

Malaysia and Islam in the Global Context: Psychological, Social and Cultural Perspectives



Compilers
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**Malaysia and Islam
in the Global Context:
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and Cultural Perspectives**

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FOREWORD

In this ever dynamic world, there is an important need to understand the prospects of unity, peace and stability. As part of this global transition and from the time of history, religion has taken an important role in manifesting the right values, the right morals, and the right ethics. Though straightforward, times now has once again put upon the test among the faiths of Islam. The challenges we face now, have surged upon misinterpretation, wrong accusations, and many media-related misleading facts from the acts of terrorism. However, Islam is not as portrayed by the media. Islam strives for peace, unity and justice. This volume, is hoped to add one more testimony in understanding the nature of Islam and its community.

The selection of papers in this volume is associated with unity and diversity with special focus in Malaysia. This volume will seek to expand reader's view on how Malaysia, copes with a multi-racial population, and still exist in a realm of unity and peace with Islam as the main religion. The titles on Islam's history and future, cultural diversity, language command for unity, organizational level management, religion, health and modernization reflects some of the insights on Islam and its world. It will also seek to explain the driving values behind Islam, and how it is integrated in the psychological, social and cultural aspects in Malaysia. Due to September 11th event, positive values of Islam throughout the ages has been shaken. Instead, Islam is associated with rigidity, violence and terrorism. Through this volume, it is hoped that the true teachings of Islam, which are the sanctity of life, justice, benevolence and tolerance will re-emerge.

The understanding of Islam and its place in the global context can prove to be challenging and complex at times. One needs to consider how this viewpoint must be tackled by way of intellectual approach. Islam must once again attempt to show its civilized and practical ways. In these times of confusion, Muslims and scholars must take up this double role. To be devoted to the teachings and at the same time, expand it towards society, through writings, research, and findings. These dual tasks can be challenging and rewarding. There will be difficulties in trying to diffuse negative perceptions. It is also not easy to re-educate the world that Islam stands by its soft-approach to life and that it honours knowledge and the life-long pursuance of it. There will be the media to tackle, and many awareness needs to be created. The rewards however, can prove to be a bigger fruit for all. A re-educated world respects and honours the religion of Islam. The children of future generations will come to embrace Islam, with the serenity and peace that has been laid upon before them by the works of today.

With the publication of this volume, it is hoped that more writings and findings relating to Islam and the global context will continue to emerge, and be put into use for the benefit and progress of Islam in unity with the world.

Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohd. Noh Bin Dalimin
Vice Chancellor
Universiti Malaysia Sabah

PREFACE

Islam is a religion that has its origins from Arabia and extends its influence to Europe, Africa and Asia. Since its time of humble beginning, the Islamic state has developed into a complex and sophisticated civilization that has its influence until today. Islam has indeed made its mark in the development of philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, sciences, arts and literature that has span throughout the millennia. The teaching of Islam, and the search for knowledge and truth has made Islam flourish and proud with its intellectual abundance. In Malaysia, Islam entered its shores in 1400 A.D., and with that, Malaysia has prospered with the Golden Age of Malacca (1400 – 1511 A.D.). Due to the September 11th tragedy, the perception of Islam has been misleading. Terrorism especially has been cruelly associated with Islam. Dictatorship, oppression and human rights abuses have been linked with countries that abide by the Islamic law. The acts of terrorism by radical fundamentalist have sent the world perception into a spiral down confusion. Islam has suffered this unfair generalization over a minority group of extremist. This should not hinder the followers of Islam. Matching misinterpretation with awareness and information, Malaysia hopes to take the lead step, in showing that a multicultural country, of many ethnicities and religions has coexisted into stability, unity and economic development. The volume on “Malaysia and Islam in the Global Context: Psychological, Social & Cultural Perspectives” is written to address these issues and hopefully to start the chain of more awareness.

To bring together Islamic viewpoints, approaches and perspectives in psychology, social and culture in Malaysia, a series of Seminar-Workshop on “*Malaysia and Islam in the Global Context: Psychological, Social & Cultural Perspectives*” was held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, on 11th February 2006; 16th September 2006 and 3rd March 2007. The main aim of the workshop is to provide a ground discussion from local and international scholars, and to deliberate on the issues of Islam and how the unification of Islam and Malaysia has brought about a country of multi-cultural population to a plateau of unity, harmony, stability and economic prosperity. Thus, the theme of the Seminar-Workshