budūn) besides God that which can neither profit them nor harm them, and the disbelievers are ever helpers (of the Satan) against his Lord" (25: 55).

It is noteworthy that some instances of the word ‘ibādah in the Qur’ān convey these three meanings simultaneously, namely, submission to a master, obedience and worship. Hence, the important semantic development shown by the word ‘ibādah in the Qur’ān, which originally literally means “obedience (fā'ah) and submission (khudū),” eventually comes to mean “worship” (‘ibādah). This association of concepts is clearly shown in the following verse:

"Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. So worship (serve) Him (fa'budhu), and be steadfast in His worship (il-‘ibādatih)" (19: 65).

60See al-Zabidi, Tāj al-'Arūs, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 331.
The Status and Significance of "Ibâdah" in Islam

From the Islamic perspective, 'ibâdah is regarded as the most vital duty of man towards God. This essential duty is frequently mentioned in the Qur'ân and constitutes the fundamental and basic principle of Islamic teaching. According to the Qur'ân, God created mankind only for the purpose of worshipping Him. The Qur'ân states, "I (God) have only created jîn and men to worship Me" (51:56). Thus, it is clear that in the Qur'ânic view, humans are created for 'ibâdah and it is their duty to concern themselves with that for which they were created. Accordingly, the commandment of 'ibâdah is frequently found throughout the Qur'ân especially in the Meccan sûrahs:

"Verily We have revealed the Book to you in truth, so worship God, offering Him sincere devotion." (39: 2)
"Verily God is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him, this is a way that is straight." (19: 36)
"Verily, I am God, there is no god but I; so worship me and establish regular prayer to remember Me." (20: 14)
"O people! Worship your Lord, who created you and those who came before you, that you may become righteous." (2: 21)
"Worship God and join not any partner with Him." (4: 36).

From the Qur'ânic perspective, 'ibâdah is a longstanding testament imposed by God on His servants, the sons of Adam, and has been eternally inserted into the nature of mankind:

"Did I not enjoin on you, 0 children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan. - Surely he is an avowed enemy to you. - And that you should worship Me? This is the straight way" (36: 60-61).

This longstanding testament is referred to elsewhere in the Qur'ân:

"When your Lord drew forth from the children of Adam out of their loins their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): 'Am I not your Lord', they said, 'Yes! We do testify!’ (This), lest you should say on

61There are 36 verses of the Qur'ân which comprise the commandment of ‘ibâdah. The words which appear in the Qur'ân showing the commandment of ‘ibâdah are: u'bud (3 times), u'budnî (once), u'budhu (twice), u'budî (2 times), u'budînî) (3 times), u'budînî (once), and u'budîhû (6 times). Only 6 of them are of Madinan sûrahs.
the Day of Judgement, 'Verily, we were unaware of this'” (7: 172).

Naturally, all humankind is believed to have the ability to realize and acknowledge the fact that they are created by God, that God is their Lord, and that they are the servants of God: "If you ask them who has created the heavens and earth, they will certainly say, 'God'” (31: 25). The recognition of the Lordliness of God, is the nature of humankind and regarded as an essential base for them to accomplish the commandment of Ḥišádah. To remind them that Ḥišádah is the main objective of their existence, and to guide them to the proper worship of God, the Messengers were sent to every People. The Qur’ān mentions that the call of Ḥišádah is an important mission for all Messengers and is even the main part in their call to God:

“”For We assuredly sent amongst every People a Messenger, (with the command) 'worship (u’budū) God, and keep away from idols (ţāghūt).’” (16:36)

"Not a Messenger did We send before you without this inspiration sent by Us to him that there is no god but I, therefore worship Me.” (21: 25)

"(The Messenger says) ‘O my people! Worship God, you have no other god but Him’” (7: 59, 65, 73, 85; 11: 50, 61, 83).

Ḥišádah is, according to a ḥadith, a right of God that should be fulfilled by His servants, and as a reward, God will fulfil His servants’ right, i.e. He will not punish them if they don’t associate any partner with Him. The Prophet Muḥammad said:

"God’s right upon His servant is that they should worship Him without associating with Him any partner; and the servant’s right upon God is that He will not punish whoever does not join with Him any partner."

From the perspective of rationality based on the Islamic textual evidence, i.e. the Qur’ān and Prophet’s traditions, the commandment of Ḥišádah obliged by God to mankind means that they are regarded as the servants (Ḥišād) of God. Furthermore,

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since God is the Absolute Sovereign, the only possible attitude for man to take towards Him is that of complete submission, humbleness and humility without reserve. In short, a “servant” (‘abdu) should act and behave as a “servant.” The primary function of a servant consists naturally in serving his Master faithfully, paying constant and careful attention to His wishes, and obeying all His commands. This is why so much importance is expressed in the Qur’an through the use of terms meaning absolute obedience, submission and humility, such as ṭāḥah (obedience), qunūt (obedience, humbleness), khushū (submissiveness), tadarruf (self-abasement). These terms may perhaps denote different concepts of obedience, but it is also possible to assume that they are a collection of concepts embodied in the meaning of ‘ibādah itself.

Moreover, ‘ibādah should be regarded as a symbol of praise to God for His bestowed favours (ni‘am - sing. ni‘mah) upon mankind. As His vicegerents on earth (Q. 2: 30), humans have countless favours bestowed on them as stated in the Qur’an: "If you would count up the favours of God, you would never be able to number them" (16: 18). These favours, in fact, are bestowed on humans to facilitate them to attain the purpose of ‘ibādah. In ordinary mundane relations between men, human ethics everywhere demand the actualization of the concept of thankfulness. When somebody has given a special favor to someone, his normal reaction to it should be gratitude. Likewise God’s favour: for those infinite favours, humans’ appreciation of them should be gratitude and thankfulness to God, and the method of such a thankfulness to God is to obey His law, i.e. by serving and worshipping Him alone. "And be grateful for the favours of God, if it is He whom you worship” (Q. 2: 172; 16: 114); "Then seek sustenance from God, and worship Him, to Him you will be returned” (Q. 29: 17); "Nay, but worship God and be of those who give thanks” (Q. 39: 66).

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64For example Q. 3: 32; 4: 59; 5: 92.
65For example Q. 2: 116; 39: 9; 33: 35.
66For example Q. 23: 2; 21: 90; 3: 199.
67For example Q. 6: 42; 23: 76; 7: 55.
68See al-Ghazzālī, Iḥyā‘, op.cit., vol. 9, p. 999.
The Relationship Between 'Ibādah, Islam, Īmān and Iḥsān

The Islamic standpoint on 'ibādah, as has already been mentioned before, is clear: that 'ibādah is the sole purpose of the creation of mankind. The method of the accomplishment of this purpose is Islam. The Qur’ān asserts: "The religion in the sight of God is Islam" (3: 19); "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of Him, and in the Hereafter he will be in the position of those who have lost" (2: 85); "I am pleased with Islam as a religion for you" (5: 3).

Islam in general consists of two basic complementary concepts, 'aqīdah or īmān (faith) and sharī'ah or 'amāl (actions). Īmān is the basis of Islam, or in other words, the foundation of Islam is based on īmān. The basic principle (rukn pl. arkān) of īmān consists of belief in six matters as mentioned in the Qur’ān and Ḥadith: "The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from His Lord, as do the believers. All (of them) believe in God, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers" (2: 285); "O ye who believe! Believe in God and His Messenger, and the scripture which He sent down before. Whoever disbelieves in God, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgement, has gone far astray" (4: 136). The Prophet Muḥammad said, replying to Gabriel’s question "what is īmān?": "That you believe in God, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, in the Hereafter, and the Decree both the good of it and the evil of it."

Īmān is not only a belief, it is also a practice ('amāl) as indicated in the other Ḥadiths: The Prophet Muḥammad said, replying to a man’s question "what is the best practice ('amāl)?": "Belief (īmān) in God and His Messenger"; "īmān is knowledge (mārifah) in the heart, confession by the tongue.


and action by the body"\textsuperscript{71}; "\textit{īmān} consists of more than seventy branches. The highest branch of \textit{īmān} is pronouncing 'there is no god but God (Allāh)' and the lowest branch of \textit{īmān} is removing a harmful thing from the road, and modesty is a part of \textit{īmān}.”\textsuperscript{72} \textit{īmān} in those hadiths is referred to as a form of action. Subsequently, scholars have concluded that \textit{īmān} consists of confession by the heart (\textit{tasdīq bi-al-qalb}), admission by the tongue (\textit{iqrār bi-al-lisan}), and practice by the body (\textit{'amal bi-al-jawāriḥ}).\textsuperscript{73}

Islam in particular is also referred to as a practice which is also known as \textit{‘ibādah}. This is indicated by the following hadith: “Islam is founded upon five things: bearing witness that there is no god but God (Allāh) and that Muḥammad is His Messenger; observing prayers; payment of alms; performing pilgrimage; and fasting in the month of Ramadān.”\textsuperscript{74} The five pillars mentioned in the hadith are the fundamentals of \textit{‘ibādah}, which do not mean that \textit{‘ibādah} is limited to these five practices, as all one’s deeds are regarded as \textit{‘ibādah} if they are pleasing to God.

The first part of the above-mentioned hadith i.e. bearing witness to the Lordship of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad denotes the confession of \textit{īmān}. Hence, it is possible to say that \textit{īmān} is simplified in the two-part phrase (\textit{kalimah}): "There is no god but God (Allāh); and Muḥammad is His Messenger,” which also constitutes the first pillar of Islam. Although the first pillar of Islam indicated in the hadith does not mention the other four elements of \textit{īmān}, it is understood that they are embodied in it, as bearing witness of the Lordliness of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad demands belief in the other four matters. The first pillar of Islam is signified in another hadith as \textit{‘ibādah}: “Islam is that you worship God and you do not

\textsuperscript{71}Ibn Mājah, \textit{Sunan Ibn Mājah}, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah” 64. See also, Abū Manṣūr Ḥabīl al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, \textit{Kitāb Uṣūl al-Dīn}. (İstanbul: Dār al-Funūn, 1928), vol. 1, p. 251.


associate any partner with Him, that you perform the prayer, pay alms, perform pilgrimage and fast in the month of Ramadān.”⁷⁵ Therefore, it is possible to regard ḵmān as ‘ibādah as well. ḵmān, however, is always discerned as a firm belief in heart, and it should be proved by practice i.e. Islam. Given that Islam is perceived as practice,⁷⁶ it is possible for someone to be a Muslim without ḵmān, but someone who practises Islam without having ḵmān could be a hypocrite (munāfīq) nevertheless. The Qur’ān points out: “The desert Arabs say: ‘We believe.’ Say, ‘You do not believe, but say ‘We have submitted (our wills to God) become Muslim.’” For ḵmān has not yet entered your hearts….” (49:14). Thus, it is possible to say, as stated by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, that every believer (mu‘min) is a Muslim, but not every Muslim is a believer.⁷⁷ The true believer, in fact, is he who possesses ḵmān as well as practises Islam.

Iḥsān (righteousness), as depicted by the ḥadīth “that you worship God as if you see Him; if you do not see Him, indeed He sees you,”⁷⁸ is the complementary element of ‘ibādah. Al-Nawawī, in commenting on this ḥadīth says that one who worships God by considering himself as though he sees God will get the highest status of worship as he is aware that he is facing God.⁷⁹ Since iḥsān is mentioned together with the principles of ḵmān and Islām, we can assume it is the most important principle of worship or the highest level of worship.

Hence, the close relationship between ‘ibādah, ḵmān and Islam is seen: ‘ibādah

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⁷⁹Al-Nawawī, al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥḥ Muslim, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 112.
is the purpose of the creation of man. Islam in general, i.e. as a religious system, is the way to attain the purpose of 'ibādah, and in particular, i.e. as practice, is outer 'ibādah. Iman is a basic foundation of Islam and it must be manifested by practice. The practice is called Islam and it is 'ibādah as well. Since īmān is regarded by scholars as Islam, and Islam is 'ibādah; therefore, it is also possible to regard īmān as 'ibādah. The concept of 'ibādah is naturally embodied in īmān and Islam, as signified in the meaning of Islam itself, i.e. submission and obedience to the will of God.

Some Aspects of 'Ibādah in the Era of Jāhiliyyah

Information about 'Ibādah in Arabia, or particularly in Makkah in the period of Jāhiliyyah is scarce and mostly relies on accounts of the religion of Arabia itself. The religion of the Arabs in the period preceding Islam, which is known as the state of ignorance, in opposition to the knowledge of God's true worship taught to them by the Prophet Muḥammad, was mainly idolatry. However, there were some other religions embraced by the Arabs such as the Sabian religion, Christianity, Judaism and the Magian religion. The accounts of Arabian idol worship before Islam are mostly based on Ibn al-Kalbi’s Kitāb al-Asnām, a classical work of the late second century of the Hijrah. This recounts what is known about a large number of gods and goddesses and about the ceremonies connected with their worship.


The term Jāhiliyyah is often translated as the Age of Ignorance implying a
time of paganism before one recognized the oneness of God or knew God’s sacred law.
However, it does not mean that all Arabs were totally pagans and disbelieved in the
"High God". As a matter of fact, there is evidence in the Qur’ān that some individuals,
while continuing to recognize pagan deities and to worship them, regarded Allah or
God as creator of the world and a "high god" superior to the other deities.
Furthermore, in this period there were some Arabs who were dissatisfied with the
idolatry and the other religions, and sought the original religion of Abraham that
taught about belief in the oneness of God and submission to Him. In the following
sections we shall discuss the religion of Arabia in the period preceding Islam.

The Vestiges of the Religion of Abraham (Dīn Ḥanīf)

In the milieu of the deeply rooted idolatrous religion, there were some people who
were dissatisfied with the idolatry in which their countrymen were plunged into, and
who protested emphatically against the idle and often cruel superstitions of the
Arabs. They sought for what they called al-ḥanifīyyah, 'the Religion of Abraham'.
These men were called ḥunafā’ (true believers). Their religion seems to have
consisted chiefly in denying the superstition of the Arabs, and in only asserting the
existence of one sole-ruling God whose absolute slaves all mankind are, without being
able to decide on minor doctrines, or to determine in what manner this one God
should be worshipped.

As the ḥunafā’ could give their countrymen no more definite creed than this,

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84 On the subject of Jāhiliyyah, see for example, Toshihiko Izutsu, God and Man in the Qur’ān. (Tokyo:
The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964), chapter VIII; idem, Ethico-Religious Concepts

85 On the subject of social life of pre Islamic Arab, see for example, Jawād Alī, Al-Mufassal fi Tārīkh al-
‘Arab Qābl al-Islām, op.cit., vol. 4-5.

86 "Ḥunafā’ (singular Ḥanīf) is derived from word Ḥanifa means to turn or bend sideways. Here it denotes
inclined to right way, orthodox, firm in faith and true. Perhaps the last word, true, sums up most of the
other shades. It is used frequently in the Qur’ān in describing the true religion of Abraham which is
resumed by Islam.
their influence was very limited. Ibn Ishaq noted a few accounts about the subject in his famous *Sirat Rasūl Allāh*. He narrated that there were four men of Quraysh, known as 'four inquirers', who had gone in search of the true religion of Abraham. They were Waraqah b. Nawfal, Ubayd Allāh b. Jaḥṣ, Uṭmān b. al-Ḥuwayrith and Zayd b. Āmīr. Waraqah decided on Christianity and followed the books of its teachers until he had obtained knowledge of the scripture. Ubayd Allāh remained in doubt until, after the revelation, he made profession of Islam and went to Abyssinia. However, when he arrived there he adopted Christianity, parted from Islam, and died there as a Christian. Uṭmān went to the Byzantine emperor (Qaysār), where he became a Christian and attained high office. The fourth man, Zayd, became neither Jew nor Christian, although he renounced the religion of the Quraysh. He claimed that he worshipped the God of Abraham, and he publicly rebuked his people for their practices. He set forth in search of the religion of Abraham and made inquiries from monks and Jewish priests. He passed through Mesopotamia, and then wandered through the whole of Syria. He died on his way back to Makkah after being attacked.

The other people who were known to be of the religion of Abraham were: Umayyah b. Abī al-Ṣalt, the poet, who used to compose poems about the Expected Prophet, but later after the Prophet Muhammad was sent, he harbored feelings of hatred against him; and Qiss b. Sāʿīdah al-Ībāḍī, the great judge at the time, who used to criticize the Arab’s superstitions and remind them of the promised Messenger in his speech to the public. Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, Širmah b. Abī Anas, Āmīr b. Al-Ẓarb al-Udwānī, Khālid b. Sinān al-ʿAbsī and Umayr b. Jundub al-Juḥānī were also among the

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The ḥunafā’ also comprised the people who restrained themselves from wine, drunkenness and divination by arrows. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭālib b. Hāshim, Qays b. ʿĀṣim al-Tamimi and Ḥanzalah al-Rāhib b. Aḥī Ṣāmīr belonged to this category of ḥunafā’.

The details of the religion of Abraham were difficult to find. However, the Qur’ān has answered this concern by equating Islam with the religion of Abraham (Q. 4: 125; 6: 161; 16: 123), and therefore, it is conceivable that the religion of Abraham resembled Islam as preached by the Prophet Muḥammad. Before the revelation, the people who were interested in the ḥanīfīyyah knew a little of its creed. They knew that only the High God is to be worshipped and He has no associate, and they should abstain from evil deeds, but they knew nothing about the manner in which He should be worshipped. For example, in the case of Zayd b. ʿAmr, as he didn’t know the true way of worship,92 he might only conjecture the worthy manner which he thought suited for God. To show his humility to God, he was seen to pray facing the Ka’bah saying, "My God is the God of Abraham and my religion is the religion of Abraham."93 Sometimes he was seen to prostrate on the palms of his hands.94

On certain occasions Zayd used to compose poems which consisted of his belief in the High God and denunciation of idolatry.95 Such poems as recorded in Ibn Iṣḥāq’s Sīrat al-Rasūl Allāh show that Zayd was on the right faith in accordance with the Islamic faith preached later by the Prophet Muḥammad. The Prophet Muḥammad, when he was asked about Zayd said, "God has forgiven and has given mercy to him. Indeed, he died on the religion of Abraham."96 For his true faith, the Prophet Muḥammad had foreseen him in the Garden under two big trees (dawḥatayn).97

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92Ibn Iṣḥāq, Sīrat Rasūl Allāh, op.cit., p. 100.
94Ibn Iṣḥāq, Sīrat Rasūl Allāh, op.cit., p. 100.
95Ibid., p. 102.
Prophet also stated that he will be raised from the dead as the sole representative of a whole people (ummah wāḥidah).98

There were also some rites identified as remnants of the tradition of Abraham especially in matters pertaining to the city of Makkah and regarding the rituals of pilgrimage (ḥajj). At the time, Makkah was still regarded as a holy territory as declared by Abraham99 and was respected by all. At certain seasons, all fighting was forbidden within its limits, arms were not allowed to be carried, and no animal was allowed to be killed.100 Pilgrimage was performed within the months of Rajab, Dhū al-Qa‘dah, Dhū al-Ḥijjah and al-Muḥarram, however, the pilgrimage to the Ka‘bah was permitted only in the third month.101 Halting at ‘Arafah, circumambulations around the Ka‘bah, walking to and fro with hasty steps seven times between the hills of Ṣafā and Marwah, and making the sacrificial offerings to God, were among the rituals of pilgrimage assumed to be a part of the traditions of Abraham. However, most of these traditions were muddled up with idolatrous superstitions as will be discussed in the next section.

**The Tahannuth**102

It is noteworthy that in the period of the Jāhiliyyah, there was a religious practice called *tahannuth*103 which was said to be practised by the ḥunafā’. The term

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99Based on ḥadith narrated by Muslim, al-Nasā‘i and al-Ṭabarī, see for example, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Ḥajj," ḥad. 2439.


101In the other three months, they performed pilgrimage to their idols. See ibid., p. 238.


103*Tahannuth* is derived from the word *hanitha*, means to practice piety or to seek religious purification. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 321.
taḥannuth was mentioned in some traditions in connection with the first revelation of the Prophet and variously interpreted by scholars. Ibn Ishaq reported:

"The Prophet used to spend one month in every year in religious retreat in Ḥirā' which was a part of al-taḥannuth in which Quraysh used to engage during the Jāhiliyyah. Al-Taḥannuth is al-tabarrur. The Prophet used to spend this month in every year in religious retreat and give food to the poor who came to him. After he completed the month and returned from seclusion, the first thing he would do on leaving before going home was to circumambulate the Ka'bah seven times, or as often as God willed..."

In Ṣaḥḥ al-Bukhārī, the tradition giving an account of the same events also contains the expression of taḥannuth, but differs in many respects from the tradition of Ibn Ishaq. The passage in the Ṣaḥḥ reads: "...Then he was made to cherish solitude and he was in religious retreat alone in the cave of Ḥirā' and practised taḥannuth a number of nights before he returned to his family..." There are other traditions in which the word tanassuk is used instead of taḥannuth.

The explanation of the word taḥannuth is differently given in the two traditions. In the tradition of Ibn Ishaq, it is glossed by tabarrur while in the tradition of al-Bukhārī, it is glossed by ta'rabbud. Ta'rabbud has a wide range of meanings and commentators are in difficulties to define the ta'rabbud of the Prophet before his prophethood. Al-Qaṣṭallānī states that the Prophet performed three types of ʿibādah: going into seclusion (khalwah), taḥannuth, and watching the Ka'bah. He adds that the idea of ta'rabbud was assigned exclusively to the practice of seclusion because withdrawal from people, and especially people living in falsehood, is a kind of ʿibādah.

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104 Tabarrur is translated as religious devotion by Guillame (The Life of Muhammad, p. 105) and self justification by Watt and McDonald (The History of al-Tabarī, vol. VI, p. 70). Ibn Hishām defines taḥannuth as taḥannuf from hanifiyyah i.e., professing hanifiyyah or performing the actions of hanif. See Ibn Hishām, al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 235.


108 Ibn Ḥajar mentioned, the word taḥannuth was glossed ta'rabbud by al-Zuhri. See Ibn Ḥajar al-Ṣaʿdī Asqalānī, Fāṭḥ al-Bābī Sharḥ Ṣaḥḥ al-Bukhārī (Cairo: Maṭābāt al-Salafīyyah wa-Maktabātuhā, 1959), vol. 1, p. 18.
Finally, he quotes an anonymous opinion that the *ta'abbud* of the Prophet was meditation (*tafakkur*).\(^{109}\)

There are some more traditions reported by many scholars about the practice of *tahannuth* by the Quraysh as quoted by M. J. Kister.\(^{110}\) Quoting from al-Balâḍhuri’s *Ansâb al-Ashrâf*, he records the tradition that the first man to practise *tahannuth* at Ḥirâ was ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib. “He was the first who practised *tahannuth* at Ḥirâ.” (*Tahannuth*, says the gloss, is *ta’alluh* or *tabarrur*). When the moon of Ramadān appeared he used to enter Ḥirâ and did not leave till the end of the month and fed the poor. He was distressed by the iniquity of the people of Makkah and would perform circumambulation of the Ka’bah many times.”\(^{111}\) Kister also notes the tradition recorded by al-Balâḍhuri, "When the month of Ramadān began people of Quraysh - these intending *tahannuth* - used to leave for Ḥirâ and stayed there for a month and fed the poor who called on them. When they saw the moon of Shawwāl they (descended and) did not enter their homes until they had performed the circumambulation of the Ka’bah for a week. The Prophet used to perform it (i.e. this custom).”\(^{112}\)

In these two traditions, two elements are emphasized: the feeding of the poor and the ritual practice of the circumambulation of Ka’bah, a symbol of the veneration of the House. These are exactly the elements of *tahannuth* as related in the tradition of Ibn Ishaq about the Call of Prophecy. Though one might say that this practice was not associated with the religion of Abraham, it is possible to postulate that in this period of Jâhiliyyah, *tahannuth* was regarded by the Ḥunafā’ as the right way of *ibâdah*. As there were no trustworthy sources to find the right way of *ibâdah* taught by Abraham, the Ḥunafā’ might have created their own way to worship God which they thought was the worthy way of worshipping God, i.e., by practising *tahannuth*. The


\(^{111}\)Ibid., p. 232.

\(^{112}\)Ibid., pp. 232-233.
Prophet Muhammad himself regarded *tahannuth* as a true way of worshipping God before his prophethood even though it was merely a customary practice initiated by his predecessors.

**Idolatry**

**The Origin of Idolatry**

From prehistoric times, man has sought to worship powers of nature, or symbols representing those powers, or idols representing those symbols. The first who introduced idolatry is unknown, and it is believed that it was established through religious evolution. As the complete historical account of the origin of idolatry is not available and knowledge on this matter is fragmentary, scholars have propounded many conjectural theories. A favourite theory among 18th century theologians and philosophers was that idolatry was a degeneration. Man was supposed to have begun with a very high and pure idea of the divinity. Afterwards, desiring to have a material picture of his deity, he represented him by the noblest and most elevated thing that he knew, normally in an anthropomorphous image. Gradually he came to regard these symbolic images as real portraits, and in the course of time considered them as divine individualities.

It is also believed that idols were originally the images of deceased ancestors which appeared in the period of the Prophet Noah (Nūḥ). According to Ibn ʿAbbās, within the period between Ādam and Noah, which was about ten centuries, all

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115Ibid.
mankind were the followers of Islam. After this period the tendency of idolatry increased and Noah was specifically sent to eradicate the idolatry among his peoples.116 The basic reason for idolatry as narrated by al-Bukhārī, was the adoration of a particular person. He narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās, in commenting on Q. 71: 23, that Wadd, Suwāʾ, Yaghūth, Yaʿūq and Nasr were among the pious men of the Prophet Noah. After they died, the people were very grieved until Satan appeared and suggested that they build statues of each of those pious men and named them accordingly. The statues were to be placed at their regular meeting place, but they were not worshipped. In the course of time, when people became negligent and ignorant, they started to worship those statues.117

Ibn Kathir narrates from Ibn Abī Ḥātim, when mentioning the beginning of idol worship, that there was a man of piety loved by his people. After he died, they felt very sad and mourned on his grave at a place called Bābil. Then, Satan appeared in the shape of a man offering them to portray his image so that they could put it in their circle (nādī) and remember him. They agreed and were grateful for it. After a long time, Satan appeared again offering himself to set up for everyone of them a statue (timthāl) resembling the image of the deceased man, so that they could put it in their house and easily remember him, and they happily accepted it. Their descendants persisted in remembering the man in this way, and after a long time, as people became negligent, they treated the deceased man’s idol as a god apart from the true God.118 He also noted that the name of the first idol worshipped by people was Wadd,119 which was named after Wadd, who was Seth (Shēth)120 the second Prophet of God after his father Ādam.

117See ʿĀlī Bilād al-Bilād, “Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, ḥad. 4539.
119Ibid.
120Wadd, according to Ibn ʿAsākir while mentioning about the Prophet Seth (Shēth), was one of forty sons of Prophet Ādam. He was known as Shēth and Hibat Allāh. Wadd had four sons, Sūwīl, Yaghūth, Yaʿūq and Nasr, who are mentioned in the Qurʾān (Q: 71: 23). See Ibn ʿAsākir, Tahdīb al-Tārīkh, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 45.
Idolatry is also conceived as the transition of fetishism. At a certain period man began to experience the need for representing, in concrete and personal form, the mysterious forces which he conceived of as being embodied in certain natural or artificial objects and situated at the very source of the phenomena of nature. Man always thought that unusual and strange objects such as big stones and big trees have natural power and therefore they should be respected and worshipped. It is certain that man began at a given moment to make his fetishes in the form of what he believed to dwell inside each one. Fetishism is a direct antecedent of idolatry and is co-existent with it. The fetish and idol are both conceived of as the body of the spirit. They are used for the same purposes and employed under the same conditions, except that idolatry lays more stress on the anthropomorphic, or rather zoomorphic, conception of the divinity, and so lends itself to a more accentuated development of the cult.

Although at the beginning man's idea of God tended to be anthropomorphic, then, fear in primitive life led to the transfer of anything mysterious or imagined to be injurious, to the Pantheon. Such things have to be placated in order that they may not injure man. This led to the worship of animals noxious to man, such as serpent worship, which still prevails in many primitive areas. In ancient Egyptian mythology, for example, the crocodile, the dog, the bull, and the ibis were worshipped, literally and symbolically. They were thought to represent the supernatural beings or became the companions or slaves of the divinities whom they used to embody. However, after men's knowledge developed and they observed the wonderful heavenly bodies and their motions, they began to feel their sublimity, beauty and mystery. Subsequently, they transferred their worship to the heavenly bodies. It is believed

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121 G. D'Alviella, "Images and Idols," op. cit., p. 114.

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid., p. 115.

124 Ibid.
that the worship of heavenly bodies broadened in the period of Abraham among the people of Chaldea, who were regarded as of the first great astronomers. The parable of Abraham in Q. 6: 74-82 points to the importance of the cult of the worship of heavenly bodies and the fallacy among them, alongside idol worship. The Sabian (Ṣābiʿūn) worship of heavenly bodies in Arabia before Islam probably had its source in Chaldea.

**Idolatrous Worship in the Period of Jāhiliyyah**

As has been mentioned before, although the Arabs professed faith in the unity of God (Q. 23: 84-89; 29: 61-65; 31: 25; 39: 38; 43: 9-15), it was too shallow as they had adopted idolatry, thinking that their idols would act as intermediaries between them and God, and in particular interceding with God on behalf of men (Q. 39: 3, 10: 18; 30: 12). For them, divine favour could only be obtained through the intercession of the idols. They would, therefore, turn to their pagan deities, invoking their blessing in all sorts of undertakings. Thus, their belief in the one God became as if an empty dogma, finding no place in the system of their practical life. The true worship of God was superseded by the false worship of their idols. However, perhaps it is reasonable to say that the manner of worshipping their idols, such as prostration before them, circumambulation around them, and offering sacrifices to them, and others, were derived from the original acts of worship practiced by the previous prophets as hinted at in the Qur’ān in the parable of Abraham (Q. 2: 125, 128; 37: 103-107). The following paragraphs will highlight how such a debasing idolatry replaced the true worship of God.

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126 A region of ancient Babylonia (Arabic Kaldān), the homeland of Abraham.

127 There were three types of idol worshipped by the heathen Arabs, namely, ṣaḥām (idol), i.e., the stone or wood made statues resembled a living form; ṣanām (idol), i.e., the rude blocks of stone erected in its original shape; and ṣawthān (images). However, in Islamic literature, sometimes they were used interchangeably.
Idolatry in pre-Islamic Makkah, as reported by Ibn Isḥāq\(^{128}\) and Ibn al-Kalbi\(^{129}\) originated in the following ways. When the descendants of Ishmael crowded into Makkah and supplanted its original inhabitants, the Amelekites, dissension and strife arose, causing them to fight among themselves. Consequently, they dispersed throughout the land seeking a livelihood. Everyone who left the city took with him a stone from the sacred area (al-ḥaram) as a token of reverence to it and as a sign of deep affection for Makkah. Wherever they settled they set it up and circumambulated it in the same manner that they used to circumambulate the Ka’bah before, seeking thereby its blessing and affirming their deep affection for the Sacred House. In fact, the Arabs still venerated the Ka’bah and Makkah and journeyed to them in order to perform the great and lesser pilgrimage, conforming thereby to the time-honored custom which they inherited from Abraham and Ishmael.\(^{130}\)

In time, this led them to worship what stones they pleased and those which made an impression on them. As generations passed they forgot their former faith and exchanged the religion of Abraham and Ishmael for another. Consequently they took to the worship of images, becoming like the nations before them. They sought and determined what the people of Noah had worshipped of these images and adopted the worship of those which were still remembered among them. According to a tradition recorded by Ibn Isḥāq, the first who changed the religion of Ishmael and set up images was ʿAmr b. Luḥayy b. Qamḥah b. Khindif of the Khuzā‘ah. Ibn Isḥāq narrates\(^{131}\) that Abū Hurayrah said, ”I heard the Apostle of God saying to Aktham b. al-Jawn al-Khuza‘ī, ‘O Aktham, I saw ʿAmr b. Luḥayy b. Qamḥah b. Khindif dragging his intestines in hell, and never did I see two men so much alike as you and he!’ ‘Will this resemblance injure me?’ asked Aktham. ‘No’, said the Apostle, ‘for you are a believer and he is an infidel. He was the first to change the religion of Ishmael, to set up idols, and institute


\(^{130}\)Ibid., p. 4.

\(^{131}\)Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 33. Part of this tradition is also reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. See al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in Kitāb al-Manāqib, 3260; Muslim, *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, in Kitāb al-Jannah,” 5096 and 5097.
the custom of the *baḥrāh, sāʿibah, waṣīlah* and *ḥāmī.*" He took over the custody of the Kaʿbah after the Jurhumites. He was held as the worst custodian of the Sacred House in history as he was the first to introduce the idolatry into the land of Arabia. Ibn Hishām and Ibn al-Kalbī report, when mentioning the beginning of idol worship in pre-Islamic Makkah, that when ʿAmr b. Luḥayy became very sick, he was told that there was a hot spring in Balqāʾ, in Syria, and he would be cured if he was to go there. He went to the hot spring, bathed therein, and was cured. During his stay there, he noticed that the inhabitants of the place worshipped idols. He asked them what they were and they replied that to them they prayed for rain, and from them they sought victory over the enemy. He asked them to give him a few of those idols, and they did. He took them back with him to Makkah and erected them around the Kaʿbah and afterwards idolatry spread throughout the land of Arabia.

The nomadic way of life and the tribal organization of the Arabs influenced their religious practices: the multitude of deities worshipped in Arabia were tribal deities. Each tribe had its own god or goddess. The mobility of nomadic life led to the adoption of suitable cultic practices. Thus, the members of the tribes could worship their deity anywhere by investing any form of stone with the divine.

Three tribal deities were preeminent in central Arabia, namely, Allāt, al-ʿUzzā and Manāt, the three goddess mentioned in the Qurʾān (Q. 53: 19-22) which were also

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132 These terms are mentioned in the Qurʾān (5: 103) and their associated practices condemned by Islam. A *sāʿibah* is a she camel which has given birth to females at ten successive births. She is set free, is never ridden, her hair is not shorn, and only a guest is allowed to drink her milk. A *waṣīlah* is an ewe which has had ten twin ewes in successive births without a male lamb intervening. A *baḥrāh* is a she camel having its ears slit. When a she camel or ewe gives birth to five, or seven, or ten, the young ones if male are slaughtered, but if female its ears were slit. The others says that it is the mother of a *sāʿibah*, and it is exempted from slaughtering and carrying burden. A *ḥāmī* is a stallion camel who is the sire of ten successive females without an intervening colt. His back is taboo and he is not ridden. His hair is not shorn and he is left to run among the camels to mount them. Beyond that no use is made of him.


136 Balqāʾ in present day is in Jordan, near Ṭammān.
called "the Daughters of Allah". The most ancient of these was Manāt, which was worshipped by the Aws and the Khazraj tribes and such people in Yathrib, and the Azd tribe, and whose sanctuary was at Qudayd, on the Red Sea, near Makkah. Allāt was the goddess of the Thaqif tribe but was also revered by the Quraysh. Her sanctuary was at Ţa‘if and was, in the words of Ibn al-Kalbi, "a cubic rock beside which a certain Jew used to prepare his barley porridge". Al-ʿUzza was the goddess of the Quraysh and Kinanah tribes, located at Ḥurād. The Arabs as well as Quraysh were wont to name their children ʿAbd al-ʿUzza. Al-ʿUzza was also the greatest idol among the Quraysh. They used to journey to her, offer gifts unto her, and seek her favours through sacrifices.

Five other deities, all of South Arabian provenance, are also mentioned in the Qur’ān (71: 23 - 24), namely, Wadd, Suwā’, Yaghūth, Ya‘ūq and Nasr. These are said to have been antediluvian idols, which Noah preached against, and were afterwards taken by the Arabs for gods. Wadd was worshipped under the form of a man by the tribe of Kalb in Dumat al-Jandal. Suwā’ was worshipped in the shape of a woman by the Hudhayl tribe in Ruḥāṭ. Yaghūth was an idol in the shape of a lion, and was the deity of the Madhhij tribe of Jurash. Ya‘ūq was worshipped by the Khaywān tribe in the figure of a horse. Nasr was a deity worshipped by the Ḥimyar tribe in the form of an eagle, which the name signifies.

Two deities, Isāf (male) and Nā‘īlah (female) were worshipped as a couple. Their images were placed in the proximity of Ka‘bah and were worshipped by the Khuzā‘ah and Quraysh tribes. The legend surrounding this couple states that they were

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138Ibid., pp. 12-14.
139Ibid., p. 14.
140Ibid., p. 16.
141Ibid., p. 9; Ibn Ishaq, Sīrat Rasūl Allāh, op.cit., p. 36.
originally two people from the Jurhum tribe in Yemen who fornicated in the Ka’bah and as a result were turned to stone.\textsuperscript{144} Besides these idols, the Arabs also worshipped a great number of others. There were about 360 idols, equalling in number the days of their year, in and about the Ka’bah. On the inside wall of the Ka’bah were the carved images of angels, Abraham, Mary and Jesus.\textsuperscript{145} Among the great number of the idols, Hubal was the important one. Hubal was brought from Syria by ʿAmr b. Luḥayy. He was described as a carnelian red statue with a broken arm, a limb that the Quraysh tribe repaired in gold. In front of it were seven arrows which the Arabs used in divination.\textsuperscript{146} The statue was placed in the Ka’bah and was worshipped as a god by the Arabs of the Ḥijāz, especially by the Quraysh. The legend surrounding Hubal showed him as a god of rain and a warrior god. It was this idol who was invoked by Abū Sufyān, a leader of the Quraysh, during the battle of Uḥud.\textsuperscript{147} Apart from the tribal idols, every housekeeper had his household god or goddess, which he worshipped before leaving his home and first saluted upon returning.

Regarding the matter of how the heathen Arabs performed their worship of idols, or their cultic practices, it is not known whether specific rituals were prescribed or not, and information regarding this matter is very limited. The most common cultic practice was offering. The worshippers offered a few valuables in recognition of the deity’s care and support. The offering could include a portion of the harvest, money, jewellery or gold and other things. Thus, for instance, Ibn Hishām stated that money, jewellery, gold and onyx were found in the sanctuary of Allāt upon its destruction in Islamic times,\textsuperscript{148} while al-ʿAzraqi noted that the people of the lower part of Makkah, who had Dhū al-Khalasah, used to put necklaces on it, and bring gifts of barley and 


\textsuperscript{145}Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allah al-ʿAzraqi, \textit{Akhbār Makkah} (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1969), vol. 1, p. 163.

\textsuperscript{146}Ibn al-Kalbi, \textit{The Book of Idols}, op.cit., p. 23.

\textsuperscript{147}Ibid., p. 24.

wheat to it. They poured milk on it, sacrificed to it and hung ostrich eggs on it. Several accounts also mention that worshippers gave money or camels to the keeper (sādīn) of the Ka'bah when consulting Hubal for a certain prophecy. It was customary to set apart a portion of their livestock and the products of their land to their deities. For the Khawāln, who had an idol called ‘Ammanas, they used to divide their crops and animals between their idols and God, as stated in the Qur'ān (6: 136). However they were not fair in the division as they gave priority to their idols: if any of God’s portion which they had earmarked for him came into their idols’ portion they would leave it to them; but if any of their idols’ portion was in God’s portion, they would return it to their idols. This practice was denounced by the Qur’ān itself (6: 136). According to the Qur’ān commentators, the act of setting apart of animals and crops itself was not reasonable, for God is the Creator and Owner of everything, and He has no partner, and so He does not need anything from His creatures.

Animal sacrifice, especially of sheep and camels, was the most common practice. In fact, the Arabs used to sacrifice their animals to God or to their idols either in fulfillment of a vow or as an expression of gratitude to the deities for the increase of their animals. Ibn al-Kalbi recounted that the Prophet Muḥammad said that in pre-Islamic times when he used to follow the religion of his people, he made an offering of a white sheep to al-‘Uzzā. Another passage from Ibn al-Kalbi implies that the flesh of sacrificial animals was divided among the worshippers present at the ceremony. The animals which they offered and slaughtered before the idols were called ‘atā’īr (sing. ‘atīrah) (sacrifices), and the place where those animals were

149Al-Azraqī, Akhbār Makkah, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 73.
151The commentary of Jalālayn suggests that God’s portion went to the guests and the needy, whereas that for the pagan deities went to the sadānāh, the person in charge of the shrine. See Jalāl al-Dīn al-Mahallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, Tafsīr al-Jalālayn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), chapter 6: 136, p. 192.
154Ibid., p. 18.
slaughtered was called *`itr* (altar) or *ghabghab*. Apart from the sacrifice, there had been a practice of setting their animals at liberty which was also regarded as offering to their idols. Of these consecrated animals there were various sorts, each denoted by different terms, namely the afore-mentioned *baḥrāḥ*, *sā`ibah*, *waṣīlah* and *ḥām*. Those animals were not to be used for any purpose except for needy travellers who alone were allowed to drink their milk. The animals were pastured in areas sacred to their deities, and generally were held inviolable. This practice, which was believed to have been invented by 'Amr b. Luḥayy of the Khuzza'ah, the same man who first introduced idolatry into Arabia, was later denounced by Islam. The heathen Arabs assumed that this practice was a part of God's teachings, but the Qur'ān (Q. 5: 103) asserts that it was their own innovated superstition.

The sacrifice of humans did not exist, and was even prevented. Ibn Ishāq recounts that once 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was about to sacrifice his son 'Abd Allāh to God at the Ka'bah in accomplishing his vow, but the Quraysh prevented him from doing so for fear that people would follow his practice and never stop bringing their sons to sacrifice them, thereby becoming a threat to human kind. Finally, after treating with divination on numerous occasions, he substituted 'Abd Allāh by a hundred camels which then were duly slaughtered and left there, and no man or wild beast was kept back from eating them. It is reasonable to say that 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, in making a vow to sacrifice one of his ten sons, was following in the tradition of Abraham who was

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155Ibid., p. 29.
157See footnote no.131. For further details, see for example, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿĀṣim*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 172-175.
158When 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib encountered the opposition of Quraysh in digging the well of Zamzam, he vowed that if he had ten sons to grow up and protect him, he would sacrifice one of them to God at the Ka'bah. After casting the arrows, the custom they used for divination, the arrow fell against 'Abd Allāh, his youngest son and the one he loved most. Presuming that this was God's decision (he was continuously praying to God whenever the custodian of the arrows cast the arrows), he took 'Abd Allāh, went up to Isāf and Nāilah, the two idols near the Ka'ba where Quraysh used to slaughter their sacrifices, took a large knife and nearly sacrificed him before the Quraysh stopped him. See Ibn Ishāq, *Ṣirat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 67.
commanded by God to sacrifice his son Ishmael\textsuperscript{160} (Q. 37: 102). Presumably, he assumed his sacrifice would be an ultimate sacrifice, as a symbol of his praise, love and obedience to God, for his sons were the most dear to him, even if Abraham did not really sacrifice his son. Furthermore no one could betray his own vow made in the name of God or the idols, a common value among them. The Qur'\'an (6: 137, 140; 81: 8-9) also notes the practice of \textit{wa'd al-banat} (the burial alive of infant daughters) at this time, but this should not be viewed as a form of human sacrifice, since the real motive of this act as noted in the Qur'\'an was fear of poverty (6: 151; 17: 31).

Among the devotional practices of the idols were some practices which were believed to be derived from the traditions of Abraham and Ishmael, such as the veneration of the Ka'bah and its circumambulation, performing of the great and lesser pilgrimage, the vigil on 'Arafah and Muzdalifah, and raising the voice in the acclamation of the name of God (\textit{ihlāl}) during the pilgrimage, and others\textsuperscript{161} but they introduced elements not belonging to them. Thus, for example, whenever Nizār, Kinānah and Quraysh raised their voice in the \textit{ihlāl}, they were accustomed to say: "At Thy service, 0 God, at Thy service! At Thy service, Thou without an associate but the associate Thou hast. Thou ownest him and what he owns."\textsuperscript{162} They used to acknowledge his unity in their cry, but at the same time associated their gods with Him, placing their affairs in His hands. In this case the Qur'\'an mentions, "And most of them do not believe in God without associating others with Him" (Q. 12: 106). In other words, they do not acknowledge His unity through the knowledge of His rightful


\textsuperscript{161}According to some western scholars, such ceremonies, as Muir expressed, "have no conceivable connection with Abraham or with the ideas which his descendants would be likely to inherit from him, but were originated in causes foreign to the country chiefly occupied by the children of Abraham; they were strictly local; or, in so far as based on the idolatry prevailing in the south, were imported by immigrants from the Yemen." See William Muir, \textit{The Life of Mohammad} (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1912), p. cii. However, in the Islamic point of view, such ceremonies were definitely derived from Abraham himself, based on the Qur'\'an (2: 128) and many traditions as recorded by many scholars. Those traditions, as narrated by al-Ṭabârî (and others), mention that the ceremonies (\textit{manāṣib}) were taught to Abraham by Gabriel after completing the building of Ka'bah. See for example, al-Ṭabârî, \textit{Tārīkh al-Ṭabârî}, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 156-158; Ibn Kathîr, \textit{Taṣfīh Ibn Kathîr}, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 283-284.

dues, but they associate with Him some of his own creatures.

According to one tradition, the heathen Arabs, except the Quraysh and their descendants (who were called al-Ḥums), used to circumambulate the Ka'bah in a state of nudity.\textsuperscript{163} The reason for that might be they were obliged to perform the circumambulation by wearing a particular cloth as they should not appear before God in their ordinary garb. Ibn Ishaq recounts that the pilgrims were not allowed to go around except in the garments of the Ḥums, the rule introduced by the Quraysh.\textsuperscript{164} Hence, if anyone had not the means of getting such a cloth,\textsuperscript{165} he was obliged to perform the ceremony in a state of nudity. However, if they felt scruples when they had no Ḥums garments, they could go around in their ordinary clothes, but they had to throw them away afterwards so that neither they nor anyone else could make use of them.\textsuperscript{166} This practice was abolished by Islam after the conquest of Makkah\textsuperscript{167} by Q. 7: 31-32. Al-Dhahabi also reports that in doing circumambulation of the Kafbah, they also used to touch either the idol of Isâf or Nā‘îlah, a practice they mixed with their worship of God.

Besides worshipping God in the manner they had modified, the heathen Arabs worshipped their idols by imitating the manner they worshipped God. Several accounts recount that the heathen Arabs worshipped their idols by some practices such as


\textsuperscript{164}According to Ibn Ishaq, the Quraysh who were the guardians of the holy land had introduced many innovations to distinguish them, the people of the sanctuary, from the others and because of their arrogance and pride. Therefore they gave up the halt (\textit{wuqūf}) at ‘Arafah (otherwise they did it at Muzdalifah, according to al-Dhahabi, see al-Dhahabi, \textit{Tārīkh al-ʿIslām}, op.cit., bk. 1, p. 79) even though they recognized it was of the institutions of the pilgrimage and of the religion of Abraham; they would eat cheese made of sour milk or clarify butter while they were in the state of taboo; they would refuse to allow those outside the \textit{ḥaram} to bring food in with them when they came on the great or little pilgrimage; they could not circumambulate the house except in the garments of the Ḥums; and others. See Ibn Ishaq, \textit{Ṣirat Rasūl Allāh}, op.cit., p. 87.

\textsuperscript{165}A tradition narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim notes that the Quraysh used to give clothes to those who wanted to perform the circumambulation, and those who had not been given such cloth would circumambulate in nudity.

\textsuperscript{166}The Arabs called these clothes \textit{al-laqā} (the cast-off), see Ibn Ishaq, \textit{Ṣirat Rasūl Allāh}, op.cit., p. 88.

\textsuperscript{167}See the traditions narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā‘ī, Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad and al-Dārīmī, in "Bāb al-Ḥajj."
showing aggrandizement (ta’zīm) to them, practising veneration (fī tikāf), offering sacrifices, shaving their hair, prostrating before them, and circumambulating around them in the same way they circumambulated the Ka'bah, although they called this circumambulating circumrotation (dawār). They used to pray to their idols as well as pray to God. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, for example, in accomplishing his vow to sacrifice one of his sons, dealt with Hubal's divination before praying to God. The Qur'an states that they prayed to God only in certain circumstances, especially when they were in great danger, but turned back to their deities after God saved them (Q: 30: 33; 39: 8; 29: 65). Their worship to God, in fact, was obscured by idolatrous worship, even if they loved the idols as they loved God (2: 165). Their love of idols was somewhat clear. Whenever one purposed to set out on a journey, his last act before leaving the house would be to touch the idol in the hope of an auspicious journey; and on his return, the first thing he would do was to touch it again in gratitude for a propitious return. During the journey he would bring with him four stones: three as supports for his cooking pot, and one as his god. Showing love for the idols, they were accustomed to name their babies after the idols' name. Feeling love for the idol, Abū Uḥayḥah (Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ b. Umayyah), for example, wept upon his death fearing that al-ʿUzza would not be worshipped after his death.

However, there were some good and charitable deeds which were believed to be done for the sake of God, such as fasting and charity. It was reported that the Quraysh used to fast on the day of ʿAshūrā' during the Jāhiliyyah period and this

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168 For example, al-Dhahabi narrated on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās that the Quraysh used to venerate Buwānah, one of their idols, for a day and night in a year. See al-Dhahabi, Tārikh al-Īslām, op.cit., bk. 1, p. 80.


170 Ibid., p. 28.


172 Ibn al-Kalbi, Kitāb al-ʿAšnām, op.cit., p. 20
practice was resumed by Islam until it was replaced by the fasting of Ramačan.\textsuperscript{173} The Arabs also used to practice charity such as feeding the needy, giving their camels for charitable purposes, freeing slaves, honouring guests and treating their neighbours well, the good practices they called \textit{tahannuth}.\textsuperscript{174} According to the Qur’ān, these good deeds were useless, as ashes on which the wind blows furiously on a tempestuous day (14: 18), and in the Hereafter such deeds would be as floating dust scattered about (25: 23). However, they would get the reward for such deeds if they became Muslim after the advent of Islam.\textsuperscript{175}

The Islamic System of ‘\textit{Ibādah}

As the main purpose of the creation of mankind, ‘\textit{Ibādah} has its own system and method established in Islam as the right approach of man to God. The Prophet eradicated various erroneous forms of worship in the period of Jāhiliyyah and taught the manner of worshipping God.\textsuperscript{176} Throughout the twenty-three years of his prophethood, the Prophet Muḥammad, inspired by God, instituted a specific practical system of ‘\textit{Ibādah} which constitutes an important part of the basic Islamic system as

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{172}Tradition reported by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Abū Dāwūd, Mālik and al-Dārimi. See for example, al-Bukhārī, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī}, in "Kitāb al-Ṣawm," 1760; Muslim, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim}, in "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 1898 and 1900.
  \item \textsuperscript{174}Tradition reported by al-Bukhārī, Muslim and Aḥmad. See for example, al-Bukhārī, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī}, in "Kitāb al-Imān," 1346, 2068, 2353, 5533; Muslim, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim}, in "Kitāb al-Imān," 175, 176, 177.
  \item \textsuperscript{176}Al-Bukhārī, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī}, in "Kitāb al-Imān," 1346.
\end{itemize}

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\textsuperscript{173}There were some ‘\textit{Ibādāt} in the period of Jāhiliyyah that were retained, corrected and modified by Islam, such as fasting, pilgrimage, sacrifice and others. It is known that the teachings of Islam preached by the Prophet Muḥammad which denounced the varied false worships in the pre-Islamic period that were based on polytheism, especially the idolatrous ones, did not totally reject all the Jāhiliyyah’s system which had been established over centuries. Islam’s denunciation was only on the deviations of faith, heresies, wrongdoings and evil deeds of the Jāhiliyyah. Islam preserved the good values and virtuous principles which were compatible with its teachings, and even, adopted some of them that were considered to be Abrahamic legacies. It is noteworthy that among the objectives of the advent of Islam is to resurrect the religion of Abraham which almost vanished at the time (see Q. 3: 95; 6: 161; 16: 123). Therefore, in that case, Islam should not be viewed as adopted the Jāhiliyyah’s system, but from the origin of the Jāhiliyyah’s system, i.e. the traditions of Abraham. See the commentary of al-Qurtubi on Q. 16: 123 in his al-\textit{Jāmi‘ il-Ahkām al-Qur’ān}, op.cit., vol. 10, p. 130, and the commentary of Ibn Kathir on 6: 161 in his \textit{Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Āzīm}, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 317.
found in the Qur‘ān and Sunnah.

As has been mentioned before, the system of Islam consists of two basic elements: faith (‘aqīdah) and canonical law (Sharī‘ah). ‘Ibādah or ‘ibādāt, the usual word used in the treatises of jurisprudence (fiqh), is a sub-system of Sharī‘ah. Sharī‘ah, as expounded by scholars and jurists, can be divided into several divisions, namely ‘ibādāt, mu‘āmalāt, munākahāt and jināyāt. In the works on law or jurisprudence (fiqh), ‘ibādah is often referred to as the ordinances of divine worship, i.e. the specific prescribed rites by which mankind expresses his creatureliness, submissiveness and obedience to God. Some are obligatory (fard or wājib), while the others are supererogatory (sunnah, mandūb or nāfilah).

‘Ibādah: Obligatory and Supererogatory

There are four basic obligatory acts of ‘ibádah, which, together with the confession of faith (shahádah), constitute the pillars of Islam, namely, prayers (ṣalāh), almsgiving (zakāh), fasting during Ramaḍān (ṣiyām Ramaḍān) and pilgrimage (hajj). The confession of faith is commonly dealt with in the science of Kalām, while the other four pillars are referred to as the fundamentals of ‘ibādah, which are classed, together with ritual purification (ṭahārah) in the section of ‘ibādāt, the first section in the writing of fiqh books. Although the whole system of Islam consisting of the matters of faith and Sharī‘ah is also perceived as ‘ibādāt generally, the four pillars are the very basic ‘ibādāt that act as the framework of the structure of Islam.

These compulsory ‘ibādāt are the first and foremost duty after the confession of faith, which must be observed by every single person professing to be a Muslim as they are the basic means by which one manifests submissiveness, humbleness and

177 No definite division of Sharī‘ah has been classified by scholars. The formal classification is, ‘ibādāt, mu‘āmalāt and ‘uqūbāt. See Joseph Schacht, “Sharī‘a”, in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. IV, p. 321.

obedience to God, and acknowledges His oneness and sovereignty. Each act of 'ibādāt has its own particular manner of accomplishment taught by the Prophet Muḥammad, and each has its own significance and meaning mentioned in the Qurʾān and Sunnah which should be appreciated by every Muslim.179

Apart from the obligatory 'ibādāt, Islam has also prescribed supererogatory 'ibādāt consisting of various type of prayers, fasting, charity, remembrance and supplication. The obligatory 'ibādāt, as depicted by al-Ghazzālī, are "the capital on which the trading activities are based and through which man comes to safety," while the supererogatory 'ibādāt are "the profit which gives a man a higher degree of success."180 The Prophet Muḥammad said that God says:

"Nothing brings men nearer to Me like the performance of what I made obligatory for them; and through works of supererogation My servant comes ever nearer to Me until I love him, and when I have bestowed My love on him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his tongue with which he speaks, his hand with which he grasps, and his foot with which he walks."181

'Ibādāt, whether obligatory or supererogatory, are not limited to such rituals, but include every good deed done in obedience to and for the pleasure of God. 'Ibādāt can be prayer, fasting, remembrance and so on, and it can be others such as good behaviour, reverence to parents, good relationship with others, trustworthiness, commanding the good and forbidding evil, jihad and etc., which the Qurʾān mentions as 'amal ṣāliḥ, bi'r, khayr, ḥasanah or suchlike terms:

"Whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, he should work righteous works (ʾamal ṣāliḥ), and he should not associate any partner in the worship of his Lord" (19: 110).

"It is not righteousness (al-bi'r) that you turn your faces towards east or west, but righteousness is the one who believes in God, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book and the Prophets; and gives his wealth, in spite of


love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, to the poor, to the wayfarer, to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and performs prayer; gives alms; and who fulfil their covenant when they make it; and who are patient in tribulation and adversity, and the time of stress. Such are the people of the truth and they are the pious (al-muttaqûn)” (2: 177).

“And whatever good (khayr) you send before you for yourselves, you will certainly find it with God, better and greater in reward” (73: 20).

“Whoever brings a good deed (hasanah) will have better than its worth, and they will be safe from the terror on that Day” (27: 89).

Such terms may have their own specific meanings, but signify and share the principal meaning of good deeds accomplished in accordance with the law of God and to seek His pleasure,182 which is the meaning that is incorporated in the meaning of ‘ibādah itself, i.e. what God loves and is pleased with.183

In the wide range of ‘ibādat, there are some types apart from the four pillars of Islam, which have been specially highlighted in the Sunnah. Invocation (du‘ ā’), for instance, is epitomized as the core of ‘ibādah. The Prophet Muḥammad said: “Invocation (al-du‘ ā’) is the brain (mukhkh) of ‘ibādah.”184 In another ḥadīth, it is referred to as ‘ibādah itself: “Indeed, invocation (al-du‘ ā’) is ‘ibādah.”185 In the relationship between Muslims, good opinion (ḥusn al-ẓann) is regarded as good ‘ibādah. The Prophet said: “Good opinion is a part of good ‘ibādah.”186 Jihad, the culmination of Islam,187 can be regarded as the highest ‘ibādah as signified in the


183Mawdūdī, al-Mustalahat al-Arbdah, op.cit., p. 34.


187Based on the ḥadîth: “The ‘head’ (ra’s) of business (al-amr) is Islam, its pillars is Prayer (ṣalâh), and its culmination (dhihrwat sanā‘înîh) is jihad.” See Sunan al-Tirmidhî, in ‘Kitâb al-İmân,’ 2541; Sunan Ibn Mâjah, in ‘Kitâb al-Fitan,’ 3963; al-Musnad, in ‘Musnad al-Anşârî,’ 21008, 21036, 21054 & 21106.
hadith: "One's position in the row (ṣaff) in the way of God (jihad) is better than sixty years of `ibādah." 188 Jihad is also considered as the best action after faith (īmān). The Prophet was asked about the best action (ʿamal), and he answered: "Belief (īmān) in God and His Messenger." He was asked again: "What is next?" The Prophet answered: "Jihad in the way of God." 189 These particular ʿibādāt could be perceived, perhaps, as the supporters of the structure of Islam in maintaining the relationship with God, perpetuating the relationship with human beings, and preserving the teachings of Islam.

ʿIbādah in the System of Islam

Sometimes, the scholars tend to regard the whole system of Islam or dīn as ʿibādah, 190 as signified by their respective meaning, i.e. submissiveness (khudah) and humbleness (tadhallul), 191 which is also meant by ʿibādah. The natural result of the submissiveness and humbleness is that all one's activities should conform to the instructions of the One to whom one is submitting, i.e. God. Besides, the meaning of ʿibādah also demands the obedience to all of God's law, i.e. to follow at every step in one's life, the law laid down by God and reject all other laws conflicting with His law. By doing so his entire life will transform into a life of ʿibādah, and in such a life every single action, including what are usually considered secular or worldly actions will become ʿibādah, provided that they are done in the limits set by God of permissible and

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188See Sunan al-Dārīmī, in 'Kitāb al-Jihād,' 2289.


191Islam' comes from the word astama which means to submit, while dīn is derived from the word dāna that means to humble. See E. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, op.cit., bk. 1, pt. III, p. 938. In the Islamic literature, Islam and dīn are used interchangeably to mean the corpus of obligatory prescriptions given by God, to which one must submit. See the articles "Islam" and "Din" in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. II, p. 293, vol. IV, p. 171.
forbidden things.¹⁹²

Many traditions mention that certain deeds will be rewarded, implying that they are part of 'ibādah. For instance, decent work is considered in Islam a type of 'ibādah. The Prophet Muḥammad said: "Whoever finds himself at nightfall tired from his work, God will forgive his sins."¹⁹³ Seeking knowledge is regarded as one of the highest types of 'ibādah. The Prophet Muḥammad said: "Seeking knowledge is obligatory (fard 'āla) for every Muslim."¹⁹⁴ In another saying he said: "Seeking knowledge for one hour is better than praying for seventy years."¹⁹⁵ Social courtesy and cooperation are part of 'ibādah when done for the sake of God as the Prophet told: "Receiving your friend with a smile is a type of charity, helping a person to load his animal is a charity and putting some water in your neighbour's bucket is a charity."¹⁹⁶ It is worth noting that even performing one's duty is considered a sort of worship. The Prophet Muḥammad said that whatever one spends for his family is a type of charity, and he will be rewarded if he acquires it through legal means.¹⁹⁷ In fact, according to the Prophet, having sexual intercourse with a legal partner is also regarded as 'ibādah. The Companions asked the Prophet: "How are we going to be rewarded for doing something we enjoy very much?" The Prophet asked them: "Suppose you satisfy your desires illegally; don't you think that you will be punished for that?" They replied: "Yes." He said: "So, by satisfying it legally with your wives you are rewarded for it."¹⁹⁸ The concept of 'ibādah in Islam is comprehensive, which includes all the good deeds of an individual. This of course is in agreement with the all inclusive nature of Islam as a way of life which regulates human life at all levels:


¹⁹³Narrated by al-Bayhaqī, see Sunan al-Kubrā, in "Kitāb al-Film", 233.


¹⁹⁵As narrated in İhyā', op.cit., vol. 1, p. 15.

¹⁹⁶See Sunan al-Tirmidhī, in "Kitāb al-Bīr wa al-Şilah" 1879.

¹⁹⁷Narrated by al-Ṭabrānī, as quoted by al-Qaraḍāwī in al-İbādah, op.cit., p. 64.

individual, social, economic, political and spiritual.

This is the utmost objective of Islamic teachings, i.e. to call human beings to the total worship of God, which is symbolized in the declaration of faith, 'Lā ilāha illsa Allāh' - 'There is no god but God.' The Qur'ān says:

"Say, my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are for the Lord of worlds. He has no associate. I have been commanded this, and I am the foremost to be among the submitters" (6: 162 - 163).

"The command (al-ḥukm) belongs to God alone. He commands you not to worship anyone except Him. This is the right way of life." (12: 40).

The practical interpretation of the declaration of faith, according to the scholars, is the foundation of a Muslim community. Thus, the declaration of faith provides the foundation for a complete system of life in all its detail. To quote Sayyid Quṭḥ: 199

"If the system of life is constructed on some other foundation, or if other sources are mixed with this foundation, then that community cannot be considered Islamic. The distinctive feature of a Muslim community is: that in all its affairs, it is based on worship (ʿubūdiyyah) of God alone. The declaration of faith expresses this principle and determines its character: in beliefs, in devotional acts (tāwūbūdiyyah), and in rules and regulations, this declaration takes a concrete form... anyone who derives laws from a source other than God, in a way other than what He taught us through the Prophet, does not worship God alone... In this society, the beliefs and ideas of individuals, their religious observances and ʿibāḍah, their social system and laws, are all based on the submission to God alone. If this attitude is eliminated from any of these aspects, the whole of Islam is eliminated, as the first pillar of Islam is eliminated..."

Hence, ʿibāḍah does not mean merely to worship God in the form of rituals, but it means to worship God in all realms of life by following His law, i.e. the whole system of Islam. Islam, being a way of life, requires that its followers model their life according to its teachings in every aspect, religious or otherwise. Worshipping God in rituals without obeying the rest of His law, according to the scholars, would be polytheism (shīrk) in His worship. 200 The Qur'ān states:

"It is not for a believer, man or woman, when God and His Messenger have

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200 Ibid., p. 94; al-Qaraḍāwī, al-ʿibāḍah fi al-Īslām, op.cit., p. 54.
decree a matter, that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys God and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a clear error” (33: 36).

"Are there associates of God who have made permissible for them in their religion that which God has permitted?” (42: 21).

The Simple Classification of ‘ibādah

Inasmuch as the realm of ‘ibādah in Islam is large, scholars tend to classify it into several sub-categories. In traditional Islamic treatises, the classification of ‘ibādah is found more in the fiqh books, which normally commence with the section of purity (bāb al-tahārah), followed by the section of ‘ibādat comprising the four main compulsory rituals, namely prayers, fasting, alms, and pilgrimage. In connection with these rituals, the supererogatory ‘ibādat relating to them such as voluntary prayers, funerals (jana'iz), voluntary fasting and others, are also discussed. They are also accompanied by other supererogatory ‘ibādat such as spiritual retreat (al-iftikāf), reciting the Qur’ān, supplication and remembrance, ritual slaughter (al-dhabā’ih), vows (al-nudhūr) and oaths (al-ayman). Jihad, sometimes, is also included in the section of ‘ibādat.201

In modern Islamic literature, in addition to the established traditional fiqh’s classification, ‘ibādat is classified into several divisions. The most common classification is based on its rules (ḥukm). There are three categories based on this method of classification. The categories are: (i) obligatory; (ii) supererogatory; (iii) collective duty (fard kifāyah). The obligatory ‘ibādat consists of the four pillars of Islam; while the supererogatory ‘ibādat are many such as invocation, remembrance, charity, trustworthiness, fulfilling promises and all good deeds. The collective duty type of ‘ibādat includes funerals (tajhīz al-māiyīt) and jihad.202


Another classification is based on its physical form. In this classification, \( 'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \) is divided into two categories, viz. (i) external \( 'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \ (\text{'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \ z\ddot{a}hiriyyah}) \), which are oral or practical, or abstentional, such as recitation of the Qur\'an, invocation, prayers and fasting, and; (ii) internal \( 'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \ (\text{'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \ ba\c{t}iniyyah}) \) which find its place in one\'s heart such as faith, love to God, trust in God (tawakkul) and fear (khawf) of Him.\(^{203}\)

A further classification is made concerning the relationship with God and the relationship with human beings. \( 'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \) concerning the relationship with God are known as private \( 'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \ (\text{'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \ khususiyyah}) \), such as the four pillars of Islam, invocation, remembrance and repentance (tawbah); whilst \( 'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \) concerning the relationship with humans are known as general \( 'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \ (\text{'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}t \ umumiyyah}) \), which pertain to the matters of politics, law, economics, society, education, jihad and etc.\(^{204}\)

There are some other classifications made by scholars using different terminologies. However, whatever the classification may be, the concerns are the same. Though this discussion is to give a clear picture of the general concept of \( 'ib\ddot{a}d\ddot{a}h \) in Islamic perspectives, in the next discussion this study will particularly highlight on specific ritual acts of worship, including the obligatory and supererogatory ones, which have been the subject of debate between the reformists and the traditionalists in Malaysia.

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\(^{203}\)See for example, Ibn al-Qayyim, \textit{Mift\'ah D\'ar al-S\'a\d{a} dah} (Riy\d{a}d: Maktabat al-Riy\d{a}d al-Hadithah, n. d.), vol. 1, p. 293; Mu\c{h}ammad b. \textasciitilde\Abd al-Wahh\d{a}b, \textit{Majm\'\u{u}\'at al-Taw\f{\i}h\d{\d{o}}}, op.cit., pp. 235-236; T. M. Hasbi Ashshiddieqy, \textit{Kuliah Ibadah} (Batu Caves, [Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia]): Thinkers Library, 1994), pp. 15-18.

\(^{204}\)See Mu\c{h}ammad al-Mub\d{a}rak, \textit{Niz\'\u{a}m al-Isl\'\u{a}m}, op.cit., p. 364.
Perceptions Regarding the Shahādah (Profession of Faith)

As the first pillar of Islam, the traditionalists and the reformists regard the shahādah - *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh, Muḥammad-ur-Rasūl-Allāh* - "There is no god but God and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God" - as a matter of the uttermost importance for a Muslim. It is also the basis that differentiates a Muslim from non-Muslim. However, their approaches to the shahādah are somewhat different. According to the traditionalists, every human being who has a sound mind (*aqīl*) and is mature (*bālīgh*) is obliged to be a Muslim by uttering the shahādah; and one who is already a Muslim must utter the shahādah at least five times a day, i.e. in the last salutation to God (*al-tahiyyah al-akhirah*) of the five obligatory prayers.¹ To utter the shahādah one must "know, be convinced of, believe and testify"² two things: that there is no other god to be worshipped but God; and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God. To appreciate the former, one should firstly know God through His perfect attributes, especially the 'Twenty Attributes' (*sifat duai puluh*) of God³ as taught in the *Umm al-Barāhin* of al-

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² Ibid., p. 2.

³ The 'Twenty Attributes of God' are classified into four categories, namely: 1. *Ṣifah Nafsīyah* (Obligatory Attribute for the Essence of God) which consists of one attribute i.e. *Wujūd* (Existence); 2. *Ṣifah Saḫībiyyah* (Attributes that deny undeserved qualities for His Essence) which comprises five attributes, namely: *Qidām* (Sempiternity - Infinite Pre-Existence), *Baqā’* (Everlasting), *Mukhāṣafatuh-ú li-al-bawādīth* (Different from created things), *Qiyāmu-ú bi-nafsíh* (Self-Existence - Independence), *Wābdāniyyah* (Oneness); 3. *Ṣifah Ma‘ṣūm* (The Attributes that exist in the Existence of God), which consists of seven attributes, namely: *Qudrah* (Omnipotence), *Irādah* (Will), *‘Ilm* (Knowledge), *Ḥayāh* (Life), *Ṣamā* (Listening), *Baqār* (Sight) and *Kala‘m* (Speaking); 4. *Ṣifah Ma‘nawīyyah* (The Confirmed Attributes of the God's) which also consists seven attributes: *Qādir* (Omnipotent), *Murād* (Having Will), *Ṣālim* (Having (continued...)}
Sanūsī; and to appreciate the latter, one should know the 'three qualities' of the Messenger of God as taught also by al-Sanūsī’s Umm al-Barāhīn. The traditionalists believe that the doctrine of Twenty Attributes of God and Three Qualities of God’s Messenger are the basis and prerequisite of the shahādah.

For the traditionalists, the meaning of the first part of shahādah - Lā ilāh-a illa-Allāh (There is no god but God) - is understood as follows: The meaning of ulūhiyyah is the independence (istiqhna’) of God from others and the dependence (iftiqar) of others to God. Therefore, Lā ilāh-a illa-Allāh means Lā mustaghniy-a an kulli mā siwāh wa muftaqirun ilayh kullu mā’adāh illa-Allāh - that there is no one who is independent from the others, and is depended on by the others except God. The phrase Lā ilāh-a illa-Allāh consists of two elements: denial (nafy) and confirmation (ithbat), i.e. denying everything from being god (ilāh); and confirming only God is god (ilāh). This phrase also manifests the reality (ḥaqiqah) of God, which can be described by these phrases: Layṣa mustahiqq li-al-ṣibādah ghayru Allāh (There is no one who is worthy to be worshipped except God); Layṣa ma’būd bi-ḥaqq ghayr Allāh (There is no one who is really worshipped except God); Layṣa waṣīl al-wujūd al-mustahiqq li-al-ṣibādah ghayr Allāh (There is no one who obligatorily exists who is

1[...continued]
Knowledge), Ḥayy (Alive), Sami (Hearing), Başır (Hearing Discernment) and Mutakallim (Speaker). See for example, Muhammad Zain b. Faqih Jalaluddin Ashi, Bidayat al-Hidayah Sharḥ Matn Umm al-Barāhīn (Pulau Pinang: Percetakan al-Macarif, no date), pp. 6-14; Ismail b. Abdul Mutalib Ashi, Hidayah al-Awām (Pulau Pinang: Dar al-Macarif, no date) pp. 4-5; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, Maṣla al-Badrayn wa Majma’ al-Bahrayn (Bangkok: Maktabah al-Nahdi, no date), pp. 5-8.


4As elaborated by Daud Fatani regarding the Shahadah. See Sullam al-Mubtadi, op.cit., p. 3.

5Muhammad Zain Ashi, Bidayat al-Hidayah, op.cit., p. 28; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, Maṣla al-Badrayn, op.cit., p. 9.

6Muhammad Zain Ashi, Bidayat al-Hidayah, op.cit., p. 28; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, Maṣla al-Badrayn, op.cit., p. 9.

7Muhammad Zain Ashi, Bidayat al-Hidayah, op.cit., p. 28; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, Maṣla al-Badrayn, op.cit., p. 9.

worthy to be worshipped except God). All these meanings, according to the traditionalists, should be present in one’s heart when uttering the *shahādah*.9

To simplify the matter, the traditionalists have lined up four pillars (*arkān*) for the *shahādah*, namely:10 1. To confirm (*ithbāt*) the essence (*dhāt*) of God; 2. To confirm the attributes (*ṣifāt*) of God; 3. To confirm the actions (*afāl*) of God; 4. To confirm the truth of the Messenger of God.11

The reformists, however, are apparently not in favour of the traditionalists’ approach which emphasizes the doctrine of the Twenty Attributes of God in the *shahādah*. The reformists disagree with the method of teaching of the doctrine which they claim is confusing, bothering and fails to build a strong faith in the Muslim community.12 To relate the *shahādah* only with the understanding of the Twenty Attributes of God and the Three Qualities of the Messenger is unwise as the *shahādah* has a wide meaning which comprehends the meaning of Islam and *īmān*. The *shahādah*, according to the reformists, is the ‘Word of Islam’ (*Kalimat al-Īslām*) by which one is not considered a Muslim until he knows its meanings, agrees with it, and obeys to do what is obliged to him. It is also the ‘Word of Sincerity’ (*Kalimat al-Ikhlās*) that denies polytheism (*shirk*); and the ‘Word of Devoutness’ (*Kalimat al-Taqwā*) which saves the speaker from polytheism.13

The reformists’ approach in appreciating the *shahādah* is similar to the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb which are, as they claim, based on the Qur’ān, the Sunnah and the way pioneered by the Salaf al-Ṣāliḥīn.

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9Ibid., pp. 28, 30.


11This four pillars are usually counted alongside the pillars of *īmān* and the pillars of Islam which altogether constitute Fifteen Pillars of Religion. See Ibid.


13See for example, leaflets published by the Persatuan al-İslah Perlis regarding ‘Sharat-sharat Shahādah’ no. 1-10, no date. The leaflets are published weekly, during the public lecture on every Friday morning. The content of the leaflets is referred mainly to the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. See also, Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, edited by Muḥammad Rashid Rīḍā (Egypt: Maktabah al-Manār, 1346H), pp. 172-173.
(Pious Forefathers). This is clearly shown in the teaching of the Oneness of God (tawḥīd) which is classified into three types: Tawḥīd al-Rububiyah (The Oneness of Lordship); Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah al-ʿUbūdiyyah (The Oneness of Servitude); and Tawḥīd al-Asmāʾ wa al-Šifāt (The Oneness of God’s names and attributes). Such a teaching is known to be associated with Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, Muhammad b. Ṣād al-Wahhāb and suchlike persons who are of the salafi madhhab as found in their writings.14

Such a teaching of Tawḥīd is also regarded as a prerequisite of the shahādah as it is a way to know God. To be more specific, the reformists have propounded seven simple conditions (shurūṭ) of the shahādah, namely: 1. Knowing the meaning (ʿilm) of the shahādah in its sense of denying and confirming (nafṣ wa ithbāt); 2. Being convinced (yaqīn) without any doubt of what is understood of the meaning of the shahādah; 3. Being sincere (ikhlas) about what is professed; 4. Being honest (ṣiddq), free from hypocrisy (nifāq); 5. Having love (mahabbah) for the shahādah and what is indicated by it; 6. Obeying (inqiyād) the rights (ḥuquq) of the shahādah which includes the obligatory deeds (al-ʿamāl al-wājibah), with sincerity and to please God; 7. Agreeing (qabūl) with its meaning.15 Everyone who utters the shahādah must possess all these conditions, otherwise it will not benefit him.16

Perceptions Regarding Matters Pertaining to Prayer (Ṣalāh)

Nullity of Ablution - Touching (Mulāmasah)

The issue of touching (mulāmasah) - whether it nullifies one’s ablution or not - is one

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of the questions about which there is dispute (masāʾil khilāfiyyah) among the jurists (fuqahāʾ). In the Malaysian context, this issue has been the cause of long polemic between the firmly-established traditionalists, the exponents of the Shāfiʿīte madhhab, and the reformists, the challengers of traditionalism.

According to the Shāfiʿī madhhab, touching (mulāmasah) the skin of someone of the opposite sex, whether with desire (shahwah) or not, purposely or otherwise, is regarded to be a cause of the nullification of one’s ablution.17 This is the law (ḥukm) that is strongly adopted by the traditional Malay Muslim scholars which also has been observed by the Malays in general. To be more specific, the law states that the ablution will be nullified by the direct contact of a man’s skin to a woman’s skin or vice versa, to whom he or she is not a relative (ajnabī) and to whom marriage is not forbidden (ghayr al-mahram), notwithstanding the elderly and even the deceased.17 Both parties, the toucher and the touched person are affected. However, touching whether with desire or otherwise parts such as the hair, nails or teeth does not nullify the ablution for they are different from the skin. This is similar with the case of feeling of desire without touching, which does not nullify the ablation as the desire is only in the heart, and not shown by action.18

The reason for the nullity of ablation is that the touching is identified as a

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18Direct contact means without obstruction (ḥāʾil) such as cloth. If touching is over the cloth, thick or thin, accompanied with desire or not, it does not nullify the ablution as it does not contact the skin. The term man and woman signifies male (dhakar) and female (unṭha) who are mature in age (bālīgh) and commonly have desire (shahwah) for the opposite sex, so that a boy’s touching a girl or vice versa will not nullify the ablation for the absence of possibility of desire (maqīnaṭ al-shahwah). The term unmarrigeable (mahram) means a person whom one is prohibited from marrying because of lineage (nasab), foster relationship (raqf) or marriage relationship (musāḥarah). See Al-Shirāzī, al-Muhadhdhab, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 24; al-Bajūrī, Ḥāshiyat al-Bajūrī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 71. See also Muhammad Arshad Banjari, Sabīl al-Muhtadān, op.cit., pp. 91-93; Daud Fatani, Buqyhat al-Tullāb, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 35-37; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, Wishāḥ al-Afrāḥ (Penang: al-Māʿārif, no date), p. 14; idem, Maṭla al-Badrāyn (Bangkok: Maktabah al-Nahdī, no date), p. 20.

source of sexual pleasure (al-taladhdhudh) that leads to desire (al-shahwah), a circumstance which is not worthy for those who are in a state of purity (al-mutaţahhirûn).19 The proof of this law is the verses of the Qur’ân (4: 43 & 5: 6) mentioning the legitimacy of tayammum (rubbing with clean sand or earth) instead of ablution:

"And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from offices of nature (al-ghâ’în), or you have been in contact with women (lâmastum al-nisâ’), and you find no water, then perform tayammum with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands."

In the Shâfi‘i’s point of view, the mulâmasah mentioned in the verse denotes its real lexical meaning, i.e. touching by hand (al-jass bi-al-yad), or kissing (al-qublah), or skin contact (mulâqât al-basharatayn), not sexual intercourse (jimâ). The reading of ʿHamzah and al-Kisâ‘î, "lamastum al-nisâ’" (you touched your wives),20 is a clue that strengthens this meaning, for lams shows a clear meaning of touching by hand.21

This law is also based on a tradition of the Companions (athar) narrated by Mâlik22 that ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar is reported to have said: "A man’s kissing of his wife, and his touching with his hand, are included in "touching" (mulâmasah). Whoever kisses his wife or touches her with his hand, is obliged to perform ablution." ʿAbd Allâh b. Mas‘ûd is also reported to have had the same opinion.23

The reformists’ standpoint on this issue is seemingly in total contradiction to the traditionalists’ viewpoint. They affirm the Ḥanafis’ opinion that touching does not nullify ablution24 for several reasons which can be summarized as follows:

19Muhammad Arshad Banjari, Sabâl al-Muhtadîn, op.cit., p. 91.
23Al-Shâfi‘î, al-Umm, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 75; see also, Mâlik, al-Muwatâţa’, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 44.
a. The "touching" (mulāmasah) mentioned in the Q: 4: 43 & 5: 6 means sexual intercourse, not touching by hand, or kissing, or skin contact. The word lāmāsa in the verse itself hints at this meaning: that lāmāsa is of the form fa'ala which indicates mutual action between two parties, unlike the word lamasawhich is of the form fa'ala which signifies single side action. Therefore, what is meant by lāmāsa - mutual touching - in its usual sense is definitely sexual intercourse, not just any touching.

b. Furthermore, if skin contact nullifies ablution, then touching the skin of one's next of kin such as mothers, sisters and daughters, would also nullify the ablution, for the word al-nisā' (women) in the verses does not differentiate between women to whom marriage is forbidden (mahram) and women to whom marriage is allowed (ghayr al-mahram).

c. If the "touching" (mulāmasah) mentioned in the two verses is understood as skin contact, it could also be understood as indirect contact, i.e. touching women's clothes, for the verses do not differentiate between touching women's skin and touching them over their clothes, and this is a judgement that all are agreed is invalid.

d. There are several Prophetic traditions which signify that skin contact does not nullify ablution. Among them are:

"Ā'ishah said: The Prophet used to kiss some of his wives, and then perform prayer without redoing ablution."

"Ā'ishah said that the Prophet kissed her while he was fasting and said: 'Indeed, this kissing does not nullify ablution and does not break one's..."
"A'ishah said: I used to sleep in front of the Prophet (while he was praying) while my legs were opposite his qiblah. And in prostration he pushed my legs and I withdrew then and when he stood, I stretched them. In those days the houses were without lights."

"A'ishah said: One night I missed the Messenger of God from the bed, and when I sought him my hand touched the soles of his feet while he was in the state of prostration; they (feet) were raised..."

These traditions, according to the reformists, clearly show that touching does not nullify ablution.

Whatever the reformists' arguments are, the traditionalists insist that the "touching" (mulâmasah) mentioned in the two verses must be regarded as denoting its real meaning and not its metaphorical meaning (majâzî) since every word is understood to be used in its original meaning unless there is a contrary indication. Concerning the traditions of the Prophet's kissing his wives, the traditionalists affirm the Shâfi'îs' position that these traditions are weak (qa'î) or incompletely transmitted (mursal) and should not be considered as strong proofs. Furthermore, the traditions mentioning the Prophet's touching "A'ishah's foot and "A'ishah's touching the Prophet's foot should be understood to mean that the touching was over an obstruction (ha'il) or if not, they must be considered as referring to a special judgement for the Prophet only.

The reformists answer that although the traditions of the Prophet's kissing may be individually weak, they strengthen each other which, can be regarded, as acknowledged by the science of tradition (ilm muṣṭalâh al-ḥadîth), as 'good by virtue of others' (ḥasan li-ghayrih). To understand that "A'ishah, in the other sound


tradition, touched the Prophet's foot over an obstruction (ha'il) or that this was a special judgement for the Prophet cannot be acknowledged as there is no evidence that proves this.\textsuperscript{34}

In holding their view, the traditionalists encounter a problem during circumambulation (tawaf) around the Ka'bah while performing hajj or 'umrah as they are exposed to a lot of unavoidable touching from the crowds of people who are circumambulating the Ka'bah. To sort out this problem, they have identified three possible solutions. Firstly, they can temporarily leave the Shafi'i madhab in this case and accept the judgement of the other madhabs (i.e. the Hanafi, Maliki, and Hanbali madhabs) which maintain that mere touching never nullifies ablution.\textsuperscript{35} This practice is permissible in case of difficulty (mashaqqah), and some scholars even allow that people should follow the law of the madhab practised in Sa'udi Arabia (i.e. the Hanbali madhab) while they are there (i.e. to practise talfiq).\textsuperscript{36} Secondly, they may hold the anonymous viewpoint in the Shafi'i madhab that touching nullifies the toucher's ablution only, not the touched person's ablution.\textsuperscript{37} Thirdly, they may hold the original viewpoint, but they need to be ultra-careful during the circumambulation. They must make every effort not to be in contact with the opposite sex; if they are touched, they must repeat their ablution.\textsuperscript{38}

However, the first solution seems to be very unpopular amongst the traditionalists as they feel it inconvenient and strange to practise another madhab's standpoint for they belong to the Shafi'i madhab. The second solution is rarely practised as it is not a definite standpoint (qawl mu'tamad) in the Shafi'i madhab. The third choice is the most popular solution. This is the way they choose and they

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., pp. 61-62.

\textsuperscript{35}This is the opinion of the Mufti of Perak, Dato' Harussani Zakaria as quoted by Mohd. Radzi Othman and O. K. Rahmat Baharuddin in Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Negeri Perlis dan Kaitannya dengan Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Negeri-negeri Lain di Malaysia (Pulau Pinang: USM, 1991), p. 278.

\textsuperscript{36}The standpoint of the Mufti of Pahang Dato' Muhammad Talb Hassan as quoted in ibid., p. 305.

\textsuperscript{37}This is the statement of the Chief Qađi of Kedah, Abdul Halim Abd Rahman and the Chief of Kedah Religious Council, Dato' Yusuf Ismail, as quoted in ibid., pp. 311-312.

\textsuperscript{38}This is a well known standpoint held by most traditionalists in Malaysia.
feel convenient with this solution, even if it is somewhat difficult to avoid touching others and to have to walk far away to the ablution centre to repeat their ablution. This difficulty is regarded as one of the difficulties which they must struggle and be patient with in order to get an accepted ḥajj (ḥajj mabrūr). This is the most satisfactory solution for those who hold the principle that the adherents of Shāfīī madhhab should stick to it as far as they are able to.

Recitations of Certain Prayers Before Adhān (The Call For Prayer)

It is a common practice among the traditionalists in Malaysia to recite certain prayers before doing adhān. Normally, the muʿadhhdhin (caller), who is known in Malaysia as Tok Bilal or Bilal39 recites the ṣalawāt ʿalā al-Nabi (blessing upon the Prophet; in Malay: selawat), followed by the the profession of faith (shahādah) and ḥawqalah, i.e. to utter "Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh (there is no power and no strength save in God)" over the mosque's loudspeakers at the beginning of every prayer time, and then doing the adhān. In the southern part of the Malay Peninsula, the Tok Bilal chants some other prayers prior to the beginning of the ʿubūd (dawn), ʿasr (afternoon) and Friday prayers. The Tok Bilal takes about twenty to thirty minutes to chant some prayers called Doa Tarḥīm, Selawat Nūriyyah, Doa Taubat and Qasidah.

The Doa Tarḥīm chanted is: "Yā arḥam al-raḥimīn rḥam-nā (O the Most Merciful of those who show mercy, have mercy on us)." The chanting of the Doa Tarḥīm is regularly repeated up to a hundred times. The Selawat Nūriyyah chanted is: "Allāhumma ṣallī wa sallīm ʿalā nūr al-anwār, wa sīr al-ʿasrār, saiyidi-nā wa maulānā Muḥammad al-mukhtār (O God, bless and have peace upon the light of the lights, and secret of the secrets, our chief and our master, Muḥammad the selected)." The Doa Taubat chanted is: "Ilāhī lastū li-al-Firdaws aḥlan wā-lā aqwā ʿalā nīr al-jaḥīm, - Allāhu - fa-hab lī tawbatan wa-gḥfir dhunūbī, fa-innaka gḥfir al-dhanb al-ʿażīn (O

39This epithet is derived from the name of first muadhdhin in Islam appointed by the Prophet Muḥammad, namely Bilāl b. Rabāḥ.

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God, I am not entitled for the Paradise, and I am not strong to be in Hell, - O God - give me repentance and forgive my sins, indeed you are the Forgiver of the great sin." These prayers are chanted numerous times until the prayer time begins. For the Friday prayer, the Tok Bilal begins his chanting of these prayers earlier besides chanting the Qasidah, i.e. the chapter of Qasidat al-Burdah written by Muḥammad al-Būṣīrī, the third chapter of the book Majmūʿ Mawlid Sharaf al-Anām, the Arabic poetry book compiled by Jaʿfar al-Barzanjī that contains praises for the Prophet Muḥammad as well as the narration of his life.

The Tok Bilal in the northern and eastern states of the Malay Peninsula appears to have a different ritual. Here, the Tok Bilal recites some verses or sūrahs of the Qurʾān over the mosque’s loudspeakers instead of chanting the prayers. If he for some reason is unable to recite the verses himself, a recorded version is played. In other places, especially in the rural areas, a special big drum called beduk placed outside the mosque is beaten in a certain manner to signal the beginning of certain prayers. The purpose of reciting the Qurʾān or chanting the prayers and Qasidah before adhān over the mosque’s loudspeakers is purportedly to remind the people that the time of prayer is about to begin, and to let them prepare themselves for the congregational prayer. It is also thought to be a distinguishing mark (ṣhāf ār) of the Muslim tradition.

The reformists denounce this practice considering it as a blameworthy innovation (bīdāʿah) which should be avoided and banned.61 The reformists affirm that this practice was never practised by the Prophet Muḥammad, his Companions, the Pious Forefathers nor has it been acknowledged by any jurists even those of the Shāfiʿī madhhab. They maintain that there is no such prayer taught by the Prophet Muḥammad before the adhān.62 They hold that the Prophet Muḥammad only taught the prayer that accompanies the adhān and the prayer after it. Among the prescribed prayers to be said by the listener of the adhān, as mentioned in the Prophetic


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traditions are: saying what is said by the \textit{mu'adhdhin} during the \textit{adhār} and reciting the \textit{al-ṣalāt `alā al-nabī} and the \textit{shahādah} after the \textit{adhān}, and lastly reciting this prayer: "\textit{Allāhumma rabba hādhīhi al-dā`awat al-tāmmah wa al-ṣalāt al-qā'imah, āti Muḥammad al-wasālata wa-faṣīlah, wā-b'ath-hu maqāman maḥmūdan alladhi wā ad-tah} (O God, Lord of this perfect call and of the prayer which is going to be established, give Muhammad the right of intercession and superiority, and send him (on the Day of Judgment) to the best and the highest place which You have promised him)."\textsuperscript{66}

For the reformists, reciting the Qur’ān and chanting the prayers over the mosque’s loudspeakers before the \textit{adhān} would not only disturb the surrounding people who may be resting or studying, and disturb the people in the mosque who are doing \textit{i`tikāf} (seclusion in a mosque for the remembrance of God) or reciting the Qur’ān\textsuperscript{67} but it would also lead the reciter to commit the sin of \textit{riyā} (proud to be seen of men) and \textit{sunnah} (seeking good reputation) which are of the lesser polytheism (\textit{al-shirk al-saghūr}).\textsuperscript{68} Furthermore, they argue, the recitation of the Qur’ān is to be understood by the reciter and not to be proud of his good recitation and melodious voice.\textsuperscript{69} The reformists further their argumentation that chanting the prayers loudly before \textit{adhān} contradicts Islamic ethics as one should not raise his voice during praying to God to be heard by other people. The Qur’ān clearly states: "Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He does not like the aggressors" (7: 55); "And remember your
Lord within yourself, humbly and with fear without loudness in words in the mornings, and in the afternoons and do not be of those who are neglectful” (7: 205).

The reformists conclude that the *adhān* is enough to remind Muslims of the prayer times, to call them for the congregational prayer, or to be a *shī'ār* of the Muslim traditions, and they need nothing else to achieve that purpose. Furthermore, they assert that adding something new in religious matters, particularly in the realm of ‘*ibādah* is regarded as *bid'ah*.

The Utterance of Intention (*Al-Talaffuẓ bi-al-Niyyah*)

It is known that intention (*niyyah*) is an obligatory pillar (*rukn*) of the prayer. Generally, scholars agree that the intention is made in the heart. However, some of them affirm that it is recommendable (*mustaḥabb*) to utter the intention as it can remind and support the heart to determine the prayer. In the Malaysian context, this opinion has been firmly adopted by the traditionalists of the Shāfiʿite *madhhab*. According to them, the intention should be uttered prior to the beginning of a prayer, i.e. before the *takbīrat-ul-iḥrām* (*takbīr* of sanctification) mentioning, alongside determination in the heart, the action and specification of the prayer: *‘Usālī fi *fard* (or *sunnah*) al-ṣaḥr (or al-ṣaʿr/ al-maghriʿ/ al-ṣiḥā/ al-ṣubh etc.), arbāʿ a ṭakāḥ (or ṭakāʿātayn/ thalāṭa ṭakāḥ etc.) *mustaqqībī al-qiblah ad-dāʾan (or qaḍāʾan), ĩmāman*.

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2This is the opinion of the majority of scholars except the Mālikis who see that uttering the intention is permissible (*jawāz*), but it is preferable (*awliā*) to omit the utterance. See Wahbah al-Ẓuhayli, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmi wa-Adillatuh*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 613.

3According to the Shāfiʿite, *niyyah* for obligatory *salāhs* should consist of three elements, namely, *qaṣd* *kiṣf* al-fīl (purpose of doing the action, i.e. the action of *salāh*); *niyyat* al-*fard* (*intention* of its obligatoriness); and *tāyīn* nawʾ al-*fard* (*specification* of the type of the obligatoriness). These elements should be clearly appeared in one’s *niyyah* of the *salāh*. It is not compulsory but recommendable to determine other specifications, namely, *al-igfāṣah ilā Allāh* (attribution to God); *istiqbaḥ al-qiblah* (Facing the Qiblah); *‘adad al-Ṭakāḥ* (the number of ṭakāḥ); *imāmiyyah* or *ma’mūniyyah* (leading or following position); and *ḥāl u-hā ad-duʿāyyan aw qaḍā’iyyan* (the condition of the *salāh* whether it is a prayer accomplished within the time or prayer that is owed). See Abū Ishaq al-Shirrāzī, *al-Muhaddithah*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 70; al-Sharbīnī al-Khatīb, *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 148, 150, 252-253.
(or ma'mūman) lillāh-i -tdala” (“I pray the obligatory zuhr - midday prayer - [or the 'asr - afternoon prayer - /the maghrib - sunset prayer - /the 'ishā' - nightfall prayer - /the şuh - dawn prayer] four rakā'āt (sing. rakā'ah - literally means bowing) (or two rak'ahs or three rak'ahs etc.) facing the direction of the qiblah (the Kā bah) within the time, (or making it up after the time) as leader (or follower) for the sake of God”).

The utterance of intention has been generally taught among Malays, and has become an accustomed practice among them. When children are taught about the prayer in a formal or informal education system, they are firstly asked to memorize the intention as an obligatory part of the prayer. When performing the prayer, they are taught to put their memorized intention into words. The nature of intention is therefore understood as a combination of determination by the heart and articulation by the tongue.

This rooted understanding and practice is deeply criticised by the reformists who simply blame the utterance of intention, known as "usalli", as bid'ah, for it has not ever been practiced by the Prophet Muhammad, his Companions, the pious Forefathers (al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ) and the four Imams of the established madhhab. This practice, they claim, is based only on superficial reason without any authoritative evidences from the Quran, the Sunnah, the practice of the Companions, ijmā', qiyaṣ and others. However, the traditionalists strongly insist that this practice has been legally approved by the scholars and widely practiced by all other Muslims; it is a well known practice and it is a good bid'ah.

There has been a long unresolved dispute between the traditionalists and the reformists regarding this issue as they hold on to their respective standpoints showing their non-compromising attitude. The traditionalists perceive that the utterance of

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the intention before a prayer is recommended for several reasons which can be summarized as follows:

a. The utterance of intention is legally approved as stated in many books as the tongue can normally help and support the heart to determine the prayer. The heart is often careless and doubtful, so it needs to be reminded by the tongue with an organized phrase depicting the action that will be done.⁶

b. The utterance of intention prior to the prayer is evident by qiyās (analogy) with the intention of the ḥajj that was uttered by the Prophet Muḥammad.⁷

c. Although the Prophet Muḥammad never uttered his intention in performing the prayer, it is a good bid'ah (bid'ah ḥasanah) which will strengthen one’s intention to perform the prayer.

d. Many scholars, including great qādīs and muftīs, hold this opinion and utter their intention before a prayer.

The traditionalists finally maintain that this issue is a question about which there is dispute (masā'il al-khilāfiyyah), and it is up to individuals to decide their own choice.

The reformists deny all these reasons arguing that:⁸

a. The traditionalist’s argument that the utterance of intention has been legally approved cannot be accepted as there is no textual evidence (dalil) which can justify the matter. The simple reason that the tongue will help reminding and

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⁷As narrated by Muslim and others that the Prophet Muḥammad said when going into ḥārām: “Here we are, O God, for doing ḥajj and ‘umrah” (Labbay-ka bi-ḥajj wa ‘umrah). See Ṣaḥḥi Muslim, in “Kitāb al-Ḥajj”, 2194, 2195.

supporting the heart is neither valid, nor reasonable and may even be a lie, as logically it is the heart which moves the tongue and the body and not vice-versa. The place of intention is in the heart, not at the tongue. It is absurd that the utterance of intention is made only for specific acts of 'ibādāt such as ablution, prayer, fasting and pilgrimage, but not for the other acts of 'ibādāt, such as almsgiving, recitation of the Qur’ān, remembrance (dhikr), invocation (duʿāʾ), call for prayer (ādhan) and others. The reason that the utterance of intention is mentioned in many books is also rejected, as books cannot be justified as the yardstick of the truth, and in fact, there are also many books that denounce the practice.

b. To use the method of qiyās in equating the prayer with hajj is void as the hajj is not similar to the prayer. The status of prayer is superior to the hajj, and it is not permissible, according to the method of qiyās in the science of jurisprudence (usūl al-fiqh), to judge a superior one by analogy with an inferior one. Furthermore, qiyās is not permissible in the matter of 'ibādah as stated by al-Shāfi’ī.9 Therefore, they question, how the traditionalists who are of the Shāfi’ite madhab can hold on to something which contradicts their leader’s principle? They further question that if qiyās in the matter of 'ibādah is permissible, why aren’t ādhan and iqāmah done before prayer for the deceased (ṣalāḥ al-janāʾiz), ʿid prayer and tarāwīh prayer, measuring them by analogy with the five obligatory prayers?; or why isn’t the Subh prayer shortened to one rakʿah during travelling, as the Zuhr, ʿAṣr and ʿIshā prayers can be shortened to two rakʿahs?10

c. Uttering the intention is not a good bidʿah. As a matter of fact, there is no good bidʿah in religious matters as stated by the Prophet: “Whoever innovates something in our business (religion) which is not in harmony with the

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principles of the religion, that thing is rejected;"11 "and every bid'ah is an error."12 The matter of 'ibādah has been completely taught by the Prophet Muḥammad, and there is no space for ijtihād. To regard an innovated thing as a good bid'ah is a serious error, as Mālik said: "Whoever innovates an innovation in Islam and finds it good, it is, as if he has assumed that the Prophet has betrayed the message of God."13

d. The source of truth is the Quran and the Sunnah. Truth cannot be measured by the long robes and big turbans of the grand scholars, qaḍis and muftīs. It is safer to follow the way pioneered by the Prophet, his Companions and the pious forefathers than following others.

The reformists further maintain that this issue is not a question about which there is dispute (masā' il al-khilāfiyyah), as it has no basis from any textual proofs (adilloh). For them, the masā' il al-khilāfiyyah occur when there are a variety of perceptions in understanding the textual proofs. This is a matter of sunnah and bid'ah, not the masā' il al-khilāfiyyah.14

Both parties hold strongly to their respective standpoints. In this case, some extreme traditionalists were misguided as they attempted to commit a lie saying that the utterance of intention is based on a sound ḥadīth of the Prophet Muḥammad allegedly narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. A book written by al-Faqīr Hārūn b. Muḥammad al-Šamadī al-Kalantānī entitled Durūs al-Tawḥīd wa al-Fiqh wa al-Taṣawwuf conveys a fabricated ḥadīth to justify the utterance of intention. The book says: "Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrated in their takhrij, from Ibn ʿUmar, that when the Apostle peace be upon him was sitting with his companions in the mosque, Fāṭimah

11See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, in 'Kitāb al-Ṣulḥ,' 2499; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, in 'Kitāb al-Aqḍiyah', 3242, 3243; Sunan Abī Dāwūd, in 'Kitāb al-Sunnah', 3990; Sunan Ibn Mājah, in 'Kitāb al-Muqaddimah', 14; al-Musnad, in 'Bāqī Musnad al-Anṣār', 23311.


13Al-Shatibi, al-ftiṣām (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kitāb al-ʿArabiyyah, no date), vol. 1. p. 49.

came asking him about 'Aṣr prayer. The Apostle said, "Say usūlār farḍ al-'aṣr arba' a
rakā'āt adā'ān li-llāhī tā' ālā. (I pray the obligatory 'Aṣr four rakā'āt within the time
for the sake of God)." This alleged ḥadīth has never been found in any authoritative
ḥadīth books, especially not in al-Bukhārī's and Muslim's Sahīh. Other books are found
to have the same fabricated ḥadīth. These books have been strongly condemned by
the reformists as they blatantly commit a "big lie" to gain support from the public
without thinking of the risks.

Pronouncing the Basmalah Before Reciting Sūrat al-Fātiḥah

The jurists disagree with the practice of pronouncing the basmalah or tasmiyah i.e.
to say Bi-ism Allah al-Rahmān al-Rahīm (In the name of God, the Beneficient, the
Merciful) before reciting Sūrat al-Fātiḥah in the prayer. The four madhhabs seem to
have different views on this case. Abū Ḥanīfah held that the basmalah should be
pronounced inaudibly (sīrr) in each rakā'ah with Sūrat al-Fātiḥah even though he did
not regard the basmalah as a verse of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah. Mālik prohibited this in the
obligatory prayers, whether loudly (jahr) or inaudibly at the beginning of Sūrat al-
Fātiḥah or any other sūrahs, but permitted it in supererogatory prayers. Al-Shāfi‘ī
affirmed that it should be pronounced aloud in the case of audible recitation and in
a whisper in the case of inaudible recitation, for the basmalah, according to him, is
a verse of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal held the same opinion as Abū Hanifah,
i.e. the basmalah should be pronounced inaudibly, but regarded the basmalah as a
verse of sūrat al-Fātiḥah.18

15See Faqir Harun b. Muhammad Samadi Kalantani, Durūs al-Tawḥīd wa al-Fiqh wa al-Taṣawwuf. (Penang:
Persama Press, no date), p. 16.
18As quoted in Wahbah al-Zuhayli, al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 646-654; Ibn Rushd,
Bidāyat al-Mujtahid (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.) vol. 1, pp. 124-125; al-Shawkānī, Nayl al-
(continued...
In Malaysia, the traditionalists strongly hold al-Shāfi‘ī’s view whilst the reformists adopt Aḥmad’s standpoint. The reasons for this disagreement are due to the disputation between the different jurists they choose to follow which can be simplified as follows:

The traditionalists base their viewpoint on al-Shāfi‘ī’s view that inasmuch as the basmalah is a verse of Sūrat al-Fātīhah, it must be pronounced according to its recitation, i.e. loudly in audible recitation (the first two rak‘ahs in Maghrib and ‘Ishā’ prayers, and in both rak‘ahs of the Ṣubḥ prayer), and inaudibly in inaudible recitation.19 Al-Shāfi‘ī held that the basmalah is the seventh verse of sūrat al-Fātīhah, and if it is abandoned, the rak‘ah of the prayer is not complete.20

There are also many Prophetic traditions indicating that the Prophet used to begin the recitation in his prayer by pronouncing the basmalah. It is narrated on the authority of Na‘īm b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Mujammir who said, "I observed prayer led by Abū Hurayrah and he recited Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm before the umm al-Qur‘ān and before the sūrah, and he pronounced takbīr while bowing and while straightening up. He then said, 'I provide you with a semblance of the prayer of the Messenger of God.'"21 Al-Shāfi‘ī narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said, "The Prophet used to begin the recitation in his prayer by pronouncing Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm."22 He also narrated from Anas b. Mālik that he said, "Mūfāwiyyah led the prayer in Madinah and he began the recitation without pronouncing Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm, and without pronouncing takbīr while bowing and straightening up. After the prayer, the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār said to him, 'O Mūfāwiyyah, you have shortened the prayer. Where was Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm and where was the takbīr when

18[...continued]


you were bowing and straightening up?" When he led the prayer again after that, he pronounced Bi-ism Allāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm and the takbīr loudly.\(^{23}\) To strengthen their view, the traditionalists eventually cite al-Shirāzī’s words that the traditions indicating the basmalah is pronounced loudly in audible prayer are also narrated on the authority of either Bukhārī, or Muslim, or both of them from six Companions of the Prophet, namely, Abū Hurayrah, Umm Salamah, Ibn ʿAbbās, Anas b. Mālik, ʿAli b. Abī Tālib and Samurah b. Jundub.\(^{24}\) They conclude, although there are some traditions that mention that the Prophet and his Companions did not pronounce the basmalah loudly, they must be interpreted that the Companions who narrated the traditions did not hear the pronunciation while the others heard it.\(^ {25}\)

The reformists, who opt for the Ḥanbalis’ standpoint on this issue, say that although the basmalah is a verse of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah, it must be pronounced inaudibly as this is what the Prophet used to do. There are a lot of Prophetic traditions that support this. Anas b. Mālik said, "I prayed behind the Prophet, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān, and I never heard them pronounce Bi-ism Allāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm."\(^ {26}\) He also narrated, "I prayed behind the Prophet, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān, and they began the recitation with al-Ḥamd li-Allāh Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn, they did not pronounce Bi-ism Allāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm either at the beginning of the recitation or at the end."\(^ {27}\) It is also narrated from Anas that he said, "I prayed behind the Prophet, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān and they never pronounced Bi-ism Allāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm loudly."\(^ {28}\) Ibn ʿAbd Allāh b. Mughaffal said, "My father heard me when I was reciting

\(^{23}\) Narrated by al-Shāfīʿī as cited in Nayl al-Awṭār, op.cit., vol 1, p 200; see also, al-Shāfīʿī, al-Umm, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 157.


\(^{25}\) As quoted in A. Hassan, Soal Jawab, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 96.

\(^{26}\) Narrated by all traditionists. See for example, Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Adhān," 701; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 605; Al-Musnad, "Kitāb Baqi Musnad al-Mukthirin," 12858.

\(^{27}\) Narrated by Muslim and Al-Jahmād. See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 606; al-Musnad, "Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirin," 13276.

\(^{28}\) Narrated by Ahmad and al-Nasāʿī. See for example, al-Musnad, "Musnad al-Mukthirin," 12380, 13406, 13284.
the *basmalah*, and said, 'O my son, beware of innovation, for I have prayed with the Messenger of God, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān, but I did not hear any of them reciting it. Therefore do not say that. If you begin the recitation, say *Al-Ḥamd li-Allāh Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn.*'  All those traditions, according to the reformists, clearly indicate that the *basmalah* should be pronounced inaudibly in all prayers.

Regarding the traditions which mention that the Prophet pronounced the *basmalah* loudly, the reformists interpret them as the Prophet’s purpose in showing the ummah that the *basmalah* is a verse of *Sūrat al-Fātīḥah*. They conclude that there are more traditions which mention that the Prophet and his Companions pronounced the *basmalah* inaudibly than there are ones mentioning otherwise. Therefore, they claim, the Prophet used to pronounce it inaudibly more often than he pronounced it loudly, so much so that some Companions assumed that the Prophet never ever pronounced it.  

The Recitation of *Qunūt* (Supplication)  in the Šubh Prayer

The issue of *qunūt* has been the cause of endless polemic between the traditionalists and the reformists in Malaysia. This is, in fact, the result of disagreement between the jurists on this issue. Abū Ḥanīfah held that reciting *qunūt* is not permitted in the Šubh prayer, and its place is in the *witr* prayer. Mālik maintained that *qunūt* is recommended for the Šubh prayer, while al-Shāfīʿī held that it is sunnah in the Šubh prayer. Aḥmad held the same opinion as Abū Ḥanīfah.  In this case, the reformists appear to be in favour of Abū Ḥanīfah and Aḥmad’s standpoint, while the

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31Originally *qunūt* means humility. *Qunūt* here means supplication during the *fitādāl* in the last rakʿah of the Šubh prayer or other prayers.

traditionalists consistently remain with al-Shafi'i’s viewpoint.

The traditionalists hold, as affirmed by the jurists of the Shafi'i madhhab, that the recitation of qunūt in the Śubh and witr prayers during the second half of Ramaḍān is recommended, for it is regarded as an important part of the prayer (sunnat al-abī ād). If it is omitted, it is recommended to be replaced by doing sujud al-sahw (prostration of forgetfulness) at the end of the prayer. The prescribed text of the qunūt, according to them, as narrated by al-Ḥākim from Abū Hurayrah, is: "O God, guide me with those You have guided, and deliver me with those You have delivered, and take me into Your charge with those You have taken into Your charge, and bless me in what You have given, and guard me from the evil of what You have decreed, You are the One who decrees, and there is no decree for You. He whom You befriend is not humbled. You are the Glorious, our Lord, and the Exalted." These words should be pronounced loudly, with both hands raised.

The reformists perceive that reciting qunūt daily in the Śubh prayer with such a text is not recommended, and if it is practised constantly, it can even lead to committing bid‘ah, since according to them, the Prophet never did such a practice, and there is no strong proof that indicates this. The discussion on this case can be described as follows:

The traditionalists base their standpoint on the following traditions:

Anas b. Mālik said: "The Apostle recited qunūt for a month for cursing the killers of his Companions at Bi‘r Ma‘ānāh, and then he omitted it. Regarding the qunūt in the Śubh prayer, he still recited qunūt until he passed away." (This tradition is considered authentic by al-Ḥākim). Al-Rabūṭ said: "A man asked Anas b. Mālik, 'Did the Messenger of God recite the qunūt for a month asking for an 'Arab tribe to be cursed?' Anas rebuked..."
him saying: "The Messenger of God never left the qunūt in the ʿṢubḥ prayer until he passed away." 36

Anas said: "I prayed behind the Messenger of God, and he never left the qunūt in the morning prayer until he passed away. And I prayed behind Abū Bakr and "Umar, and they did the same thing." 37

Al-ʿAwwām b. ʿAmrah said: "I asked Abū ʿUthmān regarding the qunūt in the ʿṢubḥ prayer and he said: 'After bowing.' I asked him again: 'From whom?' He replied: 'From Abū Bakr, "Umar and ʿUthmān.'" 38

ʿAbd Allāh al-Maʿqīl said: "Alī recited the qunūt in the ʿṢubḥ prayer." 39

Ḥasan al-Bāṣrī said: "I prayed behind twenty-eight Companions who participated in the battle of Badr, and they all recited the qunūt in the ʿṢubḥ prayer after bowing." 40

All these traditions, according to the traditionalists, indicate that the Prophet, the Rightly Guided Caliphs and his Companions never omitted the qunūt in the ʿṢubḥ prayer, and therefore, reciting the qunūt is a sunnah which should not be omitted. Regarding the opinion that there is no such qunūt in the ʿṢubḥ prayer, one traditionalist muftī said that those who perceive so might not be aware of these traditions. 41 However, the matter is not as simple as they claim because the reformists are aware of these traditions but reject the argumentation of these traditions for several reasons which can be described as follows:

a. The first and second traditions are weak (ḍairūf) in the opinion of all traditionists (muḥaddithūn), except al-Ḥākim who regards them as authentic. This is because, as formerly stated by al-Shawkānī, there is Abū Jaʿfar b. Al-Rāzī in the chain of narrators, who was identified by the traditionists as a person who had a weak memory and made a lot of mistakes, 42 and therefore,


37Narrated by Al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān, as cited in ibid.

38Narrated by al-Bayhaqi as stated in A. Hassan, Soal Jawab, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 131.

39Narrated by al-Bayhaqi and al-Ṣāfī as stated in ibid.

40Narrated by al-Ḥākim and Abū Aḥmad as cited in ibid.

41See the fatwa given by Saiyid Alwi b. Tahir Al-Haddad, the former Mufti of Johore in Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 53-54.

these traditions are regarded as weak and cannot be used as arguments. In addition to this, Anas b. Mālik himself denied that he narrated that the Prophet recited the qunūt in the ʿSubḥ prayer until he passed away. This is clearly shown by the tradition narrated by al-Khaṭīb that ʿĀṣim b. Sulaimān said to Anas: "The people claimed that the Prophet never left the qunūt in the ʿSubḥ prayer." Anas replied: "They lie, for the Prophet only recited the qunūt for a month asking God to curse a group of the polytheists."43 In the other tradition narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah on the authority of Saʿīd and Qatādah, Anas reportedly said: "The Prophet never recited the qunūt except to pray for a group of people or to ask God to curse a group of people."44 As there is a contradiction between the traditions narrated by the same person, they should not be used as arguments.45

b. The third tradition narrated by al-Hasan and Sufyān is also unacceptable as there is a person in the chain of narrators whose name is ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd, who was identified by the traditionists, such as Aḥmad, al-Nasāʾī and Ibn Hibbān, as a deceiver, a fabricator of traditions and a leader of the Qadariyyah madhhab. This tradition therefore dropped to the status of weak and cannot be used in argumentation.46

c. The fourth and fifth traditions which mention that the Rightly Guided Caliphs, recited the qunūt in the ʿSubḥ prayer, even though they are regarded as sound traditions, are still questionable as many other sound traditions indicate otherwise,47 such as these few traditions: Abū Mālik al-Ashjaʿī said to his father: "O my father, you have prayed behind the Messenger of God, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and behind ʿAli in Kūfah for a period about five years. Did

43See ibid., vol. 2, p. 340. This tradition is also narrated by al-Bukhārī with a slightly different version. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Jumʿah," 947.


they recite the *qunūt* in the Fajr prayer? His father replied: "Beware o my son, it is an innovation."48 It is also narrated that Saʿīd b. Jubayr said: "I bear witness that I heard Ibn ʿAbbās said: 'Indeed, the recitation of *qunūt* in the ʿUbūd prayer is an innovation (bidʿah)"49 Abū Mijlaz said: "I prayed the ʿUbūd prayer behind Ibn ʿUmar and he did not recite the *qunūt*. I said to him, I did not see you recite the *qunūt*. He replied: 'I do not know that from anyone of the Companions.'"50

d. The last tradition, which mentions that twenty eight of the Companions who participated in the battle of Badr recited the *qunūt* in the ʿUbūd prayer, is also unacceptable as this tradition has been regarded as weak by many traditionists including the great traditionist, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, as stated in his book *Talkhīṣ al-Khabīr*.51

The reformists furthermore assert, quoting the words of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah in his *Zād al-Māʾād*, that it is impossible that the Prophet recited the *qunūt* daily in the ʿUbūd prayer until he passed away, for if it was true, it would have been known by the whole ummah, and it would have been narrated by all the Companions in a sound way, just as in the matter of the number of obligatory prayers, the number of *rakābahs* in each prayer, etc. However, as a matter of fact, such a recitation of the *qunūt* has not been narrated through authentic tradition, and was even regarded as innovation by many Companions.52

Having denied such a recitation of *qunūt* in the ʿUbūd prayer, the reformists affirm that according to the *sunnah* of the Prophet, the *qunūt* is recited specifically

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49Narrated by al-Dāraquṭnī as cited in ibid.

50Narrated by al-Bayhaqī as cited in ibid.


at two times, namely, during a calamity (nāzilah) and in the witr prayer. Regarding the first, the reformists assert that the qunūt is recited during a calamity or fatality such as during war, when being tyrannized by the enemy, and during states of drought, epidemic, starvation and plight. In these situations the qunūt should be recited in all obligatory prayers, and when these calamities disappear, the qunūt is no longer recited.53 A lot of traditions are recorded regarding this. For instance, al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate that Anas said:

"The Prophet sent seventy men, called al-Qurrā’ for some purpose. The two groups of Bani Sulaym called Rfl and Dhakwān appeared to them near a well called Bi’r Ma’ūnah. The people (i.e. al-Qurrā’) said: ‘By Allah, we have not come to harm you, but we are passing by you on our way to do something for the Prophet.’ But they (the infidels) killed them (the Qurrā’). The Prophet therefore invoked evil upon them for a month during the morning (al-ghadāh) prayer. That was the beginning of the qunut and we never used to recite the qunut before that."54

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate that Abū Hurayrah said:

"Whenever the Messenger of God lifted his head from the bowing in the last rak‘ah he used to say: ‘O God, save ʿAyyāsh b. Abī Rabī‘ah. O God, save Salamah b. Hishām. O God, save al-Walid b. al-Walid. O God, save the weak faithful believers. O God, be hard on the tribes of Mu‘ādar and send (famine) years on them like the (famine) years of (Prophet) Joseph.’ The Prophet further said, ‘O God, forgive the tribes of Ghifār and save the tribes of Aslam.’ Ibn Abū al-Zīnād said: The qunut used to be recited by the Prophet in the Fajr prayer."55

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim also narrate that Anas and al-Barā’ said that the Messenger of God used to recite the qunūt in the Fajr and Maghrib prayers.56 Abū Dāwūd and Aḥmad narrate that ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās said:

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"The Messenger of God recited the qunut daily for a month in the noon, afternoon, sunset, night and morning prayers. After he said 'God has heard the one who praises Him' in the last rak'ah, he invoked a curse on some clans of Banū Sulaym, Ri‘il, Dhakwān and ‘Uṣayyah, and those who were standing behind him said: 'Amen.'\textsuperscript{57}

Based on these traditions, the reformists affirm that the qunut is to be recited particularly during a calamity and is to be omitted when it disappears. The Prophet did not specify only the Subh prayer to recite such a qunut, but he used to do so in the Subh prayer as this time has its own significance as described by the Qur'ān: (17: 78): "And recite the Qur'ān in the Fajr (prayer). Verily, the recitation of the Qur'ān in the Fajr is ever witnessed." The fajr time is also described by the traditions as the time of prayer being answered, the time that is witnessed by the Angels of the night and the Angels of the day, and so on.\textsuperscript{58} Concerning the text of the qunut, they maintain that there is no specific text to be recited, provided that it is recited in Arabic, and that it depends on the situation and necessities.\textsuperscript{59}

The reformists further argue that the word qunut denotes several meanings: obedience and humility; standing and praying silently in the prayer; to keep silence when listening to the recitation of an imām; and to lengthen the standing in the prayer by reciting some supplication.\textsuperscript{60} These are among the meanings which can be extracted from the word qunut mentioned several times in the Qur'ān, such as these verses: 

\begin{quote}
...To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth, and all surrender with obedience (qānitūn) to Him" (Q: 2: 116); 
"And stand before God with obedience (qānitān)" (Q: 2: 238); 
"Is one who is obedient (qānit) to God, prostrating himself or standing during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy his Lord (like one who disbelieves?)" (Q: 39:9).
\end{quote}

If these meanings are considered, the traditions narrated by Anas b. Mālik propounded by the traditionalists


\textsuperscript{58}A. Hassan, Soal Jawab, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 136.

\textsuperscript{59}A. Hassan, Pengajaran Shalat, op.cit., p. 335.

\textsuperscript{60}Abu Bakar Ashaari, Sembahyang Rasulullah, op.cit., pp. 87-88.
to base their standpoint could be accepted when the qunūt is interpreted as standing obediently lengthening the recitations in the prayer. This is the most suitable meaning for these traditions as these traditions do not mention any specific text for the qunūt.\(^{61}\)

There is an opinion among the reformists that al-Shāffi himself omitted such a qunūt after he agreed with Abū Ḥanīfa’s ījtiḥād that there is no qunūt in the Ṣubḥ prayer. They deny the traditionalists’ opinion that al-Shāffi omitted the qunūt during his visit to Abū Ḥanīfa’s tomb to show his respect for the ījtiḥād of Abū Ḥanīfa.\(^{62}\)

On this issue, the reformists quote the words of al-Shāfīrānī, the friend and the great student of al-Shāfī, in his al-Mīzān al-Kubrā. “Al-Shāfī’s omission of the qunūt during his visit to Abū Ḥanīfa’s tomb was as a result of an agreement in their ījtiḥād that occurred at the time. That was regarded as one of the great miracles (al-kaṟāmāt al-jaḵlāh) of Abū Ḥanīfa.”\(^{63}\) They conclude that, as a matter of fact, at the beginning, al-Shāfī did recite the qunūt in the Ṣubḥ prayer, but that he omitted it in the later part of his life. The traditionalists, however, perceive al-Shafīrānī’s viewpoint as strange, for this fact was never known to any other jurists of the Shaffi madhhab and hence, is rejected.

Regarding the text of the qunūt which is referred to in the tradition narrated by Abū Hurayrah on the authority of al-Ḥākim, the reformists state that this tradition is unacceptable as there is a man in the chain of narrators whose name is ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa‘īd al-Maqbūrī who was identified by the traditionists as an unreliable person. This text, however, appears to be narrated authentically in another tradition concerning the qunūt in the witr prayer. This tradition is narrated by Aḥṣāb al-Sunan and Aḥmad from the Prophet’s grandson al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, who said:

“‘The messenger of God taught me some words that I say during the witr. They are: O God, guide me with those You have guided, and deliver me with those You have delivered, and take me into Your charge with those You have taken

\(^{61}\)Ibid.


\(^{63}\)Al-Shāfīrānī, al-Mīzān al-Kubrā (Cairo: Maktabah al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, n. d.) vol. 1, p. 60.
into Your charge, and bless me in what You have given, and guard me from the evil of what You have decreed. You are the One who decrees, and there is no decree for You. He whom You befriend is not humbled. You are the Glorious, our Lord, and the Exalted. Peace be upon the Prophet Muḥammad.”

Therefore, the reformists affirm that such a recitation of qunūt is to be recited in the witr prayer, not in the Ẓubḥ prayer.

In the Malaysian context, the traditionalists will perform a prostration of forgetfulness (ṣuḥūd sahw) before the salām when praying behind a reformist imām as the qunūt will have been omitted. And if the reformists pray behind a traditionalist imām, they do not raise their hands nor pronounce āmīn (amen) when the qunūt is being recited, but keep silent or recite the prayer of ī’tidāl until the recitation of qunūt ends. Some reformists denounce the traditionalists who perform a prostration of forgetfulness as they are going against the imām who does not do so. This is because, according to them, following the imām is obligatory, while the recitation of qunūt is only recommended. In return, the traditionalists denounce the reformists who do not raise their hands and pronounce ‘Amen’ when the imām is reciting the qunūt, for they are also going against the imām and the reward of following the imām might not be rewarded to them. However, there are many reformists and traditionalists who hold that there is an excuse when following an imām of a different madhhab, and that the follower should follow the imām whether he recites the qunūt or not.

**Dhikr (Remembrance) and Duʿāʾ (Supplication) After The Prayer**

Generally, the traditionalists and the reformists agree that the recitation of certain dhikrs (remembrances) and duʿāʾs (supplications) after the prayer is recommended, and this is proved by many authentic traditions which indicate that the Prophet recited some dhikrs and duʿāʾs after every obligatory prayer. However, they disagree on the manner of the dhikrs and duʿāʾs that should be recited after the congregational

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*Narrated by ʿAbd al-Sunan and ʿAbd mad, as quoted in Sayyid Sābiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 36-37.*
prayer. The traditionalists and the reformists have their own way of reciting the dhikrs and duʿāʾs: the traditionalists recite it in unison with raised voice, while the reformists recite it individually and inaudibly.

With regard to the traditionalists’ manner of recitation, after the congregational prayer finishes, the imām who leads the recitation starts to chant the specific dhikrs and duʿāʾs followed by all the maʿmūms (the followers) raising their voice in a particular rhythm. Among the dhikrs recited are:

The istighfār (begging forgiveness from God) which is read three times:

"Astaghfiru-llāh al-ʿAzīm aللāh huwa al-ḥayy al-qayyūm wa atūbū ilaah (I beg forgiveness from God the Great, there is no god but He, the Ever Living, the Sustainer and I turn to Him with repentance)."

After the ʿSubḥ and Maghrib prayers, the first dhikr recited is:

"La ilāha illā Allāh wahdahū lā shartū-lah la hu al-mulk wa la-hu al-ḥamd yuḥyi wa yumāh wa-huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr (There is no god but God, the One and has no associate, to Him belongs the dominion and to Him belongs the praise, He gives life and He causes death, and He is able to do all things)."

(This dhikr is recited ten times).

The next dhikr is:

"Allāhumma anta al-Salām, wa min-kā al-salām, fa-ḥayyī nā rabbānā bi-al-salām, wa-adkhīl nā al-jannat dār al-salām, tabārakta yā dha al-jalāl wa al-ikrān (O God, you are Peace, and from you peace comes. Give us life, O Lord, in peace, and place us in the Paradise of The Peace, blessed are You, O Possessor of Glory and Honour)."

Afterwards, sūrat al-Fāṭiḥah is recited once; while Sūrat al-Ikhlās, Sūrat al-Falaq and Sūrat al-Nās are recited three times. Āyat al-Kursī (Q: 2: 255) and verse 3: 18 of the Qurʾān which begins with "Shahida Allāh anna-hu lā ilāha illa huwa..." are recited next followed by the chanting of tasbīh, tahmiṣ and takbīr 33 times each. They then chant the dhikr munājāt followed by tahliʿ for up to a hundred times. The īmām then recites a duʿāʾ and the maʿmūms say 'Amen' at every pause of the īmām. At the end

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65See for example, Panduan Wirid Dan Doa Selepas Sembahyang (Kuala Lumpur: YADIM, 1990); see also, Daud Fatani, Munyat al-Musalli, op.cit., pp. 20-21; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, Wishāḥ al-Afrāḥ, pp. 53-55.
of the du'a the imām utters "al-Фatiḥah" which indicates that all should recite Sūrat al-Фatiḥah once again hoping that with the blessing of this sūrah, their du'a will be answered.  

The imām then recites the du'a once more, but this time the du'a is shorter than the previous one, and the ma'mūms again say 'Amen'. After the du'a ends the imām pronounces "taqabbal Allāh min-kum (may God accept from you all)," and the ma'mūms reply in chorus saying "min-nā wa min-kum, taqabbal yā Karīm (from us and from you, O Most Beneficient please accept)." Afterwards, they shake hands with each other and utter al-ṣalāt 'ala al-Nabi'inaudibly. In many places in the southern states of the Malay Peninsula, the imām and ma'mūms stand up to form a circle, chanting the al-ṣalāt 'ala al-Nabi together, and then, the first person on the right of the imām begins the handshake with the imām first and his fellows next. The next person then continues, and this practice ends after everyone has shaken hands with each other. The recitation of these dhikrs and du'a's usually takes longer than the prayer itself.

Reciting the dhikrs and du'a's in that manner seems very familiar in the Malay Muslim world, and it is regarded as an integral part of the congregational prayer. It seems somewhat strange if the congregational prayer is not followed by such a practice, and in fact, the ability to lead the ma'mūms to recite the dhikrs and du'a's in such a manner is regarded as an important prerequisite for becoming an imām. However, such a method of dhikrs and du'a's is not prescribed in any traditional fiqh books taught in the Malay world nor by any jurist of the Shāfi‘i madhhab, and it is not known who invented or introduced such a practice in the Malay world.

In spite of the fact that such a manner of reciting dhikrs and du'a's is not prescribed in any fiqh books or by any jurists, the traditionalists base this deeply rooted practice on various arguments and reasons.67

(i) The traditionalists maintain that reciting dhikrs and du'a's in a raised voice was

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a normal practice at the time of the Prophet and his Companions as indicated in many traditions. For example, al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate on the authority of Abū Ma'bad that he said:

"Ibn 'Abbās told me, 'In the lifetime of the Prophet it was a custom to recite dhikr and dū ā's aloud after the compulsory congregational prayers.' Ibn 'Abbās further said, 'When I heard the dhikr, I would recognize that the compulsory congregational prayer had ended.'"68

The Prophet also used to recite certain dhikrs and dū ā's loudly which were heard by his Companions as stated in many other traditions. It is narrated on the authority of Thawbān that he said:

"When the Messenger of God finished his prayer, he begged forgiveness three times and said, 'Allāhumma anta al-Salām wa min-ka al-salām tabārak-ta yā dha al-Jalāl wa al-ikrām (O God, You are Peace, and peace comes from You, blessed are You, O Possessor of Glory and Honour).'"69

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim also narrated from Warrād, the scribe of al-Mughirah b. Shu'bah, that he said:

"Once al-Mughirah dictated to me in a letter addressed to Mu'āwiyyah that the Prophet used to say after every compulsory prayer, 'Lā itāha īla-Allāh wahdahū lā shari'ka lahh, la-hu al-mulk wa-la-hu al-ḥamd, wa-huwa'ālā kulli shay'in qādir. Allāhumma lā māni fā li-mā ātāt, wa lā mu'til li-mā manāt, wa lā yaf'du dhā al-jadd min-ka al-jadd. (There is no god but God, and He has no partner, and for Him is the Kingdom and all the praises are for Him and He is Omnipotent. O God, nobody can hold back what you give and nobody can give what You hold back. Hard efforts by anyone for anything cannot benefit one against Your Will)."70

These traditions show that reciting dhikrs and dū ā's loudly is a sunnah of the Prophet which should not be excluded. Even though the traditions do not indicate that the Prophet and his Companions recited dhikrs and dū ā's together after the prayer, this

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is hinted by many other traditions as stated in the following arguments:

(ii) The traditionalists assert that assembly together for the remembrance of God by any manner is a good practice that is loved by the Angels as explained in many Prophetic traditions. For instance, al-Bukhārī narrates on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet said:

"God has Angels who move around on the roads looking for those who remember God (ahl al-dhikr). When they find people who are remembering God, they call each other saying, 'Come to your pursuit.'" He added: "Then the Angels encircle them with their wings up to the nearest heaven (al-samā' al-dunya)." He added, "Their Lord asks the Angels - though He knows better than them - 'What do My servants say?' The Angels reply, 'They say: Subḥāna-Allah, Allāhu-Akbar, and al-hamdu-li-Allah.' God then says, 'Have they seen Me?' The Angels reply, 'No! By God, they haven't seen You.' God says, 'How would it have been if they saw Me?' The Angels reply, 'If they saw You, they would worship You more devoutly and remember Your Glory more deeply, and declare Your freedom from any resemblance to anything more often....'"\(^7\)

Muslim narrates from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet said:

"God has many moving Angels who look for the gatherings of the remembrance of God (majālis al-dhikr). When the Angels find a gathering filled with the remembrance of God they sit together with them, and they surround the people with their wings up to the nearest heaven..."\(^7\)

Muslim also narrates on the authority of Abū Hurayrah and Abū Saïd al-Khudri that the Prophet said:

"The Angels will surround those who are sitting together remembering God, mercy will cover them, tranquility will descend upon them, and God will mention them in the presence of those near Him."\(^7\)

It is also narrated from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet said:

"...Those persons who assemble in one of the houses of God, (and) recite the Book of God, (and) learn and teach the Qur’ān among themselves, will have


\(^7\)As cited in Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik? op.cit., pp.133. See also Şahîh Muslim, "Kitâb al-Dhikr wa al-Du‘â’ wa al-Tawbah wa al-Istighfâr," 4,854

tranquillity descend upon them, mercy will cover them, the Angels will surround them, and God will mention them in the presence of those near Him...”74

Based on these traditions, the traditionalists sum up that reciting *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* loudly and en masse after a congregational prayer is one of the ways to fulfill what is meant by the traditions.

(iii) They assert that reciting *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* together after the congregational prayer is regarded by many scholars as good practice for it gives many benefits to those who participate in the gathering, just as the benefits of the congregational prayer, which is regarded as a symbol of solidarity of the *ummah*. It is absurd, they claim, if Muslims perform their prayer in congregation but after the prayer they recite the *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* individually, for it does not indicate unity. In addition to that, reciting *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* together is thought to be a good method for children to learn all of the *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* after the prayer. All the benefits of this practice indicate that this practice is good and blessed by God, for what is considered good by Muslims is also good in the perception of God. This principle is explained by the Prophet in a tradition narrated by Aḥmad: "What is perceived by the Muslims as good, is good in the perspective of God. And what is perceived by the Muslims as bad, is bad in the perspective of God."75

(iv) Finally, some traditionalists maintain that even if the Prophet and his Companions never recited *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* together after the congregational prayer, it does not mean that doing this is prohibited as there is no specific prohibition on this matter. They affirm that reciting *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* is included in the matter of general ‘*ibādah* (*ibādah mutlaqah*) whose method of accomplishment is not prescribed by Islamic law, and it is up to Muslims to decide how to perform it.

For the reformists, chanting *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* loudly and together after the

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congregational prayer is an additional innovation (bid'ah ijdāfiyyah) which was not known in the time of the Prophet, his Companions, and the Pious Forefathers, and is not recognized by any jurists. They affirm that the proper manner to recite dhikrs and du'ā's after the prayer is individually and inaudibly, and they claim that this was the manner that the Prophet used to do. They also cite the viewpoints of some jurists, such as al-Shāṭibi, that regular recitation of dhikrs and du'ā's after the prayer together with raised voices is an innovation which should be abandoned.

The reformists denounce the traditionalists' way, saying that reciting the dhikrs and du'ā's together with raised voices is improper and against the Qur'anic teaching regarding the ādāb (manner) of reciting dhikrs and du'ā's. The Qur'ān states: "Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He does not like the aggressors" (7: 55); "And remember your Lord within yourself, humbly and with fear without loudness in words, in the mornings, and in the afternoons and do not be of those who are neglectful" (7: 205). These two verses clearly show that dhikr and du'ā should be done inaudibly and individually, and those who recite them with loudness and together could be labelled as aggressors.

The reformists further assert that the Prophet used to admonish his Companions who did dhikr loudly as stated in many traditions. For example, al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate from Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ārī that he said:

"The Prophet started ascending a high place or hill, and a man ascended it and shouted in a loud voice, 'Lā ilāha illa Allah wa-Allahu Akbar (there is no god but God, God is the Greatest).’ At the time, the Prophet was riding his mule. The Prophet then said to the man, ‘You are not calling upon a deaf or absent one.’”

Muslim and al-Tirmidhī narrated that Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ārī said:


78See Şahih al-Bukhārī, “Kitāb al-Dā’ awāt,” 5,930; Şahih Muslim, “Kitāb al-Dhikr wa al-Dū ā’ wa al-Tawbat wa al-Istighfār,” 4875.
"We were travelling with the Prophet when the people started to raise their voices pronouncing the takbīr. The Prophet then said: 'O people, lower your voices, for you are not calling upon a deaf or an absent one, but you are calling upon the All-Hearer and the Close, and He is with you.' In the narration of Aḥmad, it is added: "Indeed, He who you are calling upon is closer to everyone of you than the neck of your riding camel."

Regarding the traditionalists’ arguments, the reformists’ answers can be simplified as follows:

(i) Concerning the account of Ibn ʿAbbās that it was a custom in the lifetime of the Prophet to recite dhikrs loudly after the congregational prayers, the reformists assert that the narrator of this tradition, i.e. Abū Ma’bad, the servant of Ibn ʿAbbās, had denied this as stated twice in the narration of Muslim:

(It is related) From ʿAmr that he said: "Abū Ma’bad told me - and then he denied that - from Ibn ʿAbbās who said, 'We did not know the end of the prayer of the Prophet except by the pronouncing of the takbīr.'"

(It is related) From ʿAmr b. Dinār, from Abū Ma’bad the servant of Ibn ʿAbbās, that he narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās that he said: "We did not know the end of the prayer of the Prophet except by the pronouncing of the takbīr." ʿAmr said: "I told this to Abū Ma’bad but he denied it and said: 'I did not tell you that.'" ʿAmr said: "He really told me that before."

The reformists hold that insomuch as the narrator of this tradition had denied what is narrated from him, it cannot therefore be judged as an authoritative argument even if it is narrated through a sound channel.

With respect to the traditions mentioning that the Prophet recited certain dhikrs and duʿāʾs loudly after the prayer, the reformists assert that these traditions should be understood as meaning that this practice is only recommended for the imām for the purpose of teaching his maʾmūms, and not to be practiced continuously. This is the agreed point of view among the jurists as stated by al-Nawawi. Al-Shāfīʿī

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80Sahīh Muslim, "Kitāb al-Masajid wa Mawāḍif al-Salah," 1, 316.

81Sahīh Muslim, "Kitāb al-Masajid wa Mawāḍif al-Salah," 1, 317.

82Al-Nawawi, al-Minḥāj Sharḥ Sahīh Muslim, op.cit., vol. 5, p. 86.
himself bases his viewpoint on these traditions, holding that it is recommended for the imām only to pronounce the dhikr and duʿāʾs loudly for a short time in order to let the maʾmūms know how dhikrs should be done. The reformists quote al-Shāfīʿī’s words in his al-Umm:

"I prefer, for the imām and the maʾmūm, to recite the dhikr inaudibly after the prayer is finished, except for the imām who is obliged to teach (the maʾmūm), and he should recite it audibly until the maʾmūm knows it, and then he should recite it inaudibly..."83

The reformists argue that what is practised by the traditionalists is completely different from what is prescribed by al-Shāfīʿī, and, at this point, they criticize the traditionalists’ attitude who proudly acknowledge that they belong to the Shāfīʿī madhhab but incline to follow their own judgement and ignore their master’s ījtihād.

(ii) With regard to the traditionalists’ second argument which is based on the traditions which mention that the Angels like gatherings for the remembrance of God, the reformists affirm that these traditions do not prove anything in this issue as they do not indicate that the dhikr is to be recited loudly and together. They maintain that the gathering of dhikr stated in the traditions refers to any sort of activities that encourage people to remember God, provided that they do not contradict the principles laid down by the sharīʿah.

(iii) The traditionalists’ third argument, which mentions that reciting dhikr and duʿā’ loudly and together is perceived as good by many scholars, is unacceptable to the reformists. The reasons are simple: that the Prophet and his Companions who knew better about the religion never did this; the methods of ḍiʿāʾidah were completely taught by the Prophet; and, there is no room for ījtihād in the realm of ḍiʿāʾidah. Therefore, the tradition narrated by ʿAlīmad which mentions that what is perceived by the Muslims as good is good in the perspective of God and so on is not applicable in the matters of ḍiʿāʾidah, and is only applicable to mundane activities, and this must be decided by a mujtahid or competent scholar, not by any ordinary Muslim.

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83Al-Shāfīʿī, al-Umm, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 220-221.
(iv) The traditionalists’ last argument, which mentions that there is no specific prohibition from the Prophet to recite the dhikr and du‘ā’ loudly and together after the prayer, is considered by the reformists as misleading and even harmful to the Islamic teachings. To justify something by judging the absence of prohibition from the Shāfī‘i is rejected, for if it is accepted, anyone can abuse the Islamic teachings, for example by claiming that he can pray Žuhr in five or ten or hundred rak‘ahs, or he can pray ‘Asr in one rak‘ah, etc., as there is no specific prohibition from God or the Prophet on these matters. At this point, the reformists admonish the traditionalists for being too excessive in using logic without thinking about the consequences.

They conclude, not only in this particular issue but all issues pertaining to matters of ‘ibādah, that the Prophet has shown complete guidance in the realm of ‘ibādah, both the form and the manner to be followed by the ummah and this leaves no room for any type of addition or reduction. This principle is based on the Prophet’s saying: “Whoever does a deed which is not prescribed by our commandment on it, that (deed) is rejected.” They also mention some principles in the science of jurisprudence regarding matters of ‘ibādah, such as: “The principle in the matter of ‘ibādah is suspending (the judgement) and following (the example) (al-aṣl fī al-‘ibādah al-tawqīf wa al-ittibā’);” and “the principle in the matter of ‘ibādah is void unless there is an evident of commandment on it (al-aṣl fī al-‘ibādah al-buṭlān hattā yaqūmu dalil ʿalā al-amr).”

The reformists further say that it is better and sufficient to follow the Prophet’s original way rather than choose a new innovated way, for the Prophet’s way is the safest, purest and doubtless way, while the new way is doubtful and could lead to error. The Prophet said: “Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does

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not make you doubt.\textsuperscript{87}

Matters Concerning The Friday Congregational Prayer

Doing The \textit{Adhān} Twice

Regarding this issue, the traditionalists and the reformists dispute whether the \textit{adhan} should be done once or twice before the beginning of the \textit{khutbah} (sermon). For the traditionalists who base their viewpoint on the judgement determined by the jurists of the Shāfi‘ī \textit{madhab}, the \textit{adhan} is recommended to be done twice: the first is done when the time of midday begins; and the second is done after the \textit{imām} or \textit{khatib} (preacher) ascends the pulpit and pronounces the \textit{taslīm} to the \textit{ma’mūms}. The reformists assert that the \textit{adhan} is done once, i.e. when the \textit{imām} or \textit{khatib} seats himself at the pulpit after greeting the \textit{ma’mūms} with the \textit{taslīm}, and this is the opinion of the majority of the jurists.

The traditionalists base their viewpoint on the practice of the third Caliph 'Uthmān b. 'Affān who added to the one initial \textit{adhan} in order to enable the people to get ready for the Friday prayer. This account is based on the traditions narrated by al-Bukhārī and others that al-Sā‘īb b. Yazīd said:

\begin{quote}
"‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān introduced the second \textit{adhan} on Fridays when the number of the people in the mosque increased. Previously the \textit{adhan} on Fridays used to be pronounced only after the \textit{imām} had taken his seat (on the pulpit).\textsuperscript{88}\" 
\end{quote}

Al-Sā‘īb b. Yazīd also narrated:

\begin{quote}
"In the lifetime of the Prophet, Abū Bakr and 'Umar, the \textit{adhan} for the Friday prayer used to be pronounced when the \textit{imam} sat on the pulpit. But during the Caliphate of ‘Uthmān when the Muslims increased in number, a third\textsuperscript{89} \textit{adhan}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{89}The third \textit{adhan} referred to here is the first one done. It is regarded as the third one because it is an addition to the original \textit{adhan} and the \textit{iqāmah} (the final call prior to the beginning of the prayer) which (continued...)
at al-Zawrā’ was added. Abū ʿAbd Allāh said, ‘al-Zawrā’ is a place in the market of Madinah.”

"The person who increased the number of adhāns for the Friday prayers to three was ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān and it was when the number of the (Muslim) people of Madinah had increased. In the lifetime of the Prophet there was only one mu’adhdhin and the adhān used to be pronounced only after the imām had taken his seat (i.e. on the pulpit).”

These traditions, according to the traditionalists, prove that the adhān should be done twice especially in an area with a high population of Muslims. They assert that the adhān was not done twice in the Prophet’s time and in the time of the first two Caliphs after him as the Muslim population in Madinah was still small, and it was sufficient to do the adhān over the mosque’s door. When the population increased and the people were busy with their mundane business, ‘Uthman perceived that another adhān was needed to let people know that the time for Friday prayer was about to begin and to remind them that the khutbah was about to be delivered, so that they could prepare themselves to join in the congregation. This adhān, the traditionalists maintain, was commanded by ‘Uthman and agreed by the rest of the Companions and has been continuously practiced after that. There was, therefore, a silent consensus (ijmā sukūṭi) among the Companions which should not be disputed by anybody.

The reformists affirm, based on the same proofs used by the traditionalists, that even if ‘Uthmān had instituted the second adhān for certain reasons, the practice in the time of the Prophet is more valid and undisputable. Furthermore, they argue, the adhān allegedly introduced by ‘Uthman is questionable for various reasons: Firstly, the account by al-Sā‘ib b. Yazid that ‘Uthmān was the first person to introduce the second adhān contradicts the account of ‘Atā’, (as quoted by al-Shāffi‘i in his al-
who denied the fact and stated that Muʿāwiyyah b. Abī Sufyān was the first person to introduce the second adhān.\(^9^4\) Secondly, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, a great Companion of the Prophet, regarded the second adhān as bidʿah, as stated by Wakī, al-Shāfiʿī’s master: “Hishām b. Al-Ghār reported that he asked Nāff about the first adhān of the Friday prayer and he (Nāff) said, “ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar said that such an adhān is bidʿah.”\(^9^5\) In the tradition narrated by Ibn Abī Shaybah, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar said: “When the Prophet ascended the pulpit, Bilāl would pronounce the adhān. After the Prophet finished his sermon, he (Bilāl) would pronounce the iqāmah. The first adhān is bidʿah.”\(^9^6\)

However, the reformists add, if the account of al-Sāib is accepted notwithstanding the contradiction to the other, the traditionalists’ practice nowadays does not match the second adhān practised in the time of ʿUthmān for several reasons. For one thing, the adhān in the time of ʿUthmān was held at al-Zawrāʿ, the highest place in the market of Madīnah to remind the public who were in the market about the Friday prayer, while the traditionalists do the adhān in the mosque which does not reach public places such as those who are in shopping complexes, or their place of work etc. Secondly, the second adhān introduced by ʿUthmān at al-Zawrāʿ was reportedly done before the beginning of the Friday prayer time, while the traditionalists do the adhān at the beginning of the Friday prayer time and chant other recitations such as Qasidah before that. Thirdly, there is no account mentioning that in the time of ʿUthmān the people in the mosque prayed two rakʿahs for the sunnah qabliyyah (the recommended prayer before the Friday prayer) after the first adhān was done, while the traditionalists hold that it is recommended to pray two rakʿahs immediately after the first adhān.

In addition to that, the reformists state that al-Shāfiʿī himself did not

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\(^9^3\)Al-Shāfiʿī, al-Umm, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 61.

\(^9^4\)Abdullah al-Qari, 200 Bidʿah Hari Jumaat, op.cit., pp. 73-75.

\(^9^5\)As cited in Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, Penebas Bidʿah, op.cit., p. 21.

recommend adding the second adhān for the Friday prayer but liked it to be done as in the Prophet’s time. They cite al-Shāfi‘i’s words regarding this issue:

"Trusted scholars told me from al-Zuhri from al-Sā‘ib b. Yazid, that the adhān of the Friday prayer used to be pronounced when the imam sat on the pulpit in the time of the Prophet, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. But during the Caliphate of ‘Uthmān when the Muslims increased in number, ‘Uthmān commanded the second adhān, and it was done, and that new state of affairs remained so. ‘Aṭā‘ denied the fact that ‘Uthmān introduced that and said, 'It was Mu‘āwiyyah who invented it,' - God knows best. Whoever it was, I prefer the affair that was done in the time of the Prophet."98

At this point, the reformists question the traditionalists’ attitude of claiming to be the loyal adherents of the Shāfi‘i madhhab, but they ignore their master’s words and choose their own judgement.

Concerning the traditionalists’ argument that the addition of the adhān was a matter of silent consensus among the Companions in the time of ‘Uthmān, the reformists argue that silent consensus is not accepted as an authoritative evidence for al-Shāfi‘i, and this argument is therefore void.99

Two Rak‘ahs after the First Adhān (Sunnah Qabliyyah)

It is customary for the traditionalists to perform two rak‘ahs (known as sunnah qabliyyah) immediately after the first adhān is done, and they deem it as recommended.100 They base their viewpoint on the following evidences: Firstly, the traditionalists propound the Prophetic tradition narrated by al-Bukhāri and Muslim from ʿAbd Allāh b. Mughaffal al-Muzani who said:

"The Prophet said: 'There is a prayer between the two adhāns. There is a prayer between the two adhāns. There is a prayer between the two adhāns.'

99Abdullah al-Qari, Revolusi Mental, op.cit., p. 5. On al-Shāfi‘i’s rejection of the authority of silent consensus, see for example, al-Shāfi‘i, Jimā‘ al-Ilm (Beirut:: Dār Qutaybah, 1996), pp. 54-56.
100Daud Fatani, Bughyat al-Tullāb, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 214;
He then said: 'For the one who wants to pray.'

The traditionalists, quoting al-Nawawi’s standpoint, maintain that not only does this tradition denote in general that it is recommended to pray between the two *adhāns* (i.e. the *adhan* and the *iqāmah*) for the regular compulsory prayers, but it is also applicable in the case of the Friday prayer by equating it analogically with the *Zuhr* prayer. However, for the Friday prayer, this recommended prayer is done after the first *adhan*, not after the second one, for after the second *adhan* it is the time for listening to the *khutbah*.

Secondly, the traditionalists base their argument on another Prophetic tradition which is narrated by Ibn Mājah from Jābir and Abū Hurayrah who said:

"Salīk al-Ghaṭafānī came when the Prophet was delivering the (Friday) *khutbah*. The Prophet said to him: 'Did you pray two *rak‘ahs* before coming here?' He replied: 'No.' The Prophet said: 'Pray two *rak‘ahs* and make them simple."

This tradition, according to the traditionalists, indicates that two *rak‘ahs* prayer before the Friday prayer is strongly recommended.

The reformists, however, denounce this practice stating that such a prayer is not recommended, and placing it after the first *adhan* is purely an innovation. They maintain that the recommended prayer before the Friday prayer should not be specified after the first *adhan*, but can be done at anytime before the *adhan*. According to several Prophetic traditions, they state, the Companions of the Prophet went to the mosque in the morning and did *fītikāf*, which included reciting the Qur’an and remembrance, and doing supererogatory prayers, while waiting for the Friday prayer. This kind of prayer, which is known as *sunnah mutlqah*, can be done at any

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103 Abu Bakar b. Hassān, Taman Huraian, op. cit., p. 11.

104 See for instance, Sahih Muslim, "Kitāb al-Jumāfah," 1,418; Sunan AbiDāwūd, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 886.
time as agreed by all jurists, and is not limited to any number of rakʿahs or any specific time. However, placing two rakʿahs as a supererogatory prayer after the first adhān, which is also an innovation, is disputable as it was never done by the Prophet, the Companions, or the Pious Forefathers, and was not acknowledged by the leaders of the four madhhabs.105

The reformists uphold that the traditionalists’ first argument, which is based on the Prophet’s tradition narrated by ʿAbd Allāh b. Mughaffal, is weak for several reasons: firstly, this tradition mentions the supererogatory prayer in general terms (ijmāl) and it needs to be clarified. There are many traditions that clarify this, such as the tradition of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar who said "I preserved from the Prophet ten rakʿahs (of supererogatory prayers): two rakʿahs before Zuhr, and two rakʿahs after it, two rakʿahs after Maghrib in his house, two rakʿahs after ʿIshā’ in his house, and two rakʿahs before Subh."106 Umm Ḥabībah narrated that the Prophet said: "Whoever does twelve rakʿahs of supererogatory prayers during the day and night, a house in the Heaven is built for him: four rakʿahs before Zuhr and two rakʿahs after it, two rakʿahs after Maghrib in his house, two rakʿahs after ʿIshā’ in his house, and two rakʿahs before Subh."107 This clarification does not mention any supererogatory prayer before the Friday prayer. Therefore, doing the supererogatory prayers between the adhān and the iqāmah as suggested in the tradition of ʿAbd Allāh b. Mughaffal is only applicable for the regular obligatory prayers. Furthermore, the Prophet had emphasized at the end of this tradition "for the one who wants to pray," which indicates that the prayer between the two adhāns is optional (takhyīr), and not strongly recommended (taʾkīd).108

Secondly, equating the Friday prayer with the Zuhr prayer by using analogy is


void as there is 'no analogy in the matter of 'ibādah' and 'no analogy in fixing the supererogatory 'ibādah.' In this case, they cite the words of Abū Shāmah, a great scholar in the Shāfi‘i madhhab who was also a master of al-Nawawī: "The reason for no supererogatory prayer before it (the Friday prayer) that what is meant by supererogatory prayers are those which are narrated from the Prophet's words or deeds. There is nothing from the Prophet indicating a supererogatory prayer before that, and it is not permitted to use analogy in fixing the prayers."110

Thirdly, the reformists hold that adding the first initial adhān is an innovation; therefore, fixing the supererogatory prayer after it is also an innovation as this was never practised by the Prophet, the Companions and the pious Forefathers.111

Concerning the second tradition where the Prophet asked Salīk al-Ghatafānī "did you pray two rak‘ahs before coming here?", the reformists assert that the phrase "before coming here" is questionable for the following reasons:112

(i) This tradition is also narrated by Muslim in his Sahīh and the uppermost part of the chain of narrators is similar with Ibn Mājah's, but Muslim does not narrate such a phrase. It is agreed among the scholars that the Sahīhs are more authoritative and preferable than the Sunans.

(ii) Abū Dāwūd also narrates this tradition with a similar chain of narrators as Ibn Majah's, but there is no mention of the phrase "before coming here." According to the degree of authority, Sunan Abī Dāwūd is more authoritative than Sunan Ibn Mājah, and therefore, it cannot be a strong evidence.

(iii) The traditionists and jurists agree that the Prophet's order to Salīk is an order to perform the prayer of salutation (tahjīyat al-masjid). They also agree that any other

supererogatory prayers performed after the khaṭāb has sat on the pulpit are not permitted.

(iv) Insomuch as the tradition narrated by Ibn Mājah contains the addition of the phrase “before coming here” while the one narrated by the others of higher degree does not, it can be categorized as strange or isolated (shādhdh) and cannot be judged as an authoritative evidence.

The reformists conclude by quoting Ibn al-Qayyim in this matter: “Whoever assumes that the Companions prayed two rak‘ahs after Bilāl did the adhān for Friday prayer, is the most ignorant person about the sunnah.”

Perceptions Regarding Zakāh (Almsgiving) of Property

The Expansion of Zakāh Resources

As zakāh is a non-ritual form of ‘ibādah, the discussion regarding this issue in the context of the traditionalists and the reformists’ conflict of thought only revolves around material matters. The most disputed issue concerning the matter of zakāh is about the kinds of wealth which are subject to zakāh. In the traditional view based on the Shāfi‘i madhhab, there are six particular types of property on which zakāh is levied, namely, (i) farm animals (ar‘ām), i.e. camels, cattle and sheep or goats; (ii) crops (nabāt), i.e. grains and fruits that can be stored as food; (iii) cash (naqūd); (iv) buried treasure (rikāz); (v) gold and silver (ma‘dīn); (vi) business commodities. Current practice in almost all the states in Malaysia shows that zakāh is imposed only on these specific properties.

On the other hand, the reformists’ viewpoint, which is much influenced by the


ideas of contemporary prominent scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī, Muḥammad al-Ghazālī and Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, is that the types of property subject to zakāh should not be restricted only to those specific traditional resources, but should be expanded to include other kinds of wealth, taking into account contemporary developments and changes. They affirm that since the institution of zakāh has an essential role in society, its sources must also be comprehensive, so that its functions can run effectively. Zakāh is considered as an efficient means to solve the problem of poverty in the Muslim community. However, the limited zakāh resources which lead to insufficient zakāh funds contribute to the failure of achieving this objective. To achieve the objective, the reformists assert, the zakāh resources must be expanded to include contemporary resources of wealth. Zakāh should not be only imposed on paddy products earned by poor farmers, it must also be imposed on various other plantation products run commercially by rich owners. Fisheries, various industries, shares, wages, salaries or income of professional groups, etc, are also regarded as contemporary resources of wealth.\footnote{Abdullah Ibrahim, Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya (Kelantan: Pustaka Reka, 1997), pp. 52, 92-93.}

They maintain that the limitation of zakāh resources specified by the Shāfi‘ī madhhab which is based on the practice in the Prophet’s lifetime, is only appropriate for that time, as they were the only resources of wealth available. Times have changed and the resources of wealth have increased in number, and these new resources must also be subject to zakāh. For instance, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb at his time imposed the zakāh on honey and horses bred for commercial purposes, as these were among the main sources of wealth at that time. At the present time, they assert, there are many resources which are important sources of wealth, such as shares, industries, wages or professional income, and many other resources, and they must not be exempted from zakāh.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 104-105; Ahmad Ibrahim, Pentadbiran Undang-undang Islam di Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur: IKIM, 1997), pp. 641-642.}

The expansion of zakāh resources, they maintain, is not a baseless
justification. It is in fact, in harmony with the principles of the sharī'ah, based on the method of qiyās (analogy) and various other principles derived from the principle of maṣlahah (common interest).¹¹⁷ For example, the method of qiyās can be used to impose zakāh on salary or professional income, i.e. by equating them to the zakāh of plantations which requires no condition of āwl (the period of a year). The shared underlying cause (i'llah) of them refers to the method of earning, i.e. that they are property earned through labour.¹¹⁸ The method of qiyās can also be used to impose zakāh on petroleum, tin, and other valuable minerals by equating them to the minerals of gold and silver, which share the same features, namely they are valuable things obtained from the earth’s crust and profitable. The other principles used to justify the expansion of zakāh resources are:¹¹⁹

(i) The principle of distribution of wealth. This principle is based on a Prophetic tradition comprising the instruction of the Prophet to his delegate to Yemen, Mū'ādh b. Jabal, to collect zakāh from the rich and distribute it among the poor.¹²⁰ Based on this principle, the rich are obliged to contribute, in the name of zakāh, from their wealth for the poor, in order to establish a right and just balance between the two extremes. This should include all kinds of wealth that fulfill the requisite conditions.¹²¹

(ii) The consideration of what brings more benefits to the poor (litbār ma'an fa'a'li-al-fuqara’). This principle is always used to solve the problem disputed among the jurists regarding the specification of zakāh resources. In the case of zakāh of salary or income, for example, the jurists dispute whether it should be equated to cash (al-nuquād), which requires the condition of āwl, or to crop products that require no condition of āwl. By considering this principle, some jurists choose the latter which means that zakāh is levied at the time of earning if the net balance meets the

¹¹⁸Detailed discussion about zakāh of salary will be covered in the next topic.
¹²⁰See Sahīh al-Bukhārī, “Kitāb al-Zakah,” 1,308; Sahīh Muslim, “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 27.
¹²¹Abdullah Ibrahim, Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya, op.cit., p. 95.
condition of *nisab*. Otherwise, the rich would spend all their salary for personal luxurious purposes, such as buying non-*zakāh* properties, spending for holidays etc., leaving the balance below the *nisab*, and thus, free themselves from the obligation of *zakāh*.\(^{122}\)

(iii) The autonomy of the āmil *mufawwad* (authorized person who administers the fund of *zakāh*).\(^{123}\) Under this principle, the āmil *mufawwad* is given a special privilege to apply his own *ijtiḥād* or choose any suitable *ijtiḥād* of any *madhhab*, without being bound to the *ijtiḥād* of the leader or to the *madhhab* of the property owners.\(^{124}\) This means that in identifying the properties that are subject to *zakāh*, especially with regard to the properties disputed among the jurists, the āmil *mufawwad* is free to use his judgement, taking into account the common interests of the poor without oppressing the rich. Even though the āmil *mufawwad* is required by classical *fiqh* to be a *mujtahid*, given the difficulty at the present time to find a *mujtahid*, a council comprising a group of scholar can be formed alternatively.\(^{125}\)

Based on the above arguments, the reformists conclude that all kinds of modern wealth, which are the product of a person’s capital and labour, should have *zakāh* imposed on them. A fact that must be scrutinized by the scholars is that the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet do not specifically specify the resources of *zakāh*, unlike the targeted groups to whom *zakāh* is due which are determined in detail by the Qur’ān. This has left room for Muslims to practice *ijtiḥād* in accordance with current needs. This is what has been exemplified by the leaders of the *madhāhib* who used to apply their *ijtiḥād* to adapt contemporary developments to the objectives of the *sharīah*. The *qawl qadīm* (former opinion) and *qawl jadīd* (later opinion) of al-

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\(^{122}\)Ibid., pp. 97, 101-102, 166.

\(^{123}\)The original term used by al-Mawardi is ‘Ummāl al-Tafwīd, i.e. authorized persons who are responsible for the affairs of *zakāh*. They are independent, according to al-Mawardi, in making policy about *zakāh*. There are other *zakāh* workers called ‘Ummāl al-Tanfīd who are only responsible for collecting *zakāh* but have no power in making policy. See al-Mawardi, *al-Aḥkām al-Ṣuṭḥāniyyah wa al-Wilāyyāt al-Dīniyyah* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Ḥalabi, 1966), p. 116.

\(^{124}\)See Ibid.

Shāfī, for instance, prove that the factors of surroundings and contemporary changes are essential considerations for *ijtihād*. The *ḥukm* must be realistic, otherwise the objectives of the *sharfaḥ* would not be achieved.\textsuperscript{126}

In recent developments, this idea has attracted the *zakāh* authorities’ interest, and they have attempted to impose *zakāh* on several new resources. For example, in 1987 the *zakāh* authority of the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur drafted a new bill (*Zakat and Fitrah Bill, 1987*) to reform the local *zakāh* administration, which includes therein the expansion of *zakāh* resources. Section 18 of the bill (known as Draft of *Zakat* Act of Federal Territory, 1987) specifies the following items as subject to *zakāh*: (i) Gold and silver; (ii) cash, including loans; (iii) plantation products; (iv) farm animals; (v) *ma‘dīn*; (vi) *kanz*; (vii) *rikāz*; (viii) trade commodities; (ix) shares; (x) salaries; (xi) construction; (xii) other incomes. The last four items are new resources. Among these four new items, however, until this research is being written, only *zakāh* on salary has been imposed.\textsuperscript{127}

**Zakāh of Agricultural Produce**

According to the traditional viewpoint based on the Shāfī *madhhab*, *zakāh* is levied only on crops which can be stored as food (*al-muddakhar al-muqtāt*), such as wheat, barley, rice, corn, peanut, dates and raisins. Any other farm produce which cannot be stored as food, such as olives, apples, oranges, melons, pomegranates and vegetables, are not subject to *zakāh*.\textsuperscript{128} This is based on a Prophetic tradition narrated on the authority of Abū Burdah that the Prophet sent Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī and Mu‘ādh b. Jabal to Yemen to teach the people there about Islam, and he instructed them to


\textsuperscript{127}Other states such as Selangor and Perlis have also embarked on collecting *zakāh* on salary.

impose the zakāh only on four items, i.e. wheat, barley, dates and raisins. Although this tradition only specifies four kinds of crops, it can be analogically extended to others which share the same underlying cause (‘illah), i.e. that they are food and they can be stored. Other crops are excused by the Prophet as they are perishables. In the Malaysian context, according to this standpoint, the crops available that are subject to zakāh are rice, corn and peanuts, but in practice, zakāh is only imposed on rice as it is the only crop planted on a large scale.

For the reformists, zakāh on crops should not be limited to non-perishable food, but it should also be extended to all kinds of food, and even to everything produced from land. This viewpoint, which is originally that of the Ḥanafis, is based on the texts of the Qur’ān and Prophetic tradition which imply a general application. The Qur’ān states: "O you who believe, spend of the good things which you have earned, and of that which We have produced from the earth for you" (Q: 2: 267); "And it is He Who produces gardens trellised and un-trellised, and date-palms, and crops of different shapes and taste, and olives, and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in taste). Eat of their fruit when they bear fruit, and pay the due thereof on the day of its harvest" (Q: 6: 141). These verses do not distinguish between the crops that are obliged for zakāh, or whether they are perishable food or not. The Prophet said: "There is a tenth (‘ushr) in what is watered by the sky, but in that which is irrigated there is a twentieth (nisf ‘ushr)." In this tradition, the word "what" (ma) which is a relative pronoun like alladhī implies generality, and it does not specify any condition or underlying cause. If zakāh is specified on certain crops, it contradicts the generality of the above texts.132

Concerning the tradition mentioning that Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ārī and Mu'ādh b.

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129 Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī and al-Ḥākim, as quoted in Daud Fatani, Busyihyot al-Ṭullāb, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 43-44. See also, al-Shawkānī, Nayl al-Awṭār, vol. 4, p. 143.

130 Daud Fatani, Busyihyot al-Ṭullāb, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 43-44; see also, idem, Furū‘ al-Masa’il, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 184.


132 Mujaini Tarimin, Zakat Pertanian Sistem dan Pelaksanaannya, op.cit., p. 22.
Jabal were asked to collect the \textit{zakāh} in Yemen on four kinds of crops, namely wheat, barley, dates and raisins, the reformists affirm that the status of this tradition itself lacks credibility, as clarified by Abū Ḥanīfah, because of the incompleteness and weakness of the narrators, and which therefore is categorized as a weak tradition.\textsuperscript{133} If this tradition is accepted regardless of its status, it must be interpreted that this restriction was a temporary specification based on the situation that there might be only these four crops which were mainly cultivated at that time. Otherwise, it has no value as a \textit{hukm} as it contradicts the sound evidence at higher level. They conclude that the specification of \textit{zakāh} on certain crops has no basis in the Qur‘ān, sound tradition, jurists’ consensus or analogy, but is only based on jurists’ personal judgement.\textsuperscript{134}

From the above arguments, the reformists hold that the \textit{zakāh} should be levied on all plantation products having a feature of growth potential (\textit{al-nama‘}),\textsuperscript{135} whether they are storable food or not. These include rice, corn, peanuts, bananas, pineapples, cocoa, palms, coconuts, sugar cane, black pepper, local fruits, vegetables and others which are produced commercially.\textsuperscript{136} The amount of payable \textit{zakāh} for these crops can be equated by analogy with the amount imposed on rice. The minimum limit (\textit{niṣāb}) of \textit{zakāh} on crops specified by the Prophet is 5 \textit{awsuq} which is equivalent to 652.80 kg. If the crops reach the \textit{niṣāb}, the amount of payable \textit{zakāh} is 1/10 (10\%) of the total amount if they are watered by sky, or 1/20 (5\%) if they are watered by man-made irrigation. At present, \textit{zakāh} on rice is no longer paid in its raw material form, but it is paid in cash value. This practice is adopted from the Ḥanāfī’s point of view.


\textsuperscript{135}Growth potential (\textit{al-nama‘}) is one of the conditions of \textit{zakāh} fixed by the jurists of the Ḥanāfī \textit{madhhab}. It means the ability of property to increase due to cultivation, reproduction or exchange, and which generates income or profit for the owner and is not for his basic use. See al-Kasānī, \textit{Bada‘ī al-Šanā‘ī} (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḥalabī, 1973), vol. 2, p. 11; Ibn‘ Abidin, \textit{Ḥashiyyah Ibn‘ Abidin} (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḥalabī, n.d.), vol. 2, p. See also, al-Qaraḍawī, \textit{Fiqh al-Zakāh}, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 138-139.

Even if this practice contradicts the viewpoint of the Shafi`i madhhab who prohibit the zakāh to be paid in price, the Council of Religious Affairs in all states in Malaysia perceive that this practice is more suitable in the modern situation. The reformists suggest that zakāh on those crops are also payable in cash value. This means that the niṣāb of all valuable crops is the price of 652.80 kg of them.\textsuperscript{137}

The obligation of zakāh on such crops is not a bid'ah or against the principle of sharī'ah, but it is, as a matter of fact, embodied in the principle of common interest of the community (maṣlahat al-ummah) and justice (al-'adālah) underlying the purposes (maqāṣid) of the sharī'ah. It is unfair to impose the zakāh only on paddy farmers, but exempt other farmers or owners of large farms, such as palm farms operated on a large scale, whose income is far higher than the paddy farmers'. Such crops at the present time have been a great resource of wealth which deserves the imposition of zakāh for the benefits of people in need. A purpose of zakāh is to attain equitable distribution of wealth among the community, so that both the rich and the poor can share social wealth to satisfy their needs. If the imposition of zakāh is limited to certain resources of wealth, it is difficult to achieve that purpose.\textsuperscript{138} At this point, the reformists assert that the Malay traditional thought that one must stick only to the Shafi`i madhhab should be changed, and they must be ready to adopt any other madhhabs' standpoints or contemporary ijtihāds compatible with contemporary circumstances. If they can adopt the Hanafis standpoint in paying zakāh of rice by its price, there is no reason for them to reject the obligation of zakāh on those crops. This change is not a sin, but is a solution for a current problem.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{137}Ibid., pp. 43-44; Abdullah Ibrahim, Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya, op.cit., pp. 167-168.

\textsuperscript{138}Mujaini Tarimin, Zakat Pertanian, op.cit., p. 23; Abdullah Ibrahim, Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya, op.cit., pp. 164-166.

\textsuperscript{139}Mujaini Tarimin, Zakat Pertanian, op.cit., p. 24.
Zakah of Salary or Professional Income

Today, one’s salary or income including allowances, bonuses, benefit, bounty, reward, wages, etc, which is earned through the result of one’s service or labour, paid whether by an employer or a client, has become a great source of wealth. Thus, the question is posed, whether zakāh should be imposed on this particular source of wealth or not. In the traditional writing of fiqh, a basic idea regarding this matter is discovered in a few sources, such as in al-Muḥalla of Ibn Ḥazm and al-Mughni of Ibn Qudāmah. Nowadays, the idea of imposing zakāh on salary is strongly held by some prominent scholars such as the Egyptian Yūṣuf al-Qaraḍāwī and his teachers Muḥammad al-Ghazālī and Muḥammad Abū Zahrah.\textsuperscript{140}

In Malaysia, this idea, which is associated with the reformists, has been a controversial issue, since the suggestion that zakāh should be collected at the time it is obtained contradicts the traditional thought of most Malay Muslims. For the traditionalists, as salary and professional income are received in the form of cash, its zakāh should be paid under the method of zakāh of cash. Thus, there is no question about the zakāh of salary as it can be placed under the treatment of zakāh of cash saving which is subject to the condition of ḥawl. This means that if the balance of salary is saved and it reaches the niṣāb for one whole year, zakāh is imposed under the name of cash saving. This is the common understanding based on the Shāfī’i madhhab.\textsuperscript{141} Contrarily, the reformists maintain that zakāh on salary should be distinguished from zakāh on cash saving, for it seems to be more similar with plantation products in terms of the way it is obtained, i.e. the outcome of one’s effort, labour and skill. Inasmuch as zakāh of plantations is paid on the day of its harvest without being subject to the condition of ḥawl, they recommend that zakāh on salary should be treated similarly.\textsuperscript{142} Their arguments on this issue, which mainly

\textsuperscript{142}Ibid., p. 289; Abdullah Ibrahim, Zakat, op.cit., pp. 101-102.
refer to al-Qaraḍawi’s viewpoint in his *Fiqh al-Zakah*, can be summarized as the following.

The justification of zakāh on salary is drawn from the Qurʾān: 2: 267: “O you who believe, spend of the good things which you have earned (*ma kasab-tum*).” The phrase *ma kasab-tum* in the verse is understood as comprising all kinds of earnings, which include salary or income. Zakāh on salary is also extended from the concept of *māl mustafād* (property accrued as profit), which is defined as any new profit obtained in a permissible way, such as salary, professional income, income of the capital which is not traded, and others.143 Under this concept, they assert, if the *māl mustafād* is a profit of one’s property payable for zakāh, such as trade commodities and farm animals bred for commercial purposes, that profit must be combined together with the property (capital), and zakāh is payable after the conditions of *niṣāb* and *ḥawl* are fulfilled. If the profit is the price of the property on which zakāh has been paid, such as the price of crop products or the price of farm animals on which zakāh has already been paid, there is no more zakāh on that price, because zakāh is not imposed twice on a property.144 This is the ordinary form of zakāh understood by many people. However, the essential question of this *māl mustafād* is, if the profit is not earned through the investment of the property, but it is acquired by its own, such as in the form of wages of his work, should zakāh be paid after the *ḥawl* is complete as zakāh on saved cash; or should zakāh be paid immediately after the profit is gained regardless of the condition of *ḥawl*? The popular answer among the jurists is the first one, i.e. zakāh should be paid when the *ḥawl* is complete on the basis of saved property. This standpoint is held by Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik and al-Shāfiʿī. However, the reformists abandon the popular opinion and choose the unpopular one, i.e. that zakāh must be imposed at the time the profit is acquired, without being

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subject to the condition of ḥawl. This is the standpoint of Dāwūd al-Ẓāhirī and Ibn Ḥazm and a group of the Shiʿah madhhab. At this point the reformists emphasize that the person to whom the standpoint belongs does not matter in Islamic law, rather the important matter is adopting the standpoint which suits the purposes of Sharīʿah and meets the interests of the community.

There are some reasons for the reformists to choose such a standpoint. To begin with, they affirm that the status of the Prophetic tradition regarding the condition of ḥawl for the māl mustafād is weak. The tradition is narrated on the authority of al-Tirmidhi from Ibn ʿUmar who said that the Prophet said: "If someone gets property, there is no zakāh on it until a period of a year has passed over it while it is in the possession of its owner." The narrator of this tradition, al-Tirmidhi himself admitted that this tradition falls into the category of weak and suspended (mawqūf), and therefore it cannot be a basis of ḥukm. Secondly, there is a tradition of Ibn ʿAbbās narrated by Abū ʿUbayd in his al-Amwāl, mentioning that whoever obtains māl mustafād should pay its zakāh on the day he gains it. However, they admit that these two reasons are not a strong enough base for their standpoint as they are disputable among the jurists. As regards the above-mentioned Prophetic tradition, although al-Tirmidhi regarded it as weak and suspended, the other traditionists regarded it otherwise. Al-Kahlānī in his Subul al-Salām remarks that this tradition can be considered sound as there are many traditions of the Companions which indicate a similar meaning. Even if this tradition is suspended, he says, it has a degree of ṭaf as it explains matters which are beyond the room of ījtihād. With regard to the tradition of Ibn ʿAbbās, Abū ʿUbayd himself, the narrator of the tradition, interpreted


māl mustafād as land, based on the custom of the people of Madīnah who use the term māl to refer to land.\(^{150}\) Based on this interpretation, the ḥukm of paying zakāh on the day of acquisition is only applied to land products, not to any other.

As the evidences from the naṣṣ do not much support their viewpoint, the reformists turn to the principle of qiyās. By using the method of qiyās, salary and professional income are equated with plantation products under the same underlying cause (illah), namely, they are produced from the utilization of one’s energy, ability and expertise.\(^{151}\) They acknowledge that this idea may sound somewhat absurd and difficult to accept for the moment, but there are factors to be considered. According to them, in the context of Malaysian society nowadays, salary and professional income are the most important sources of wealth for many Muslims especially in urban areas where no other sources of wealth, except trading, are available. If zakāh is not levied on their incomes, except on savings collected once a year, most of them would be free from the obligation of zakāh even if they were wealthy. This is because, in the view of the reformists, there are so many rich people who tend not to save or invest their wealth for profit, but to spend it on luxuries. As a result, most of the rich are freed from the obligation of zakāh, and zakāh is mainly paid by paddy farmers living in the rural areas. This phenomenon does not only show the defect of fulfilling the Prophet’s instruction to collect the zakāh from the rich to be distributed among the poor, but, it would also damage the social justice demanded by the sharī’ah. Therefore, a method to justify the collection of zakāh on salary and professional income at the time they are acquired is necessary, and the reformists find that the method of qiyās is worthwhile and applicable in this case. This standpoint is, in fact, derived from a viewpoint held by contemporary scholars such as Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī and Ahmad ʿAlī al-Salūsī, which they claim as a precautionary (iḥtiyāṭi) standpoint that originates from the standpoint of some Companions such as Ibn ʿAbbās,
Ibn Mas'ūd and Muḥāwiyyah.\textsuperscript{152}

The application of qiyyās in this issue, as a matter of fact, refers to the principle of maṣlaḥah (common interests) to preserve the benefit of the poor and those who face financial hardship. The reality in Malaysia shows that there are many rich people in the country, but the funds of zakāh are still low and inadequate for distribution among those in need. One of the causes of this problem, the reformists maintain, is the failure to understand the real concept and objectives of zakāh which has resulted in limited implementation of zakāh in the community. They maintain, repeating al-Qarāḍāwī's statements, that it is unfair to put a burden of zakāh on farmers who have to pay 10\% or 5\% from their small annual or biannual income, but the rich such as engineers, lawyers, doctors and government officers, who receive handsome monthly income, are free from the obligation. The fact is that there are the rich who spend their income on buying non-zakāh properties for personal consumption and do not save their money longer than a few months; and there are many spendthrifts who spend their income on luxuries, and purposely leave their money below the niṣāb to avoid the obligation of zakāh. If zakāh on income is imposed at the time it is obtained, these problems could be avoided and the interests of the people in need would be more secured. The application of the principle of maṣlaḥah in this issue, they claim, is in line with contemporary needs in protecting the interests of the community, and this is in accordance with the principles of the sharī'ah. Even if the maṣlaḥah is a subsidiary source of evidence in Islamic law, it can be utilized in cases where no text (naṣṣ) explains them clearly.\textsuperscript{153}

Concerning the payable rate of zakāh, the reformists' suggest that the rate should be the same as zakāh on cash since the salary is received in cash. This means


that the payable rate is 2.5% of the balance of the salary if it reaches the *niṣāb*\(^{154}\) after the deductions for basic needs and debts. The amount of 2.5% is payable at the time the salary is received to make sure that even if one spends his salary over the limit of his basic needs, he is still obliged to pay the zakāh. Excessive spending is a kind of extravagance which is discouraged.\(^{155}\)

Currently, although there is a controversy regarding this issue and official fatwa is not yet issued, many states in Malaysia, such as Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Perlis, have started to introduce zakāh on salary and professional income to Muslims. Through the active campaigns held by the zakāh authorities, Muslims’ awareness on this issue is increasing, and the implementation of zakāh has been well received although there are people who neglect it due to their own ignorance, or possibly, their unwillingness to adopt a new perspective.

### Matters Regarding Fasting (Ṣiyām) during the Month of Ramaḍān

**Confirmation of the Beginning of Ramaḍān by Sighting (*Ru’yah*) and Astronomical Calculation (*Hisāb*) Methods**

The traditionalists and the reformists agree that the commencement of fasting of Ramaḍān is determined by the visibility of the new moon, but they dispute about whether the mechanism of astronomical calculation is permissible to ascertain the existence of the new moon. The traditionalists maintain that the beginning of Ramaḍān is determined by the method of sighting (*ru’yah*),\(^{156}\) while the method of

\(^{154}\)The *niṣāb* of cash is the value of 20 *mithqāl* [85g] of gold which is equivalent to approximately 3,000 Malaysian ringgit.


\(^{156}\)According to a resolution of the Istanbul Islamic Countries Conference on Ḥilāl 1978, *ru’yah* is defined as the visibility of new moon by naked eye sighting or by the assistance of telescope. See Baharrudin (continued...)
astronomical calculation is used secondarily to assist and facilitate the method of sighting, and it cannot be a self-sufficient means to confirm the new moon. The reformists assert that the method of astronomical calculation is permissible in cases where the mechanism of sighting is impossible to take place. The arguments of both sides can be summarized as follows:

The traditionalists’ standpoint, which maintains that the beginning of Ramadān is to be confirmed by the method of sighting, refers to many Prophetic traditions, such as the following traditions:  

Qays b. Ṭalq narrated from his father that the Prophet said: "Indeed, God has created these crescents (al-ahillah) as signs to mark fixed periods of time (mawaqīt) for mankind. Start fasting on sighting it (the crescent of Ramadān), and break the fast on sighting it (the crescent of Shawwāl), and if the sky is overcast, then complete the number."  

Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet mentioned the crescent moon (al-hilāl) and then said: "Start fasting when you see it (the crescent of Ramadān), and break the fast when you see it (the crescent of Shawwāl), but when (the actual position of the month is) concealed from you (on account of cloudy sky), then count thirty days."  

Rib‘ī b. Khirārāsh, and other Companions narrated from the Prophet that he said: "Do not precede the month (of Ramadān), but wait until you complete the number (of the month of Sha‘bān) or you see the crescent (of Ramadān)."  

‘Abd Allāh b. ʿAbdās narrated that the Prophet said: "Start fasting when you see it (the crescent of Ramadān), and break the fast when you see it (the crescent of Shawwāl), but when (the actual position of the month is) concealed from you (on account of a cloudy sky), then complete the number thirty days. Do not rush to start the new month."
These traditions, the traditionalists emphasize, lay down the principle that the commencement of the Islamic lunar month is subject to the visibility of the new moon; and if the new moon is invisible because of an overcast sky, the count of the month must be completed as thirty days. The beginning of fasting, without exception, also relies on the visibility of the new moon of Ramadān, and if it is not seen, the month of Shāb‘bān must be completed as thirty days. This is the common rule of commencing and breaking fasting which is agreed by the majority of jurists, and it is not permitted, they assert, to base the beginning of Ramadān on astronomical calculation as the traditions do not signify that. The traditions only denote that the basis of the commencement of fasting is the visibility of the new moon, notwithstanding its existence, so that if clouds obstruct its visibility, the new moon must be considered as not existing even if it does actually exist.\(^{162}\)

For the traditionalists, the astronomical calculation can only play a technical role in this matter and it cannot replace the method of sighting. This is because the important aspect emphasized by Islamic law is the judgment of apparent matters (ḥukm ḥāhir), and with regard to this case, it is the sighting of the light of crescent (nūr al-hilal) which cannot be carried out by the method of calculation.\(^{163}\) However, they affirm, even if the public cannot rely on the astronomical calculation, the astronomers themselves can rely on their calculation to begin or break fasting.\(^{164}\)

The reformists hold that astronomical calculation is permissible for ascertaining the beginning of the new month when there are factors that conceal sighting and make it impossible. They maintain that the important element in confirming the beginning of the new month is the existence of the new moon, which can be identified


\(^{163}\)Baharuddin Zainal, "Di Mana Anak Bulan Syawal 1418 Hijrah," op.cit., p. 6.

either by sighting, or, if this is impossible, by astronomical calculation. This standpoint is constructed on several Prophetic traditions such as the following traditions:

'Abd Allāh b. ʿUmar reported that the Prophet mentioned Ramaḍān and said: "Don’t start fasting until you see the crescent (of Ramaḍān), and don’t break the fast until you see the crescent (of Shawwāl). If it is concealed, make an assessment about it (fa-ṣdurū lahu)."

'Abd Allāh b. ʿUmar narrated that the Prophet said: "Indeed, the (count of) month is twenty-nine (days). Don’t start fasting until you see it (the crescent of Ramaḍān), and don’t break the fast until you see it (the crescent of Shawwāl). When it is concealed, make an assessment about it.”

'Abd Allāh b. ʿUmar also narrated from the Prophet that he said: "Fast on sighting it (the crescent of Ramaḍān), and break the fast on sighting it (the crescent of Shawwāl). If it is concealed, make an assessment about it.”

The reformists maintain that the phrase “make an assessment about it (fa-ṣdurū lahu),” which is a general statement (ijmāl), can be interpreted as making an astronomical calculation, as formerly stated by a group of jurists including ʿĀḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibn Surayj, Muṭṭarīf b. ʿAbd Allāh and Ibn Ḥutaybah. Even if the majority of jurists uphold that the phrase “make an assessment about it (fa-ṣdurū lahu)" means “make an assessment by completing the month as thirty days (fa-ṣdurū lahu thalāthi)” as appears in many other Prophetic traditions, the reformists insist that the method of completing the month as thirty days if sighting is not possible is to ensure that fasting is observed rightly in the month of Ramaḍān, and not to precede it. However, they assert, this method is not a fixed rule, but it is only a solution recommended by the Prophet at his time, when astronomical knowledge among the

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166See Ṣaḥḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Ṣawm,” 1,773; Ṣaḥḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām,” p. 1,795.


Arabs was not yet developed, and precise calculations for the new moon were unknown. This is hinted at by the Prophet himself as he said: "We are an illiterate nation, we neither write nor know accounts. The month is like this and like this, (i.e.) sometimes of twenty nine days and sometimes of thirty days." This tradition is a simple statement of the prevailing conditions during the early days in Madinah where Muslim scribes could write and compute, but complicated calculations of the new moon were still unknown among the Muslims. But now that the knowledge of astronomy has developed and broadened, and the movement of the moon can be calculated accurately as we see nowadays, there is no reason why astronomical calculation cannot be a criterion for the determination of the month of Ramaḍān.

The reformists add, quoting al-Alūsī and Rashīd Riḍā’s standpoint with regard to the verse of Qur‘ān “whoever of you witnesses (shahida) the month (of Ramaḍān), must fast that month” (2: 185), that the phrase "witnesses the month (shahida al-shahr)" doesn’t mean “witnesses the crescent (shahida al-hilāl)” as interpreted by many commentators, for the Arabs never say "witnesses the crescent (shahida al-hilāl),” but they say "see the crescent (ra‘ā al-hilāl). Therefore, the phrase "witnesses the month (shahida al-shahr)" should be understood to mean “being convinced of the presence of the month.” To be convinced of the presence of the month of Ramaḍān means that the month can be determined either by sighting the crescent or by using astronomical calculations.

The reformists further assert that astronomical evidence, as a matter of fact, is acknowledged by the Qur‘ān itself as it states:

"It is He who made the sun a shining thing and the moon as a light, and (He) has measured out its phases (manāzīl), that you might know the number of

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171Ṣaḥḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Ṣawm,” 1,780; Ṣaḥḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām,” 1,806.


The reformists maintain that these verses emphasize the significance of the moon and the sun as a guide to calculating time for mankind, and confirm the use of astronomical calculation in their daily life. By the establishment of astronomical knowledge, Muslims have been confidently relying on it to determine the time of daily prayers, times of starting and breaking the fast, etc. If Muslims can rely on astronomical calculations in these matters, why cannot they rely on them for determining the new moon of Ramaḍān, the reformists argue.174

The traditionalists insist that sighting, which is an ʿillah (underlying cause for a rule) of fasting of Ramaḍān, is a matter of taʿabbud, and is specified by a clear naṣṣ, which, therefore, must be considered as a fixed rule. Fasting is based on sighting the new moon of Ramaḍān, no matter whether this occurs at the actual possible time of sighting or after it. It is not proper to regard that when the new moon rises in the sky, regardless of whether the people see it or not, it would be the first night of the month. It should be visible to the people and they should see it to start the month. If they don’t see it, then it would carry no value for them.175 This point of view is based on the tradition narrated by Muslim on the authority of Abu al-Bakhtari who said: “We went to perform lesser pilgrimage, and when we arrived at the date-palm farm, we saw the crescent (of Ramaḍān). Some people said that it was three nights old, and some others said it was two nights old. Later, we met Ibn ʿAbbās and mentioned this to him. He informed us that the Prophet said: ‘God has set crescent sighting as an

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indication of Ramadān. Thus, Ramadān starts on the night that you see it."

At a certain level, some traditionalists seem to have an extreme standpoint regarding this issue. Saiyid Alwi al-Haddad, the former muftī of Johor state, has delivered a fatwā mentioning that "those who fast earlier than the others without relying on a sighting, and only rely on doubt (wahm) or astronomical calculation, fall into the group of Rāfiḍiyyah (a group of Shi‘ah sect), and this has been said by scholars. Preceding the fasting is a custom of the Rāfiḍīs which was then followed by the Qādiyānis, and some Indonesians who have links with the Qādiyānis...." He further says: "preceding the fasting of Ramadān without sighting or completing the month contradicts the instruction laid down by the Prophetic traditions..."  

The reformists denounce this fatwā saying it is baseless, too rigid, excessive and obsolete. They insist that what is meant by preceding the month as prohibited in the tradition of Rib‘ī b. Khirāsh is to begin fasting before Ramadān begins, and this never occurs in using astronomical calculation as it can confirm precisely when the month begins. To counter this fatwā, they also convey the standpoint of some jurists of the Shāfī‘i madhhab, such as Ibn Rifah, al-Zarkashi, al-Subki, al-Khaṭīb and al-Ramlī, who approve of fasting based on astronomical calculation maintaining that it can be relied on, as it is based on definite knowledge.

Recent developments show that the traditionalists seem to be adopting the method of astronomical calculation in determining the beginning of Ramadān, in addition to a sighting, i.e. a method known as imkān al-ru’yah. For more than ten years, the Islamic Center of Malaysia has been proclaiming that both a sighting and astronomical calculation will be used in determining the beginning of Ramadān, but they do not elaborate on how far astronomical calculation is used. The practice in Malaysia shows that the sighting of the new moon through a special telescope is done at about twenty six places throughout the country on the evening of 29th of Shībān.

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176See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 1,820.
178Abu Bakar Ashaari, Pedoman 'Ībādah Puasa, op.cit., p. 93.
Before the last decade the Penyimpan Mohor Besar Raja-raja (the Keeper of the Rulers’ Seal), who was assigned to declare the beginning of the fasting of Ramađan to the public, used to state in his declaration whether the new moon had been seen or not. However, for the last ten years his declaration was only to announce the day that Ramađan begins, and it has not mentioned whether the new moon has been seen or not. Some people believe that the Islamic Center has been relying on astronomical calculation regardless of the result of sighting. The irony is they claim to observe sighting only to confirm the astronomical calculation, not vice versa.

The Prayer of Ramađan Nights (Ṣalāt al-Tarāwih)

The jurists agree that the Ramađan night prayers, which are known as tarāwih prayers, are more desirable than night prayers during any of other the months, because the Prophet said: “He who celebrates the nights of Ramađan praying and worshipping because of his faith and only for God’s sake, will have all prior sins that have issued forth from him forgiven.” In the Malaysian context, the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists with regard to the matter of tarāwih prayers revolves mainly around its practical manner. The conflict occurs when the reformists denounce the traditionalists’ specific way of performing tarāwih prayers and the additional practices accompanying them. The traditionalists have established their own specific way of performing the tarāwih prayers despite the fact that it was never prescribed in any fiqh books. The traditionalists regard this way to be a good bidah (bidah hasanah), while the reformists regard it as a blameworthy bidah (bidah madhmūmah). The dispute between the traditionalists and reformists concerning this matter is reflected in the following aspects:

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179 See Ṣaḥḥ al-Bukhārī, “Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Tarāwih,” 1,870; Ṣaḥḥ Muslim, “Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Musāfirīn wa Qaṣrī-hā,” 1,269.

Recitation of the Qur’ān in *Tarāwīh* Prayers

The traditionalists, who perform *tarāwīh* prayers in twenty *rak‘ahs* plus three *rak‘ahs* of *witr* (odd) prayer, have specified certain *sūrah* to be recited in every two *rak‘ah* of a prayer. For the first part of Ramaḍān, i.e. from the first to the fifteenth night of Ramaḍān, the *sūrah* recited in the first *rak‘ah* (one *sūrah* for every first *rak‘ah*) after the *Sūrat al-Fātihah*, in chronological order are: (1) *Sūrat al-Takathur*; (2) *Sūrat al-'Aṣr*; (3) *Sūrat al-Humazah*; (4) *Sūrat al-Fil*; (5) *Sūrat Quraysh*; (6) *Sūrat al-Mā‘ūn*; (7) *Sūrat al-Kawthar*; (8) *Sūrat al-Kāfūrūn*; (9) *Sūrat al-Nāsir*; (10) *Sūrat al-Masād*. In every second *rak‘ah* of the prayers, *Sūrat al-Ikhlas* is recited. For the second part of Ramaḍān, i.e. from the sixteenth night onwards, they specify *Sūrat al-Qadr* to be recited in every first *rak‘ah* of the prayers, while in the second *rak‘ah*, the *sūrah* recited in the first *rak‘ah* of the prayers in the first part of Ramaḍān are recited.

Such a specification, according to the traditionalists, is to facilitate the *imām* and *ma‘mūms* remembering the count of *rak‘ahs*, and it is not a fixed rule. One can recite any *sūrah* he wishes, and if he has memorized the whole Qur’ān, he is recommended to recite two or three parts (*juz‘*) of the Qur’ān, or one part for each night, so he can complete the recitation of the whole Qur’ān by the end of Ramaḍān. However, in practice, it is seldom that one finds the traditionalists performing the *tarāwīh* prayers with long recitation of the Qur’ān; on the contrary, most of them recite the specified *sūrah*.

For the reformists, such a specification, even if it is said that it is not a fixed rule, is baseless as it is not prescribed by any authoritative proof. They regard the traditionalists’ reason for such specification, i.e. for remembering the count of *rak‘ahs*, as naive and unacceptable, as it is not a difficult matter to remember the count of *rak‘ahs* if they perform the prayer with solemnity and full submissiveness (*khushū‘*). Fixing certain *sūrah* for certain *rak‘ah* would also mislead ordinary people who might regard it as a *sunnah* of the Prophet if it were not clearly explained. The

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181Abdul Qadir Mandili, *Senjata To’ Haji dan To’ Lebai*, op.cit., p. 36; *Solat Tarawih*, op.cit., p. 3.
Qur'an mentions that any surah or verses can be recited as long as one is comfortable with it. It states: “Recite as much of the Qur'an as may be easy for you” (74: 20). However, they assert, it is better to lengthen the recitation of the Qur'an in this prayer as this is a sunnah that the Prophet used to do.

Although the traditionalists perform twenty rak'ahs of tarawîh prayers and three rak'ahs of witr prayer, the prayers are done quickly and are over in a very short time. This has been a subject of criticism by the reformists who say that such haste, which is possibly due to the ignorance of the imām or the laziness of the ma'mūns, would damage the spirit of the prayer as it is done so quickly that it damages the arkān, the sunnahs and the ethics of the prayer. For instance, in reciting Sūrat al-Fātīhah, which is a rukn of prayer, the imām is observed to recite the verses quickly and continuously in a single breath without any waqf (pause). Other arkān are also done in a hurry, by which they can finish two rak'ahs of the tarawîh prayers within two or three minutes. The reformists affirm that this haste contradicts the concept of the tarawîh prayers which means the prayer of rest, that should be performed with relaxation without rushing. It also contradicts the Prophet’s practice who used to lengthen and beautify his prayer during Ramaḍān. It is reported that ʿAbd Raḥmān b. ʿAwf asked ʿĀʾishah, the Prophet’s wife, regarding the prayer of the Prophet during Ramaḍān and she said: “The Prophet never exceeded eleven rak'ahs in Ramaḍān or in other months; he used to perform four rak'ahs, do not ask me about their beauty and length, then four rak'ahs, do not ask me about their beauty and length, and then three rak'ahs.” ʿĀʾishah further said: “I said, ‘O Messenger of God, do you sleep before performing the witr prayer?’ He replied: ‘O ʿĀʾishah, my eyes sleep but my heart remains awake.’” Al-Ḥārîrî is reported to have said: “We prayed with the Prophet on the 23rd night of Ramaḍān until one third of the night. Then we prayed with him on the 25th night until half the night. Then we prayed with him on the 27th night...”

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183Ibid., pp. 164-165.

night until we assumed that we would miss the *falah*, which they call the *saḥūr*.\textsuperscript{185}

Chanting the *Dhikrs* and Blessing upon the Prophet between the *Tarāwīḥ Prayers*

To begin the *tarāwīḥ* prayers, it is customary for the traditionalists to chant certain *dhikrs* and blessing upon the Prophet en masse by raising their voices in a particular rhythm.\textsuperscript{186} The Tok Bilal firstly chants a *dhikr*: "*Subḥān Allāh wa al-ḥamd li-Allāh wa lā ilāha illā Allāh wa Allāh akbar*, *wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh al-ʿAlī al-ʿAzīm* (Glory be to God, all praises be to God, there is no god but God, He is the Greatest, there is no power and no strength save in God the Most High the Most Great)." He then chants the blessing upon the Prophet (*al-ṣalāt ʿalā al-nabi*) three times, each being longer than the one before it. He chants: "*Allāhumma ṣallī ʿalā Muḥammad* (O God, bless Muḥammad)," first followed by "*Allāhumma ṣallī ʿalā sayyidi-nā Muḥammad* (O God, bless our chief Muḥammad)," and then "*Allāhumma ṣallī ʿalā sayyidi-nā wa ḥabībi-nā wa shaffī-nā wa dhukhri-nā wa mowlā-nā Muḥammad* (O God, bless upon our chief, our beloved, our advocate, our treasure, and our master Muḥammad)." The *maʿmūms* reply simultaneously and loudly: "*Ṣallā Allāh wa sallam ʿalayh* (may God bless and salute him)" each time. The Tok Bilal then calls the *maʿmūms* to perform the *tarāwīḥ* prayers saying: "*Ṣalāt al-tarāwīḥ min qiyām shahr Ramāḍān athābā-kum Allāh* (Come to *tarāwīḥ* prayers as a part of celebrating the month of Ramāḍān, may God reward you)." The *maʿmūms* reply en masse: "*Aḥ-ṣalāt lā ilāh illā Allāh* (Let's go to the prayer, there is no god but God)," after which they all perform the prayer together.\textsuperscript{187}

Immediately after completing two *rakʿahs*, the Tok Bilal exclaims: "*Fadlān min Allāh wa niʿmah* (This is a grace from God and His favour)," continued by the *maʿmūms*: "*Wa maghfiratān wa raḥmah, lā ilāha illā Allāhu wahdahū lā sharīk lah, wa lā rasūlī lā mā ṣāhiḥ lā muṣḥifī lā mā baʿẓī ʿalā bi-Allāh al-ʿAlī al-ʿAzīm* (There is no god but God, He is the Greatest, there is no messenger but God, He is the Most High the Most Great)."


\textsuperscript{186}Abdul Qadir Mandili, Senjata To' Ḥāji dan To' Lebai, op.cit., p. 37; Solat Tarawih, op.cit., pp. 4-6.

\textsuperscript{187}Abdul Qadir Mandili, Senjata To' Ḥāji dan To' Lebai, op.cit., p. 37; Solat Tarawih, op.cit., pp. 4-6.
lahu al-mulk wa lahu al-ḥamd wa huwa `alā kulli shay`in qadīr (Forgiveness and mercy, there is no god but God, the One who has no associate, to Him belongs the dominion and to Him belongs the praise, and He is able to do all things).” The Tok Bilāl then chants the blessing upon the Prophet: “Allāhumma salli `alā Muḥammad (O God, bless upon Muḥammad),” and the ma`mūms reply: “Ṣallā Allāh wa sallam `alayh (may God bless and salute him).” The Tok Bilal says again: “Al-Badr al-munīr Muḥammad (The shining full moon Muḥammad), and the ma`mūms respond loudly: “Ṣallā `alayh (ask blessing upon him),” and they stand up to continue the prayer. The same practice is repeated after they finish the sixth, tenth, fourteenth and eighteenth rak`ahs of the prayer.\(^{188}\)

The routine is different after the completion of the fourth, eighth, twelfth, sixteenth and the twentieth rak`ahs of the prayer. At the end of these rak`ahs, the Tok Bilal chants: “Subhān al-Malik al-Ma`bud (Glory be to the Worshipped King),” followed by the chanting of the ma`mūms: “Subhān al-Malik al-Mawjūd, subhāna al-Malik al-Ḥāy y alladhi lā yanām wa lā yamūt wa lā yafūt abadā. Subbūjūn quddūsun rabba-nā wa rabb al-malāʾikat wa-al-Rūḥ. Subhān Allāh wa al-ḥamd li-Allāh wa lā īlāha illā Allāh wa Allāh akbar, wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh al-Ḳāl Azīm (Glory be to God, all praises be to God, there is no god but God, He is the Greatest, there is no power and no strength save in God the Most High the Most Great).” The Tok Bilal then repeats the three blessings upon the Prophet as done before and the ma`mūms reply in the same way as mentioned before. Then the Imām recites a brief supplication\(^{189}\) and the ma`mūms say “Amen” at his pauses. Afterwards, the Tok Bilal mentions the names of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, one after every four rak`ahs.\(^{190}\) He chants, for example, after the fourth rak`ah: “Al-Khalīfah al-awwal amīr al-mu`minin sayyidu-nā Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (The first Caliph leader of the believers, our

\(^{188}\)Abdul Qadir Mandili, Senjata To’ Ḥajj dan To’ Lebai, op.cit., pp. 38-42; Solat Tarawih, op.cit., pp. 6-15.

\(^{189}\)After completing the prayer twenty rak`ahs, the Imām normally recites the longer supplication.

\(^{190}\)This begins with mentioning Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq after the fourth rak`ah, followed by Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb after the eighth rak`ah, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān after the twelfth rak`ah, and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib after the sixteenth rak`ah.
chief Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddiq), and the maʿmūms respond: “Raḍiya Allāh ʿanhu (May God be pleased with him).” 191

The twenty rakāḥs of tarāwīḥ prayers are normally followed by three rakāḥs of witr (odd) prayer to end the prayers for that night. To perform the witr prayer, when the Imām finishes his supplication, the Tok Bilal chants: “Awtiruwa majjiduwa cazzimu shahra-kum shahra al-siyam rahima-kum Allah (Observe the witr prayer, glorify and aggrandize your month, the month of fasting, may God show mercy to you).” From the night of the sixteenth of Ramaḍān onwards, the word “wa-qnutū (and do the qunūt)” is added after the word “ʿazzimu” to remind them to recite the qunūt in the last rakāḥ, which they believe as recommended after the 15th night of Ramaḍān. The maʿmūms then reply in chorus: “Al-salat ḥan ilia Allāh (Let’s go to the prayer, there is no god but God).” The Tok Bilal then chants the blessing upon the Prophet three times and the maʿmūms reply in a similar fashion as mentioned previously. Once more, the Tok Bilal chants the final call to the prayer: “Ṣalāt al-witr athaba-kum Allāh (Observe the witr prayer, may God reward you),” and the maʿmūms reply: “Al-salat ḥan ilia Allāh (Let’s go to the prayer, there is no god but God).” 192

After the witr prayer finishes, it is customary to chant the dhikr munājāt193 collectively and enthusiastically, followed by the tahlīl up to a hundred times or more as they wish. 194 The tarāwīḥ prayers end when the Imām finishes reciting supplication after the tahlīl. After the prayer, they adjourn to enjoy the moreh before starting the next activity in celebrating the night of Ramaḍān, i.e. the tadarrus al-Qurān, which normally ends at midnight.

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191 When Āli b. Abi Ṭālib is mentioned, the maʿmūms say: “Karram Allāh wajhah (May God honor him).” See Solat Tarawih, op.cit., p. 21.

192 Abdul Qadir Mandili, Senjata To’ Ḥaji dan To’ Lebai, op.cit., pp. 44-47; Solat Tarawih, op.cit., pp. 29-36.

193 It is to recite two times of “Yā Latif yā Kāfī, yā Ḥafīẓ yā Shafī (O the Most Kind, O Sufficer, O Guardian, O Curer), and once “Yā Latif yā Wafī, yā Karīm anta Allāh (O the Most Kind, O the Fulfiller [of the promise], O the Most Generous, you are God).” See Abdul Qadir Mandili, Senjata To’ Ḥaji dan To’ Lebai, op.cit., p. 46; Solat Tarawih, op.cit., p. 32.

194 Abdul Qadir Mandili, Senjata To’ Ḥaji dan To’ Lebai, op.cit., p. 46; Solat Tarawih, op.cit., p. 32.

195 Foods and drinks specially prepared for those who participate in the tarāwīḥ prayers.
The traditionalists hold that chanting the *dhikr* and the blessing upon the Prophet in between the *tarāwīh* prayers in this particular way is to show their glorification of the month of Ramaḍān. As this month is considered as the greatest month for Muslims, a month of blessing and mercy in which Muslims are encouraged to multiply their *ʿibādah* and good deeds, it is important for them to seize this opportunity by performing any sort of *ʿibādah* as much as possible. Assembling together in the mosque at night observing the *tarāwīh* prayers, reciting the *dhikr*, asking for blessings upon the Prophet, reciting the *taḥlīl*, and reciting the Qur’ān collectively are regarded by the traditionalists as means of celebrating the opportunity to gain reward in the nights of Ramaḍān, in addition to being a distinguishing mark (ṣhiʿār) of the religion. They further affirm that even if such a practice was unknown in the time of the Prophet, it can be done as there is no specific prohibition from the *nass*, and it is included in the general order to multiply the recommended deeds in the month of Ramaḍān.

However, the reformists strongly denounce such a way of performing *tarāwīh* prayers, saying that this manner is a newly invented practice which was not prescribed by the Prophet, his Companions and the Pious Forefathers, and is not approved by any of the jurists. Their condemnation regarding this matter is based on the following points:

Firstly, reciting the *dhikr* and the blessing upon the Prophet is a good and recommended practice, but this way of performing it in between the *tarāwīh* prayers, i.e. by chanting it en masse and loudly is against the ethics of *dhikr* and *dū āʾ* taught by the Qur’ān and Prophetic traditions. The reformists assert that according to the

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199 See the reformists’ earlier argumentation on the subject of uttering the intention prior to performing prayers.
Prophetic traditions, raising the voice en masse in reciting dhikr is permitted on three occasions only, namely, when reciting talbiyah during the ḥajj and ‘umrah; chanting the takbīr during ʿid days; and uttering the takbīr during battle.\(^{200}\)

Secondly, the reformists argue, the chanting of certain dhikrs and blessings upon the Prophet in between the tarāwīḥ prayers as done by the traditionalists was never practised nor instructed by the Prophet, his Companions and the Pious Forefathers. Placing it in between the tarāwīḥ prayers is therefore a bid‘ah, for if it was recommended, the Prophet would have practised or instructed it before. The Prophet had meticulously taught the ways of all ‘ibādah, and nobody should add to or lessen them, or create a new form of ‘ibādah. The Prophet said concerning this matter: "O people, there is nothing that brings you close to Paradise and keeps you away from Hell, except I have instructed you to do it. And there is nothing that brings you close to Hell and keeps you away from Paradise, except I have prohibited you from it."\(^{201}\) With regard to the traditionalists' argument that there is no specific prohibition from the nass concerning this matter, the reformists' answer to that is even if there is no specific prohibition, this practice was never done by the Prophet, and this omission is a sunnah which should be followed by the ummah.\(^{202}\)

Thirdly, the reformists hold that raising the voice en masse in the mosque, even if for the purpose of ‘ibādah, is prohibited by the religion as the mosque is a place of tranquility for worshipping God. This is indicated by several Prophetic traditions, such as the following traditions: ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar said that the Prophet was observingṣīkāf (seclusion in the mosque for the remembrance of God) during the last ten nights of Ramaḍān, and a small house made from date palm leaves was built for him. One night he stretched his head out saying: "O people, when the worshipper (musalli) is praying, he is conversing with (yunājī) his Blessed and Exalted Lord. So, everybody must know that he is conversing with his Lord, and do not raise your voices


\(^{201}\)Tradition narrated by al-Baghawi, as cited in A. Hassan, Soal Jawab, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 237.

\(^{202}\)Abdul Ghani Idris Idris, Amalan Bid‘ah, op.cit., p. 253.
above each other." Al-Bayyāḏ narrated that the Prophet came out to the people when they were praying and raising their voices in the recitation (of the Qurʾān). He said: "The worshipper is conversing with his Lord, then concentrate on what is conversed and don’t raise your voices over each other (in the recitation of) the Qurʾān." Al-Ṣā’īb b. Yazīd said: "I was standing in the mosque and somebody threw a stone at me. I looked around and found that it was ʿUmar bin Al-Khattab. He said to me: "Fetch those two men to me." When I did, he said to them: "Who are you?" They replied: "We are from Taʿif." ʿUmar said: "If you were from this country (Madinah) I would have punished you for raising your voices in the mosque of the Messenger of God."

Based on this prohibition, the reformists maintain that raising the voice when performing the tarāwīḥ prayers in the mosque as done by the traditionalists could lead to committing a sin as they breach the code of conduct (adāb) when in a mosque. Furthermore, the reformists assert, chanting dhikr and duʿāʾ en masse in the mosque is dangerously similar to the practice of the Christians who used to chant their prayers together and loudly in the church, while resemblance to other religion is prohibited by Islam as the Prophet said: "Whoever resembles a group of people, is one of them." Therefore, they affirm, it is important to perform the tarāwīḥ prayers in their proper and original way.

\[\text{203 Al-Musnad, } "\text{Musnad al-Mukthirin min al-Ṣaḥābah,}" 5,853.\]
\[\text{204 Al-Muwatta', } "\text{Kitab al-Nida' li al-Salah,}" 163.\]
\[\text{205 Sahih al-Bukhari, } "\text{Kitab al-Salah,}" 450.\]
\[\text{206 Abu Bakar Ashaari, } Pedoman 'Ibādah Puasa, op.cit., p. 108.\]
\[\text{207 See Sunan Abi Dawūd, } "\text{Kitāb al-Libās,}" 3,512; Al-Musnad, "Musnad al-Mukthirin min al-Ṣaḥābah,}" 4,868, 4,869, 5,409.\]
\[\text{208 Abu Bakar Ashaari, } Pedoman 'Ibādah Puasa, op.cit., p. 107.\]
Perceptions Concerning the *Hajj* (Pilgrimage)

The *Miqāt Makāni* (Appointed Location)

The *miqāt* (pl. *mawāqīt*) *makāni* is a special point which is designated for setting the *niyyah* (intention) of commencing the *hajj* and performing the rites of entering into the state of *ihrām* (ritual purification). There are several locations specified by the Prophet as the *mawāqīt* of *hajj*. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrated that Ibn ʿAbbās said: "The Prophet designated Dhū al-Ḥulayfah the *miqāt* for the people of Madinah; al-Juḥfah for the people of Shām; Qarn al-Manāzil for the people of Najd; and Yalamlam for the people of Yaman. These *mawāqīt* are for the people in those places, and for those who come through those places to perform the *hajj* and *umrah* (lesser pilgrimage). And whoever lives within these boundaries can perform *ihrām* from the place he lives; and the people of Makkah can perform *ihrām* from Makkah."210 In another tradition narrated by Muslim on the authority of Jābir, there is an addition: "For the people of Iraq it (the *miqāt*) is Dhāt ‘Irq."211 For the pilgrims from Malaysia who travel by air to Makkah from the east, the *miqāt* applicable for them as understood from the tradition is Qarn al-Manāzil.

However, the majority of the Malaysian pilgrims do not travel directly to Mecca to perform *hajj*, but travel to Madinah first for the *ziyārah* (visit) to the Prophet’s Mosque and other historical places, staying there for several days or a few weeks, and then continue their journey to Makkah to perform *hajj* by going into *ihrām* from Dhū al-Ḥulayfah, the *miqāt* assigned for the people of Madinah and those who come from the north. This involves those pilgrims on the early flights, who normally travel before the beginning of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, under the service of the Tabung Haji

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209*Ihrām* is the ceremonial status of the pilgrim from the moment he starts his *hajj* and puts on the *hajj* garment, until he completes all the *hajj* rites and is released from the *hajj* restrictions. In this state, he is described as *muḥrim*. *Ihrām* also refers to the forming of intention for *hajj* in addition to denoting the *hajj* garment.


211Ibid.
Those travelling later go to Makkah directly after landing in Jeddah and go into ihram from Qarn al-Manâzil. The practice of going into ihram from Dhû al- Ḥulayfah, the miqāt that is not originally assigned for Malaysian pilgrims, and relinquishing their original miqāt, has been a subject of disputation between the traditionalists and reformists.

The traditionalists hold that such a practice is permissible, as the pilgrims travelling first to Madinah have not really set the intention of performing hajj yet, but only have an intention of ziyārah. Moreover, the course of their journey is towards Madinah, not Makkah, and it does not pass the miqāt of Qarn al-Manâzil. Thus, they do not need to go into ihram from Qarn al-Manâzil, and they are not liable for dam (atonement by slaughtering an animal), as there is no reason for that. This is the viewpoint adopted by the Tabung Haji.

The reformists hold that relinquishing the original miqāt and starting the ihram from another miqāt is not permissible and will be liable for dam, as stated by Mâlik. They assert that from the beginning the basic intention of the pilgrims is to perform the hajj, together with 'umrah if they wish. Thus, they must follow all the hajj manâṣik (rites) instructed by the Prophet starting from their departure from home until the end of the manâṣik, and this includes starting the ihram from the miqāt assigned by the Prophet for them. As the intention of the pilgrims is to perform the hajj in Makkah, they should travel directly to Makkah by doing the ihram from Qarn al-Manâzil, and ziyârah to Madinah can be performed after the hajj manâṣik finish. Travelling to Madinah first for ziyârah is a deviation from the original intention and causes the changing of the miqāt which is liable for dam. They perceive no reason for not travelling to Makkah directly. If early arrival at Makkah causes difficulties of being

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212Tabung Haji or its full name Lembaga Urusan dan Tabung Haji (Pilgrims Management and Fund Board) is a government-owned corporation established to provide hajj management and service for Muslims of Malaysia. For brief overview on Tabung Haji, see for example, Awang Had Saleh, "Modern Concept Of Hajj Management: The Experience of Malaysia," in Ziauddin Sardar and M. A. Zaki Badawi (eds.), Hajj Studies (London : Croom Helm, n. d.), vol. 1, pp. 73-86.


in *ihram* for a long time, it can be solved by performing *tamattu‘* ḥajj which releases them from *ihram* after completing an ‘*umrah*.\(^{215}\) However, the Tabung Haji shows no interest in this standpoint, resulting in the reformists choosing later flights in order to avoid a change of *mīqāt*.

**Tawāf al-*Ifādah*\(^{216}\) for the *Qārin*\(^{217}\)**

*Tawāf al-*ifādah* is an indispensable part of the *ḥajj* without which the *ḥajj* is invalid, and that is the one referred to in Qur’ān 22:29: “Then let them complete the prescribed duties for them, and perform their vows, and circumambulate the ancient House (the Ka’bah).” Further, according to the jurists, no atonement is acceptable in its place. The jurists agree that the *mutamattif* is obliged to perform two *tawāf al-*ifādahs: one for the ‘*umrah* and one for the *ḥajj* on the day of sacrifice (yawm al-‘*nahr* - 10th Dhū al-Ḥijjah), and they also agree that the *mufrid* is obliged to perform only one *tawāf al-*ifādah, on the day of sacrifice. Nonetheless, they disagree about the *qārin*, whether he is obliged to perform one *tawāf al-*ifādah or two. The majority of the jurists, which includes Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī, Aḥmad and Ibn Ḥazm maintain that one *tawāf al-*ifādah is sufficient for the *qārin*, and this was also the opinion of Ibn ‘Umar and Jābir.\(^{218}\) Furthermore, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī and Aḥmad maintain that the *tawāf al-*

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216*Tawāf al-*ifādah* literally means the circumambulation of pouring forth, named after the pouring of pilgrims from Mina to the Ka’bah to perform the obligatory circumambulation on Ḥīd al-‘*Aqabah* after throwing pebbles at the Jamrat al-‘*Aqabah*. See Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Fiqh al-‘*Islāmī*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 146.

217*Qārin* is a person who undertakes the *qirān* form of *ḥajj*. *Qirān* is one of the three forms of the performance of *ḥajj*. The other two forms are *tamattu‘* (a person performing this is called *mutamattif*) and *ifrād* (a person performing this is called *mufrid*). *Qirān* is performing the *ḥajj* and the ‘*umrah* by combining them together simultaneously; while *tamattu‘* is performing the *ḥajj* and the ‘*umrah* by commencing the ‘*umrah* first then the *ḥajj* in the month of *ḥajj*; and *ifrād* is performing the *ḥajj* only, but the ‘*umrah* can be performed after the *ḥajj* finishes. See Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Fiqh al-*‘*Islāmī*, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 215-222.

ifādah must be performed after the ṭuqūf (vigil) at ʿArafah, i.e. on the day of sacrifice or after that. Ibn Ḥazm, however, and some other jurists maintain that the ẓawāf al-ifādah is accomplished by the first ẓawāf (al-ẓawāf al-awwal). In Malaysia, a group of reformists have adopted the latter position, and this has resulted in a great dispute between them and the traditionalists when a religious authority released a fatwā that opposed this standpoint.

In August 1987 (Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1407H) a group of 54 pilgrims from the state of Perlis, led by the reformist scholar, Ramli Ahmad, had performed the qirān ʿhajj by performing the ẓawāf al-ifādah (which they prefer to call obligatory ẓawāf, as the term al-ifādah is not applicable in this case) for the ʿhajj and ʿumrah before the ṭuqūf at ʿArafah, or to be specific, on their arrival at Makkah. Consequently, the state’s Religious Affairs Council released a fatwā proclaiming that their ʿhajj was not complete, and void if the ẓawāf al-ifādah was not made up before their death. The second fatwā was released afterwards mentioning that anyone who did not perform ẓawāf al-ifādah after the ṭuqūf is still in the ritual state of iḥrām and bound by the prohibitions of iḥrām. This issue became serious when it was disseminated by the media which portrayed that group of pilgrims as if they had really done wrong, without leaving them to defend their position. However, in early 1989, a book was published to counter the fatwā and defend their practice of ʿhajj.

Defending their argumentation, the reformists insist that it is sufficient for the

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223 This book, titled Hajji Qirān, Benarkah 54 Orang Jamaʿah Hajji Negeri Perlis Tidak Sah Hajjinya? is written by Hashim Ghani, a reformist scholar of Negeri Sembilan who is a close friend of Ramli Ahmad, a scholar who led those 54 pilgrims.
qārin to perform only one obligatory ṭawāf, and that this can be accomplished on arrival in Makkah (which also can be called ṭawāf al-quḍūm - arrival circumambulation). This means that the ṭawāf al-ifāḍah is regarded as having been accomplished by the first ṭawāf, i.e. ṭawāf al-quḍūm, and the qārin does not need to perform it anymore on the day of sacrifice or after that. They base their opinion on several proofs, including various traditions and jurists' opinions. Among them is the tradition narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim from ʿĀʾishah who said:

“We went out with the Prophet during the farewell ḥajj (ḥajjat al-wādāʾ) and we went into ihram for ʿumrah. Then the Prophet said to us: “Whoever has got a sacrificial animal (ḥady) should go into ihram for ḥajj and ʿumrah and should not come out of ihram until he has performed both (ḥajj and ʿumrah).” I arrived at Makkah along with him while I was menstruating, so I did not perform the ṭawāf around the Kaʿbah or (ṣā'y) between ʿṢafā and Mawārakah. I informed the Prophet about that and he said, “Undo your braids and comb your hair, and then perform the ihram for ḥajj and leave the ʿumrah.” I did so, and when we performed and finished the ḥajj, the Prophet sent me to al-Tanrīm along with (my brother) ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Abu Bakr to perform the ʿumrah. The Prophet said, “This ʿumrah is in lieu of your missed ʿumrah.” Those who had undertaken the ihram for ʿumrah, performed the ṭawāf around the Kaʿbah and ʿṣā'y between ʿṢafā and Mawārakah, and then came out of ihram, and on their return from Mina, they performed another ṭawāf. But those who combined their ḥajj and ʿumrah performed only one ṭawāf.”

Based on the above tradition, the reformists maintain, quoting also the standpoint of al-Nawawī, al-Qaṣṭallānī and Ibn Ḥajar, that in the Farewell Ḥajj, the Prophet performed the qirān ḥajj and performed only one ṭawāf for the ḥajj and ʿumrah. This ṭawāf was in fact performed on his arrival in Makkah before the wuqūf at Arāfah, as indicated in the tradition of Ibn ʿUmar:

Ibn ʿUmar intended to perform ḥajj in the year when al-Ḥajjāj attacked Ibn al-Zubayr. Somebody said to Ibn ʿUmar: “There is a danger of an impending

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225Ibid., pp. 28-108.

226Sahih al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Ḥajj," 1,530, 1,534; Sahih Muslim, "Kitāb al-Ḥajj," 2,108.

227Hashim Ghani, Hajji Qiran, op.cit., p. 20.

war between them." Ibn 'Umar said: "Verily, in God's Messenger you have a good example to follow. I would do the same as the Messenger had done. I make you witness that I have decided to perform 'umrah." Then he went out and when he reached al-Baydā', he said: "The ceremonies of both hajj and 'umrah are similar. I make you witness that I have made hajj compulsory for me along with 'umrah." He drove (to Makkah) a sacrificial animal which he had bought at Qudayd. He then departed by performing the ihram for both of them (hajj and 'umrah). When he arrived in Makkah, he performed tawaf around the House (Ka'bah) and (sa'y) between Safā and Marwah, and did not do more than that. He did not slaughter the sacrificial animal, or shave or cut short his hair, or finish his ihram until the day of sacrifice. Then he slaughtered his sacrificial animal and shaved his head. He considered the first таваф as sufficient for the hajj and 'umrah. Ibn 'Umar said: "That was how the Messenger of God performed it."

The reformists assert that this tradition clearly shows that Ibn 'Umar, who exemplified the hajj manāsik of the Prophet, did not perform таваф al-ifāħah after the wuqāf i.e. on the day of sacrifice, but only performed the таваф on his arrival at Makkah, and he regarded it as sufficient for both hajj and 'umrah. There is another tradition that supports this fact:229

Wabararah reported: While I was sitting in the company of Ibn 'Umar, a man came to him and said: "Is it right for me to circumambulate the House before I come to stay (at 'Arafah)?" Ibn 'Umar said: "Yes." The man said: "Ibn 'Abbās, however, says: "Do not circumambulate the House until you come to stay at 'Arafah."" Ibn 'Umar replied: "God's Messenger performed the hajj and circumambulated the House before coming to stay (at 'Arafah). If you say the truth, is it more rightful to follow the saying of the Prophet or the words of Ibn 'Abbās?"

There is another tradition of Ibn 'Umar narrated by al-Shawkānī which says that "He (Ibn 'Umar) considered that he had accomplished the таваф for hajj and 'umrah by performing the first таваф, i.e. the one that he performed on the day of sacrifice for Ifāħah"230 The reformists clarify this by referring to Ibn Ḥajar's words in his Fath al-Bāri,231 where he states that some jurists presumed that the first таваф meant in the tradition is таваф al-qudūm that is followed by the sa'y between Safā and Marwah.


Quoting Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, he explains: "This tradition has been an argument for Mālik that ʿtawāf al-quḍūm which is followed by ʿsāy can be a valid substitute for the ʿtawāf al-ifāḍah if the pilgrim has not performed the latter due to his ignorance or forgetfulness until he has returned to his homeland, but he is liable for dam." Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr then comments: "If the first ʿtawāf is considered as the ʿtawāf al-quḍūm, it can take the place of ʿtawāf al-ifāḍah, and this indicates that the ʿtawāf al-quḍūm is an absolute substitute for ʿtawāf al-ifāḍah. This means that the pilgrims can purposely omit the latter, without being subject to the reasons of ignorance or forgetfulness, and without being subject to the supposition that ʿtawāf al-quḍūm is ʿtawāf al-ifāḍah on the day of sacrifice, or ʿsāy." Furthermore, to strengthen their argumentation, they convey the words of ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Banā in his al-Fath al-Rabbānī, the commentary of al-Musnad, regarding the practice of Ibn ʿUmar. Al-Banā maintains: "For the qārin, ʿtawāf al-quḍūm is sufficient to replace ʿtawāf al-ifāḍah, and that is what is meant by the phrase of ‘he performed ʿtawāf for the ḥajj and ʿumrah once.’"  

Regarding the tradition mentioning that "the Prophet performed ifāḍah (afāḍa) on the day of sacrifice and then came back and performed the Zuhr prayer at Minā," they assert that the word afāḍa in the tradition should be interpreted in its lexical meaning, i.e. "departed from Muzdalifah to Makkah," and not be understood as "performed the ʿtawāf al-ifāḍah". This is because if it is interpreted as "performed the ʿtawāf al-ifāḍah," it contradicts the previous traditions of Ibn ʿUmar.  

The traditionalists strongly denounce this standpoint saying that performing the ʿtawāf al-ifāḍah before the wuqūf is an inversion of the manāṣik of ḥajj and is not allowed in Islamic teaching. They are liable for dam as they did not abide by the order (tartīb) of the manāṣik of ḥajj, and they must make up the ʿtawāf al-ifāḍah after the...
wuqūf on another occasion before coming out of ihram.226 In the fatwā delivered by the mufti of Perlis, Mat Jahya Husain, he clarifies that the first ṭawāf performed by the Prophet was ʿṭawāf al-qudūm, not ʿṭawāf al-ifāḍah. The Prophet performed the ʿṭawāf al-ifāḍah after the wuqūf at Ārafah. He bases the fatwā on several proofs. The first proof is a verse of the Qurʾān: “Then let them complete the prescribed duties for them, and perform their vows, and circumambulate the ancient House (the Kaʿbah).” This verse indicates the sequences of the manāṣik of ḥajj, by which the ʿṭawāf is placed last, and this denies the possibility of ʿṭawāf al-ifāḍah being replaced by the ʿṭawāf al-qudūm because the latter is performed at the beginning of the manāṣik of ḥajj, i.e. on arrival in Makkah. The second proof is the tradition of Ibn ʿUmar who narrated that “the Prophet performed ʿṭawāf al-ifāḍah (aṭfāḏa) on the day of sacrifice and then came back and performed the Zuhr prayer at Minā.” Unlike the reformists, the mufti interprets the word “aṭfāḏa” in the tradition as “performed ʿṭawāf al-iṭfāḏah,” not “departed from Muzdalifah to Makkah.” The third proof is what he claims as the consensus of the jurists, including the four leaders of the madhāhib who all hold that the ʿṭawāf al-iṭfāḏah must be performed after the wuqūf, and that this is a condition of its validity.227

The fatwā also explains that the phrase “first ʿṭawāf” mentioned in the tradition of Ibn ʿUmar (that he accomplished the ʿṭawāf for the ḥajj and ʿumrah by the first ʿṭawāf) means the one he performed on the day of sacrifice, and this has been indicated in another tradition mentioned by al-Shawkānī in his Nayl al-Awtār: “He (Ibn ʿUmar) considered that he had accomplished the ʿṭawāf for the ḥajj and ʿumrah by performing the first ʿṭawāf, i.e. the one that he performed on the day of sacrifice for iṭfāḏah.” If it is said that ʿṭawāf al-iṭfāḏah can be performed before the wuqūf, this contradicts the previous tradition stating that the Prophet performed the ʿṭawāf al-iṭfāḏah on the day of sacrifice. He then concludes that the pilgrims who did not perform the ʿṭawāf al-iṭfāḏah after the wuqūf have not completed their ḥajj, and they

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226See the opinion of Abdul Kadir Talib, the Mufti of Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, in “Kerjakan Tawaf Ifazah Sebelum Wuquf Berdosa Jika Kahwin - Datuk Abdul Kadir,” in Utusan Malaysia, 26 May 1988.

must therefore perform the ταώφ al-ifādah again after the wuqūf. If they do not perform it until they die, their ḥajj is void.238

In another fatwā, it was decided that the pilgrims who did not perform the ταώφ al-ifādah after the wuqūf at Arafah, had not achieved the second tahallul (freedom from the restrictions of ḥiyām).239 Therefore, they are still being prohibited from doing six matters regarding women, namely: (i) marrying (ii) contracting marriage, (iii) proposing marriage, (iv) having sexual intercourse and its preliminaries, (v) being guardian of marriage, and (vi) being representative of guardian of marriage. The fatwā concludes that for all types of ḥajj, viz. tamattif, ifrad and qiran, ταώφ al-ifādah must be performed after the wuqūf at Arafah.240

After the release of the fatwā, the group of 54 pilgrims were strongly condemned by the public. The leader of this group, Ramli Ahmad, was severely criticised by the traditionalists who said that he was not a learned man but pretending to be a scholar, and even worse, he was labelled by the former mufti of Kuala Lumpur, Abdul Kadir Talib, as a companion of Iblis who tried to damage the cibādah of Muslims.241 However, this group (except for 5 of them who accepted the fatwā and repeated the ḥajj in the following year) rejected and challenged the fatwā saying that the fatwā was released without being meticulously researched, and they urged the Council to retract the fatwā. A series of discussions between both parties have been held, but only reached deadlock as both are convinced about their respective standpoints.

It is worthy to note that not all reformists agree with the practice of this

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239 The tahallul is of two types: (i) The tahallul awwal or tahallul aṣghar (first or minor freedom) which occurs after the casting of pebbles at the Jamrat al-Aqabah. This is a partial freedom, by which the pilgrims are free from the restrictions of ḥiyām except, according to the majority of jurists, matters related to women; (ii) The tahallul thānī or tahallul akbar (second or major freedom), which occurs after the ταώφ al-ifādah. This is a full freedom by which the pilgrims are free from all restrictions of ḥiyām. See Wahbah al-Zuhayli, al-Fiqh al-Islā̄mi, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 229.


group. There was also a disagreement among the reformists regarding this issue. Most of the reformists hold that they should follow the strongest and the best standpoint among the madhhabs in matters where there are disputes, as they always do. In this issue, the group of 54 reformist pilgrims, according to most reformists, seem to have followed a weak viewpoint among the madhhabs, and this considered is an irregular practice. This has broken their consistency in choosing the best opinion of the madhhabs and open a door of criticism from their opponent, i.e. the traditionalists. However, the great majority of reformists did not denounce the practice of that group, as they believe that the group has followed a practice that has a basis from the sunnah of the Prophet. They maintain that though the practice is permissible as approved by some scholars, it is better anyway for them not to choose a weak opinion of the jurists.

Matters Related to the Deceased

Death is considered as the last milestone in a Muslim’s worldly life and a gateway to the hereafter. His luck or fate in the hereafter is subject to his deeds in his worldly life, and he has no more opportunity to get rewards except from three sources as stated in the Prophetic tradition:\textsuperscript{242} “When a man dies, his actions come to an end, except for three: an ongoing charity (ṣadaqah jāriyah); or knowledge by which people benefit; or a pious son who prays for him (the deceased).” In the traditional Malay world, after the deceased has been buried, there are several practices established to “assist” the deceased in his new life, which are usually practised in two forms: (i) assisting the deceased to answer the questions from the angels in his grave, which is called talqān (instructing), which is performed immediately after the burial, on his grave; (ii) contributing to the reward of the deceased by performing certain acts of ʿibādah or ṣadaqah (charity), and making up his omitted obligations. Comprised in the

\textsuperscript{242}ʿaḥādīth Muslim, “Kitāb al-Waṣiyyah,” 3,084; Sunan al-Tirmidhi, “Kitāb al-Ādkām,” 1,297.
latter are the ceremony of *tahlīl* (chanting the phrase *lā ilāha illa Allah*), the *kenduri* *awrah* (feast of the deceased), reciting the Qur’ān on the grave, *sedeekah fatiha* (contributing the reward of reciting the *sūrat al-Fātīha*), paying the *fidyah* (ransom) for missed prayers and others. All these practices are widely practised by the traditionalists but are strongly denounced by the reformists. Discussion on this matter can be summarized as follows:

The *Talqīn* after Burial

The *talqīn* (Malay *talkin*) is a prayer recited to calm the deceased and instruct him to answer rightly the questions propounded by the angels of the grave, namely, *Munkar* and *Nakir*, regarding the matters of his faith. According to the traditionalists, the *talqīn* is recommended or desirable (*mustahabb*), and this is indicated in the tradition narrated by al-Ṭabarānī from Abū Umamah who said:

“When I die, do to me as the Prophet had instructed us. He (the Prophet) said: ‘When one of your brothers dies, and you have levelled the ground on his grave, let one of you stand by the head of the grave and say, “O fulān b. fulānah.” Indeed, he is listening but cannot answer. Then say again, “O fulān b. fulānah.” He is listening but still cannot answer. Then say again, “O fulān b. fulānah,” and he answers, “Yes, guide me, may God show mercy to you,” but you do not notice that. Then say, “remember the state in which you left this world, i.e. witnessing that there is no god but God, and that Muḥammad is His servant and His messenger; and that I am pleased with God as a Lord, and with Islām as a religion, and with Muḥammad as a Prophet, and with Qur’ān as a guidance, and with Ka’bah as a qiblah, and with the believers as brothers; and that Paradise is true, Hell is true, the resurrection is true, the Hour is coming, there is no doubt about it, and that God will resurrect those who are in the graves.” Munkar and Nakir then hold each other’s hands and say: “Let us go, what is there to keep us beside someone who has been instructed his argument.” A man asked the Prophet: ‘O Messenger of God, how if his mother is unknown?’ The Prophet replied: ‘He is related to his mother Ḥawwā’ (thus he is called): O fulān b. Ḥawwā’ (Eve)”


In practising the *talqīn*, as soon as the filling in of the grave is completed, the *imām* or a religious teacher sits on the square mat by the head of the grave, and starts reciting the *talqīn*, while the people who circle the grave listen to it and say "Amen" when the *imām* chants the *du’a* at the end of the *talqīn*. The *talqīn* is recited in Arabic or Malay and contains mainly the instructions and guides for the dead to answer the questions by the angels. The instructions recited are more than those that are stated in the Abū Umāmah’s tradition, and thus, it normally takes about half an hour to finish the *talqīn*. The *talqīn* can be recited repeatedly in one occasion if the dead man’s relatives wish, and a certain sum is customarily paid to the *imām* who recites the *talqīn*. The *talqīn* is usually followed by the chanting of *tahlil* and prayer for the deceased. For the traditionalists, the *talqīn* is not only for the benefit of the deceased, but also benefits the living people to remember death and to be prepared for it.

The practice of *talqīn* is nevertheless denounced by the reformists who hold that it is a *bid'ah madhmūmah* as it is not prescribed either in the Qur’ān, nor in the sunnah, nor by the leaders of the four madhhabs. The tradition of Abū Umāmah is considered by them as not authentic (ghayr ṣaḥīḥ) as stated by numerous traditionists, such as al-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, ʿIzz al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Salām, Ibn al-Ṣanāʿī, and others. Al-Ṣanāʿī says in his *Subul al-Salām*: “The traditionists have meticulously investigated the tradition of *talqīn* and found that it is weak. Practising the *talqīn* is a *bid'ah*, and one should not be confused because many people practise it.”

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tradition, and therefore it is considered weak.249 Logically, the reformists state, if the Prophet had ever instructed the talqîn, it would have been widely known and practised among his Companions, but it seems to be unknown among them. The leaders of the four madhhab, except Aţmad, also did not say anything about the talqîn after burial, and it remained unknown until the third century of the Hijrah, when it was practised by small number of people. According to Aţmad, he did not know who practised the talqîn except a group of people of Syria who did it when Abû al-Mughirah died.250 Furthermore, they emphasize, quoting al-Nawawi’s words in al-Majmû, that Abû Umâmah is reported to have narrated the tradition during his death-throes (naza‘), i.e. not in a normal situation, and thus, its validity is questionable.251

Besides the invalidity of the tradition of talqîn, the reformists base their standpoint on several other reasons. They affirm that the practice of talqîn contradicts the distinct meaning hinted at in the Qur’ân that nobody can teach or instruct the dead. The Qur’ân states: "Nor are the living and the dead (alike). Verily, God makes whom He will hear, but you cannot make hear those who are in the graves (35: 22); "Verily, you cannot make the dead to hear, nor can you make the deaf to hear the call, when they flee, turning their backs" (27: 80). The Qur’ân in another place states: "And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he says: 'Now I repent'" (5: 18). The reformists maintain, if repentance prior to death is rejected, any instructions to guide the deceased to the truth after his death would be more worthless. They further argue, if the talqîn can benefit the deceased Muslim, it would also benefit the dead disbeliever, and it should be recited for him, as there is no difference between the two in terms of observing the instructions.252

249 Al-Shawkânî, Nayl al-Awtâr, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 90.
250 Ibid., vol. 4: 90.
The reformists conclude that the *talqīn* after burial has no benefit to the deceased, nor it is recommended by the *sharfaḥ*, but is merely an innovation. The right *talqīn* as recommended by the Prophet is instructing those who are dying to affirm the words of *tawḥīd*, "*lā ilāha illā Allāh* (there is no god but God)." The Prophet said: "Whisper to those of you who are dying the affirmation of "*lā ilāha illā Allāh.*" This tradition denotes that this *talqīn* can benefit those who are still alive, and is worthless after death. The reformists assert that according to the tradition of the Prophet, after the deceased is buried, it is recommended for the living to pray to God to forgive him and to give him steadfastness when answering the questions from the angels. It is narrated from Hāni', the servant of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, that when the burial finished, the Prophet stood by the grave and said: "Seek forgiveness for your brother and pray for him to be steadfast, for now he is being questioned." The reformists maintain that even if the *talqīn* after burial is held by the traditionalists as desirable or recommended, it seems as if it is considered as customarily obligatory, as none of them is willing to leave his relatives to be buried without *talqīn*. Such an attitude is harmful as it could cause misjudgement of the *ḥukm* on this matter and lead to misunderstanding that the *talqīn* can secure the deceased in his grave regardless of his lack of faith or good deeds.

**Contributing to the Reward of the Deceased**

According to the traditionalists, contributing to the reward of the deceased is recommended in Islam. The basis of their point of view is the tradition narrated by Muslim stated previously: "When a man dies, his actions come to an end, except for three: an ongoing charity (ṣadaqah ḥāriyyah); or knowledge by which people benefit;
or a pious son who prays for him (the deceased)." This tradition is regarded by them as an important basis for the principle of contributing rewards for the deceased. According to them, this tradition indicates that only the acts of the deceased, i.e. his obligatatory acts (a'māl taklīfiyāh) have come to an end, while the living can still act and contribute the reward to him. They assert that inasmuch as the deceased in the barzakh (interval) world cannot perform obligatory acts, it is necessary for the living to assist him by performing any types of obligatory acts with the intention of contributing the reward to him. From the traditionalists’ point of view, it can be concluded from this tradition that beside the statement of the three sources of rewards, this tradition also connotes another source of reward for the deceased, i.e. the contribution of the living.256 This fact is proven by many other traditions, such as the following:

Ibn 'Abbās narrated that the mother of Sa'īd b. 'Ubādah died during Sa'īd’s absence. He said to the Prophet: "O Messenger of God, my mother died during my absence. Will it benefit her if I give charity on her behalf?" The Prophet said: "Yes." Sa'īd said: "I take you as my witness that I give my garden al-Mikhraf as charity on her behalf."257

A man came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of God, my mother died and she ought to have fasted one month. Shall I fast on her behalf?" The Prophet replied: "If your mother had been in debt, would you have paid her debt?" The man answered: "Yes." The Prophet said: "God’s debt has more right to be paid."258

A woman from the tribe of Juhaynah came to the Prophet and said, "My mother had vowed to perform ḥajj but she died before performing it. May I perform ḥajj on my mother’s behalf?" The Prophet replied: "Perform ḥajj on her behalf. Had there been a debt on your mother, would you have paid it or not? So, pay God’s debt, as it has more right to be paid."259

These traditions, according to the traditionalists, clearly signify that the living can contribute to the reward of the deceased by performing any obligatory acts on his behalf, and those acts will benefit him, as well as the living. Contributing to the

258 Sahīh al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 1,817; Sahīh Muslim, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 1,937.
reward of the deceased, as a matter of fact, is not limited to making up obligatory acts on behalf of the deceased only, but encompasses every good action (‘amal ṣāliḥ) done by the living. They further state that giving reward to the deceased is like giving one’s property earned from work to another. When one performs any act of ‘ibādah, he gets the reward from God, and thus he owns it and it will be in his possession permanently unless he gives it to someone else. As the reward is of a transcendental (ghayb) nature, giving it to another is accomplished through the intention, meaning that one must intend and ask God to give the reward of his performance of ‘ibādah to the deceased, otherwise, the reward remains his.260 However, they assert, except in the case of ḥajj, reward can only be given to the deceased, and it is not applicable for the living as they are able to get the reward by performing the acts of ‘ibādah themselves. For the deceased, the only thing the living cannot perform on behalf of them is the prayer, whether the obligatory or the supererogatory ones, as there is no proof that indicate this.261 However, according to them, missed prayers can be made up by paying a fidyah (ransom) to the poor.

In the Malay world, there are many practices included in the category of giving the reward to the deceased. Among them are making up the deceased’s missed obligatory actions, such as zakāh, fasting and ḥajj; paying the fidyah for missed prayers; paying his debts; reciting the Qur’ān over his grave and reciting Sūrat al-Fātīḥah; and performing the tahlil ceremony and the kenduri arwah. These will be clarified in the following discussions.

Making Up The Deceased’s Missed Obligatory Actions

After one’s death, his relatives would investigate if he owes any debts to people, or omitted his obligatory actions. If he owes a debt to people, they pay it out of his property, or, if he has no property, they pay it out of theirs on his behalf. The

payment of debt should be finished before the burial, but it can be delayed after that if they are not able to pay it straight away. Regarding his missed obligatory actions, i.e zakāh, fasting and ḥajj, his relatives will perform them on his behalf. If he has missed obligatory prayers, his relatives make them up by paying fidyāh, i.e giving a cupak (Arabic mudd - a small cubic measure) of rice or its price to the poor for one missed prayer. They also pay the fidyāh for his missed fasting by the same rate, i.e a cupak for a day of missed fasting.

The practice of paying the fidyāh for missed prayers is based on a standpoint in the Shafi‘i madhhab as quoted by Ibn Ḥajar in his al-Tuhfah. He says that some scholars of the Shafi‘i madhhab, such as al-‘Abbādi, Iṣḥāq, ʿAṭā’ and Ibn Burhān, hold that fidyāh of the prayer is permissible, as there is a tradition about that, but this tradition is ma‘ūlī (too weak). He also states that Ibn al-Subki had once done it for his dead relatives.262 This standpoint, however, is perceived by the majority of jurists in this madhhab, including Ibn Ḥajar, as weak and not recommended.263 Al-Nawawi states in his Sharḥ Muslim that the reason for paying the fidyāh for a missed prayer is its analogy (qiyās) with fasting, which can be made up by the fidyāh. However he asserts that this standpoint is very weak.264 Notwithstanding the weakness of this standpoint, it has been adopted by traditional Malay society, especially those who are in rural areas, and regarded as if a must if the deceased has missed prayers in his lifetime.

To pay the fidyāh, the relative of the dead man would estimate his missed prayers or fasting, and prepare the equivalent amount of rice or its price to be given to the poor or the pious men in the area. If the deceased had never performed the prayer during his lifetime, the total of his missed prayers is estimated from his assumed age of puberty (bulūgh) until his death. The cost of this preparation of rice or its price is taken from the dead’s property, or, if he left no property or its property

264Al-Nawawi, Sharḥ Sahih Muslim, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 49.
is not enough for this purpose, his relative would defray it. In normal practice, the rice or its price need not amount to very much, as it can be used repeatedly to complete the fidyah. For example, three gunny sacks of rice is normally used to pay the fidyah for a year (for 1,825 times) of missed prayers, but they can be used numerous times until the fidyah is completed, which means that if the deceased omitted the prayers for ten years, they will be used ten times. This requires them to be returned to the fidyah payer, i.e. the relative of the dead man, after it was handed to the payee, i.e. the poor or the pious man. The payer would negotiate first with the payee to return the rice back to him as a šadaqah or hadiyah (gift), so that he can use it numerous times to complete the fidyah. To begin the payment of fidyah, the relative of the deceased utters that he pays the certain amount of the rice as fidyah of the certain numbers of missed prayers on behalf of the deceased, stating his name, and hands it to the payee. The rice then belongs to the payee, but he then returns it back to the payer saying that he gives the rice to him as a šadaqah or hadiyah. Using the same rice, the payer and the payee then would repeat the same step, until the amount of the fidyah completes. After it finishes, the rice would either be returned to the payer or kept by the payee, depending on their agreement. If the price of the rice is used, normally in money or gold jewellery, the same procedure is used, but they would be finally returned to the payer, and only a small amount of money is given to the payee as a wage of his cooperation in completing the payment of fidyah.

Such a practice, which seems to contain an element of trickery, is not only denounced by the reformists, but is also denounced by some traditionalist scholars. For them, even if the payment of fidyah is permissible, such a practice is considered a kind of deception in matters of religion that will not benefit the deceased. Such a practice is also considered as an attempt to deceive God, as stated in the Qur’ān: "They deceive God and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and they perceive it not" (2: 9). They maintain that the fidyah should be paid with the right amount to the poor, and it cannot be returned back to the payer, and the agreement about that is perceived as not valid as it denies the freedom of the payee
to use his property. Such a practice is considered a *bid‘ah* and an invalid trick.\(^{265}\) However, among traditional Malay society in certain parts of the Malay Peninsula, this method of paying the *fidyah* is still widely practised as it is regarded as the only way to make up the deceased’s missed prayers.

Another practice of contributing to the reward of the deceased is reciting the Qur‘ān over his grave. According to the traditionalists, it is recommended for the family to recite the Qur‘ān, especially *Sūrat Yā Sīn* for the deceased, and if they are not able to recite it, they can hire a pious man to recite it. The recitation of the Qur‘ān is recommended to be done by the grave of the deceased, but it also can be done in the house of the deceased. It is narrated that the Prophet said: "Whoever enters the grave area and recites *qul huwa Allāh aḥad* eleven times, and then he present it as gift to the deceased, will be given the reward of as many as the number of the deceased."\(^{266}\) Al-Shāfi‘ī is reported to have said: "It is desired (*yustahabb*) that a part of the Qur‘ān is recited by the grave (after the funeral), and if the whole Qur‘ān is recited, that is good."\(^{267}\) In certain parts of Malaysia, a gathering to recite the whole Qur‘ān attended by the whole community is held until the third day (sometimes until the seventh day) after the death. Everyone recites certain chapters of the Qur‘ān with the intention that the reward of the recitation is given to the deceased. The gathering is ended with a prayer for the deceased.\(^{268}\)

The recitation of the Qur‘ān for the deceased can also be done at anytime after that specific time, but reciting it on Friday it is most recommended. This is based on the Prophetic traditions: "Whoever visits his parent’s grave or the grave of one of them on Friday, reciting *Sūrat Yā Sīn*, will be forgiven"; "Whoever visits the grave of his parent every Friday and recites *Sūrat Yā Sīn* by the grave, will be forgiven


\(^{266}\)Narrated by al-Dāraqutnī, as quoted in Mohd. Baqir, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?*, op.cit., p. 51.


as much as the number of its verses or its letters."\textsuperscript{269} In certain parts of the northern Malay Peninsula, it is customary for the families of the dead to hire the pious men to recite the Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n by the grave during the month of Rama\textsuperscript{d}\textsuperscript{a}n as to celebrate the blessing of this month. According to the traditionalists, hiring a person to recite the Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n for the deceased is of benefit to all parties: the hirer, the hired person and the deceased. Even if the hired person recites the Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n with the sole intention of getting the wage, the deceased will benefit by the recitation.\textsuperscript{270}

Included in the category of contributing to the reward of the deceased is the \textit{sedekah fata\\textsuperscript{h}ah}, i.e reciting \textit{Susan al-Fati\\textsuperscript{h}ah} and giving its reward to the deceased. This is a very common practice in traditional Malay society and regarded as the simplest way of contributing to the reward of the deceased, as there is no specific ceremony needed for this purpose. One can contribute to the reward of the deceased at anytime and anywhere by reciting \textit{Susan al-Fati\\textsuperscript{h}ah} with the intention of giving its reward to the deceased. In addition to \textit{Susan al-Fati\\textsuperscript{h}ah}, they also recite \textit{Susan al-Ikhla\\textsuperscript{s}} as it is believed to comprise one third of the Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n. It is also customary to do \textit{sedekah fata\\textsuperscript{h}ah} en masse but inaudibly at the beginning of any gathering they hold, instead of holding the \textit{tahl\\textsuperscript{l}l} ceremony.

The issue of contributing to the reward of the deceased is one of the disputed matters among the jurists. The jurists agree that \textit{du\\textsuperscript{f}\\textsuperscript{a}}, \textit{istigfa\\textsuperscript{r}}, \textit{sadaqa\\textsuperscript{h}} and making up missed acts of \textit{\textsuperscript{2}ib\\textsuperscript{d}\\textsuperscript{a}\\textsuperscript{h} (except prayer) can benefit the deceased, as this is indicated by many Prophetic traditions. However they dispute regarding whether other physical forms of \textit{\textsuperscript{2}ib\\textsuperscript{d}\\textsuperscript{a}\\textsuperscript{h}} (\textit{\textsuperscript{2}ib\\textsuperscript{d}\\textsuperscript{a}\\textsuperscript{h} badani\\textsuperscript{y}ah}), such as the prayer, recitation of Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n and \textit{dhikr}, can benefit the deceased or not. The jurists of the \textit{\textsuperscript{2}anafi} madhhab and some jurists of the \textit{\textsuperscript{2}alimi}, \textit{\textsuperscript{2}a\\textsuperscript{f}\\textsuperscript{i}} and \textit{\textsuperscript{2}anbali} madhhab hold that it benefits the deceased, while the majority of jurists of the \textit{\textsuperscript{2}alimi, the \textit{\textsuperscript{2}a\\textsuperscript{f}\\textsuperscript{i}} and the \textit{\textsuperscript{2}anbali

\textsuperscript{269}As quoted in Dr. Ruhani, \textit{Revolusi Mental}, op.cit., p. 69. The narrators of both traditions are not mentioned.

\textsuperscript{270}Daud Fatani, \textit{Fur\\textsuperscript{u} al-Mas\\textsuperscript{a}\\textsuperscript{l}l}, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 183-184.
Madhhab schools hold that it does not benefit the deceased.\textsuperscript{271} In this issue, it seems that the traditionalists, who are of the Shafi'i madhhab, adopt the viewpoint of the minority of the jurists in the madhhab, while the reformists adopt the standpoint of the majority of the jurists of the Malikis, Shafiis and Hanbalis madhhabs.

Defending their standpoint, the reformists assert that contributing to the reward of the deceased by performing prayer, reciting the Qur'an or dhikr would not benefit the deceased as there is no proof that indicates this and it contradicts statements in the Qur'an, such as: "And that man can have nothing but what he did" (53: 39); "This Day (the Day of Resurrection), none will be wronged in anything, nor will you be requited anything except that which you have done" (36: 54); "He (a person) gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned" (2: 286); "Whoever does a righteous good deed, that is for (the benefit of) his own self, and whoever does evil, that is against his own self, and your Lord is not at all unjust to (His) servants" (41: 46); "Whoever acts correctly, goes right only for the benefit of his own self. And whoever goes astray, goes astray to his own loss. No one laden with burdens can bear another's burden. And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning)" (17: 15); and "This Day you shall be recompensed for what you have done" (45: 28). Generally, the reformists maintain, these verses indicate that one can get reward only from one's own effort, and none can contribute any reward to another, and this law applies to both the living and the dead. However, the generality of these verses is specified by Prophetic traditions indicating that du'a, istighfar, sadaqah, and making up missed obligatory acts of 'ibadah (except prayer), when performed by the living for the deceased, are of the benefit to the deceased. The other kinds of 'ibadah which are not so indicated are subject to the generality of the law, unless it is proven otherwise. Even if it is known that one's reward is one's "private property" which one can keep or give to another by intention or praying to God, in this case, his intention or prayer would not be

accepted as they contradict the law of God.272

Regarding the traditionalists’ practice of paying *fidyah* for the deceased’s missed prayers, the reformists state that this is a baseless practice which is unacknowledged by almost all jurists, including the great jurists of the Shāfi‘ī madhhab, and of course, by al-Shāfi‘ī himself. They state that the *fidyah* is only specified for missed fasting, and not for the prayer. Using analogy to equate the prayer with fasting is unacceptable as they claim that analogy is not valid in matters of ‘ibādah. On the method of paying the *fidyah* established by the traditionalists, the reformists consider it as a ridiculous deception in religion and a kind of *bid‘ah munkarah* that should be eliminated at all costs. Furthermore, they assert that the *fidyah* for missed prayer and paying it in such a way can be considered as a *bid‘ah murakkabah* (multiple innovation), as both of them are unknown in the religion. Such a practice is useless and is making a mockery of the religion.

The reformists have the same perception regarding reciting the Qur’ān for the deceased, either by the grave or at home. They maintain that all the traditions pertaining to the issue of reciting the Qur’ān for the deceased by his grave are either too weak or fabricated, as stated by several traditionists who have investigated these traditions.273 Regarding the saying of al-Shāfi‘ī that it is desireable to recite the Qur’ān by the grave after the burial, the reformists hold, quoting Sayyid Sābiq’s, that the recitation desired by al-Shāfi‘ī is for the purpose of blessing for the deceased, not for the purpose of giving the reward to him, as it is known that al-Shāfi‘ī did not acknowledge that the reward of the recitation of the Qur’ān would benefit the deceased.274 They also quote al-Nawawi’s statement that the dominant standpoint (al-*mashhūr*) in the Shāfi‘ī madhhab regarding reciting the Qur’ān for the deceased is that the reward of the recitation does not benefit the deceased. He cites in his *Sharḥ Šubḥ Muslim* and *al-Majmū‘* that al-Shāfi‘ī’s proof of this matter is the verse of the Qur’ān:

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274Ibid., p. 70.
"And that man can have nothing but what he did" (53: 39); and the saying of the Prophet mentioned previously: "When a man dies, his actions come to an end...."\(^{275}\)

The reformists also denounce the practice of hiring a pious man to recite the Qur'ān for the deceased, asserting that reciting the Qur'ān with a worldly intention is prohibited, as stated by almost all jurists. They quote the words of Maḥmūd al-Šayḫ al-Ayn, the commentator of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, in his 'Umdat al-Qārī': "It is prohibited to recite the Qur'ān for a worldly purpose. Both the receiver (of the wage) and the giver are committing a sin." Ibn Ṣadr al-Ṣaḥīḥ in his al-Nihāyah Sharḥ al-Hidāyah is quoted as saying: "The recitation of the Qur'ān with the intention of getting a wage (uṣūrah) is of benefit to neither the deceased nor the reciter.\(^{276}\)

On the practice of sedekah fatībah for the deceased, the reformists hold a similar perception, considering this practice as another example of bid'ah in Malay society. They maintain that there are in fact various ways for the living to assist the deceased as indicated in Prophetic traditions, instead of "creating" their own way for that purpose. According to the sunnah of the Prophet, the living are recommended to pray to God for the blessing of the deceased and to ask forgiveness for him. To contribute to the reward of the deceased, apart from making up his missed obligations, the Prophet recommended the living to give charity on behalf of the deceased and this will surely benefit him. Giving examples of matters that benefit the deceased, the reformists convey al-Suyūṭī’s and Aḥmad al-Ḥakāmi’s words expressed in their poems.\(^{277}\) Al-Suyūṭī says:

"When the son of Adam dies then finished
from him are his actions except ten:
Knowledge he had spread and the prayer of his offspring
and his planted dates and his ongoing charity
And heritage of a muṣḥaf and a lodge for travellers at a seaport
and digging a well or making a river flow
And a house he built for foreigners to take shelter [in]


\(^{276}\)As cited in Dr. Ruhani, Revolusi Mental, op.cit., p. 42.

or a place he built for dhikr
And teaching the noble Qur’ān.
Take this from traditions briefly.”

While al-Ḥakami says:

"And it is true that charity and prayer
benefit, if done as prescribed
Likewise paying a debt, regardless of
who is the payer, without disputation
Likewise for the father the effort of his son
will benefit him, by the text, without hesitation
And fasting and pilgrimage which are made up
by a relative or other after him, and that is clear.”

The Tahlīl Ceremony and Kenduri Arwah (Feast of the Deceased)

The tahlīl and kenduri arwah are very common practices in the Malay world and regarded by the Malays as their most important custom. Tahlīl and kenduri arwah are customarily held on certain days after a person’s death, i.e. on the 1st, 3rd, 7th, 40th (or 44th) and 100th days. After the 100th day they are held on unspecified days, and are usually held jointly with other occasions such as wedding feasts, feasts of circumcision and feasts of thankfulness. Some people, apart from that, hold the same feast once every year. The main purpose of this practice, in addition to remembering the deceased, is to give him the reward of the recitation of the tahlīl, the reward of ṣadaqah (as giving a feast is considered a type of ṣadaqah), and to pray for the blessing of God in the hereafter. This practice, however, is not prescribed in the

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278 Literally, tahlīl means saying the words “lā ilāha illa-Allāh (there is no god but God). In the Malay world, tahlīl (Malay tahlil, or meratib) refers to a ceremony of chanting these words, which the rewards of this chanting are specially dedicated for the deceased. The reason for choosing these words to be recited for the deceased is because these words are regarded as the best dhikr, as the Prophet said: "The best dhikr is lā ilāha illa-Allāh, and the best duʿa' is al-hamdu li-Allāh." (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Mājah). See Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?, op.cit., pp. 113-116.


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Malay traditional *fiqh* books, but is well accepted by traditional Malay society and is regarded as an important part of their religious activities.

The *kenduri arwah* is organized by the deceased’s close relatives and is normally held at night after the ‘Ishā’ prayer. All relatives of the dead, his neighbours, the *imām* and pious men, especially the staff of the nearest mosque, are invited to the feast. It is considered that the more pious men invited, the better it is for the deceased. The *kenduri arwah* is started by the *tahlīl* ceremony, which is led by the *imām*, who in this particular ceremony is called *khalīfah* (caliph). Before commencing the *tahlīl* ceremony with the recitation of the *sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, the *khalīfah* mentions who its reward will be presented to. He says: “To the presence of the Prophet, to his family, all the Prophets and Messengers, the Prophet’s Companions, the Followers, the Followers of the Followers, and to all spirits of their parents, all Muslims and Mu’mins whether they are living or dead. For them is (the reward of) al-*Fātiḥah*.” The word "*al-Fātiḥah*” is said loudly signalling that everyone must recite *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*. After reciting it, they chant *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* three times, *Sūrat al-Falaq* and *Sūrat al-Nās* once. Afterwards, *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* is recited again, followed by the chanting of certain verses of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, namely, verses 1 to 5, 255, and 284 to 286. This is followed by blessing and praising the Prophet and his family. The *istighfār* is then chanted three times. The chanting is paused, and then the *khalīfah* utters, quoting the saying of the Prophet: “The best *dhikr* - let it be known - is *lā ilāha illa-Allāh*,” and the people answer “Ḥāyy Ma‘būd (The Living, The Worshipped).” He then says again the *tahlīl*, while the people answer “Ḥāyy Mawjūd (The Living, The Existing).” The third time he chants the *tahlīl*, the people answer, “Muḥammad rasūl Allāh (Muḥammad is the Messenger of God).”

They then chant the *tahlīl* together, loudly and repeatedly for at least a hundred times, slowly at first, but then picking up speed, shaking their heads and

\[279(\ldots)\text{continued}\]


\[280\text{See full text of tahlīl in, for example, }^{5}\text{Ali Baldram, Perukunan, op.cit., pp. 155-159; YADIM, Ya Sāh, Tahlīl dan Doa (booklet), pp. 20-44.}\]
bodies left and right with their eyes closed in concentration. To signal the end of the chanting of *tahlīl*, the *khalifah* raises his voice over the others' and reduces the speed of the chant. Continuing the ceremony, the blessing on the Prophet is recited after that, followed by these formulas: chanting of the *tasbih* (saying *subḥān Allāh wa bi-ḥamdih* - Glory be to God and praise be to Him) 33 times; chanting *yā Allāh* (O God) 33 times; and the *istighfār* 10 times. The blessing on the Prophet is then recited again, followed by the recitation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*. The *khalifah* then recites the prayer for the deceased (*doa arwah*), while the people say "Amen" at his pauses. The major content of this prayer is praying to God to send the reward of all that they have recited as a gift (*hadiyah*) to the presence of the Prophet Muḥammad, to his family, his Companions, the Followers, and the Followers of the Followers. Then they pray to God to send the reward specifically to the spirit of the deceased by mentioning his name and his father's name, and to his ancestors and descendants in general. They also pray to God to send the rewards to the spirits of their parents and ancestors, and to the spirits of all the dead Muslims and Mu'mins. The prayer finally ends when the *khalifah* utters "*taqabbal Allāh min-kum* (may God accept from you all)," and the people answer "*min-nā wa min-kum, taqabbal yā Karīm* (from us and from all of you, please accept, O Most Generous)." According to them, the reward of this practice, which is intended for the deceased, would not be only received by him, but those who perform it would also receive the same reward. After the ceremony finishes, the guests are served with food and drink. The usual food served, which is a must, is yellow glutinous rice, a symbol of remembering the deceased, which is also considered as a trade mark of the *kenduri arwah*. The deceased's relatives who pay the expenses of preparing the foods intend it as a charity whose reward is also dedicated to the deceased.

In the viewpoint of the traditionalists, this practice is considered good and recommended. They hold that this practice is included in the category of contributing

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to the reward of the deceased, which they perceive as recommended and demanded in Islam.\textsuperscript{283} Regarding the \textit{tahlīl} ceremony, the traditionalists perceive it as good and recommended. They hold that the \textit{tahlīl} ceremony is in fact a combination of the recitation of the Qur’ān and various \textit{dhikrs} and supplications for the dead, and these acts are well known as recommended, and thus there is no doubt that this ceremony is also recommended. The \textit{tahlīl} ceremony is considered as a type of \textit{dhikr} (remembrance) that is not only endorsed, but commanded by the Qur’ān and the \textit{sunnah} of the Prophet. For example, the Qur’ān says: "O you who believe, remember God with much remembrance" (33:41); "And remember your Lord much" (2: 41); "And men who remember God much and women who remember (Him), God has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward" (33: 35). Referring to the \textit{sunnah}, the Prophet is reported to have said: "The best \textit{dhikr} is \textit{lā ilāha illa-Allāh}."\textsuperscript{284} He also said: "The luckiest person who will have my intercession on the Day of Resurrection will be the one who has said \textit{lā ilāha illa-Allāh} sincerely from the bottom of his heart."\textsuperscript{285} The Prophet said in another tradition: "The angels will surround those who are sitting together remembering God, mercy will cover them, tranquility will descend upon them, and God will mention them in the presence of those near Him."\textsuperscript{286}

The traditionalists assert that practising the \textit{tahlīl} ceremony for the benefit of the deceased is also good as it is a way to assist their Muslim brothers, which is also encouraged in Islam. In their viewpoint, even if the reward of the practice is intended to be presented specially for the deceased, it, in fact, is not only received by the deceased, but the participants of the ceremony will also receive the same reward.\textsuperscript{287}

The traditionalists claim that the feast of the deceased was in fact a custom


\textsuperscript{286}See Ṣaḥḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Dhikr wa al-Diğā' wa al-Tawbah wa al-Istighfār," 4,868.

in pre Islamic Arabia, and it was permitted by the Prophet after the advent of Islam.\(^{288}\)

They maintain that the Prophet himself once attended the feast held by the widow of a deceased man after his burial. It is narrated from 'Āšīm b. Kulayb that a man of the Anṣār said:

"We went out with the Messenger of God to a funeral, and I saw the Messenger of God at the grave giving instructions to the grave digger: "Make it wide on the side of his feet, and make it wide on the side of his head." When he came back, he was met by a man who conveyed an invitation from a woman, i.e. the widow of the deceased. So he fulfilled the invitation and we all came with him. The food was brought, and he put his hand on it and the people did the same and they ate. When the Messenger of God was chewing a morsel in his mouth, he said: "I find the flesh of a sheep which has been taken without its owner's permission." The woman said: "0 Messenger of God, I sent (someone) to al-Baqf to have a sheep bought for me, but there was none. So I sent (him) to my neighbour, who had bought a sheep, asking him to send it to me for the price (he had paid), but he could not be found. I, therefore, sent (him) to his wife and she sent it to me." The Messenger of God said: "Give this food to the prisoners."\(^{289}\)

The traditionalists assert that it is clear from this tradition that the feast of the deceased held by his family is permissible, as the Prophet and his Companions once attended one, showing that he agreed with such a practice.

As the feast of the deceased is neither recommended nor prohibited by the Prophet, it is subject to the intention behind the practice; if it is held with the intention of giving charity to the people, the ḥukm of the feast becomes recommended, as charity is encouraged in Islam. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr narrated that the Prophet was asked: "What kind of deeds in Islam are best?" He replied: "Feeding the poor, and greeting those you know and those you don't know."\(^{290}\) Furthermore, the traditionalists maintain that charity may be given on behalf of the deceased as the Prophet affirmed it when he was asked about it. 'Ā'ishah narrated that a man said to the Prophet: "My mother died suddenly and she wasn't able to bequeath. I think if she could have spoken, she would have given charity. May I give charity on her behalf?" He


\(^{289}\)Narrated by al-Bayhaqi as quoted in ibid., pp. 102-103.

\(^{290}\)Ṣaḥḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Īmān," 11; Ṣaḥḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Īmān," 56.
said: "Yes! Give charity on her behalf." According to the Malay custom, the *kenduri arwah* is held with an intention of giving charity, whose reward is dedicated for the deceased, and this, the traditionalists maintain, is concordant with Islamic teachings. Regarding the specification of the days for the feast, they assert that this is only the Malay custom which can be followed or ignored, as there is no indication from any *nass* (text) about this, and one is allowed to hold it whenever one wishes. However, there is another viewpoint from some traditionalists who say that such a feast is reprehensible, but this opinion seems unpopular and disregarded by traditional Malay society.

For the reformists, the practice of *tahlīl* and *kenduri arwah* is considered as *bid'ah* and not part of Islamic teachings. They maintain that this practice is a new form of *'ibādah* created by the Malays a long time ago, and thereafter has been a deeply rooted custom among them. It is regarded as their essential religious activity alongside the five pillars of Islam, and it has also been a source of religious satisfaction and pride for them. However, the reformists say, such a practice is unknown in Islam, as it was never practised by the Prophet, his Companions, the Pious Forefathers and the leaders of the *madhāhib*, nor it was prescribed by them. Such a practice has no basis in the religion and is only a Malay tradition inherited from their ancestors.

Regarding the *tahlīl* ceremony, the reformists affirm that the *tahlīl*, reciting the Qur'ān and invocation for the deceased, are originally recommended, but compiling them to be recited in specific way and creating a ceremony for practising it on the occasion of death is a blameworthy *bid'ah*. Such a specification is an act of

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291 *Saḥḥaḥ* Muslim, "Kitāb al-Zakah," 1,672. Also narrated by al-Bukhārī with slightly different text. See *Saḥḥaḥ* al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Janā'ilz," 1,299.

292 Mohd. Baqir, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?*, op.cit., p. 108. However, it is believed that the specification of the days of the feast is based on a traditional Malay belief that the spirit of the deceased returns to his home on these days. The feast is held to welcome and celebrate his return, in addition to contribute the reward of the feast to him.


creating a new form of 'ibādah, while man has no right to do that. Practising it and presenting its reward to the deceased is a bid'ah rejected by God. The Prophet said: "Whoever performs action which is not on our command, it is rejected." The reformists maintain that the origin of the tahlīl ceremony is believed to be established by an excessive 'ābid (worshipper) who saw in his dream a group of people being tormented in the barzakh world coming to him asking him to help them by saying the tahlīl thousands of times and presenting the reward to them. After doing what was asked, he saw in his dream that those people were in enjoyment, telling him that they have been released from their tortures as a result of the reward of the tahlīl presented to them. It was from this dream that the tahlīl ceremony originated. However, the reformists affirm, the sharī'ah is based on what is the nass, not on dreams. Dreams have no credibility nor legality at all in religious matters. Therefore, practising what is based on dreams is useless and rejected.

Furthermore, they maintain that the tahlīl ceremony as practised by the traditionalists nowadays is not approved by the Shāfī madhhab as has been said by the jurists of the madhhab. Al-Nawawi, for example, says: "Regarding the recitation of the Qur‘ān, the popular standpoint in the Shāfī madhhab is that the reward of the recitation will not benefit the deceased. The proofs of al-Shāfī and those who are in favour with him on this is the saying of God: "And that man can have nothing but what he did" (Q, 53: 39); and the saying of the Prophet: "When a man dies, his actions come to an end, except for three: an ongoing charity (ṣadaqah jāriyah); or knowledge by which people benefit; or a pious son who prays for him (the deceased)."

Al-Muzani in his Hāmish al-Umm, al-Haythamī in his al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā, and al-Subkī in his Takmilat al-Majmū say the same. As the reward of recitation of the Qur‘ān will not be obtained by the deceased, neither will the recitation of dhikr, including the tahlīl, benefit him. At this point, the reformists denounce the traditionalists' manner who proudly claim themselves as loyal exponents of the Shāfī madhhab, but ignore

26 Dr. Ruhani, Revolusi Mental, op.cit., p. 66-67.
297 Al-Nawawi, Sharī'ah Muslim, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 49.
what is said by their masters on this issue.298

Concerning the kenduri arwah, which is held on specific days after death, the reformists also consider it as a bid‘ah, as it has no basis in any naṣṣ. Holding the feast is originally good, but specifying it on the day of the death and certain days after that is purely bid‘ah as it was never prescribed in the Qur‘ān or the sunnah of the Prophet. The kenduri arwah, they claim, was created by the Malays and only known in this form in their world.299 This practice was in fact prohibited by the Companions of the Prophet as they regarded it as a type of wailing of the deceased (niyāḥah) which was prohibited by the Prophet.300 It is narrated that Jarir b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Bajalī, a Companion of the Prophet said: “We consider that assembling together with the family of the deceased with a feast after the funeral is a type of wailing.”301 Furthermore, they assert, the kenduri arwah that is held by the family of the deceased also contradicts the saying of the Prophet who instructed his Companions to prepare food for the family of the dead, and not vice versa. The Prophet said to his Companions on the death of Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālīb: “Prepare some food for the family of Ja‘far as they are suffering what has bothered them.”302

Regarding the tradition of ‘Āṣim who narrated that the Prophet attended the feast held by a woman after the funeral of her husband, the reformists argue this tradition saying that the woman who invited the Prophet and his Companions to the feast had no relationship to the deceased. This is suggested by the narration of Abū Dāwūd, al-Shawkānī and al-Ṣan‘ānī, according to which the phrase of "dā‘ī imra‘atih (the inviter of the deceased’s wife)" as appears in the narration of al-Bayhaqī, appear in their narration as "dā‘ī imra‘atin (the inviter of a woman). This means that the


299 However, similar feasts are also known elsewhere, such as in Iran, Pakistan and Algeria. The reformists may not aware of it.


Prophet was invited to the feast by another woman, not the deceased's widow. It is known that the narration of Abū Dāwūd is of a higher degree than that of al-Bayhaqi's, and thus, the narration of Abū Dāwūd is more acceptable.³⁰³

To strengthen their standpoint, the reformists also convey the opinions of the jurists of the Shāfī madhhab regarding this practice. They assert that according to the jurists of the Shāfī madhhab, the feast of the deceased is reprehensible and even prohibited.³⁰⁴ Al-Nawawi says in his al-Majmū': "Regarding preparing foods by the family (of the dead) and the assembly of people for it, there is no account (in a naṣṣ) about that, and it is considered as an undesirable innovation (bid'ah ghayr mustahabbah)." Ibn Sayyid al-Dimyāti in his I ḍ at al-Tālibīn says, "What is practised by the people, i.e assembling together with the relatives of the deceased with feast, is a blameworthy innovation (bid'ah munkarah), and who prohibit it will be rewarded."³⁰⁵ Ibn Ḥ ajar in his al-Tuhfah, al-Sharbini al-Khaṭīb in his Mughnl al-Muḥtāj and al-Qalyūbī in his Ḥāshiyyat al-Qalūbī say the same:³⁰⁶ Al-Shāffi himself says in his al-Umm: "I hate al-maʿtam, i.e. assembling (in the dead's house), even if there is no crying, because it causes sadness."³⁰⁷ The reformists conclude that the traditionalists' practice on this matter is not based on knowledge, but is only a tradition inherited from their ancestors, which hides behind the face of the religion.³⁰⁸

Concluding their argument, the reformists maintain that most of the traditional practices of contributing to the reward of the deceased are not based on strong facts and arguments, but seem to be merely an imitation of customs inherited from their ancestors. This is proven when they keep doing the practices which clearly contradict

³⁰⁷Al-Shāffi, al-Umm, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 248.
the definite standpoint in the Shāfi‘i madhhab regarding this issue. It is absurd, the reformists maintain, that the traditionalists claim themselves as loyal adherents of the Shāfi‘i madhhab, but at the same time ignore the standpoints that contradict their own interests, as if they are the opponents of their own madhhab.309

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Reasons For Conflict

The examples of conceptual and practical differences between the traditionalists and the reformists pertaining to the matter of ‘ibādah propounded throughout Chapter Four show that the conflict between the two parties revolves mainly around the matters about which there is dispute (masāʾil khilāfiyyah) and matters relating to the branches (furūʿ) of the religion. As with juristic differences (ikhtilāf fīqḥ), they never involve the basic principles of the tenets of Islam, but they have resulted in differences and conflict within the ummah. Juristic differences are considered a natural phenomenon in the ummah and have never been a problem among the jurists, but can have a bad impact if they are not wisely understood and dealt with by the ummah.1 History shows that, even if the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in Malaysia does not relate to the basic principles of the tenets of Islam, it has engendered a bitter experience which is hard to forget. Islamic reformism in Malaysia has never called for reform of the religion itself, but rather for reform of the traditional thought of Malay Muslims, which is blamed for being a source of stagnation of the Malay ummah, and this has brought implicit challenges to Islamic traditionalism to defend the status quo. The clash between the two views has stirred up Malay Muslims and resulted in condemnation, criticism, denunciation, vituperation and each boycotting the other. Although these phenomena seem to have somewhat abated in the present, the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists remains

unresolved. In the realm of 'ibādah, this conflict is especially obvious as it concerns matters of fundamental practice. On the one hand the conflict seems to resemble that of the typical juristic differences, but on the other, it is identified as a result of disputation about some essential matters related to the principles of Islamic reform. These can be analysed under the following headings.

Different Perceptions Regarding the Concept of Bid'ah

As seen in the Chapter Four, there are many disputed practices, such as reciting certain prayers before the adhān, uttering the intention of prayer, reciting the dhikr en masse and loudly after the prayer, chanting certain dhikrs during the prayer of tarāwīḥ etc, which relate to the issue of bid'ah. It is known that among the main doctrinal principles of Islamic reform is calling the ummah to return to the pristine Islam, i.e. to return to the Qur'ān and the sunnah of the Prophet and to refrain from bid'ah. Thus, as regards the matter of 'ibādah, the reformists strongly emphasize that all ritual forms of 'ibādah must be rightly performed in accordance with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet, and any additions or reductions are regarded as bid'ahs which must be eliminated. The term bid'ah is defined, by referring to al-

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2Bid'ah is derived from the root word "bid'ah" which means to innovate, to invent, to create or to originate something new. See E. Lane, Arabic - English Lexicon, (London & Edinburgh, Williams & Norgate, 1874), vol. 1, pp. 166-167). Bid' is a noun meaning something firstly innovated, as appears in the Qur'ān: 46: 9: "Say: I am not a new thing (bid'ah) among the Messengers (i.e. I am not the first Messenger)..." Badf is a person who originates or creates something, usually used to refer to God who is the Creator, as mentioned in Q: 2: 117: "(God is) the Creator (badf) of the heavens and the earth..." Ibtad ABOUT means to create bid'ah, as appears in Q: 57: 27: "... But the Monasticism which they invented (ibtadat al-hā) for themselves, We did not prescribe for them, but (they sought it) only to please God therewith." Mubtaaf is a person who commits bid'ah. Bid'ah, which is a noun of ibtidah, literally means innovation and is lexically defined as "a newly innovated thing which was unknown before," or "A new thing created in the religion after it has been completed." See Ibn Manṣūr, Lisān al-‘Arab (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), vol 8, pp. 6-8; Sa‘dī Abū Jayb, al-Qāmūs al-Fiqḥī (Dimashq: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), pp. 31-32.

3Apart from being influenced by the ideas of Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā in his Tafsîr al-Manâr, the reformists’ idea of bid'ah is strongly influenced by several classical writings on the issue, such as al-Tiṣām of al-Shāṭibī, al-Hawādīth wa al-Bidd of al-Ṭuṭūshī, Iṣṭiṣâr al-Sirāt al-Mustaʻṣin of Ibn Taymiyyah and Inkār al-Hawādīth wa al-Bidd of Ibn Waddah. As well as these classical writings, they also refer to several modern writings which are in agreement with their ideas such as al-Ibdâ fi Maʻṣār al-
Shatibi’s definition in his *al-ʻItisam*, as an invented religious practice that has the resemblance of lawfulness (*al-shariyyah*) whose purpose is the excessive (*mubālaqah*) worship of God, or which has a purpose similar to those of the lawful practices. For the reformists, any newly innovated practice in religious matters is regarded as a blameworthy *bid'a*. This is clearly evidenced from the sayings of the Prophet:

"Whoever performs action which is not our command, it is rejected";

Al-ʻIrbaš b. Sariyah said: "One day the Prophet led us in prayer, then faced us and gave us a lengthy exhortation at which the eyes shed tears and the hearts were afraid. A man said: ‘O Messenger of God, it seems as if it was a farewell exhortation, so what injunction do you give us?’ He then said: 'I enjoin you to fear God, and to hear and obey even if it be an Abyssinian slave, for those of you who live after me will see great disagreement. You must follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it. Avoid novelties (*muḥdathatu-ḥa*), for every novelty is innovation (*bid'a*), and every innovation is an error (*gālālah*)."

The reformists maintain that through these traditions, the Prophet clearly characterized all *bid'a* in religion as error. A key point of the reformists’ standpoint is the phrase “every *bid'a* is an error (*kullu bid'atīn gālālah*)” in the last two

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Ibtidā' of ʿAli Maḥfūz, *al-Sunan wa al-Mubtadāʾ* of Muḥammad al-Hawāmīdi; and the writings of Saudi scholars such as Abū Bakr Jābīr al-Jazāʿirī, “Abd al-ʻAzīz b. Bāz and Muḥammad al-ʻUthaymīn. Many of these writings, especially the modern ones, have been translated into Malay.


8Sunan al-ʿNasāʾī, in “Kitāb Ṣalāt al-ʻIdayn,” 1,560.

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traditions. According to the science of Islamic jurisprudence (ṣuḥūl al-fiqh), when the word "every" (kullu) is annexed (yudaf) to an indefinite noun (ism nakirah), such as "bid'ah" in this context, it denotes the generality (ʿumūm) of the noun without restriction. It is understood in view of the wording of the tradition, that the ḥukm of bid'ah in religious matters is blameworthy (madhmūmah) and therefore prohibited (ḥaram), and the generalization of this ḥukm remains until it is proven otherwise by other primary textual evidence. Hence, the reformists uphold the principle that every single bid'ah in religious matters is an error, and there are no so-called good bid'ah (bid'ah ḥasanah) in religion, as maintained by some scholars.⁹

It is noteworthy that the reformists’ idea of bid'ah is discussed in the context of religious matters only, since they claim that the Prophet himself used the term bid'ah specifically to refer to something innovated in the religion, as appears in the phrase, “whoever innovates something in this business of ours (fi amri-nā ḥādha)...” i.e. in the religion. “In the religion” in this context is understood to refer to the fundamentals of the religion that have been set out in detail, namely those matters regarding ‘aqīdah and ‘ibādah which are known as fixed matters (thawābit) and leave no room for ijtiḥād. Matters concerning muʿāmalāt and adāt, the non-fundamentals of the religion, of which only the general principles are prescribed in the primary texts and where ijtiḥād is permitted, are excluded, since they are changeable matters (mutagḥāyyirāt) that are subject to changes in time and circumstances. Therefore, innovated things in the realms of muʿāmalāt and adāt, i.e. mundane affairs, are not real bid'ah according to the reformists’ perspective, and are named bid'ah only in the light of the linguistic meaning of the word. This kind of "bid'ah" is permitted as long as it is in harmony with the principles of the Shari'ah. This is also what they categorize as maṣāliḥ ‘āmmah or maṣāliḥ mursalah (public interest), a legal doctrine held to

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ensure benefit to the ummah concerning matters of mu'āmalât and 'ādāt. Hence, they maintain that it is wrong to regard all innovated things as bid'ah, but they become bid'ah if they relate to matters of 'aqīdah or 'ibādah.

However, the reformists' idea of bid'ah seems to be apparently inconsistent, as on the one hand, they seem to be very strict by perceiving everything new in the matter of 'ibādah as a blameworthy bid'ah, but on the other hand, particularly in the case of zakāh, an important 'ibādah which is the third pillar of Islam, they seem to be the opposite by suggesting the expansion of zakatable wealth beyond what was originally specified by the Prophet. The same applies to their suggestion to consider astronomical calculation to confirm the beginning of the lunar month, a method which was unknown at the time of the Prophet. As far as the reformists' definition of bid'ah is concerned, the expansion of zakatable wealth and the using of astronomical calculation to fix the lunar month should be in the category of blameworthy bid'ah, but nevertheless, they have a different answer pertaining to this. They do not regard such suggestions as bid'ah for certain reasons. Firstly, zakāh is not a ritual form of 'ibādah, but is of the material form. Paying zakāh is an act of 'ibādah, but the substances of zakāh concerns material matters whose place is under the category of 'ādāt. Fasting of Ramadān is also an act of 'ibādah, but confirming the beginning of the month is a technical matter which also comes under the category of 'ādāt. At this point, the terms 'ibādah and 'ādāt need to be clarified. For them, "a commandment or interdiction that cannot be reasonably understood in detail (mā lam yu'qal ma'nā-hu bi al-tafsīl) is one of the matters of 'ibādah, such as purity (tahārāt), the various prayers, fasting and pilgrimage; while something that can be reasonably understood, and whose benefit (mašlahah) or harm (mofsadah) can be known, is one of the matters of 'ādāt, such as marriage, divorce, sale, rental and crime."12 The expansion of

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zakatable wealth and the using of astronomical calculation to confirm the beginning of Ramadān as suggested certainly concerns matters of ʿādāt which are propounded for the benefit of the ummah in accordance with changes in time and contemporary needs. These suggestions, they claim, are not only in harmony with the basic principles of the Sharīʿah, but are also implicitly demanded in the primary textual evidences.

Secondly, as regards the expansion of zakatable wealth, the reformists state that this expansion is not really a new thing, but had taken place in the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.13 The new things introduced by the Rightly Guided Caliphs should not be regarded as bidʿah, but in fact are a Sunnah that should be followed, as indicated in the previously stated tradition: ".... You must follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it." Thus, they insist that the suggestion to expand zakāh resources is not to create a bidʿah in the religion, but to bring benefits to the ummah through the justification of the principles and objectives of the religion.

To this extent, the reformists' perception of bidʿah can be summarized as follows: Every new matter is not necessarily a bidʿah. It is a bidʿah if it concerns the basic fundamentals of the religion, particularly matters of ʿaqīdah and the ritual types of ʿibādah which have been fixed by the Lawgiver. Every bidʿah is blameworthy and its perpetrator commits a sin. A new matter is not a bidʿah if it concerns ʿmuḥāmalāt, ʿādāt, or worldly matters, but it comes under the term maṣālīḥ mursalāh if it brings benefit to the ummah and is in accordance with the principles of the Sharīʿah.14 Accordingly, uttering the intention of prayers, reciting certain prayers before the adhān, chanting blessings upon the Prophet between the two khutbahs of the Friday prayer or between the tarāwīḥ prayers, reciting the talqih after burial, performing the

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13As mentioned earlier in the Chapter Four, pp. 191-192 on how the second caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb had introduced zakāh on honey and horses bred for commercial purposed, while this was never practiced in the time of the Prophet.

14If the new thing is against the principles of the Sharīʿah, they term it as either maṣālīḥ mufsidah (bad or unacknowledged interest) or maʾṣīyyah (disobedience) depending on the degree of the contravention. See Basri Ibrahim, Khilafah, Bidʿah dan Maslahah Umum, op.cit., p. 70.
tahlīl ceremony and the like as practiced by the traditionalists are considered blameworthy bid'ah, while recording the Qur'ān and Prophetic traditions in writing, the study of the disciplines of Arabic in order to understand the Qur'ān, writing books on beneficial subjects, building schools and hospitals, and similar matters are considered to come under the category of maṣāliḥ mursalah.

Bid'ah Ḥasanah and Bid'ah Ḋalālah

From the traditionalists' point of view, the concept of bid'ah is not as understood by the reformists. As loyal adherents of the Shāfīʾī madhhab, their idea of bid'ah is adopted from the viewpoints of the scholars in the madhhab.¹⁵ For them, bid'ah is referred to as everything new which is not stated in the Qur'ān or the Sunnah regardless whether it is good or not, and thus, they simply define bid'ah as "an action which was unknown at the time of the Prophet."¹⁶ According to them, the tradition "every new thing is a bid'ah, and every bid'ah is an error" does not refer to all new things without restriction, but only to those which are against the principles of the Sharī'ah. The use of the the word "every" (kullu) in the tradition does not indicate an absolute generalization, for there are many examples of similar generalizations in the Qur'ān and Sunnah that are not applicable without restriction, but rather are qualified by restrictions found in other primary textual evidence.¹⁷ In this regard, the generalization in these traditions has been specified by other traditions, namely by the following:

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¹⁵Among the scholars of the Shāfīʾī madhhab whose writings are always referred to by the traditionalists regarding this issue are al-ʿIzz b. ʿAbd al-Salām in his Qawāʾid al-ʾAḥkām, Abū Shāmāh in his al-Bāʾith al-ʾIznār, and al-Nawawī in some of his writings.


The Prophet said: "He who inaugurates a good sunnah in Islam (man sanna fi-al-Islam sunnatan hasanatan) earns the reward of it and all who perform it after him without diminishing their own rewards in the slightest. And he who introduces a bad sunnah in Islam gets the sin of it and all who perform it after him without diminishing their own sins in the slightest."18

 AçAbd al-Rahmân b. õAbd al-Qârî said: "I went out in the company of çUmar b. al-Khattab one night in Ramadan to the mosque and found the people praying in different groups, with a man praying alone or a man praying with a little group behind him. çUmar said: 'In my opinion it would be better to collect these people under the leadership of one reciter [i.e. to let them pray in congregation].' So, he made up his mind to congregate them behind Ubayy b. Ka'b. Then on another night I went again in his company and the people were praying behind their reciter. On that, çUmar remarked, 'What a good bid'ah this is (nîm al-bid'ah hâdîhi); but the prayer which they do not perform, because they are sleeping at its time is better than the one they are performing.' He meant the prayer in the last part of the night. In those days people used to pray in the early part of the night."19

The first tradition indicates that not every new thing is bad, and that there are new things that are good, while the second one clearly shows that çUmar himself created a new thing pertaining to a matter of 'ibâdah which he later described as a good bid'ah. Based on these traditions, the traditionalists maintain that the generalization of the tradition "every new thing is bid'ah, and every bid'ah is an error" has been restricted only to those which nothing in the Sharî'ah attests to the validity of. This idea, the traditionalists assert, is exactly in accordance with what has been pointed out by al-Shâfi'i, that "something that is innovated and contradicts the Qur'an, or the Sunnah, or ijmâ', or âthâr, is an erroneous bid'ah (bid'ah qâlalâlah). While something that is innovated and does not contradict any of these, is a good bid'ah (bid'ah hasanah).20

The reformists, however, disagree that the generalization of the tradition "every new thing is bid'ah, and every bid'ah is an error" is restricted by the other traditions. They maintain that the wording of the tradition "man sanna fi-al-Islâm

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sunnata hasanata...” shows that this tradition concerns about sunnah, not bid’ah. Sunnah and bid’ah are two opposed terms. The word sunnah in both the language of Arabs and the Sharī‘ah means way or custom. Thus, “good sunnah” and “bad sunnah” in the context of the above tradition should be interpreted as good way or bad way, and cannot possibly mean anything else. The Sunnah of the Prophet is his way of acting, ordering, accepting and rejecting, and also comprises the way of his Rightly Guided Caliphs who followed his way of acting, ordering, accepting and rejecting. Therefore, practices that are newly begun must be examined in the light of the Sunnah of the Prophet, i.e. his way of acceptance and rejection, meaning that if new practices are in harmony with the Sunnah of the Prophet, they should be considered as good sunnah, and if they contravene his Sunnah, they should be regarded as bad sunnah.

Nevertheless, the reformists insist that the tradition “kullu bid’atin galālah” and the tradition “man sanna” do not relate to each other for they concern two different matters, i.e. bid’ah and sunnah, and thus the latter cannot specify the generalization of the former. Sunnah could be either good or bad, but bid’ah is bad. To compromise between the two traditions, they affirm, it is necessary to return to the concept of bid’ah propounded earlier: that new matters are considered bid’ah if they concern the basic fundamentals of the religion, namely matters of ‘aqīdah and the ritual type of ‘ibādah which have been completely fixed by the Lawgiver. New practices that concern other matters, namely, mu‘āmalāt and ‘Ādāt, or worldly matters, are not considered bid’ah, but are termed maṣāliḥ. This opens room for the reformists to regard them also, in a general context, as sunnah: if they are in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet, they should be called good sunnah; and if not, they will be called bad sunnah. For them, such an interpretation is more acceptable and in accordance with the historical context of the tradition (sabab wurūḍ

21 According to Yūsuf al-Qarāḍāwī, the word sunnah in this tradition should be understood in its lexical meaning (ma‘nā-hu al-lughaw), i.e. one’s deed whether its good or bad, or one’s regular action, good it be or bad. See Yūsuf al-Qarāḍāwī, al-Sunnah wa al-Bid’ah (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1999), p. 7.

al-ḥadīth) which was about giving charity,²³ a matter that does not concern the basic fundamentals of Islam.²⁴

Concerning the saying of 'Umar "what a good bid'ah this is (nīm al-bid'ah hāḍihī)"²⁵ in approving the congregational tarāwīḥ prayer, the reformists affirm that bid'ah in the context of this tradition must not be considered bid'ah as such, but must be interpreted as bid'ah in its lexical meaning, for something that was initiated by the Rightly Guided Caliphs was a sunnah, as the Prophet stated: 'Follow my sunnah and the sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.'²⁶ Moreover, the congregational tarāwīḥ prayer as a matter of fact was a Sunnah of the Prophet, but was later abandoned by him as he was afraid that it might be considered obligatory for the ummah. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate that 'A'ishah said:

"One night the Prophet performed the prayer in the mosque and the people followed him. The next night he also performed the prayer and too many people gathered. On the third and the fourth nights more people gathered, but the Prophet did not come out to them. In the morning he said, 'I saw what you were doing and nothing stopped me from coming to you, but that I feared that it (i.e. the prayer) might be enjoined on you.' And that happened in the month of Ramaḍān."²⁷

The effort of 'Umar to collect the people to pray tarāwīḥ in congregation in mosque should be seen as a revival of the sunnah of the Prophet, as he saw that there was no

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²³Muslim and others narrate from Jarīr b. Abd Allāh that some desert Arabs clad in woollen clothes came to the Prophet Muhammad. He saw them in a sad plight as they had been hard pressed by need. He exhorted people to give charity, but they showed some reluctance until signs of anger could be seen on his face. Then someone from the Ansār came with a purse containing silver. Then came another person and then other people followed them in succession until signs of happiness could be seen on his face. Thereupon the Prophet said: "He who inaugurates a good sunnah in Islam (man sanna fi-al-Islām sunnanṭan ḥasanatan) earns the reward of it....(to the end of the tradition). See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Zakāh," 1,691; "Kitāb al-Īlm," 4,830; Sunan al-Tirmidhī, "Kitāb al-Īlm," 2,599.


²⁶Ahmad Yusuf Amin, Bid'ah, op.cit., p. 46. See p. 255 for full text ḥadīth.

longer any reason for its abandonment at his time.\textsuperscript{28} Thus, the reformists conclude that the saying of 'Umar "what a good bid'ah this is" cannot specify the generalization of the tradition "every bid'ah is an error," and also cannot justify good bid'ah in religion.

It is essential to note that most of the traditionalists' practices which are claimed by the reformists to be bid'ah concern supererogatory acts of 'ibadah. These supererogatory 'ibadah, such as reciting dhikr and du'\textsuperscript{a} after the prayer or at other times, reciting the Qur'\text{\'a}n, reciting blessing upon the Prophet, reciting tahl\textsuperscript{l} and the like, which are known in the context of fiqh as general acts of 'ibadah ('ibadah mut\textsuperscript{q}a\textsuperscript{q}ah), have a basis in primary textual evidence, but the way they should be practised is not specifically prescribed. The traditionalists believe that in this matters they can use their own personal reasoning (ijtihad) to practising them in certain ways and at specific occasions depending on local circumstances and necessities.\textsuperscript{29} This standpoint is based on the fact that there are a great number of traditions indicating that many Companions of the Prophet had initiated new acts, forms of dhikr and du'\textsuperscript{a} that the Prophet had never previously done or ordered to be done. The Companions did them because of their inference and conviction that such acts were part of the good that Islam brought, and in general terms urged the like to be done, in accordance with the saying of the Prophet as stated before: "He who inaugurates a good sunnah in Islam earns the reward of it and of all who perform it after him without diminishing their own rewards in the slightest ...."\textsuperscript{30}

Departing from this point, the traditionalists maintain that many of the Companions of the Prophet performed various acts through their own personal reasoning, and that the Sunnah of the Prophet was to accept those that were acts of 'ibadah and good deeds confirmable with what the Shar\textsuperscript{f}ah had established and not in conflict with it, and to reject those which were otherwise. For example, al-Bukh\text{\'a}r\text{i}

\textsuperscript{28}Ahmad Yusuf Amin, Bid'ah, op.cit., pp. 46-47.

\textsuperscript{29}Haron Din, "Persoalan Bid'ah, op.cit. See also, Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, Adab Berijtihad dan Berikhtilaf Mengikut Syariat (Selangor: IPI, 2001), p. 15.

\textsuperscript{30}ibid.
and Muslim narrate that Abū Hurayrah said:

"At the Fajr prayer the Prophet said to Bilāl, 'O Bilal, tell me which of your acts in Islam you are most hopeful about, for I have heard the footfall of your sandals in paradise.' He replied, 'I have done nothing I am more hopeful about than the fact that I do not perform ablution at any time of the night or day without praying with that ablution whatever has been destined for me to pray.'"31

Quoting Ibn Ḥajar in his Fath al-Bārī, the traditionalists emphasize that the ḥadīth shows it is permissible to use personal reasoning in choosing times for supererogatory acts of ‘ibādah, for Bilāl reached the conclusion he mentioned by his own inference and the Prophet confirmed him therein.32

Al-Bukhārī also narrates that ‘Ā’ishah said:

'The Prophet dispatched a man at the head of a military expedition who recited the Qur’ān for his companions in prayer, finishing each recital with Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ. When they returned, they mentioned this to the Prophet who told them: 'Ask him why he does this.' When they asked him, the man replied: 'Because it describes the All-merciful, and I love to recite it.' The Prophet said to them: 'Tell him God loves him.'"33

In a narration of al-Bukhārī, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudri is reported to have said:

"A man heard another reciting Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ over and over again. In the morning he went to the Prophet and mentioned it to him as if he thought that it was not enough to recite. The Prophet said: 'By Him in whose hand is my soul, is equal to one-third of the Qur’ān.'"34

The aforementioned traditions show that the Prophet confirmed the person’s restricting himself to this sūrah while praying, despite it not being what the Prophet himself did, for although the Prophet’s practice of reciting from all of the Qur’ān was superior, the man’s act was within the general parameters of the sunnah and there was nothing blameworthy about it. From these evidences, the traditionalists sum up


that any new matter must be judged according to the principles and primary texts of the Sharī'ah: whatever is attested to by the Sharī'ah as being good is acknowledged as a good bid'ah, and whatever is attested to by the Sharī'ah as being a contravention and bad is rejected as a blameworthy bid'ah.35

The reformists argue that the Companions’ acts which are based on their own personal reasoning must not be considered as bid'ah, but were actually part of the Sunnah. There has been a consensus of all Muslim scholars to regard everything done by the Prophet’s Companions which was agreed and confirmed by the Prophet as being a part of his Sunnah, and this is what is known as sunnah taqrīiyah (affirmative Sunnah). The reformists maintain that the traditionalists’ argument regarding new acts initiated by the Companions of the Prophet to justify the use of their own personal reasoning to restrict certain ways in performing the general acts of 'ibādah, is simply unacceptable, for, as ordinary people, they have no right to make exceptions to what has been generalized by the Lawgiver. They assert that among the aspects of bid'ah is to place restrictions on acts of 'ibādah which have been generalized by the Sharī'ah, such as specifying times, places and numbers. On this particular point, Abū Shāmāh is quoted as saying; "It is not permissible to specify an act of 'ibādah to a time that has not been specified by the Sharī'ah, as all the actions of righteousness are applicable to all times. There is no specific time that is better than another, with the exception of what the Sharī'ah has declared to be so, such as fasting on the day of ‘Arafah and ‘Āshūrā’, praying in the later part of night and performing the lesser pilgrimage in the month of Ramaḍān. It is not for people to specify, as this is for the Lawgiver..."36 Hence, the reformists maintain that the scholars have established the principle that "what the Lawgiver has generalized is to be performed according to its general way, and it is not permissible to restrict it or to limit it."37

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36As quoted in Abu Bakar Asaari, Ibadah Rasulullah, op.cit., pp. 70-71.

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Classification of Bid'ah

As the traditionalists perceive that not every bid'ah is erroneous, they classify it, according to its benefit, harm, or indifference, into the standard legal categories of obligatory, recommended, forbidden, reprehensible and permissible. This classification, which is based on Ibn 'Abd al-Salām's classification, can be illustrated as follows:38

(i) The first category is bid'ah that is obligatory, such as recording the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet in writing when it was feared that something might be lost from them; the study of the disciplines of Arabic that are necessary to understand the Qur'ān and the Sunnah such as grammar, word declension and lexicography; the classification of the Sunnah of the Prophet in order to distinguish the genuine from the spurious ones; and suchlike matters.

(ii) The second category is recommended bid'ah, such as building schools; writing books on beneficial subjects, extensive research into fundamentals and particular applications of the Sharī'ah; in-depth study of Arabic linguistics; performing tarāwīḥ prayers in congregation; and commemorating the birth (mawlid) of the Prophet Muḥammad.

(iii) The third category is permissible bid'ah, such as shaking hands after the prayers; and having enjoyable food, drink and housing.

(iv) The fourth category is reprehensible bid'ah, such as decorating mosques, embellishing the Qur'ān; and having a backup man (musammīf) who loudly repeats the takbīr of the imām when the latter's voice is already clearly audible to the people behind them.

(v) The fifth category is that of forbidden bid'ah, particularly those that concern

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38 Daud b. Abdullah Fatani, al-Jawāhir al-Saniyyah, op.cit., p. 37; idem, Furd al-Masa'il (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d), vol. 1, pp. 13-14; See also, al-'izz b. ʿAbd al-Salām, Qawā'id al-Aṭkām (Cairo: Dār al-Istiqāmah, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 172. In their original classification, the obligatory bid'ah comes first, followed by the forbidden bid'ah, recommendable bid'ah, reprehensible bid'ah and lastly permissible bid'ah.

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the tenets of faith, such as the *bid'ah* of the Mu'tazilah, the Qadariyyah, the Murji’ah and the Khawārij; and giving positions of authority in the Sharī'ah to those unfit for them.

The traditionalists claim that this classification of *bid'ah* made by Ibn 'Abd al-Salām was established on a firm basis in Islamic jurisprudence and legal principles, and was confirmed by the vast majority of scholars. They view it as obligatory to apply these to the new matters and contingencies that occur with changing times and peoples who live in them.\(^{39}\) One may not support the denial of this classification by clinging to the hadith "every *bid'ah* is error," for the only form of *bid'ah* that is without exception error is that concerning the tenets of faith, like the *bid'ah* of the Mu'tazilah, the Qadariyyah, the Murji’ah, and others, that contradicts the beliefs of the early Muslims. This is erroneous *bid'ah* as it is harmful and devoid of benefit.\(^{40}\) As for *bid'ah* in actions, meaning the occurrence of an act connected with *'ibādah* or something else that did not exist in the first century of Islam, it must be judged according to the five categories mentioned by Ibn 'Abd al-Salām. To claim that such an innovation is misguidance without further qualification is simply not applicable to it, for new things are among the exigencies brought into being by the passage of time and generations, and nothing that is new lacks a ruling of God that is applicable to it, whether explicitly mentioned in primary texts, or inferable from them in some way. They further assert that the only reason that Islamic law can be valid for every time and place and be the consummate and most perfect of all divine laws is because it comprises general methodological principles and universal criteria, together with the ability its scholars have been endowed with to understand its primary texts, the knowledge of different types of analogy and the other excellences that characterize it. If one is to rule that every new act that has come into being after the first century of Islam is an erroneous *bid'ah* without considering whether it entails benefit or harm, this would invalidate a large portion of the fundamental bases of the sharī'ah as well as those rulings established by analogical reasoning, and would narrow and limit the Sharī'ah’s vast

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\(^{39}\) Haron Din, "Persoalan Bid'ah, op.cit.

\(^{40}\) Ibid.
and comprehensive scope.  

This classification of *bid'ah* is, however, rejected by the reformists who maintain that creating such a classification has no basis in the primary textual evidence. Strongly influenced by the writing of al-Shâṭibi in his al-*f'tisâm*, they assert that this classification by Ibn 'Abd al-Salâm is rejected by al-Shâṭibi, and all the examples propounded by Ibn 'Abd al-Salâm, except those which fall into the categories of forbidden and reprehensible, are denied by him as being *bid'ah*. Al-Shâṭibi is quoted as saying:

"This classification is an invented matter which is not based on evidence, and furthermore, there is a contradiction within the classification itself. This is because the reality of *bid'ah* is that it is not based on evidence; neither from the primary textual evidence, nor from its methodologies. If there are evidences that indicate that something is obligatory, or recommended, or permissible, it is therefore not a *bid'ah*, and practising it would fall into the category of general actions that are commanded or optional. Therefore, combining the matters of *bid'ah* together with the evidences that prove their obligation, or recommendation, or permissibility, is a combination of two opposite things."  

In their clarification regarding the examples propounded by the traditionalists, the reformists, by referring to al-Shâṭibi’s comments on Ibn 'Abd al-Salâm’s classification, accept the categories of forbidden and reprehensible *bid'ah* as *bid'ah*, but other examples, such as giving positions of authority in the Shari‘ah to those unfit for them are not regarded as *bid'ah*. This is because such examples already contravene the principles of the religion and are clearly prohibited in primary textual evidence, and thus fall into the category of forbidden matters, the practice of which is a type of *maṣ'liyah* (disobedience) and not *bid'ah*. They also refuse to consider the examples in the categories of obligatory *bid'ah* as *bid'ah*, but regard them as parts of the *maṣâliḥ mursalah*. Some of the examples in the category of recommended, such as building schools and writing books on beneficial subjects, are considered as being

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41Ibid.

*māṣāliḥ mursalah*, while others, such as performing *tarāwīḥ* prayers in congregation are viewed as being part of the Sunnah; and commemorating the birth (*mawlid*) of the Prophet Muḥammad is held as a blameworthy *bid'ah*. As regards the examples of the category of permissible *bid'ah*, such as having enjoyable food and drink, the reformists argue that this example is included in the permissible matters, and if it is done beyond the limit would fall into the category of forbidden matters, but is not considered as a *bid'ah*. Repeating their idea of *bid'ah*, the reformists emphasize that new matters are not necessarily *bid'ah*, but they are *bid'ah* if they concern the basic fundamentals of the religion, i.e. *ʿaqīdah* and the ritual form of *ʿibādah*. If they concern mundane affairs, they are subject to judgement based on the principles and the methodologies of the Sharī'ah.

It might be concluded from the arguments of both parties that the disputation between the reformists and the traditionalists regarding the issue of *bid'ah* is a result of their different perceptions in interpreting and understanding the primary textual evidence regarding *bid'ah*, which thus drives them to define *bid'ah* differently. For the reformists who narrow the definition of *bid'ah*, the term *bid'ah* refers only to new matters that concern matters of *ʿaqīdah* and the ritual form of *ʿibādah*. Thus, they perceive every *bid'ah* to be an error. Contrarily, the traditionalists expand the definition of *bid'ah* to all new things in the domain of life, and thus classify *bid'ah* into five categories of rulings based on its conformity with the principles and the methodologies of *sharī'ah*.

As a part of a grey area, both perceptions are seem reasonable and acceptable, since they are based on primary textual evidence and built on the respective skill of each party in using the yardstick of the Sharī'ah within the boundaries of the principles and methodologies of the religion. However, the different perceptions turn into conflict as both parties show a lack of tolerance in accepting differences of perspective. The reformists in their efforts to call the Malays to return to a pristine Islam, label many of the Malays’ religious practices as blameworthy *bid'ah*. In return,

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the traditionalists, in defending their traditional orthodox practices, accuse the reformists as being a group of misguided people who are trying to disunite the solidarity of the Malay ummah. Indeed, the word "bid'ah" is a very sensitive one among Malays as it brings a bad connotation which refers to wrongdoing in religious practices, even if the traditionalists have a detailed classification of it. Thus, if their deeply rooted practices are labelled as bid'ah, the traditionalists have no choice but to strongly defend them, and offensively return the label of bid'ah to the reformists.

Perceptions Regarding the Concept of Taqlid of a Madhhab and the Need for Ijtihād

The issue of taqlid of a madhhab has also been a fundamental factor of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists regarding matters of 'ibādah, as both parties hold opposite standpoints on this issue. Taqlid is defined by the jurists as "adopting a person’s saying without knowing its proof," and in this particular context refers to the practice of adopting the juristic formulations or standpoints of certain madhhabs in matters of religious practices without considering it necessary to know their evidences. In the context of Malaysia, taqlid is held by the traditionalists as necessary or obligatory for ordinary people who have not reached the ability of performing ijtihād. Contrarily, the reformists who refer to taqlid as blind imitation

4The word taqlid, which is derived from the word qallada, literally means placing something around neck, which encircles the neck, and technically means the acceptance of a saying of a person without him knowing its evidence. A muqallid is a person who practises taqlid. See E. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, op.cit., vol.1, pp. 2557-2558; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān al-'Arab, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 365-368. In the context of Islamic jurisprudence, it signifies acting according to the decision of a mujtahid without knowing its evidence. See for example, al-Āmīdī, al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām (Cairo: Maṭba‘at Şābih, 1347 H), vol. 3, p. 166; al-Ghazālī, al-Muṣṭafā ʿalā Uṣūl (Cairo: Maṭba‘at Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, 1356 H), vol. 2, p. 123; al-Shawkānī, Irshād al-Ṣuḥūd (Cairo: Maṭba‘at Şābih, 1349 H), p. 234; Ibn Qudāmah, Rawdāt al-Nāẓīr (Cairo: al-Maktabat al-Salafīyyah 1342 H), vol. 2, p. 450; Sa‘īd Abū Jayb, al-Qāmiṣūs al-Fiqhi, op.cit., p. 308.

5Taqlid in matter of 'aqidah is perceived by almost all scholars as forbidden, while taqlid in matter of Islamic practices is disputed among the jurists: some jurists permit it and some other prohibit it. See for example, Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, Uṣūl al-Fiqī al-İslāmî (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1987), vol. 2, p. 1122-1236.

of a madhhab, strongly denounce it as a passive approach in practising religion, and a source of error which leads to fanaticism, sectarianism, disunion and weakness within the ummah, and is therefore not permissible.47

Before examining the detailed positions and arguments of both parties on the issue, it is worthwhile reviewing the historical development of the doctrine of taqlid,48 as this illustrates the background of their respective points of view. In retrospect, it can be briefly said, that this doctrine emerged at the beginning of the fourth century of the Hijrah after the establishment of the four leading madhhabs, i.e. when the basic development of Islamic law had been completed. At this time, Islamic law had been comprehensively delineated in its essential principles, and preserved in the regulations of the law books or legal manuals produced by the madhhabs. This situation led many to conclude that ijtihad was no longer necessary or desirable. Instead, Muslims were simply to follow and imitate the past law elaborated by the early jurists, i.e. to practise taqlid. Jurists were no longer to seek new solutions or produce new regulations and law books but instead study the established legal manuals and write commentaries on them. Islamic law, the product of a dynamic and creative process, now tended to become fixed and institutionalized.49 While individual scholars objected, the majority position resulted in traditional belief prohibiting substantive legal development. This is commonly referred to as “the closing of the gate of ijtihad.” Belief that the work of the madhhabs had definitely resulted in the transformation of the sharī'ah into a legal blueprint for society reinforced the sacrosanct nature of tradition, and change or innovation came to be viewed as


It was from such circumstances that the doctrine of \textit{taqlid} grew and became rooted in the Muslim community. In Malaysia, the doctrine of \textit{taqlid} is said to have flourished in traditional Malay Muslim society as it was preserved by the \\textit{pondok}'s traditional education system which, in the teaching of \textit{fiqh}, emphasized a strict, unquestioned and exclusive adherence to the Shāfi‘i \textit{madhab}.\footnote{Howard M. Federspiel, "Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia," in \textit{Monograph Series-Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asian Program}, (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1970), p. 46; Rahimin Affandi Abd. Rahman, "Budaya Taqlid di dalam Masyarakat Melayu: Satu Tinjauan Ringkas," in \textit{Jurnal Syariah}, vol. 3, no. 3, 1995, pp. 55-56.} The traditionalists believe, as observed by Federspiel, that the human mind is generally incapable of grasping the patterns and intricacies of God’s command without reliable guides. The founders of the great \textit{madhhabs}, according to them, had honestly investigated, examined, compiled and explained those patterns and intricacies, and eventually provided a reliable guide, which thus needs no alteration.\footnote{Howard M. Federspiel, "Persatuan Islam," op.cit., p. 48.} They perceive that the truths expressed in the teaching of the great Muslim scholars of classical and medieval Islam, including the four major \textit{madhhabs}, did not change. Those truths, according to the traditionalists, did not ever need to be brought to trial since they were never altered by the change of time and conditions, and were as valid in the twentieth century as when they were formulated. A reexamination of the Qur‘ān and the \textit{sunnah} of the Prophet was not only unnecessary, but also dangerous since it could lead to misinterpretation and error.\footnote{Ibid., p. 46.}

This standpoint is criticized by the reformists, as for them, the doctrine of \textit{taqlid} confines Muslims to relying on the classical and medieval interpretations of Islam which are not applicable to modern problems confronting Muslims. Instead, they encourage the exercise of \textit{ijtihad} in order to produce fresh interpretations of Islam to demonstrate its relevance and validity for modern life. Inheriting the ideologies of
previous reformists such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā, the Malay reformists emphasize the call for the reopening of the gates of *ijtihād*, as they discern that the rulings of the previous jurists were open to correction in light of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. They maintain that the nature of interpretation itself was susceptible to error because of human limitations or because new evidence might arise. This does mean their total rejection of rulings formulated in the classical and medieval period of Islam; rather, as they frequently stress, such rulings should be used as an aid in deriving new rulings in accordance with contemporary situations. They also dismiss the belief that the interpretations of a mujtahid are binding on Muslims individually or collectively, and warn that the standpoints of a madhhab must not be elevated so highly as to reach the rank of religion itself.  

For the sake of clarity, it is useful to highlight the conflict of the two parties on the issue of *taqlīd* in two aspects: the first aspect concerns the question of the permissibility of *taqlīd*; and the second aspect pertains to the issue of a muqallid being bound to follow a specific madhhab. These two aspects will be discussed in the following sections below:

The Permissibility of *Taqlīd*

With regard to this question, the reformists’ standpoint is negative, while the traditionalists’ stance is affirmative. For the traditionalists, *taqlīd* of a madhhab is not only permissible, but is obligatory for common people who do not have the ability to acquire knowledge of the rulings of the Shariʿah by themselves. This standpoint is based on several Qurʾānic texts, such as, for instance, “Ask the people of remembrance if you do not know” (16: 43). The “people of remembrance (ahl al-dhikr)” in this verse are, according to the commentators of the Qurʾān, the people of

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54 Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlīd*, op. cit., pp. 54-57;

knowledge (ahl al-‘ilm). This verse denotes that less well-informed Muslims should have recourse to qualified experts. In another verse, the Muslims are enjoined to establish and maintain a group of specialists who can provide authoritative guidance for non-specialists: "... Nor should the believers all go forth together. If a contingent from every expedition went forth they could devote themselves to studies in religion and admonish the people when they return to them so that they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil)" (9: 122). In 4: 83, the Qur’ān says: "If they had referred to the Messenger and to those of authority among them, then those of them whose task is to find it out would have known the matter." In this verse, the phrase "those of them whose task is to find it out" (alladhīna yastanbituna-hu min-hum), refers to those who possess the capacity to draw inferences directly from the evidence, which is called in Arabic istinbāṭ. These verses, according to the traditionalists, oblige a Muslim who is not at the level of istinbāṭ, i.e. who is not capable of deriving rulings from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet, even if he is a scholar, to ask and follow someone in such rulings who is at this level.56

The traditionalists maintain that even if it is recommended for a muqallid to learn as much as he is able of the formal proofs of the madhhab, not every Muslim can be a scholar, as scholarship takes a great deal of time, and for the ummah to function properly most people must develop other realms of expertise. If every Muslim were personally responsible for evaluating all the primary texts, for which a lifetime study would hardly be enough, he would either have to give up earning a living or give up his religion. Given the depth of scholarship needed to understand the revealed texts accurately, and the extreme warnings given against distorting the revelation, it is obvious to the traditionalists that ordinary Muslims are duty bound to follow expert opinion rather than rely on their own limited reasoning and knowledge.57 This is in concordance with the fact that Islam does not call one to burden oneself beyond one’s ability, as stated in the Qur’ān: “God does not burden a soul more than it can bear”


57Daud Fatani, Fath al-Mannān, op.cit., p. 40; Nahmar Jamil, Bermazhab Haram Dan Sesat?, op.cit., p. 43.
This verse indicates that one who is not able to research the evidence and derive rulings from it, must refer to the scholars who are able to do that, in order to remove difficulty and to protect himself from straying with regard to the rulings of God without knowledge.58

Furthermore, the traditionalists perceive that taqlid of a madhhab is a good practice which is based on a foundation of trust. The muqallid simply needs to conform to the madhhab without necessarily knowing the reasoning behind all of its rulings because of his trust and confidence in its scholars. This is similar to relationships in modern life which are mostly based upon taqlid, such as relationship between a patient and his doctor, a client and his lawyer, or a company director and his accountant, which are all based on trust. Comparing the science of deriving rulings to that of medicine, they give an example, quoting al-Būṭi,59 that if one is ill, one does not look for oneself in the medical textbooks for the proper diagnosis and cure, but one would go to a trained medical practitioner. The system of taqlid implies that as long as one does not get the training to become a doctor, he cannot practise medicine. And so it is in the case of Islamic law, which is in reality even more important and potentially hazardous. One would be both foolish and irresponsible to try to look through the sources oneself. Instead, one should recognize that those who have spent their entire lives studying the Qur’ān, the sunnah and the principles of law are far less likely to be mistaken than oneself.60

The reformists, however, reject the permissibility of taqlid as it is seen to result in more disadvantages than benefits for the Muslim community. For one thing, the definition of taqlid given by the jurists, namely, “adopting a person’s saying without knowing its proof,” denotes a practice that is not based upon knowledge and reasoning. Passive acceptance of dogmas from religious authorities without searching

60Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, Sumber Undang-undang Islam; op.cit., p. 57; Nahmar Jamil, Bermazhab Haram Dan Sesat?, op.cit., p. 37.
for proofs and without thinking of the rights of free examination and personal initiative is perceived as contradicting the spirit of Islam which recognizes in reasoning beings the faculty of taking decisions in all conscience, as the Qur'ān states: "And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Verily, hearing, sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned about" (Q: 17: 36). The locking up of the faculty of reasoning is discerned by the reformists as causing negative effects to the ummah and driving them to a state of passiveness and sluggishness.\
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Blind imitation of a madhhab, according to the reformists, would not only lead people to prefer the sayings and opinions of men to the text of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, but would further lead them to forget even the authentic sayings of their imāms and to prefer the sayings of their later followers without discrimination or research, which could finally lead them to perpetrate bid'ah.\[62\] Originally, the reformists assert, the permissibility of taqlīd of a mujtahid of a madhhab was considered as a rukhsah (concession) for the common people who were not able to research the evidence and derive rulings from it. However, it later turned to taqlīd of the later followers of the madhhab, and this has engendered negative effects for the ummah. This is because there are some followers of the madhhab who modified the original standpoints of the madhhab for particular reasons, resulting in late comers among the muqallids practising their sayings and eventually neglecting the authentic standpoints of the mujtahids.\[63\]

In the reformists’ point of view, most traditionalists’ practices such as uttering the intention of the prayers, reciting dhikr and du‘ā’ with raised voices after the prayers, reciting certain dhikrs and blessings upon the Prophet before the adhān or between the tarāwīḥ prayers, performing the tahlil ceremony, contributing to the reward of the deceased and so forth, can be cited as examples of the negative effects of blind imitation of the Shafi’i madhhab. To be more specific, reciting dhikr and du‘ā’

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en masse with raised voices after the prayers, for instance, was never prescribed by al-Shafi'î himself, nor by any jurists in this madhhab, but was only created by his later followers, and this is believed by his blind followers to be al-Shafi'î's authentic standpoint which was later confirmed as the practice of the Shafi'î madhhab. This practice, however, contradicts the Qur'ânic teaching regarding the adâb of performing dhikr and du'a', as appears in 7:55 and 7:205, which command dhikr and du'a' to be performed individually and inaudibly. Thus, the traditionalists' practice of reciting dhikr and du'a' en masse with raised voices suggests that they prefer the sayings of men to that of the Qur'ân, which is considered by the reformists as a blameworthy bid'ah caused by the severity of their blind imitation of the madhhab. Similar considerations apply to the other examples mentioned above, all of which are not acted upon on a basis of knowledge and evidence, but on the basis of the precedents set by their forefathers. The Qur'ân itself implicitly condemns such blind imitation when it denounces mindless submission to the world and the legacies of the forefathers in various places, such as in 2:170: "When it is said to them: 'Follow what God has sent down,' they say: 'Nay! We shall follow what we found our fathers following.' Even though their fathers did not understand anything nor were they guided"; in 43:22: "Nay! They say: 'We found our fathers following a certain way, and we guide ourselves by their footsteps'"; and in 31:21: "And when it is said to them: 'Follow that which God has sent down.' They say: 'Nay, we shall follow that which we found our fathers (doing).'

Strengthening their criticism of taqlîd, the reformists perceive that the decline of the Muslim ummah is partly due to its blind and unquestioned clinging to the past. They maintain that history has recorded that the total reliance on madhhabs has resulted in the majority of Muslims becoming negligent and careless about the study of the Qur'ân and the Sunnah, and content with the knowledge that was packaged and handed down to them. Their effort then was only to establish it firmly, defend it

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64 See the reformists' detailed arguments concerning the issue of reciting the dhikr and du'a' together with raised voices in Chapter Four pp. 173-183.

vigorously, and apply it as best as they were able. As the decline of intellectual development continued, the spirit of dissension is said to have grown stronger and become more widespread. For centuries thereafter, blind imitation became the norm and intellectual thought stagnated, while independent reasoning withered and ignorance became common. This deplorable situation, according to the reformists, did not end there but worsened considerably, as if knowledge had disappeared from the world of Muslims afflicted by intellectual sterility. Within this atmosphere, harmful innovation, perversion, and religious corruption of various kinds flourished. All this left the door wide open for the enemies of Islam to sweep away Islamic civilization and plunder its heartlands, and unfortunately, this did in reality take place when Muslims and their lands were subjugated and colonized by the West. During the era of colonization, the tradition of blind following that was so deeply rooted in the Muslims’ minds became even stronger among those who were clinging to their world of traditionalism and rejecting Western influence. Meanwhile, the people who were tempted by the influence of the West turned to blindly following Western ideologies and no longer had full confidence in their religion. Among these people, the long tradition of blind following of the madhhab had changed into blind following of the West, whilst the religion was imprisoned simply in certain rituals and ceremonies. This situation continued in the post-colonial era and remains until the present time. From this historical point of view the reformists draw the conclusion that as the nature of taqlid has had harmful effects on the ummah, it is therefore not permissible in matters of religion.

**Taqlid and Ijtihad**

As taqlid is not permissible in the eyes of the reformists, they propose that those who are incapable of ijtihad are to follow the religious authorities with knowledge of their

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67 Ahmad Yusuf Amin, Taqlid, op.cit., pp. 75-87.
evidences and proofs, a practice that they term as *ittibār*. *Ittibār*, which is defined as following a person’s saying on the basis of clear evidence of its validity, is considered as an active fidelity of the *madhhab* and an attempt to reach authenticity, while *taqlīd* is merely a blind imitation which is regarded, as illustrated by al-Shāfi‘i, "like one who gathers wood in the dark of the night and carries it in a bundle, but is worried that there might be a snake in the bundle that will bite him while he is unaware of it." The attempt to distinguish between *ittibār*, or text-based following, and *taqlīd*, or blind imitation, has been a main characteristic of the reformists’ polemics which is found in almost all their major works. Their standpoint on the doctrines of *ittibār* and *taqlīd* mainly refers to the classical writings of Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Suyūṭī and al-Shawkānī, and al-Shāṭibī, as well as the modern writings of Rashid Riḍā.

In their works on this issue, the reformists use the term *ittibār* in their call to return to a pristine Islam to refer to a rigorous following of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet as found in the accepted compendia of Prophetic traditions. In this sense, the reformists emphasize that it is indispensable for every Muslim to make every effort, as hard as he possibly can, to learn, understand and practise the teachings of Islam directly from its original sources, namely, the Qur’ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. In order to understand the Qur’ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet, one is required to ask or follow any trustworthy scholars, but one must not

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70Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, a Cordovan scholar of the 5th century of the Hijrah who wrote a lot about the validity of *ittibār* and invalidity of *taqlīd* in his *Jāmīʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faqīḥ*, was perhaps the first person who made a clear attempt to distinguish between the two doctrines. His ideas on this are frequently referred to by the later salafiyyah scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah in his *Iqtīḏā al-ṣīrāt al-Mustaqīm*, Ibn Qayyim in his *Flām al-Muwaqqfīn*, Al-Suyūṭī in his *al-Radd al-ʿadāl Ilā al-Ard*, and al-Shawkānī in his *Irshād al-Fuḥūl* and *al-Qawl al-Mufīd al-Iṣṭihād al-Taqlīd*. Rashid Riḍā's writings on *ittibār* and *taqlīd* can be frequently found in his *Taḥsīr al-Manār*.

71The term *ittibār* is consistently used by the reformists with its antithesis, namely, *ibtidār* or *bidʿah* to form a famous slogan: "*Ittibār* al-*sunnah* wa *ibtidār* al-*bidʿah* (following the Sunnah and avoiding the *bidʿah*)." See for example, Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlid*, op.cit., passim.
rely upon their sayings without knowing their evidence. The madhhabs in the perspective of the reformists are only ways or tools to understanding the proofs of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Thus, following their juristic decisions without knowledge of their evidence, as maintained by al-Shawkānī, is merely ignorance (jahl).72 Indeed, the leaders of the four madhhabs themselves criticized and prohibited the practice of following them without knowing the evidence for their views, and none of them ever asked their followers to follow their sayings, but rather to follow the original sources which were the basis of their sayings. Abū Ḥanīfah is quoted as saying: "It is not lawful for anyone to give judgement according to what we say until he knows where we have taken it from." He also said: "It is unlawful for whoever does not know my evidence to give my position as a fatwā."73 Mālik is reported to have said: "The saying of everyone may be taken or rejected, except the companion of this grave," pointing to the grave of the Prophet Muḥammad.74 Al-Shāfi‘ī says in his al-Risālah: "It is not permissible for anyone to ever say about anything that is lawful or unlawful except with knowledge."75 He is also quoted as saying: "If I say something, then compare it to the Qur'ān and the sunnah of the Prophet. If it agrees with them, accept it; but if it goes against them, reject it and throw my saying against the wall."76 Aḥmad, when a person asked him about whom he should follow, is reported to have said: "Do not follow me, and do not follow Mālik, nor al-Awzā‘ī, nor al-Thawrī, nor others. But take the rulings from where they have taken them."77 These sayings are discerned by the reformists as clear messages from the leaders of the madhhabs of the praiseworthiness of ittibā‘ and the invalidity of taqlid.78

72Al-Shawkānī, Irshād al-Fuhūl, op.cit., p. 267.
74Ibid.
Nonetheless, the traditionalists are reluctant to believe that such sayings were addressed to ordinary Muslims. For them, such remarks were particularly addressed to the scholars. The leaders of the madhhabs trained a number of students who then reached the level of istinbāṭ. It was to such students, i.e. the scholars of istinbāṭ, according to the traditionalists, that the leaders of four madhhabs addressed such remarks. If it were unlawful for ordinary Muslims to perform any acts of 'ibādah before they had mastered the entire textual corpus of the Qur’ān and thousands of Prophetic traditions, together with all the methodological principles required to weigh the evidence, and harmonise between them, they would either have to give up their professions or give up their religion. The traditionalists further maintain that quoting such words to non-scholars in order to suggest that the leaders of the madhhabs thought that it was wrong for ordinary Muslims to accept the work of scholars, is misleading and absurd, particularly in view of the lifework of the leaders of the four madhhabs from beginning to end which consisted precisely in discovering the fiqh rulings of the religion for ordinary Muslims to follow and benefit from.\(^7\)

As for the necessity of knowing the evidence of the madhhabs’ standpoint, the traditionalists argue that, according to the practice of the Companions of the Prophet in giving their legal opinion, they did not necessarily mention the evidence for it to the person who asked them. The Prophet used to send the most knowledgeable of the Companions to places whose inhabitants knew nothing more of Islam than its five pillars. The latter would follow the person sent to them in everything he gave his judgement upon, including acts of 'ibādah, interpersonal dealings, and all matters concerning the lawful and unlawful. Sometimes such a person would come across a question on which he could find no evidence in the Qur’ān or the Sunnah of the Prophet, and he would use his own personal legal reasoning and provide them an answer in the light of it, and they would follow him therein.\(^8\) Quoting al-Āmidi, they maintain that ordinary people in the time of the Companions and those who immediately followed them used to seek the opinion of mujtahids and would follow


\(^8\)Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, Sumber Undang-undang Islam, op.cit., p. 56.
them in the rules of Sacred Law. The learned among them would unhesitatingly answer their questions without alluding to evidence, and no one censured them for doing so. Furthermore, the traditionalists emphasize that in view of the fact that the scholars accept evidence from the Qur'ân, the Sunnah, and reason, as complete and inter-substantiative, the ordinary people, or learned people not at the level of istinbât and ijtihâd, should follow qualified mujtahids who have a comprehensive grasp of all the evidence. They perceive that a formal legal opinion from a mujtahid is in relation to ordinary people just as a proof from the Qur'ân and the sunnah is in relation to a mujtahid. This is because the Qur'ân, just as it obliges scholars to hold to its evidence and proof, also obliges uninformed persons to adhere to the ijtihâd and formal legal opinion of scholars.81

Rejecting the traditionalists’ viewpoint that the Companions used to give legal opinions to the people without mentioning their evidence, the reformists insist that the Prophet's senior Companions in all cases of giving legal opinion showed an emphasis on a search for textual evidence, and not an act of taqlid. This, according to the reformists, is what distinguishes ittibâ from taqlid: the former is always based on textual evidence, while the latter refers to an opinion that is not corroborated in the same way. Despite their vehement critique of taqlid, some reformists, however, at one point note that taqlid is permissible if it is impossible for one to perform individual religious obligations without practising taqlid of the scholars. Nevertheless, in this case, one is not permitted to depend on taqlid permanently, but is obliged in the interim to search for knowledge and evidence in order to reach the level of ittibâ.82 Though this seems a kind of flexibility, it does not lessen their pungent critique on taqlid as propounded consistently in their works.

The issue of taqlid of a madhhab is, in fact, a disputed matter among jurists, who in this case can be divided into three groups: the first group, which comprises the

majority of jurists, approve taqlid and perceive it as obligatory for non-mujtahids.\textsuperscript{83} The second group in all ways prohibit it for all Muslims. Among the prominent jurists in this group are al-Shawkâni and Ibn Ḥazm.\textsuperscript{84} The third group, led by Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr and Ibn al-Qayyim, despite their critique on taqlid, allow ordinary Muslims to practise taqlid, but prohibit them from holding to a specific madhhab.\textsuperscript{85} The second and third group, however, share a similar perception in their emphasis on the idea of ittibāʿ. It seems, therefore, that the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists on this issue is merely a repetition and continuation of a never-ending dispute among previous jurists. The traditionalists in this issue fall into the first group, while the reformists go into the second, or sometimes, the third group. The conflict occurs when the traditionalists perceive taqlid as a simple solution to the complex task of understanding and deriving rulings from the textual evidence, while the reformists consider it as an enormous problem that causes illness in the society.

In addition to their conflicting perspectives as examined above, it can be seen that the dispute on this issue is also due to the problem of some inappropriate perceptions vis-a-vis the definition of taqlid itself. The traditionalists' perception that it is obligatory for non-mujtahids to practise taqlid, regardless of whether they are scholars (ʿulamāʾ) or ordinary Muslims, places the former and the latter at the same level, i.e. the level of muqallids. The fact that scholars necessarily have knowledge of the fiqh rulings and the evidence for them is apparently irreconcilable with how taqlid is defined, namely, “following the ijtihāds of mujtahids without knowledge of their evidence.” This definition seems to be only applicable to ordinary people, not to the scholars, leaving a part of the traditionalists’ perception of taqlid as if in conflict with its definition, which therefore has also been a subject of criticism by the reformists. In order to find a way out of such a conflict, it would be safer, as suggested by some scholars, if the classical definition of taqlid were slightly modified,


indicating that knowing the evidence of a mujtahid in full, as he himself knows it, is unnecessary. Hence, it could be defined as “following the ijtihāds of mujtahids without complete knowledge of their evidences,” which seems to be somewhat in accordance with the fact that both ordinary Muslims and scholars do not have complete knowledge of the evidence of the ijtihāds they follow.

The reformists who condemn taqlīd as it is, seem to be satisfied with their idea of ittibā‘ which seems to distinguish the act of following ijtihāds when there is knowledge of their evidence from ones which are otherwise. Whilst their denunciation of taqlīd is apparently reasonable, their encouragement of ittibā‘ seems to be overly ideal and would seem to cause difficulties for ordinary people who are incapable of examining the evidence for the ijtihāds of the madhhab. Searching the evidence needs not only a plain knowledge of it, but also an understanding of the methods of istinbā‘ used by the mujtahid to infer the rulings from the evidence, and this requires one to have mastery of the knowledge relating to it, especially that of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (usūl al-fiqh). This means, to practise ittibā‘, an ordinary Muslim has to be a scholar in order to understand the evidence of the ijtihāds of the madhhab, and it is impossible to force all Muslims to reach this level of scholarship. Taking account of the incapability of ordinary Muslims, who are the majority, to be scholars, they should therefore be allowed to practise taqlīd, for the sake of ease and avoiding hardship. As for mujtahids and muftīs, it is undeniable that mentioning the evidence when giving legal opinions is commendable, as stated by many jurists, for it brings many benefits, but it should not be regarded as an obligation for them. Occasionally, mujtahids or muftīs will not to mention the evidence of their ijtihāds or legal opinions due to the complexity of the method of istinbā‘ which they think might cause confusion for ordinary people to understand. In this case, it is sufficient for one to trust them without asking them to provide the evidence of their ijtihād, which is also beyond the limit of courtesy.


However, regardless of that, with careful scrutiny one finds that there is an overlap between the concepts of ittibā and taqlīd, as following the ijtiḥāds of a madhhab does not mean clinging to the sayings of the mujtahid per se, but refers to adopting the rulings that are inferred from the evidence of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah through the efforts of persons who are qualified to exercise ijtiḥād. Adopting the ijtiḥāds of mujtahids for those who are not capable of ijtiḥād, though they do not know the evidence, is therefore an endeavour to follow the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, i.e. an act of ittibā. In this perspective, the mujtahids and the muqallīds are considered as the followers of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah (muttabīs), but in terms of the terminology, their acts of following are distinguished by different terms, viz. ijtiḥād for those who are able to exercise ijtiḥād, and taqlīd for those who are not able to perform ijtiḥād. Taqlīd of a madhhab, however, demands following the authentic standpoint of the madhhab, and not simply the following those which are customarily practised by their forefathers without distinguishing the original practices of the madhhab from the additional ones which are perhaps not based on any valid proofs. Thus, muqallīds, especially ordinary people, should make every effort they possibly can to reach the authentic standpoints of the madhhab, and steer clear of adopting any practices which might be only derived from custom.

**Holding to a Specific Madhhab**

The Malay Muslims are known as loyal adherents of the Shāfī madhhab. They are believed to have been practising Islam according to this madhhab as early as the advent of Islam to the Malay Archipelago. At that time, the Shāfī madhhab occupied an important position in this region as it was spread by Muslim missionaries who were of this madhhab. Thereafter, the influence of the Shāfī madhhab in Malay society has been reinforced through the teaching of fiqh in the traditional education system as well as through the Islamic legal system which refers specifically to this madhhab.88

The Shafi‘i madhab has thus generally become an official madhab for the Malays, and it is not extreme to say that the Malay Muslims are the fanatics of the Shafi‘i madhab.99 At the present time, the Shafi‘i madhab is approved as the official madhab of every state in Malaysia except the state of Perlis which does not bind itself to any specific fiqh madhab.90

Theoretically, the traditionalists believe that in practising the religion, one is not obliged to adhere to a specific madhab. One can follow any other madhab, i.e. practise talfiq,91 in certain practices as long as one does not have the intention of following only the easiest ways mixed from the various madhhabs (tatahüf ruhaş al-madhâhib).92 In the Malaysian Islamic legal system, though Islamic law is principally based on the Shafi‘i madhab, the doctrine of talfiq is used occasionally.93 Some traditionalists acknowledge that practising talfiq is better than absolute taqlid to a specific madhab. However, they hold that practising talfiq must not be seen as an


90Undang-undang Tubuh Kerajaan Perlis, 1974 (Amended), 5 (1) states that the religion of the state is Islam of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jam‘ah, with no mention of being bound to any madhab. Sect. 7 (4) of the Perlis Law of Administration of Islamic Affairs, 1963, allocates that the Majlis (Council of Islamic Affairs) and the Committee of Shar'ah, in giving the fatwa or opinion, must refer to the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. None of the laws mention that the state follows any specific fiqh madhab. In its fatwa dated 18 April 1988, the Perlis Council of Islamic Affairs, in defining the term Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jam‘ah clearly states that it is not bound to any specific fiqh madhab. See “Definasi Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah,” in Keputusan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Shar’iyyah Negeri Perlis, 18 April 1988.


92Daud Fatanî, Furû‘ al-Masâ’il, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 14. However, the traditionalists perceive that in performing certain acts of ‘ibâdah, one is obliged to follow a specific madhab. Taqlid to two madhhabs in one action is prohibited and it nullifies the act of ‘ibâdah. For example, if one wipes a part of his head in performing ablution following the Shafi‘i madhab, one is not permitted to hold that touching women’s skin would not nullify the ablution following the Mâlikî madhab. This is because touching women’s skin according to the Shafi‘i madhab nullifies the ablution, while the Mâlikî madhab do not recognize wiping a part of head in performing ablution. See Daud Fatanî, Fatâh al-Mannân, op.cit., p. 42. See also other examples in idem, Furû‘ al-Masâ’il, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 14.

attempt to eliminate madhhabism, but should be seen as an effort of reinforcement of any standpoints which are adaptable and in accordance with contemporary circumstances. They even hold that it is not wrong for those who are able to analyse and evaluate the standpoints of the madhhabs to choose the ones that appear to them as the strongest and the most convincing standpoints. For ordinary people, the traditionalists maintain, it is safer to bind themselves to a specific madhhab. This does not mean that they are duty-bound to hold to that madhhab, but they are permitted to practise talfiq in certain circumstances.

This viewpoint, however, seems to be adopted only by small group of scholars among them, while the great majority of the traditionalists strongly defend the loyalty to the Shafi'i madhhab, and consider changing to any other madhhab as heresy. This attitude is entrenched in the milieu where they are taught to adhere strictly to the Shafi'i madhhab. The teaching of fiqh, whether in the traditional or modern education system, is only confined to the texts of the Shafi'i madhhab whether in the Malay language, such as Daud Fatani's Bugyat al-Tulab and Furūʿ al-Masāʿīl, Muhammad Arshad Banjari's Sabīl al-Muhtadīn and Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani's Maṭlaṣ al-Badrayn, or in Arabic such as al-Nawawi's Minhāj al-Talibīn and al-Malbari's Fath al-Muṣīn. It has no disclosure of rulings of the madhhabs other than the Shafi'i, and thus, it is not surprising that the rulings of the other madhhabs, if they differ from the Shafi'i view, are deemed by the traditionalists as strange and unacceptable. For them, once one has been a follower of the Shafi'i madhhab, holding fast to it is a lifetime must, while turning to another madhhab might be considered as a betrayal of the madhhab.

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96 With the exception of the higher level of education, such as the Islamic Law subject taught for students of Islamic Studies in the local universities.
Whilst adherence to the Shāfiʿi madhhab is strongly conserved, any influences of the other madhhabs seem to be disliked by the traditionalists and should even be banned. In a recent development, for example, the Islamic Affairs Department of Johore state has warned that it will act against "the followers of Wahhabī" who are claimed as having deviated from the original teachings of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah, and called Muslim society to hold firmly to the teachings of the Shāfiʿi madhhab and reject the other madhhabs' teachings. This attitude indicates not only an effort to preserve the establishment of the Shāfiʿi madhhab in the Malay Muslim community, but also their resistance to accept the influences of any other madhhabs. The traditionalists believe that holding to the Shāfiʿi madhhab is a sacrosanct tradition that will preserve unity and stability among the Malay Muslims, while adopting the teachings of other madhhabs will confuse them and affect the solidarity of the community. Moreover, the traditionalists feel that the status of the Shāfiʿi madhhab as the official madhhab of the states should be seriously protected. On these reasons, the religious authorities have made every effort to preserve the influence of the Shāfiʿi madhhab, resulting in the teachings of other madhhabs having no place in the Malay Muslim community, except amongst the reformists.

It is such longstanding attitudes that are severely criticized by the reformists. The reformists believe that a Muslim is not obliged, neither by the primary textual evidence nor by the leaders of the madhhabs themselves, to bind himself to any specific fiqh madhhab. Contrary to the traditionalists' claim that adopting teachings of more than one madhhab causes confusion and disunity in the society, the reformists believe that it is the act of binding oneself to a specific madhhab which would engender confusion and disunity. The reformists maintain that holding to a

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102Abu Bakar Ashaari, Pembasmi Taqlid, op.cit., p. 60.
particular madhab, according to the position of the great majority of scholars, is not obligatory, since it is never prescribed in the Qur'an or the Sunnah. The reformists emphasize that it is only God and His Messenger who are to be obeyed by everyone in every condition, and thus, making it obligatory for a Muslim to hold and obey to a particular madhab would cause confusion about to whom the obedience should be given. In this case they quote Ibn Taymiyyah's saying: "He who makes it obligatory to blindly follow a particular imam, should be asked to repent. And if he does not repent, he must be killed, for this is associating partners with God in setting down the Shari'ah, which is only of His right." The reformists perceive that the purpose of following the ijtihad of the madhabs is to guide a Muslim to understand and practice the rulings of God. On this ground, a Muslim who is incapable of practising ijtihad should be free to consult and follow any madhab or trustworthy scholar as he wishes, just as a man who is ill consults the physician whom he prefers.

Furthermore, the reformists maintain that holding to a specific madhab would cause fanaticism of the madhab (al-ta'assub al-madhab) among its followers which would then disunite the Muslim community. It is undeniable that the Muslim community for centuries has been experiencing a chronic problem of fanaticism of the madhabs which results in not only dispute and distrust, but also hatred and rampant discord among their followers. The belief that the truth is only in their respective madhab has strengthened the fanaticism, and there is no other way, the reformists feel, to eliminate this problem except by freeing Muslims from being bound to a single specific madhab. The reformists make clear that they do not confine themselves to any single madhab that prevails in the Muslim world nowadays, for they believe that the truth is not confined to any single madhab. The best generations had passed by without binding themselves to follow any specific madhab. Also, the leaders of the

104 Abu Bakar Ashaari, Pembasmi Taqlid, op.cit., p. 120. See also Hashim Gani, Apakah Muslim Wajib Bermazhab?, op.cit., p. 37.
105 Abu Bakar Ashaari, Pembasmi Taqlid, op.cit., p. 57.
106 Ibid., pp. 110-112.
respective madhhabs made no claim of being infallible, as they simply strove to arrive at the truth; if they made some errors, they were nonetheless promised a reward, and if they were correct in their endeavors, they were entitled to a double reward as indicated in various hadiths.  

In their efforts to free Malay Muslims from being shackled to the Shafi’i madhab, the reformists have been consistently promulgating the idea of borderless fiqh, an eclectic approach which was strenuously maintain by the previous reformists, and as that is intensively promoted by Yusuf al-Qarađawi, for example, in the present day. Just as the talfiq, the concept of borderless fiqh refers to adopting the rulings of fiqh from not a single madhab but from all the four prominent madhhabs through the process tarjih, i.e. by choosing the ones which are considered as based on the strongest evidence. This concept is brought by the reformists along with their emphasis on learning Islamic law alongside the proofs thereto from the Qur’an, the Sunnah, ijmâ’, qiyâs and so forth. For them, this gives an authentic picture of Islamic fiqh brought by the Prophet Muhammad, and opens the doors of understanding to all Muslims. This approach is also believed to be a way to unite Muslims and to avoid the conflicts and fanaticism due to madhab allegiance.

In this sense, the reformists who dismiss the traditionalists’ dependency on only the Shafi’is’ “yellow” books of fiqh, have instead propounded an eclecticism in adopting rulings of fiqh and an emphasis on a method of comparative tarjih in the teaching of fiqh. In addition to the wide range of books of fiqh of the four madhhabs, comparative fiqh books such as Ibn Rushd’s Bidâyat al-Mujtahid and al-Shawkâni’s Nayl al-Awârîr among the classical works, and Sayyid Sâbiq’s Fiqh al-
Sunnah and Wahbah al-Zuhayli's *al-Fiqh al-Islāmiwa Adillatuḥ* among modern works exegeses, are profoundly essential and popular among them. The reformists regard these works as have followed the jurisprudential methodology that is best described as salafi, which examines the opinions of all four madhhabs in the light of primary textual evidence and then selects therefrom the ones that are closest to the evidence.¹¹¹

Concluding this issue, it is worth noting that according to the viewpoint of the majority of jurists, holding to a single madhhab is not obligatory, unless it is politically made obligatory by the leader of the Muslim state. In that case, all Muslims in the state are obliged to obey the law according to rulings of the madhhab chosen by their leader, except in their personal practices that are not specified by the law.¹¹² In the Malaysian context, although the Shāfī madhhab is held as the official madhhab of almost all states, to some extent as previously mentioned, the other madhhabs are permitted to be practised. In short, Islamic law in Malaysia does not confine itself only to the Shāfī madhhab, but opens the door to other madhhabs in certain circumstances. The position of some scholars among the traditionalists seems to be in accordance with the reformists’ standpoint, but the attitude of the great majority of traditionalists in resisting the adoption of the rulings of other madhhabs results in their conflict remaining unresolved. The traditionalists’ protective attitude is in fact due to their confidence in practising a single madhhab which happens to be the Shāfī madhhab. They hold that something which has been established and stabilized in the society does not need to be changed but should be defended. The traditionalists believe in stability and they are very resistant to change. The reformists, however, believe that Muslims must return to a pristine Islam, and the process of cleaning and reform must go on, even if this task is painful. These two opposing attitudes have thus been a major source of conflict between the two parties.


Lack of Tolerance over Disputed Matters

Disputes and disagreements concerning the branches (*furūḍ*) of the religion, particularly in juristic matters are considered a normal phenomenon among Muslims. Without exception, the Malay traditionalists and reformists are involved in this typical phenomenon, disputing over abstruse points of *fiqh* and other matters which are not part of the fundamental principles of Islam. Unfortunately, because of the lack of tolerance, their disputes frequently exceed the limits, resulting in long-lasting conflict between the two factions. In defending their respective standpoints, both parties not only insist that their viewpoint is the only true one and criticize the others' as wrong, but also demonstrate a non-compromising attitude and ignore the vitality of Islamic brotherhood and the unity of the Muslim *ummah*. The claims to exclusivity and superiority, in which their own opinions are regarded as a priority better than others, easily slip into fanaticism. Academic debates on disputed matters often turn to futile polemics, quarrels, dissensions and condemnations of each other, and thus cause hard feelings and even hostility among them. These obviously contradict the spirit of Islam and create a negative impact on the *ummah*.

To some extent, disagreements and disputes are allowed in Islam, as part of acknowledging the natural differences between human beings, such as in their mental capabilities, perceptions, thought, races, languages and cultures. All this naturally gives rise to a multiplicity and variety of viewpoints and judgements. Differences and disagreement are thus regarded as part of the nature of life, as hinted at in the Qurʾān: “And if your Lord had so willed, He would have made mankind one *ummah*, but they will not to cease to differ, except those on whom your Lord has bestowed His mercy, and for this did He create them.” (11: 118-119). Provided that differences do not exceed the limits and remain within the standard norms of ethics and proper behaviour, this phenomenon is acceptable and could even be beneficial for the *ummah*. Nevertheless, disagreements that lead to hostility and schism, splitting up the

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ummah, are not permitted in Islam, as stated frequently in the Qur‘ān, such as in 3: 103: "And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of God and be not divided among yourselves"; and in 8: 46: "And do not dispute with one another lest you fail and your strength desert you."

The disagreements of earlier scholars over juristic matters, for example, are acceptable, as their disagreements were about subsidiary issues, and were managed in a healthy framework and with proper ethics.\textsuperscript{114} Their disagreements were treated as differences of opinion and not reasons for estrangement and schism. Juristic disagreements between them were not allowed to go beyond the academic domain or to cause hatred and enmity, and never led them to lose sight of the major issues and the higher purposes of the sharfah. Besides, the jurists have demonstrated a great tolerance in managing disagreements among them. Differences of opinion among early jurists were in fact, to begin with, a source of blessing which helped to develop Islamic jurisprudence, establish the relevance of Islam to changing circumstances, and safeguard public welfare.\textsuperscript{115} However, later, differences of opinion became one of the most critical and dangerous factors contributing to disunity and internecine strife among Muslims. In this context, dispute between the traditionalists and the reformists, without denying its positive effects, is considered as one that has had a bad impact on the ummah. Their disputes, which mostly resemble previous juristic differences, are not apparently dealt with in the proper way, which thus, results in conflicts and schisms, and become elements of destruction in the ummah. The traditionalists and the reformists, both of them seem to have a serious lack of tolerance in experiencing opposing positions to each other. Some examples will illustrate this situation.

The antagonism between the traditionalists and the reformists over disputed matters usually exceeds its limits and goes so far as to label the opposite party as heretics, misguided, fāsiqs and even disbelievers. This chronic phenomenon regularly

\textsuperscript{114}Ibid., p. 18.
\textsuperscript{115}Ibid., p. 104.
happens among the ordinary people of the both parties who lack knowledge, but occasionally involves also their scholars. For example, the former Mufti of Johore (from 1934 until 1961), Saiyid Alwi b. Tahir al-Haddad, who was a great opponent of reformism, had in his fatwā equated the Kaum Muda reformists with the Khawārij and heretics (ahl al-bidʿah), and claimed that many of them became apostates and disbelievers resembling the Qādiyānī. Among the reasons for his claim were that the Kaum Muda, who were according to him, a group who lacked knowledge of Islam, tried to follow the teachings of other religions such as those of Christianity and the Mājūsīs; and they also paid too much attention to the controversial matters and exaggerated them, and treated those who opposed their opinions in these matters as enemies. He also made the claim that the Kaum Muda had blamed and treated with contempt the leaders of the four madhhabs and other scholars, and pretended themselves to be the followers of the true Islam. They had caused serious damage to the teachings of Islam from within and disunited the solidarity of the Malay Muslim ummah. Regardless of the truth of this allegation, claiming that the Kaum Muda resembled groups who had deviated from Islam seemed to be somewhat excessive as his opposing standpoints towards the Kaum Muda only involved the branches of Islam and points of fiqh, as referred to in his fatwā. However, as there is no tolerance, differences of opinion in such matters have been a cause of making heavy accusations to the opposing party.

The traditionalists’ attitude nowadays seems to be not much different from the past. This attitude, however, is possibly their offensive reactions towards the reformists’ aggressive campaigns which are believed to have harmed their established

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118In his fatwā, Alwi referred to several issues of fiqh which are disputed among the jurists, such as the uncleanness of pigs, rujūḍ without the consent of a wife, touching the Qur’ān without ablution, touching a woman’s skin etc. Nonetheless, he made strange conclusion and accusation to the Kaum Muda who differed with him in such issues, as if he was unaware of the jurists’ differences of opinion in these matters, or as if no differences of opinion are allowed in such matters. See his detailed fatwā in Jabatan Agama Islam Johor, Fatwa-fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 162-165.
norms and status quo. Some of the reformists, no different in the past or present days, frequently take harsh and confronting approaches in their call to Malay Muslims to return to the original Islam. This might be due to their reluctance to acknowledge many issues, particularly those which they consider to relate to matters of bid'ah, as being disputed matters (masā'īl khilāfiyyah). In this regard, the reformists seem to confine disputed matters to a limited definition. To them, disputed matters are those which have a basis in the primary textual evidence but about which jurists have differed in their interpretations to infer rulings from the evidence. Matters that have no basis in the primary textual evidence, such as uttering the intention of prayer or other acts of 'ibādah, chanting certain dhikrs and blessing upon the Prophet between the tarāwīḥ prayers, reciting the Qur’ān on the grave etc, as intensively practised by the traditionalists, according to the reformists, are not disputed matters, but matters of bid'ah. Disputed matters for them are tolerable, but matters of bid'ah are intolerable in Islam and must be eradicated by all means.119

As eradicating bid'ah is held as a part of the reformists’ important message to all Malay Muslims, confrontation with the traditionalists who they believe to practise bid'ah, is unavoidable. The reformists believe that bid'ah is intolerable in the religion and thus, those who involve themselves in such matters should be given hard warnings.120 From this standpoint, hard words and bad terms are necessarily used by some reformists in opposing and attacking the traditionalists’ practices, which, according to them, are against the teachings of Islam. Some reformist writers, such as Hashim Ghani,121 tend to use a somewhat extreme language in propagating their ideas as if to force others to accept their viewpoint. By this approach, the reformists might want to show their firmness and steadfastness in efforts to purify the society from elements that against Islamic teachings. For them, the truth must be said even

119 Basri Ibrahim, Khilafiyah, Bid'ah & Masalah Umum, op.cit., p. 291, Ahmad Yusuf Amin, Masalah Khilafiyah (Perlis: Persatuan al-Islah Perlis, n.d), pp. 4-5,

120 See Ahmad Yusuf Amin, Bid'ah, op.cit., p. 112.

121 In case of Hashim Ghani, a leader of the the group Ittiba al-Sunnah i.e a reformist group in Negeri Sembilan, his book regarding taqlid and madhhab entitled Gayung Bersambut Ke-2 As-Sunnah Membela Diri, has been severely criticized by the traditionalists for its rude language, and finally banned by the Pusat Islam who classified it as a deviated teaching.
if it is risky. However, they forget to take the sensitivities of society into account, as a harsh attitude in promulgating their ideas of reform is unacceptable to many people. Moreover, this attitude is also denounced by Islam itself as hinted at in the Qur’ān: “And by the mercy of God you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you.” (3:159). The traditionalists, in defending themselves, have no choice but to counter-attack the reformists and sometimes, worse than that, they also accuse some previous great scholars emulated by the reformists, such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and Muḥammad “Abduh as having deviated from original Islamic teachings.¹²²

In a community where the traditionalists and the reformists are intolerant to each other, arguing, quarrelling, bickering over the matters of *khilāfīyyah* are apparently common, and this frequently leads to fragmentation of their unity. Arguments over the juristic matters usually end in hard feelings and hatred which then split up Islamic brotherhood and even family relationships.¹²³ As a result, in some areas, for example, especially at the village level, both parties avoid praying together congregation but pray in seclusion in their own respective mosques or suraus. For many reformists, praying behind the traditionalists makes them feel dissatisfied, as if their prayers are incomplete, for they are praying behind someone who they believe is committing *bid‘ah* in prayer, by pronouncing the intention of prayer, reciting the *basmalah* audibly etc. The traditionalists also have similar feelings if they pray behind a reformist, but with a different reason, i.e. that they are praying behind someone whose prayer, according to their view, is incompletely performed, because some

¹²²For example, Ibn Taymiyyah is severely accused by K. H. Sirajuddin Abbas as one who was from the deviated groups of Mujassimah and Mushabbihah, and he was not from the group of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah. See K. H. Sirajuddin Abbas, *I’tiqad Aḥlussunnah Wa-l-Jama‘ah* (Kelantan: Pustaka Aman Press, 4th edition, 1978), pp. 262-269. In this book (pp 399-302), he also places Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and Wahhabism in deviated groups. Mustaffa Suhaimi in his *Salah Faham Terhadap Bidaah dan Syirik* (Selangor: Progresive Publishing House Sdn. Bhd, 1994) also shows strong criticism on Ibn Taymiyyah and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and their followers, and suggests that they were ignorant (*jāhili*) scholars (pp. 218-219).

¹²³It is regularly happens to the family sending their children to study Islam in the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia, that when they come back with the reform ideas to their family who are traditionalists, confrontation happens and breaks the family ties. In one case of the researcher’s experience, one challenged his father to debate over certain disputed matters, and in another case, one burnt his late father’s collection of traditional Malay *fiqh* books, because of his hatred of Islamic traditionalism.
"important parts" of it are left out, such as qunūṭ in the Fajr prayer and and chanting dhikr and duʿāʾ audibly altogether after the prayer. Some reformists, if they inadvertently pray behind a traditionalist, would prefer to separate themselves from the imām (mufāraqaḥ), or sometimes, if they keep following the imām dissatisfiedly, would repeat their prayer.¹²⁴

The conflict between the two factions in religious practices also extends to social relationships. Because of intolerance over disputed matters, most traditionalists and reformists, especially in rural society, appear to be in an antagonistic relationship towards each other. Boycotting the opposite party, for example in feasts, has become a common phenomenon in many areas. To most reformists, the traditionalists’ feasts, particularly the feast of the deceased, which they consider as pure bidʿah, or āqīqa and wedding feasts which are mixed up with the elements of bidʿah, such as chanting marḥaban and berzanji, should be boycotted in order to avoid their involvement in bidʿah, and as a sign of their objection to widespread bidʿah in the society. Moreover, some reformists, probably the extreme ones, regard the traditionalists as the heretics (ahl al-bidʿah) who should be treated as who they are, without considering the degree of the bidʿah they practise. For them, heretics should not be befriended or associated with. Their slaughtered meat should not be eaten, and they should not even be greeted. They should be boycotted all the way as a punishment and lesson for them to learn from.¹²⁵ In return, the traditionalists also take similar action, boycotting the reformists as they are considered as a menace to the established norms of life, stirring up the stability of society, and splitting up the unity of the Malay Muslim community.

At a higher level, a party who has power and determination frequently uses its authority to obstruct its adversary’s influence in the society. In this sense, the

¹²⁴Some reformists, sometimes, would daringly take impolite action such as scolding and shouting to the imām after the prayer. In one case of the researcher’s experience at the State Mosque of Perlis in past few years, a reformist follower, who prayed behind a young imām who was identified as a traditionalist, stood up immediately after the prayer amidst hundreds of other maʿmūms shouting angrily to the imām for his “improper” prayer, as he uttered the intention of prayer and recited basmalah audibly. He and many other reformists were seen to have done mufāraqaḥ (retracted himself from following the imām) as the imām started the prayer.

traditionalists, who are dominant in local religious authorities in almost every state in Malaysia have made numerous attempts to eliminate the reform movement. Groups associated to Kaum Muda or identified as having links with the Wahhābis, have been frequently investigated because of their "deviant" teachings. Several reformist preachers have also been banned from teaching, delivering lectures or handling da'wah activities. People are strongly reminded to refrain themselves from the allegedly deviant teachings of the reformists. However, their attempts to annihilate the reform movements have apparently failed as they face strong resistance from these groups and because it is difficult to prove the latter's "deviations."

Both parties realize that their disputes have affected the unity of the Malay Muslim ummah, but each of them puts the blame on the opposite party. Academic discussions over disputed matters, whether appearing in their writings or series of forums, dialogues and debates, frequently reach deadlock as they insist on their respective standpoints and refuse to compromise. For instance, in a closed dialogue between the Mufti of Perlis and the imāms of all mosques in the state which was held in 1995 to discuss the utterance of the basmalah before reciting the Fātiḥah in prayer, the Mufti came to the decision to allow them to recite the basmalah in the prayer either audibly or inaudibly. However, some imāms from the reformist party, perhaps the extreme ones, argued and regarded the Mufti's decision as wrong, since according to their standpoint, the basmalah should be recited inaudibly. For another example, in December 1997, an open forum between scholars from the traditionalists and

126 Groups such as Persatuan Islah of Perlis and Iltiba’ As-Sunnah of Negeri Sembilan, which are very active in promoting their reform ideas have been frequently investigated by the respective State Department of Religious Affairs for the alleged deviations in their teachings. The permits given to organize da’wah programmes have also been retracted numerous times. In addition, various books published by KITF Institut owned by Iltiba’ As-Sunnah of Negeri Sembilan are banned by JAKIM.

127 The states of Johore and Selangor, for instance, have banned some reformists preachers such as Hussein Yee, Abdullah Yasin, Rasul Dahri and Hashim Ghani from holding any teaching activities or giving any lectures in the respective states. They also retracted permit (tauliah) of da’wah from local religious teachers who were believed to involve in the reformists’ group. See for example, report in Berita Harian, 20 November 1998.

128 See Utusan Malaysia, 11 October 1995.

129 See Chapter Four pp. 164-165 for their detailed standpoint and arguments.
reformists of Perlis was held to discuss and reach reconciliation over some disputed topics, but it ended up without any solution, and, as there was no tolerance between the two parties, it has added more confusion, disagreement and chaos among thousands in the audience. Their sincerity of intention to reach a point of understanding had been sunk by their respective egoism, sternness and uncontrolled emotions. Both parties seem to have shown prejudice and a harsh attitude against each other and it seems difficult to reach reconciliation. Lack of tolerance in disputed matters has worsened their conflict.

The matters which are disputed between the traditionalists and the reformists are not part of the basic fundamentals of Islam, but only matters of its branches which mainly revolve around issues of *fiqh*. It should therefore have not been a main issue to cause conflict and disunity. However, as the two parties fail to compromise, the disputed branch matters are seen as though they are cardinal issues that cannot be tolerated. Intolerance of the two parties has thus become a main cause of their conflict which results in division and schism in the Malay Muslim community.

**Impact of Conflict**

Perennial antagonism between the traditionalists and the reformists since the emergence of Islamic reformism in Malaya in the early 20th century has in fact left a tremendous impact on the Malay Muslim community. The conflict over the issues of *'ibādah* which is regarded as a microcosm of general conflict between the two parties has undoubtedly engendered varied implications in the religious life of the Malay Muslim society. On the one hand, one might easily observe substantial negative consequences of the conflict such as schism, division and enmity within the society as elaborated earlier, but on the other hand, one might also view that this conflict in the

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130 This forum was held on 23 December 1997 at the Kompleks Warisan Negeri Perlis, on general title "Forum Al-Sunnah."
long run as generating a positive impact of varying substance on the Malay Muslim community.

For one thing, the disputes between the traditionalists and reformists which are largely expressed as controversies about ritual have transformed, though not, perhaps, to a considerable degree, the Malay Muslims’ traditional perceptions of ʿibāḍah. In the present era of pervasive Islamic resurgence which is contributed to by the reformists as well as the traditionalists, the people with their strong will and awareness are enthusiastic about returning to the original Islam which is mirrored by the recent popular slogan “returning to the Qurʾān and the sunnah of the Prophet.” In returning to the original Islam, they feel that it is extremely important to seek an authentic way of practising ʿibāḍah as exemplified in the sunnah of the Prophet. Thus, it is also necessary to purify their practices of certain ʿibāḍah which are believed to have been adulterated by impurities of customs and beliefs derived from adat, or based merely on the words of traditional ʿulamāʾ, a method that is consistently promulgated by the reformists. In this sense, when the conflict over the issues of ʿibāḍah occurs, most people seem to be more interested in adopting the reformists’ approach which emphasizes the concept of borderless fiqh and applying the method of tarj/h. This tendency might be observed, for instance, through their warm response to the reform-oriented religious programmes and literatures,131 and also through their great enthusiasm to the rapidly growing internet-based Islamic websites dealing with fiqh issues organized by certain reformist groups.132

As a result of this perceptual change, we might observe the changes as well as the decline of certain traditional rituals attributable to the traditionalists. For example, in certain areas, especially in the state of Perlis, the talq/h ceremony after

131In addition to the local literatures, the reform-oriented literatures written by the contemporary Muslim great thinkers such as Ismāʿīl al-Faruqi, Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, and especially Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī which most of their writings are translated in Malay, are always in demand in market. The voluminous Malay version of Al-Qaraḍāwī’s Fatawa Muʿāṣarah for example, has been reprinted by its publisher Pustaka Salam numerous times since its first print in 1994.

132Web pages dealt with in Malay such as Al-Ahkam Online (http://al-ahkam.net/) and Sudut Fiqh (www.jim.org.my/faq) which adopt an eclectic approach and tarj/h in its answers to fiqh problems are very popular among Malay Muslim internet users who are interested in religious materials.
the burial has been totally left, or, if it is still done, its concept has been modified from a typical manner of advising the deceased to answer the Angels' questions in the grave to giving a short reminder about death to those who are present at the burial and praying for the happiness of both the dead and the living. A similar effect is detected with regard to the tahlil ceremony which is usually held with the feast of the deceased (kenduri arwah), where in certain places it has been relinquished and instead, it is replaced by a brief sermon (tadhkirah) regarding death delivered by a pious man before the feast. Several other practices, such as, for example, chanting prayers before the adhān, the reminder to maintain silence during the khutbah of the Friday prayer, chanting the blessing upon the Prophet between the two khutbahs and reciting the Qur'ān on the grave, which were widely practised in the past seem to have been nowadays abandoned on the grounds that they are not quite in harmony with the sunnah of the Prophet. The traditional practice of paying fidyah to make up the deceased's missed prayers is now virtually extinct as it is regarded as having no basis in the primary textual evidence. In holding the feasts of the deceased (kenduri arwah), most Malays do not follow the traditionally specified days any longer, for these days are identified as being elements of customs originating from superstitious beliefs, and instead, they hold it whenever they wish. Furthermore, for most educated Malays, touching one's spouse's skin without desire is no longer considered as nullifying one's ablution, but is regarded as a rukhsah for husband and wife.

In a broader scope, the perceptual change of Ḣibādah has indirectly given a positive impact to the development of religious or fiqh education in Malaysia. Though it is known that the teaching of fiqh based on the texts of the Shāfī'ī madhhab is predominant at school and pondok levels, which thus successfully make the influence of Shāfī'ī-based traditionalism deeply entrenched in Malay society, it now seems to be increasingly neutralized by the reform-oriented fiqh taught at the university level,

133 Though it is not widely practised, this practice can still be traced among the peasant society in some villages of the state of Kedah.

134 For example, the subject of Fiqh al-Ḥibādah taught for undergraduate students of Islamic Studies in various universities in Malaysia, such as in the Academy of Islamic Studies at the University of Malaya and the Faculty of Islamic Studies at the National University of Malaysia, refer mainly to the fiqh books of the four madhhab or to those books comprising the rulings of four madhhab such as Ibn Rushd's
or at reformist-owned private religious schools\textsuperscript{135} as well as at the local religious classes organized by the reformists.\textsuperscript{136} Furthermore, the teaching of comparative fiqh (Fiqh al-Muqārān) at the university level\textsuperscript{137} specifically exposes to the students the rulings of prominent madhhabs, their methodologies in inferring the rulings and methods of tarjih in selecting the strongest ruling from them. This has broken the longstanding monopoly of Shafi‘ism in the teaching of fiqh among Malay Muslim society and has also transformed the traditional outlook of mono-source fiqh to the eclectic style.

This development, in addition to signifying a creation of a new perception of 'ibādah among Malays, is perhaps, an early signal of the decline of Islamic traditionalism. This is advocated by the fact that the shifting of the Malay Muslims’ paradigm of 'ibādah is occurring not only among ordinary Muslims in general but also among the circle of traditionalists themselves. It seems, though not clearly, that the traditionalists to some extent agree with the reformists about the necessity of reform, and therefore it is not uncommon, in addition to ignoring the traditional practices regarded as bid‘ah or superstitious, that the traditionalists in some cases seem to have embarked on some reform ideas previously propounded by the reformists. For example, the present Mufti of Perlis, Mat Jahya Hussin who is known as a great adherent of traditionalism did not give a normal talqīn at the recent funeral service

\textsuperscript{135}Such as in Ma‘had al-Tarbiyyah (MATRI) in Perlis, a secondary religious school run by a progressive reformist group called ABIM Perlis led by a local prominent scholar Dahlan Mohd. Zain. The subject of fiqh taught at the Marhalah Khāṣṣah (Special Level) in this school refers to the text of Sayyid Sābiq’s Fiqh al-Sunnah.

\textsuperscript{136}For example, the teachers of the Persatuan al-İslah Perlis use Ibn Qudāmah’s al-Muqūn, Sayyid Sābiq’s Fiqh al-Sunnah and al-Jazīrī’s al-Fiqh al-Madhdabī al-Ardabah in its fiqh classes. In Kelantan, for further example, Nik Abd. Aziz Nik Mat, a top figure of PAS who is also a Chief Minister of Kelantan, uses Sayyid Sābiq’s Fiqh al-Sunnah as a textbook for his fiqh class in his famous religious lecture every Friday morning at Kota Bharu.

\textsuperscript{137}This subject is taught, for instance, at the Academy of Islamic Studies at University of Malaya. See Buku Panduan Ijazah Tinggi, Akademi Pengajian Islam Universiti Malaya Sesi 2002/03, pp. 53-54.
of the Ruler of Perlis, but instead, he delivered a brief sermon reminding those who were present at the funeral service about death and ended it by praying to God for the bliss of the deceased and the living. In the case of the expansion of zakatable resources, as another instance, the traditionalists in the religious authorities, in espousing the government program to reform the zakâh system, moved a step forward, despite some resistant voices from their counterparts, to introduce zakâh on new resources, such as monthly salary, corporates and new types of agricultural products, an idea that was originally put forward by the reformists. The using of the method of imkân al-ru'yah, i.e. the combination of the astronomical calculation (hisâb) with the sighting (ru'yah), in determining the beginning of the months of Ramaḍān and Syawwāl is another example that some ideas of reform have influenced the traditionalists’ thought.

However, as this new trend develops, it creates anxiety among many other traditionalists as it is viewed as a massive threat to their firmly established practices and norms which are strongly preserved as a distinctive identity of Muslims in the Malay world. Thus, for many traditionalists, the reformist-oriented elements, though they might be to certain extent accepted, should be strictly controlled so that they do not threaten the Malay Muslims’ preserved identities and sacrosanct traditions. In spite of their approval of certain reform efforts over Islamic affairs, especially reforms concerning the Islamic legal administration and judiciary systems, attempts to reform traditional rituals and practices performed in manners associated with the Malays, such as the tahlil ceremony, chanting dhikrs en masse after congregational prayer, marhaban and berzanji ceremonies, kenduri arwah and so on, are strongly denounced and sometimes perceived as tantamount to heresy. For them, inasmuch

\[138\] Reform on these matters, however, are agreed by most traditionalists with scepticism. In their eyes, any attempts to reform the administration of Islamic law in Malaysia should consider the sensitivity of the attachment to the Shâfî madhhab by the Malay Muslims, and therefore, some reform efforts at federal level have been rejected by most of the official ‘ulama’. This is seen, for example, in a case when a bill of the new Administration of Muslim Family law formulated by the Sharâf and Civil Technical Committee was rejected by them, mainly because of the nature of the bill which combines laws from the four madhhabs. This is perceived by the traditionalists as an attempt to diminish the dominion of the Shâfî madhhab in the Malay world. See Rahimin Affandi Abdul Rahim, *Islamic Legal Reform in Malaysia: A Critical Analysis*, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1999), pp. 320-321.

\[139\] See for example, *Berita Harian*, 12 December 1997, p. 10.
as Islam is regarded as a part of an indivisible Malay identity, any Islamic practices and rites are also considered as the most important parts of Malay custom and culture that must be firmly preserved. Furthermore, when Islam is perceived as the foundation of Malay custom, any practices or rites related to Islam, though they are not prescribed in the primary textual evidence but have been established in the society as the people are accustomed to practise them in certain ways, are accepted as Islamic and thus are seriously defended. This attitude is also based on the principle that the local custom (urf) is acknowledged by Islam as one of its additional sources of law, and thus, those accustomed practices are perceived as having a strong basis in Islam. For this reason, the traditionalists perceive the attempt to eliminate these traditional practices and rites on the ground that they are bid'ah, as propagated by the reformists, as an effort to destroy Islamic culture and sacrosanct Malay Muslim tradition and identity.

The traditionalists, on the one hand, generally consider the reformists as a menace to the Malay Muslim community who have only brought negative effects such as division and confusion, to the community. The struggle of the reformists, according to the traditionalists, has no strong foundation, and thus, it only has bad impact on the community. On the other hand, they sincerely admit that the reformists have successfully promulgated Islamic awareness and several positive ideas among the Malay Muslim community. To the traditionalists, Islamic reformism is a great challenge to their longstanding conservatism, and that challenge should be wisely answered in order to preserve their status quo as well as the solidarity of and stability in the community. A similar attitude is detected among the reformists who treat Islamic traditionalism as a major hurdle for them to handle, as the belief in conservatism has is deeply rooted among the Malay Muslim community, but nevertheless, for the sake of the betterment of the community, they believe that reform must inevitably take place. As these two opposing groups react against each other to defend their respective idealism and also rejectionism, it has, in an aspect, resulted in discord and division among the community. However, in another aspect,
the spirit of rivalry between the two parties has generated attitudes conducive to intellectual depth as well as to Islamic resurgence. This can be seen through the endeavours of both groups, who with every possible effort increase the campaigns to proselytize their respective ideas and principles to the masses through various methods such as literature, lectures and debates, or through the setting up of their own educational institutions. The rapid growth of both reform and traditional-oriented literature, religious intellectual activities, academic polemics and educational programmes which receive a warm response from masses of people is seen as an early sign of the process of intellectual depth among Malay Muslims, especially their scholars, which has also contributed to the flourishing of the Islamic phenomenon of resurgence in Malaysia.\(^{141}\)

From another perspective, this conflict has also urged the traditionalists to reshape their attitude towards Islamic reform. Though in the early stages the traditionalists viewed the emergence of the reform movement as a vast problem in the Malay Muslim community, later, to some extent, they have agreed on the necessity of reform and renewal.\(^{142}\) The change of attitude among the traditionalists towards Islamic reform might be traced through their affirmative standpoint with regards to some questions such as *ijtihād*, *talafq* and *mašlaḥah*.

In the case of *ijtihād*, for instance, the traditionalists' attitude of rejecting *ijtihād* and being pro-*taqlid*, has apparently changed so that now they accept *ijtihād* in principle, but, unlike the reformists, they agree with it only in certain senses and to a limited degree. For the traditionalists, *ijtihād* in practice is the interpretation or application of traditional Islamic law, not a reinterpretation that is open to change in law. This is because they believe that Islam has been expressed comprehensively in its classical formulation, developed by the law schools during the early Islamic centuries, and embodied and preserved in the manuals and commentaries on Islamic

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\(^{142}\) Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Pengaruh Madhab Shafi'i*, op.cit., p. iii.
law. The traditional interpretation of Islam, according to them, governed the Muslim community down through the centuries and remains valid for today and for all ages. Therefore, they perceive a process of reformulation that alters or replaces traditional Islamic law with new prescriptions as unnecessary. As Islamic law is a divinely revealed path, it is not the law that must change or modernize, but the community that must conform to God's law. Based on this belief, it is seen that while agreeing on *ijtihād*, the traditionalists tend to restrict its role in preference to, and out of deference to, the established opinions of the masters of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence.\(^{143}\)

Unlike *ijtihād*, which is limitedly approved, the doctrine of *talīf* is now to be widely accepted by the traditionalists. Though this concept was theoretically approved in the past, in practise it was only applied in a few cases, such as *zakāt al-fitr* as mentioned earlier. The concept of *talīf* is now widely applied especially in matters related to laws such as the Muslim Family Law, Shariah Criminal Code and Evidence Law of the Shariah Court. The provisions in these laws are not derived from the rulings of the Shāfī *madhhab* alone, but are also derived from the rulings of the three other prominent *madhhabs*, according to which are thought as more applicable for contemporary and local circumstances.\(^{144}\) The combination of the rulings of the four *madhhabs* in these laws indicates that "multi-sources" *fiqh* is now accepted among the traditionalists. The doctrine of *talīf* is also seen in the practice of the Islamic financial system in Malaysia nowadays, in which the rulings and principles of the four prominent *madhhabs* are utilized. Though it is known that the implementation of *talīf* in these matters might be not fully undertaken by the traditionalists, their silent approval generally signifies that they have been somehow influenced by reform ideas.

The prevailing adoption of *talīf* in contemporary Islamic law in Malaysia is in


fact built on the principle of *mašlaḥah*. It is undeniable that this principle has been a fundamental element in the application of Islamic law in the past, but it was strictly confined within the border of the laws of the Šafīʿī *madhhab*. Through a robust campaign, the reformists have apparently been successfull in promulgating a concept of borderless *fiqh* among the Malay Muslim community, and thus, it is discerned that the application of the principle of *mašlaḥah* in Malaysian Islamic law has now expanded beyond the Šafīʿī laws. An obvious example is the process of issuing *fatwā* by the Mufti, in which he may deliver *fatwā* based on the rulings of any *madhhabs* which are in harmony with public interests.\(^{145}\) For instance, section 39 of the Act of The Administration of Muslim Law of Wilayah Persekutuan 1993 allocates that in issuing any *fatwā* or certifying any opinion, the Mufti should ordinarily refer to the accepted views of the Šafīʿī *madhhab*. If the Mufti should consider that following the accepted views of the Šafīʿī *madhhab* would lead to a situation which is repugnant to the public interest (*mašlaḥah*), he may adopt the accepted rulings of the Ḥanafi, Māliki or Ḥanbali *madhhabs*. Should the Mufti then determine that following the accepted views of the four *madhhabs* would be detrimental to the public interest, he may resolve the question according to his own judgement without being bound by any *madhhab*.\(^{146}\) The same law in other states seems to have a similar provision.\(^{147}\) This provision is applied in some cases, such as in the case of payment of *zakāt al-fiṭr* in form of cash money, which is adopted from the Ḥanafi standpoint. This replaces the Šafīʿī standpoint that *zakāt al-fiṭr* must be given in form of local food, i.e. rice in the context of Malaysia. In this case, the Ḥanafi standpoint is considered as more compatible with contemporary needs and situation.\(^{148}\)


\(^{146}\)See Act 505 The Administration of Muslim Law of Wilayah Persekutuan 1993, 39 (1), (2) (3).

\(^{147}\)See for example, Administration of Muslim Law Enactment of Selangor, No. 3, 1952, 42; Undang-undang Majlis Agama dan Istiadat Melayu dan Mahkamah-mahkamah Qadi Terengganu, No. 1 1953, 43 (1); Peraturan Jawat.ankuasa Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istdatat Melayu Kelantan, No. 14 (1938), 42; Undang-undang Pentadbiran Agama Islam Perlis, No. 3 1963, 7(4).

In order to make the above provision clear and to define how far the law of other madhhabs can be adopted, the Fatwa Committee in every state has drawn up outlines for guidance. For instance, the Fatwa Committee of Wilayah Persekutuan formulates that:

i. All fatwás must be referred to the definite standpoint of the Shāfi‘i madhhab. If the standpoints of other madhhabs are chosen, they must be approved by the Yang Dipertuan Agong.

ii. The Muslim community are not bound to practise the Shāffi madhhab, but are free to practise any other madhhabs they wish, provided that they do not denounce those who practise the Shāffi madhhab.

iii. The teachings of other madhhabs should not be openly taught to the public, but they can be taught in closed academic discussion.

iv. It is legally wrong to teach other than the teachings of Shāffi madhhab to the open public.

v. If a fatwā based on the Shāffi madhhab has been issued, no one is permitted to question it by using the arguments of the other madhhabs.

Though on the one hand this policy signifies the traditionalists’ deep adherence to the Shāffi madhhab, on the other, it has unlocked the shackle of Shāffi-based law and opened a wider space to the Malay Muslim community to choose from the compendia of Islamic law. In this case, the traditionalists’ general acceptance of the doctrine of talfiq can be regarded as an indicator of their acceptance of some aspects of Islamic reformism.

The traditionalists’ new perspective on Islamic reformism does not definitely mean they have given up conservatism, but can be seen as merely a delayed reaction due to their sceptical behaviour in facing change. However, by their adoption of some ideas of Islamic reformism, one could classify the traditionalists into a new category, i.e. the neo-traditionalists, who are, according to some scholars, more progressive in attitude, but have more of a tendency to be involved in social, economic and political

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activities. In general, neo-traditionalism is seen as a transitional position from traditionalism to any other group. It may be, however, that as a position it has its own inherent permanent protagonists. In experiencing change, this group urges a gradual change, seeing the advantage in certain elements of modern technology, for example, but wanting to withstand the rush of the acceptance of it all. For them, in the short term, urgent change may be required, but in the long run, Islam will reign supreme. This attitude is pervasively found among many Malay Muslims nowadays who were before known as the traditionalists. According to some scholars, this type of group is best exemplified by the Al-Arqam group.

Changing character does not occur among the traditionalists alone, but happens on the reformists' side too. It can be traced especially in matters pertaining to their manner of proselytizing reform ideas and antagonizing Islamic traditionalism. Some undiplomatic manners, such as harsh attacks, a confrontative attitude and the use of extreme language in opposing Islamic traditionalism, which were sometimes regarded as common features of the reformists' campaigns in the past, seem to be declining in the present time. They might have realized that such a harsh orientation would only bring negative results which would also ruin their programme of reform. Instead, a courteous, reasonable and compromising attitude seems to be their new characteristic in promoting reform ideas to the masses. Such an approach, as can be widely seen throughout their reform programmes, especially in their literature and lectures, seems to be well accepted by all Malay Muslims including the traditionalists. Most of their recently published books discussing disputed issues such as questions of bid'ah and taqlid of a madhhab, seem to be relatively moderate, fairly analysed and


152 See Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia, Sejarah dan Aliran, op.cit., p. 91.
This new character of the reformists is in fact a common trend of Islamic reformism at the present time, which might be illustrated as "the reformist moderate model which advocates the use of peaceful means to produce desirable change." 

This effort is also seen as an attempt at adopting the moderate approach outlined by the Ikhwan al-Muslimün of Egypt, the reformists' most inspirational group, in managing conflict within the community. The Ikhwan is considered as the most successful Islamic reform group which is acceptable by the mass of Muslims nowadays, and it is regarded as a role model because of its moderate method of da'wah. As regards the method of solving the conflict between Muslims over issues of fiqh, the principles laid down by the Ikhwan in this case are chiefly found in the writings of its founder, Hasan al-Banna, such as in his famous al-Uṣūl al-ISM. For example, in the eighth principle of al-Uṣūl al-ISM, al-Banna formulates that:

"Differences on the branch matters of fiqh should not be a reason to cause division in the religion, and it should not either lead to enmity and hatred. For every mujtahid is a reward. In cases of disagreement, it is permissible to exercise an academic investigation in an atmosphere of love and cooperation for the sake of God with the aim of realising the truth, and it should not lead to fanaticism and obstinacy." 

Another principle inspiring the reformists in this sense is Rashid Riḍâ's formula which was later consistently propagated by al-Banna and has been a popular maxim of the Ikhwan: "we unite on what we agree with, and we excuse each other for what we dispute on." By intensifying these formulas in the reformists' reform activities, it might be seen as a starting point in the effort to reduce conflict between them and

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153Such as recent books published by the pro-reform publishers, such as the ASA of Kelantan, KTF Institute of Negeri Sembilan, Perniagaan Jahabersa of Johore and others. See for example, Hafiz Fidaus Abdullah, Pedoman-pedoman Bermazhab dalam Islam (Johor: Perniagaan Jahabersa, 2000); Basri Ibrahim, Khilafiah, Bid'ah & Maslahah Umum (Kuala Lumpur: Darul Nu'man, 1997); Rasul Dahari, Bid'ah (Johor: Perniagaan Jahabersa, 1999).


the traditionalists.

Considering the above-mentioned realities, we might conclude that the conflict between the traditionalists and reformists, though in one aspect it has brought about disunity among Malay Muslims, has in another aspect resulted in various positive impacts for them. Though history witnesses that the conflict between them has been a bitter experience for the Malay Muslim community, in the long run, it has generated a new paradigm in their religious thought. Reconciliation between the opposing parties in the very near future is likely to be impossible, but recent developments signify that there has been a good start for them to build a basis of understanding, and in the long term, the expected unity might eventually be a reality.

Future Prospects

Islamic Reformism and Traditionalism in Current Islamic Resurgence

The emergence of Islamic reformism has undoubtedly given birth to various changes as well as conflicts within Malay Muslim society. Much as at the beginning it was vehemently challenged by the established traditionalism, in the course of time, the ideas of reform are seen to have increasingly penetrated the thick wall of orthodoxy, and consequently transformed the Malay religious thought from its conservative nature to a new outlook. As asserted by some scholars, the previous reformists did not leave any detailed blueprint for Islamic reform, but it has left a firm foundation for later generation to resume the reform endeavours in a more organized and comprehensive framework. This has been actualized by the birth of an Islamic resurgence from the early seventies onwards, which is dominated by reform-oriented

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groups who intensively propagate Islamic reformism among the Malay masses.

Though both Islamic reformism and traditionalism play important roles in current pervasive Islamic revival, it seems that the former, represented by various da'wah-oriented organizations, such as ABIM, PAS, JIM and other local reform-oriented groups operating at the state level, such as the Persatuan Al-Islah of Perlis, Ittiba' As-Sunnah of Negeri Sembilan and Gerakan Ansar As-Sunnah of Melaka, is more influential among the Malay Muslim community. The prevailing Islamic resurgence in Malaysia has pulled Malay Muslim society to be in the mainstream of resurgence, leaving the so-called world of inertia and traditional hidebound attitudes to adopting what are believed to be the dynamic ideas of reform. In the current era of Islamic resurgence, reform ideas are well accepted by the mass of Malay Muslims, and those who promote ideas of renewal are no longer labelled as heretics, but are revered and respected.159

Just as their reformist predecessors, the current reformists put the priority on the purification of Islam from superstitious beliefs and practices and a total liberation of Malay Muslims from un-Islamic "mental bondage."160 This priority has never changed even if their works seem nowadays, due to their pragmatic attitude, to be more concentrated on reform in contemporary needs in varied realms of life such as in education, politics, law, economics and social justice. The new concerns are in fact part of their prime objective to re-establish Islam in its entirety in the lives of Muslims, or in other words, to re-create an Islamic ethos, an Islamic social order, at the vortex of which is the Islamic human being, guided by the Quran and the Sunnah.161 What distinguishes the previous reformism from that of the present day is mainly the environment in which the two respective phases have operated. As viewed by Chandra Muzaffar, the emphasis in the past was directed towards colonial, political and constitutional dominance and how it affected Muslim identity and the Muslim struggle for independence, whilst present-day reformism is deeply involved in the

whole question of the character and direction of Muslim society. In other words, he says, "present Islamic reformism in Malaysia seems to be more involved in the question of identity, symbol and rituals."  

With regards to Islamic traditionalism as far as the present is concerned, it is worth noting that the vigorous traditional-oriented groups of Jamaah Tabligh and Al-Arqam have respectively played an essential role in the tide of Islamic resurgence as well as in propagating Islamic traditionalism in Malaysia for decades. Though they did not exactly represent the common traditional style of Malaysian Islamic traditionalism, through their emphasis on conservative attitudes towards Islam they had somehow reinforced the elements of traditionalism among the community. However, as concluded by Chandra, neither the Al-Arqam movement nor the Tabligh group, with their traditionalist approach to Islam, have succeeded in convincing the thinking stratum of society that the religion, as practised by them, is a viable alternative to contemporary civilization with all its ills. When the government banned the Al-Arqam group and restricted the activities of Tabligh several years ago, it was seen as if Islamic traditionalism had lost its important actors in this era of resurgent Islam. However, it did not seem to affect Islamic traditionalism in general, although it may have lessened its influence in the society. Notwithstanding the fact, Islamic traditionalism remains well-entrenched in its traditional stronghold of the religious establishment and officialdom, as well as among Sufi groups and at the level of traditional rural society.

In the present Islamic revival, the prevalent religious consciousness among Malay Muslims is perceived to have assisted Islamic reformism in gaining its tremendous momentum, and it has consequently been an overriding force which is

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responsible in shaping the character of the future Malay Muslim community. The impact of Islamic reformism in contemporary Malaysia can be discerned through the rapid development of Islam in its most organized forms, as a result of the strenuous endeavours among the Malay Muslim masses through their da'wah-motivated groups as well as the government itself. It is discernible that through the inculcation of Islamic reformism in the Malay Muslim populace by the da'wah movement, their religious consciousness is getting stronger than ever, and this has been manifested in various ways as elaborated earlier in the Chapter Two. Apart from varied manifestations of this consciousness, which are basically related to the individual and his perception of his responsibilities towards Islam, Islamic reformism has also been a catalyst for a greater consciousness, i.e. a consciousness of the need for an Islamic social order. Countless seminars, forums and academic discourses organized by the reformists have called for the establishment of an Islamic education system, an Islamic economy, an Islamic political order and an Islamic legal framework. In the eyes of the reformists, since Islam is held as a panacea for all the problems of mankind, it must govern the whole system of their life, that is, to be specific, Islam must be interpreted politically to mean an Islamic State. This demand is getting stronger and stronger by the day. The passion behind it, fortified by the enthusiastic support of a growing number of young adherents, according to the observers, is an unmistakable mark of present times.

The government’s reaction to this stream of Islamic reformism is relatively supportive. Since 1981, following the administration of Mahathir Mohamad, the present Prime Minister, some marked changes have taken place for Islam. The most notable effort he has made is to introduce an Islamization policy by inculcating Islamic values in the government machineries. The products of the Islamization policy are the variety of Islamic programmes as mentioned previously in the Chapter Two. A primary motivating factor for such breadth of Islamic programmes under the Mahathir

165 On the subject of the probability of the creation of Islamic State in Malaysia, see Hussin Mutalib, Islam in Malaysia From Revivalism to Islamic State? (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993).
166 Chandra Muzaffar, Islamic Resurgence, op.cit., p. 5.
administration must be the pressures coming from the collective force of the *dā' waḥ* movements, Islamic intellectuals, and the Islamic Party, PAS. Mahathir himself seems quite genuine in wanting to practice universal Islamic values and principles in his governance of the country. The list of institutions and policies initiated by his administration have been among the most impressive if compared to those launched by other Muslim-dominated states in the world.\(^{167}\) However, according to some scholars, the major explanation of Mahathir’s supportive policies in favour of Islam is his attempt to outwit PAS in their legitimacy quest for Malay-Muslim votes.\(^{168}\) Notwithstanding this claim, it is discernible that this increasing emphasis on Islam by the Malaysian ruling elite is the more understandable as, in recent years, there are indications of a closer identification with Islam taking root amongst the general Muslim populace. Hence, whatever the reasons are, the Islamisation process in Malaysia may continue to be a strong force or factor in the politics of the country in the years ahead.

In this era of Islamic revivalism, Islamic reformism has undoubtedly been an important role in characterizing the pattern of Malay politics, and it is expected that such a reality will accelerate in the future. The younger generation will continue to romanticize the ideal of a pristine Islam in spite of the obstacles in the way of Islamic revivalism. Islamic reformists are expected to continue their efforts to agitate the minds of all groups, including the general public, the political parties and the government. In parallel with this development, the forces against Islamic reformism may raise a greater challenge to it. Apart from the non-Muslim Malaysians who may object to the strict Islamization of society, the mass of the Malay populace who still hold fast to Islamic traditionalism is likely to remain opposed to the current reformism. Taking these arguments into consideration, it is predicted that the conflict

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\(^{167}\)Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia*, op.cit., p. 79.

between the two opposing streams will persist in the future.169

Managing the Conflict

To an extent, Islam, as it should be, has been an integrative factor in Malay Muslim society. However, due to people's varying degrees of perceptions over the religion, Islam has also been a divisive factor in the society. The conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists highlighted in this study proves that the collision course insofar as juristic matters are concerned has been a significant cause of division in Malay Muslim society. The previous illustrations and analyses clearly signify that the conflict between the two groups is not a temporary, passing fad or an unimportant development in Malay Muslim society, but has been a major issue which demands the serious concern of the community. In this study, it has been stressed that the conflict between the two groups over issues of ʿibādah unavoidably occurs when the respective parties hold different perceptions over some important issues of the religion, and thereafter react confrontatively against each other. Though the conflict does not in general involve the fundamental principles of Islam, it has been a major cause of division and enmity among Malay Muslim society. Thus, even though the conflict has also conveyed a positive impact on the Malay community as elaborated previously, if it is not wisely managed, it will persist as a chronic tumour which would eventually ruin the community. The dispute over the issues of ʿibādah, which is mainly juristic, should not have been a reason of division of Muslims. Disagreement in jurisprudence is only a reflection of the jurists' analytical thought resulting from their various methods of judgements and interpretations regarding specific issues. In this case, in order to bring about a reconciliation between the two groups, the attitude of the Companions of the Prophet and the great jurists among the Forefathers in managing disagreements is worth being learned and exemplified by both traditionalists and

reformists.170

The Companions and the great jurists had reasons to justify their differences of opinion, but they also demonstrated great tolerance in managing their disagreements. They raised themselves above emotional impulses where issues of dispute were concerned, and they managed to tolerate and admit any deficiency on their part and defer to others. Differences of opinion in subsidiary matters were prudently managed without detriment to the fundamental issues such as Islamic brotherhood and solidarity. Among the Companions, for instance, Ibn ĀAbbās and Zayd b. Thābit were known as great jurists who used to differ in many juristic issues. Nonetheless, they managed to solve their disputes without leaving any trace of rancour in their hearts, and upon Zayd’s death, Ibn ĀAbbās said: "This is the way knowledge passes away. Today, knowledge in abundance has been buried."171 Ĕumar and Ibn Masʿūd were also known to have differed on about a hundred juristic issues,172 but their disagreements did not weaken their mutual respect and love. Ĕumar is reported to have said: "Ibn Masʿūd is a citadel full of knowledge which will benefit the people of Qādisiyah."173 Similarly, Ibn Masʿūd commented after Ĕumar’s death: "Umar was indeed a fortress of Islam. Once people entered this fortress, they never left it, but when he was assassinated, the fortress began to crack."174 It is undeniable that disagreements on certain political issues between the Companions had inevitably resulted in some grave incidents in which they physically fought against each other, such as what occurred at the battles of the Camel and Šiffin, but in such dire circumstances, they never lost sight of each other’s virtues and merits. Thus, Marwān b. al-Ĥakam who was against ĔAli in the battle of the Camel said about him: "I did not

170 For further discussion on the subject of disagreement in Islam and its ethics, see for example, Ṣāha Jābir al-Ĥalwānī, The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam (Illinois: IIIIT, 1987); Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, al-Šāḥwat al-İslâmiyyah Bayna al-Ikhtilâf al-Mashrûʿ wa al-Tafarruq al-Madhmûn, op.cit.


see anyone more generous in victory than 'Ali. In the battle of the Camel, he was nothing but our protector. He ordered one of his men to announce that none of the wounded should be finished off.”175 When 'Ali was asked whether those who fought against him in the battle of Camel were polytheists or hypocrites, he asserted that they were neither polytheists nor hypocrites, and said: ”They are our brothers who committed an injustice against us.”176

In the environment of the second and third generations, juristic differences grew rapidly with the emergence of various schools of law as a result of the different methodologies of jurisprudence which they adopted. However, upholding the exemplary pattern set up by their predecessors, their disagreements were also managed in a proper manner. This is because their differences were not the result of egoism or a desire to create discord, but were the implications of their pursuit of the truth. Hence, it was a common practice among them to endorse the judgements of those who passed sound verdicts irrespective of the schools of law they belonged, and to excuse those who seemed to have made a mistake in their judgements.177 Disagreement over juristic issues never led them to divide, or to criticize and scorn each other. Rather, they had a high degree of esteem for one another, and they firmly united on the principle matters in order to preserve the solidarity of the ummah. It is not a purpose of this study to highlight the jurists’ ethical behaviour, but one who studies this particular issue would find so much biographical and historical literature filled with instances of scholarly interaction conducted in an intellectually exacting but highly refined, and gracious manner according to the best tradition of Islam. However, for the sake of clarity, it is worth citing a brief example from which one can observe the sort of ethical behaviour which shaped the life of the Forefather generation and their commitment to the ethics of disagreement.

It is known that the jurists differed with each other concerning several issues

in prayer: some recited the *basmalah* at the beginning of *sūrat al-Fātīḥah* but others did not; some uttered it audibly while others said it silently; some recited the *qunūt* supplication in the Fajr prayer but others did not; some renewed their ablution after nose-bleeding, vomiting, cupping and touching women while others did not, and so forth. However, these differences never prevented them from performing the prayer behind each other. Abū Ḥanīfah and his followers, as well as al-Shāffī, who hold that reciting the *basmalah* is obligatory, were reported to have performed prayers behind the scholars of Madīnah who were of the Mālikī school even though they did not recite the *basmalah*.178 Al-Shāfī was also reported to have performed Fajr prayer behind the followers of Abū Ḥanīfah near his grave in Iraq without making the *qunūt* supplication, although he holds that the *qunūt* supplication is an important part of the Fajr prayer. When he was asked about that, he asserted: "How can I differ from him when I am in his presence?"179 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal holds that nose-bleeding and cupping nullify ablution. Nonetheless, when he was asked if people could perform prayer behind an *imām* who did not renew his ablution after bleeding, he replied: "How I could not pray behind Mālik and Saʿīd b. al-Musayyib?"180

These simple examples are not meant to prove the inconsistency of the jurists’ standpoints, but to illustrate the high reverence for their fellows and the great tolerance between them in managing disagreements. The spirit of tolerance demonstrated by the great jurists, however, generally seems to be less learned and appreciated by the conflicting groups of the traditionalists and reformists in Malaysia. It might be true to say that the responsibility for this failure lies with unthinking followers and "recalcitrant" individuals who become steeped in bigotry and fanaticism. This type of people have apparently failed to perceive the spirit of scholarly interaction which accounted for the differences among jurists, and have a lack of insight into the norms of proper ethics which emanate from sincere intentions, a genuine search for truth, and a desire to ascertain the purpose of the Shariʿah.

178 ibid., p. 91.
179 ibid., p. 92.
180 ibid., p. 93.
Regardless of its positive impact, the effect of discord among Malay Muslim traditionalists and reformists has in fact been a great obstacle to the development of the community.

As emphasized before, differences of opinion in intellectual and juristic issues are of the natural phenomena on account of the disparities in understanding, approaches and analytic capacity with which people are created. Disagreement in this sense is healthy since it has been a catalyst for the development of human life. It is this type of disagreement which is illustrated by the Prophet Muḥammad as a sign God’s mercy in his saying: "The disagreement of my ummah is mercy." Nonetheless, difference of opinion is no longer a mercy when it steers to schism, bickering and enmity, and it will only cause disaster to the ummah as hinted at in the Qur’an 6:46: "And obey God and his Messenger, and do not dispute lest you fail and your power depart." It seems that it is in this latter type of disagreement that the reformists and traditionalists are involved, and it has caused the endless antagonism between the two groups. To eradicate the conflict might be a most difficult task, but it is not something impossible. Differences of opinion within Muslim society are always prevalent, but the conflict among them, if unlikely to be terminated, should be reduced to a minimum and should be well managed within the proper ethics and behaviour.

In that sense, it seems that in the society where the conflict prevails, the ethics of disagreement, or what is called *fiqh al-ikhtilāf* (the *fiqh* of disagreement) by some current prominent scholars such as al-Qardāwī, is indispensable to be learned by Muslims especially those who are involved in disputes over religious matters, so that the solidarity of the community can be preserved. For example, in his *al-Sahwat al-Islāmiyyah bayna al-Ikhtilāf al-Mashrūṭ wa al-Tafarruq al-Madmūn*, al-Qaraḍāwī

181 Narrated by al-Suyūṭī in his *al-Jāmī ʾal-Ṣaḥīh*. Though this hadith is said to be unauthentic, its meaning is regarded by many scholars as authentic as it is supported by other textual evidence. For further discussion concerning this hadith, see al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Sahwat al-Islāmiyyah*, op.cit., pp. 47-53.

182 The word *fiqh* used by al-Qaraḍāwī in this context does not refer to its meaning as a technical term, i.e jurisprudence, but it is rather used in its lexical meaning, namely understanding of specific matters. In that sense, al-Qaraḍāwī has introduced several other new *fiqhs*, such as *fiqh al-muwāzna*, *fiqh al-aqwāwiyāt*, *fiqh al-taḥrāk*, and *fiqh al-dawl*, mainly in the context of Islamic reawakening and the right approaches to it.
outlines some basic principles of the ethics of managing disagreements within Muslim society concerning religious issues and including juristic matters. He maintains that Muslims should be firstly sincere to God, committed to the truth, and free themselves from desires, as he believes that most conflicts within the Muslim community nowadays, though sometimes appearing in an academic outlook, are rather motivated from people’s own desires and vested interests. He further asserts that Muslims also need to steer clear from fanaticism to particular groups, individuals or madhhab, since such a fanaticism has been a great impetus to the conflict. In addition to that, the bad attitudes arising from this conflict which then generate schism within the society, such as suspicion, attacking, insulting, slandering, labelling and defaming each other, must be seriously avoided by Muslims. To create a healthy atmosphere of disagreement, Muslims are to restrain themselves from disputation, quarrelling and bickering which would result in rancour and hostility to each other. Instead, they should have discussions over the debatable issues in academic surroundings, in which they can accommodate or compromise their respective understandings to work out the issues. Finally, he repeats the Ikhwan’s principle in managing conflict among Muslims, i.e. “To co-operate where there is agreement, and to excuse each other where there is disagreement.” By emphasizing this formula, he maintains that disagreements amongst Muslims should not be an obstacle to unity, as they mainly involve the branches of Islam, and there are a lot more spaces in Islam to unite on, especially on its fundamental aspects which are also more significant.

The principles laid down by al-Qaraḍāwī might seem too ideal to be a reality, but they are in fact practicable. Given that al-Qaraḍāwī’s thought is acceptable by the mass of Malay Muslims, including both reformists and traditionalists, it is hoped that they can move together to commence the steps towards implementing these principles. By the frequent visits of great contemporary Muslim scholars to Malaysia, such as the late Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, Yusūf al-Qaraḍāwī, Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭi, the present Shaykh al-Azhar, Muḥammad Sayyid Ṭanṭawi, and many other scholars who

184 Ibid., pp. 154-157.
always accentuate the significance of Muslim solidarity and how to deal with the disagreements in the community, it is anticipated that the conflict between the opposing groups can be well managed. Though the conflict over the aspects of ḥabah amongst Muslims in Malaysia at present seems to be not as bad as their conflict in the political arena, it nevertheless contributes to the division of Malay Muslim society, and thus, it demands the serious endeavours of all parties to find out the best solution to the problem.
Islamic reform or *īsラh* has been an important tradition in the history of the Muslim community. This tradition emphasizes the need for the revitalization of faith and practice in rectifying the social and moral decline of the community, by returning to the pristine Islam. Throughout the history of the Muslim community, Islamic reform, which is deeply rooted in the basic soil of Islam, has emerged in various forms depending on the evolution of Islamic thought and the changing circumstances of the community. The emergence of Islamic reform within the Islamic community has been described in modern Islamic literature by a variety of terms, such as Islamic reformism, Islamic modernism, the Salafiyyah, Islamic fundamentalism and others. Such terms have been used to denote different orientations of Islamic reform which have taken place since the early days of Islam until now.

In any study of Islamic reform, discussion of its antithesis, i.e. Islamic traditionalism, is significant as the notion of Islamic reform results in part from a discontent stemming from the nature of Islamic traditionalism itself. Islamic traditionalism or conservatism is a tendency to cling to the traditional Islamic precepts, hold on to the old way of life and has a sceptical attitude towards Western influences. It maintains an allegiance to past methods and does not deal with the threat and attraction of the West. The traditionalists hold to the full authority of the past and resist changes that might affect the traditions of the past. Islamic traditionalism is closely associated with the *taqlid* attitude which is blamed by the reformists as having been a cause of the decline of Muslim community. It is the desire to rectify this problem which mainly characterizes Islamic reform.

Islamic reformism is the most common term used to indicate the idea and movement of Islamic reform that has emerged throughout the history of the Islamic community. It is particularly used in referring to the pre-modern Islamic reform movements which emerged in the Muslim world before the 20th century. This includes the reform efforts pioneered by ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz in the 8th century up to the
Wahhabi and Sanusi reform movements in the 18th and 19th centuries. Islamic modernism refers to the modern Islamic reform movements that swept the Islamic world in the late 19th century and the first half of 20th century, which were led by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashid ʿRiḍā. The difference between pre-modern Islamic revivalism and Islamic modernism is that the former was primarily a response to an internal socio-moral decline of the community, whilst the latter was a response to both the internal weaknesses and the external political and religio-cultural threat of Western imperialism. Both however share common features and relate to each other. Islamic modernism is observed as a continuation of pre-modern reformism. While pressing the internal reform by practising ʾijtihād, Islamic modernism tends to reformulate Islamic values and principles to modern thought, and to integrate modern thought and institutions into Islam.

In the 20th century, the spirit of Islamic reform continued to characterize the history of Islamic community. It appeared in the forms of Islamic neorevivalism or Islamic fundamentalism as represented by Ḥasan al-Bannāʾs Ikhwān Muslimūn and Abūl Aʿlā Mawdūdi’s Jamaʿat-i-Islami. They combined the worldview of pre-modern revivalism with the theory of modernism. For them, Islam is all-encompassing, but the emphasis is more on the legitimacy of the past solutions to modern problems. They acknowledged the internal weaknesses of the community and were critical of the West, but ready to adopt modern technology and accept change in a controlled fashion. Their influence was strong and spread in most Muslim countries, and their organizations have served as an example for others throughout much of the Muslim world.

Neomodernism is another type of Islamic reform that prevails in the current Islamic resurgence. Neomodernism distinguishes sharply between the principles and values of Islam’s unchangeable revelation and the historically and socially conditioned institutions and practices that can be changed to meet contemporary needs. The neomodernists’ rhetoric is not as critical of the West, and they are open to a selective process of assimilation. Though they have learned from the West, they remain Islamically oriented. They are committed to an Islamic modernization of society and
emphasize the concept of Islamization. In the contemporary Islamic world, it is Islamic neorevivalism or fundamentalism and Islamic neomodernism which dominate current Islamic reform. Though their approaches and methods might be different, they share the same principles, objectives and characteristics.

In changing circumstances and with different emphases Islamic reform has always involved a call for a return to the basic principles of Islam as presented in the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. In addressing the decline and socio-moral corruption of the Muslim community, Islamic reform believes that the cause of this decline is a departure from the true path of Islam, and the cure is a return to Islam in its original form as exemplified in the life of the Prophet, the Companions and the salaf al-sālih. It strongly emphasizes the need for ijtihād and denounces the taqlid of past traditional doctrinal authorities. It promotes the practice of ittibāʾ and condemns the ibtidāʾ. It believes that the socio-moral revival requires political action as epitomized by jihād. In encountering modernity, Islamic reformism maintains the necessity of reviving the community by the reformulation of the Islamic heritage in the light of the contemporary world. It attempts to show the compatibility of Islam in meeting contemporary needs and accepts change to a limited degree. The revival of the Muslim community and its social transformation and modernization, it maintains, must be rooted in Islamic principles and values.

In Malaysia, the advent of Islamic reform in the early 20th century can be seen in the birth of the reformists’ monthly periodical Al-Imam in 1906. The emergence of Islamic reform in Malaysia stemmed from various factors. This included discontent with the legacy of Islamic traditionalism, which from the reformists’ viewpoint had failed in redressing the decline of the Malay Muslim community. In the eyes of the reformists, Islamic traditionalism, which was mainly characterized by Sufism, had resulted in a limited role for Islam in traditional Malay society as it failed to get rid of the superstitious and un-Islamic elements of Malay beliefs and thought. The nature of Islamic traditionalism, which emphasized a strict and unquestioning allegiance to the legacy of the past in its doctrinal teachings was blamed as having contributed to the degeneration of the Malay Muslim ummah. The religious establishment who allied
with the secular Malay authority, had also failed, according to the reformists, to bring about the betterment and improvement of Malay society religiously, socially and politically. Colonialism was also blamed by them as a major culprit that had caused the stagnation of the Malay community, especially in economic and educational aspects.

Islamic reform in Malaya originated from the rise of Islamic reformism in the Middle East. The Malays’ contact with the Middle East reformists during their academic sojourn and pilgrimage was the starting point of the spread of Islamic reformism in Malaysia. In the early stages, Islamic reformism in Malaya was propagated in the Malay masses through Al-Imam periodical. Serving as the reformists’ official medium, the contents of Al-Imam were filled with the ideologies of reform and renewal. When the publication of Al-Imam was terminated, the ideas of reform continued to be disseminated by the reformists through other periodicals such as Neracha, Al-Ikhwan and Saudara. The establishment of madrasah institutions by the reformists also assisted the spread of Islamic reformism, though most of the madrasahs were later closed due to a shortage of funds.

The emergence of Islamic reformism in Malaysia resulted in a sharp conflict with its adversary, Islamic traditionalism. The conflict between the exponents of traditionalism, i.e the traditionalists, and the advocates of reformism, the reformists, which were better known as the Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda conflict, was the main characteristic of Malayan Islam until the 1930’s. The conflict was mainly expressed in doctrinal and ritual controversies of varying substance. The root of the conflict revolved mainly around the authority and the use of reason. The reformists emphasized the urgent need for *ijtihād*, whilst the traditionalists upheld *taqlīd*. The conflict between the two groups was not only through the columns of newspapers and journals, but also prevailed at the village level, which then divided the village into two rival factions. The criticism, denouncement, and condemnation of each other led to the serious division of the Malay Muslim community, and had always went beyond the ethics of disagreement laid down by the *sharīah*.
The growth of Islamic reformism in Malaysia began to stagnate after the 1930's as it was checked by various factors. Islamic reformism was seen as having failed to mobilize public support from the Malay community, and thus it failed in its struggle against the Islamic traditionalism which had dominated the community for centuries. Though Islamic reformism declined at the time, it left some positive impact on the history of the Malay Muslim community. It resulted in the emergence of a modern religious elite who actively attempted to rectify the backwardness of the Malay Muslim community. It was also an important force in awakening Malay political consciousness. It had successfully germinated the seeds of nationalism among the Malays through the idea of pan-Islam, though Malay nationalism itself eventually held back the growth of Islamic reformism in Malaya. The spirit of Islamic reformism, nonetheless, remained in the bodies and minds of certain figures, and flowed occasionally in the Malays' political struggles.

In the era after independence, Islamic reformism re-emerged in a scattered fashion in the Malay peninsula states, but conveyed by separate local groups. In the early 1970's Islamic reformism appeared in the shape of the *dakwah* movement, the movement that engendered the spread of Islamic resurgence in Malaysia. In general, Islamic resurgence in Malaysia was a cultural response to the rapid social and economic change which characterizes Malaysia's contemporary development, in which the political dimension has become crucial to Malay Muslims. The *dakwah* movement, put into motion by groups such as ABIM, PAS and JIM, were mainly influenced by the reform thought and ideas spread by the Ikhwān Muslimūn and the Jamaʿat-i-Islami. At this time, the Islamic reformism conveyed by the *dakwah* movement successfully mobilized support from the Malay Muslim masses. It has greatly contributed to a heightening of Islamic consciousness among Malays and has been a mainstream of religious thought within the community.

The strong demand from the *dakwah* movement for the establishment of more Islamic institutions in the country and the greater Islamic identity of the Malay community has created pressure on the Malaysian government to adopt policies and strategies which are supportive of Islam. Under its Islamization policy, the government
has implemented various Islamic programmes, from the inculcation of an Islamic values in the government administration to the establishment of Islamic banking and financial system. Though the government has provided no official blueprint for its Islamization policy, it seems to be committed to the policy. Despite frequent criticisms, the government has proved that its Islamization policy has brought about a positive benefit to the Malay Muslim ummah. Furthermore, the government itself is seen as having contributed much to the development of Islamic resurgence as well as to the growth of Islamic reformism in Malaysia.

'Ibādah, the act or rites of worshipping God, has been one of the subjects of conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists. Though in the Islamic literature 'ibādah is defined by scholars in various ways, in general it denotes obedience and ultimate submission to God. In this study the term 'ibādah has been used to mean the ordinances of divine worship, i.e. the specific prescribed rites by which mankind expresses his creatureliness, submissiveness and obedience to God, such as prayer (ṣalāh), almsgiving (zakāh), fasting (ṣawm) and pilgrimage (ḥajj). 'Ibādah from Islamic perspective is regarded as the most important duty of man towards God, and it is in fact a sole purpose of the creation of mankind. This duty is frequently mentioned in the Qurʾān and constitutes the fundamental principle of the teachings of Islam.

Throughout the twenty-three years of his prophethood, the Prophet Muḥammad, inspired by God, established a specific practical system of 'ibādah which constitutes an integral part of of the basic Islamic system as found in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. The establishment of a practical system of 'ibādah by the Prophet Muḥammad had some of its origins in the rites of worship that prevailed in the period of Jāhiliyyah. These rites were, in fact, some of the remnants of the Abrahamic legacies that had been corrupted over the course of time. Thus, some forms of 'ibādah prevailing in the era of Jāhiliyyah such as fasting, pilgrimage, charity and sacrifice were preserved and revitalized by Islam with some modifications and corrections. At the same time, Islam had rejected and eradicated various erroneous forms of worship in the Jāhiliyyah period, especially the prevalent idolatrous worship, and taught the
proper ways of worshipping God.

As the main purpose of the creation of human beings, ʿibādah has its own system and method established in Islam as the right approach of man to God. There are four basic obligatory ʿibādah which constitute the pillars of Islam, namely prayer (ṣalāh), almsgiving (zakāh), fasting (ṣawm) in the month of Ramaḍān and pilgrimage (ḥajj). Islam has also prescribed the supererogatory ʿibādah of varying substances which include various forms of prayer, fasting, charity, supplication and remembrance. There are specific rules, pre-requisites, principles and manners of practice for each of these obligatory and supererogatory ʿibādah which has been laid down in Islamic jurisprudence. It is these particular areas that have been a significant part of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in Malaysia.

The conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in matters of ʿibādah starts right from the first pillar of Islam, i.e. the profession of faith (shahādah). The profession of faith is not really an act of ʿibādah, but it is a pre-requisite of all acts of ʿibādah in Islam. The conflict between the two parties in the profession of faith revolves around their approaches in appreciating the two phrases of the profession. The traditionalists emphasize on the doctrine of the Twenty Attributes of God and the Three Qualities of the Messenger as taught by al-Sanūsī in his Umm al-Barāḥīn. While criticizing the traditionalists’ method in appreciating the shahadah as leading to confusion, the reformists lay emphasis on the teaching of the Oneness of God (tawḥīd) as appears in the writings of the salafiyyah.

The conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in ʿibādah is much seen in the prayer and matters relating to it. In the matter of ṭuṭūr (ablution), their disputes occur mainly on the question of its nullity by touching the skin of a person of the opposite sex, the question of touching the Qurʾān without being in ṭuṭūr, and some invocations recited while doing ṭuṭūr. In the matter of adḥān, the dispute is on the question whether the chanting of certain supplications before calling the adḥān is permissible or not. In performing the prayer, the disagreement between the two parties revolves mainly on the issues of the utterance of the intention of prayer,
pronouncing the *basmalah* before reciting the *sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, recitation of *qunūt* supplication in the Fajr prayer. The issue of reciting certain *dhikrs* and *duʿāʾs* after the prayer finishes is also a subject of disagreement between them, in which the traditionalists prefer to do it by chanting them loudly together, whilst the reformists prefer otherwise, i.e. inaudibly and individually. In the Friday prayer, they are in dispute on matters regarding calling the *adhān* twice, performing the *sunnah qabliyyah* prayer after the first *adhān*, reciting the *tāriqiyah* by the *muadhdhin*, and chanting the blessing upon the Prophet between two *khutbahs*. The traditionalists, in each case, base their viewpoint on the judgement determined by the jurists of the Shāfiʿī *madhab*, whereas the reformists emphasize a strict adherence to the rules which are indicated by the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Companions and the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*.

In the matters regarding fasting during Ṭaḥḏhān, the conflict occurs on the issue of using *ruʿyah* and *ḥisāb* methods in confirming the beginning of Ṭaḥḏhān. In this case, the traditionalists hold to using *ruʿyah* as a fixed rule and disapprove of using astronomical calculation in determining the beginning of Ṭaḥḏhān. The reformists, however, maintain that if *ruʿyah* fails, astronomical calculations can be used to determine it. Though both insist on their own standpoints and arguments, the traditionalists in recent developments have tended to adopt the reformists’ stance, since astronomical calculation is generally acceptable for its accuracy, and is therefore widely used in determining prayer times and in other matters. The *tarāwīḥ* prayer has also been a subject of dispute between them. The dispute occurs when the traditionalists specify certain verses to be recited in the prayer, whilst the reformists denounce such a designation as *bidʿah*. The chanting of certain *dhikrs* and blessings upon the Prophet Muḥammad in between the *tarāwīḥ* prayers which has been an accustomed practice of the traditionalists is also denounced by the reformists as it was neither practiced at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Companions and the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, nor it was acknowledged by any *imāms* of the four *madhhabs*.

Concerning *zakāh*, the major dispute between the traditionalists and the reformists has been on its resources, which revolves around the question of whether
the zakāh resources should be expanded or not. The traditionalists' standpoint is that the zakāh resources should be limited to the six types of property which are specified in the Shāfi‘i madhhab, namely, farm animals; crops, i.e. grains and fruits that can be stroed as food; cash; buried treasure; gold and silver; and business commodities. The reformists view that the zakāh resources should not be restricted to those specific traditional resources, but should be expanded to include other kinds of wealth, taking into account contemporary developments and changes. This would include contemporary resources of wealth such as various plantation products, fisheries, a variety of industries, shares, wages, salaries or income of professional groups. Their standpoint, which mainly resembles the viewpoints of the Ḥanafi madhhab, is based on several Sharī‘ah principles, including the principles of maṣlaḥah and ʿadālah. Some of the reformist standpoints regarding this issue seem to be acceptable, as some states have introduced the imposition of zakāh on the monthly salary and professional income on Muslims.

In matters to do with performing the pilgrimage, the traditionalists and the reformists are in conflict with regard to the issues of making the intention for ḥajj on the appointed location (miqāt) and the tawāf al-ifāḍah for the qārin. In the first issue, the traditionalists perceive that making the intention can be done at Dhū al-Ḥulayfah, an appointed location for those who come from Madinah, as they come to Madinah first before going to Makkah. The reformists denounce this practice saying that making the intention must be done at Qam al-Manāzil, an appointed location for those who come from the east. For them, those who go to Madinah first and make the intention for ḥajj at Dhū al-Ḥulayfah are liable for dam. In the second issue, some reformists hold that it is sufficient for the qārin to perform only one obligatory tawāf which is done upon their arrival in Makkah, whilst the traditionalists maintain that it should be done after the wuqūf, i.e. on the day of sacrifice (10th of Dhu al-Ḥijjah). These issues were raised when a group of reformists who travelled for ḥajj in 1987 performed the tawāf upon their arrival in Makkah and did not perform the tawāf al-ifāḍah on the day of sacrifice. This practice was severely condemned by the traditionalists, and a fatwā was issued saying that the those pilgrims had not
completed their hajj unless they performed the ṭawāf al-ifādah again after the wuqūf, and if they did not perform before they died, their hajj would be void. The reformists challenged the fatwā and propounded various textual proofs and jurists’ views supporting their standpoint, but failed to convinced the traditionalists, and thus the fatwā has not been retracted.

The conflict between the the traditionalists and the reformists also arises over some questions relating to the deceased, particularly regarding the issues of performing the talqih after the burial, and the question of whether contributing the reward to the deceased in various way such as tahlīl ceremony and kenduri arwah will benefit him or not. On most of these questions, the traditionalists’ standpoint, though based on several arguments, seems to be in contrast to the definite standpoint of the Shāfi’ī madhhab, to which they belong. Compared to the traditionalists’ viewpoint, the reformists stance, which denounces the traditionalists’ practice of talqih, tahlīl, kenduri arwah and contributing to the reward of the deceased, seems to be in favour of the standpoint of the Shāfi’ī madhhab, although they do not belong to it. In that case, the traditionalists’ attitude, in the eye of the reformists, is questionable as they claim that they are loyal adherents of al-Shāfi’ī but they neglect his clear standpoint in these issues, and instead, hold to the very weak opinion in the madhhab.

Though the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists over the matters of ʿibādah seems, on the one hand, to resemble that of the typical juristic differences, on the other, it is a result of disputation concerning some principles which form the ideology of Islamic reformism. In analysing the conflict, several reasons have been identified as the major cause of the conflict. One of the major reasons for the conflict is their different judgements concerning the question of bidʿah. It is known that Islamic reformism in its calls for a return to the pristine Islam has denounced bidʿah as the main cause of the community’s deviation from the straight path. According to the reformists’ view and arguments, something innovated in the religion after it had been completely taught by the Prophet is regarded as blameworthy bidʿah. This refers to the fundamentals of the religion which have been
fixed in detail (thawābit), namely matters regarding faith (‘aqidah) and ritual form of ‘ibādah. Newly innovated things that concern mundane affairs, i.e. non-fundamental aspects of the religion such as matters of mu‘āmalāt and ‘aḍāt, are not considered bid‘ah as they are changeable matters (mutaghayyirāt) that depend greatly on changes of public interest (maṣlaḥah). To them, all bid‘ahs are erroneous (galālah) and have a bad connotation in the religion. For them, most of the tarditionalists’ practice on the disputed issues involves bid‘ah, i.e. something which deviates from the true practice of Islam taught by the Prophet Muhammad. The traditionalists however perceive that all bid‘ah is not necessarily bad, and there is good bid‘ah which they term bid‘ah ḥasanah. For them, erroneous bid‘ah is something that contradicts the principles of religion. The traditionalists maintain that their practices which have been accused by the reformists as bid‘ah, as a matter of fact, fall into the category of bid‘ah ḥasanah. Some of the traditionalists’ idea of bid‘ah ḥasanah also overlaps with the reformists’ idea of maṣlaḥah. As both parties insist on their own perceptions, the conflict remains unresolved.

The issue regarding the concept of taqlīd of a madhhab has also been an important cause of the conflict. The taqlīd phenomenon is rooted deeply in Malay society since it was strongly preserved by the traditionalists through the pondok educational system, which, especially in the teaching of fiqh, emphasized on strict imitation and exclusive adherence to the Shāfi‘ī madhhab. The traditionalists perceive taqlīd as permissible, even obligatory for those who are incapable of practising ijtihād. For them, textual evidence denotes that less well-informed Muslims should have recourse to qualified experts, i.e. to practise taqlīd. Given the depth of scholarship that is needed to understand the revealed texts accurately, and the extreme warnings given against distorting the revelation, it is obvious to the traditionalists that ordinary Muslims are duty bound to follow expert opinion rather than rely on their own limited reasoning and knowledge. On the contrary, the reformists strongly denounce taqlīd as, for them, it is a passive way of practising the religion, and likely to be a cause of error which leads to fanaticism and division within the Muslim ummah. In their eyes, taqlīd would confine Muslims to relying on the
classical and medieval interpretations of Islam which are not applicable to the modern problems of Muslims. Such interpretations themselves are susceptible to error because of human limitations or because new evidence might arise. They instead encourage the exercise of *ijtihād* in order to produce fresh interpretations of Islam to demonstrate its relevancy and validity in modern Muslim life. Those who are not capable of exercising *ijtihād* should to practise *ittībā*. *Ittibā* is considered by them as a positive way in following of the *madhhab* and an attempt to reach authenticity, while *taqlīd* is merely a blind imitation, which will finally lead to perpetrating the bidʿah, as seen in various tradtionalists’ religious practices.

The traditionalists’ hold to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* solely, and their attitude of being reluctant to adapt the laws of other *madhhabs* has also resulted in the conflict. Though some traditionalists approve the practice of *tafaqqū*, the great majority of them reject it and strongly defend their loyalty solely to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. This attitude is not surprising as they live in a milieu where the teachings of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* are deeply entrenched whilst the teachings of other *madhhabs* are extremely alien. The traditionalists believe that holding to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* is a sacrosanct tradition which preserves the unity and stability of the Malay Muslim community, whereas adopting the teachings of other *madhhabs* will lead to confusion and affect the solidarity of the community. Contrary to the traditionalists’ belief, the reformists perceive that it is binding oneself to a specific *madhhab* that leads to disunity of the community as it causes fanaticism among its followers. History has witnessed, according to the reformists, a chronic problem of fanaticism of *madhhab* among the Muslim community for a long time, which has finally resulted in disputes and rampant discord among their followers. Since they believe that the truth exists in all the *madhhabs*, the reformists do not confine themselves to any specific *madhhab*. They propagate the idea of borderless *fiqh*, an eclectic approach that resembles *tafaqqū*, i.e. by analyzing the views of all the *madhhabs* on specific questions, and choosing the best ones through the method of *tartijī*.

In a broader perspective, the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in matters of *ʿibādah* can also be classified into two main categories: The
first category is the conflicts that occur as a result of juristic or madhhab differences; while the second category is the conflicts that resulted from local custom differences. From twenty examples of disputed matters propounded in the Chapter 4, 13 of them fall in the first category while 7 of them are in the second category. A brief statistical information on this categorization is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Disputed</th>
<th>Juristic/ Madhhab Difference</th>
<th>Local Custom Difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shahādah</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nullity of wuḍū’</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recitation of certain prayers before adhān</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utterance of intention</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pronouncing basmalah before sūrat al-Fātiḥah</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recitation of qunūt in the Fajr prayer</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chanting dhikrs and duʿā’ after the prayer</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing the adhān twice on Friday prayer</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two rak‘ah of sunnah qaibliyyah on Friday prayer</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expansion of zakāh resources</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakāh of agricultural produce</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakāh of monthly salary</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using ru’yah and ḥisāb in confirming the beginning of Ramaḍān</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recitation of certain sūrahs in tarāwīḥ prayers</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanting dhikrs and ṣalawāt between tarāwīḥ prayers</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing of mīqāt makānī</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṭawāf al-ifāḍah for the Qārīn</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talqīḥ after burial</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making up the deceased’s missed obligatory actions</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahlīl ceremony and kenduri arwah</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is seen from above statistics that the disputes between the traditionalists and the reformists over the matters of *'ibadah* are mainly juristic. When disputes are of the juristic ones, the reformists always tend to choose the strongest standpoint among the *madhhab* by using the method of *tarjih*. However, sometimes, a small group of them adopt a weak viewpoint among the *madhhab* such as in the issue of *tawāf al-ifādah* for the *qārin*. This seems to be unfamiliar attitude of the reformists, but they considered it as acceptable as long as it has a basis in the primary textual evidence.

The disputes between the traditionalists and the reformists, though mainly concerning juristic matters which are part of the branches of the religion, have frequently exceeded the limits as they show a non-compromising attitude against each other. Both parties seem to have a serious lack of tolerance in experiencing opposing standpoints to each other. The antagonism between them has gone so far as to label their opponents as heretics, misguided and even disbelievers. Both parties might be aware that they are only disputing over non-fundamental issues of the religion, but astonishingly, they tend to show their enmity towards each other which thus splits up Islamic brotherhood among them. This has resulted in serious division of the Malay Muslim community. Though efforts of reconciliation have been made, they have frequently ended without any solution. As both parties seem to have a thick prejudice and harsh attitude against each other, the conflict becomes worse and leaves the Malay community in schism.

In spite of its direct negative effects, the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists on issues of *'ibadah* has engendered some positive impact for the Malay Muslim community. In the long run, the conflict has gradually transformed the traditional perception of *'ibadah* among the Malay Muslim community. As a result, some practices of *'ibadah* which used to be practised in their traditional ways, have been purified and practised in their original form as taught by the Prophet. The perceptual change has also developed the teaching of *fiqh* in the Malaysian education system. The teaching of *fiqh* in Malaysia, especially at the higher learning level, is no
longer based on the Shāfi‘ī madhhab solely as it was before, but now adopts the reformist’ concept of borderless *fiqh*, i.e. by referring to all leading madhhabs and choosing the best ones. This has broken the domination of Shāffism in the Malaysian teaching of *fiqh* and transformed the traditional outlook of the Shāffī-based *fiqh* to an eclectic *fiqh*.

The change has also been an indicator of the beginning of the decline of Islamic traditionalism. The traditionalists are seen, to some extent, as having approved and adopted some ideas of reform, especially with regard to the issues of *ijtihād*, *tafīq* and *maslahah*. The decline of Islamic traditionalism and its changing attitude has led to the emergence of a new group of Muslims, namely the neo-traditionalists. The reformists have also experienced some changes of attitude. They were known before as having a harsh attitude towards their antagonists, but now they are seen to be more courteous and compromising in promoting their reform ideas. They actively attempt to adopt the moderate approaches as outlined by the İkhwān Muslimūn, who are regarded as the most successful reform group for their moderate attitudes in propagating the ideas of Islamic reform. These changes have brought new hope for reducing the conflict between the two parties, in the long run, to a minimum level, but in the very near future this might be impossible.

Throughout its existence in Malaysia for over a century, Islamic reformism has passed through various experiences. Though it was strongly challenged by Islamic traditionalism from the early days of its emergence, it has eventually been accepted by the Malay masses. Though the previous reformists did not leave any detailed blueprint for Islamic reform, they have left a strong foundation for the later generation to resume their reform efforts, and this has been realized by the birth of various reform-oriented *dakwah* groups who intensively promote Islamic reformism in more organized frameworks. The ideas of Islamic reform have thus spread, and been accepted and advocated by most Malays, especially the youth and the intelligentsia. As regards the Islamic traditionalism, even if it is said to be declining, has secured its influence among its traditional stronghold of the religious establishment, Şufi groups and peasant society. Islamic reformism may be seen as an important force which is
responsible for shaping the future course of Malaysian Islam, but traditionalism will presumably continue its challenge to the former. Thus, it is predicted that the conflict between them is unlikely to be resolved.

As the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists is predicted to persist in the future, it is suggested that they should manage it wisely to avoid schism and disunity among the Malay Muslim community. Disagreement is part of life, but it will turn into serious problem if it is unwisely managed. The conflict over issues of 'ibādah, which is mainly juristic, should have not been a reason for the division of Malay Muslims. It is suggested that the traditionalists and the reformists to learn and practise the ethics of disagreement as demonstrated by the Companions of the Prophet and the great jurists among the salaf al-ṣāliḥ who showed great tolerance to each other in managing their disagreements. Though completely eliminating the conflict between them seems impossible, it should be managed by holding to the ethics of disagreement in order to preserve the solidarity of the ummah. The Ikhwān's principle of "to co-operate on where there is agreement and to excuse each other where there is disagreement," is useful to be a basic formula of reconciliation between the traditionalists and the reformists.
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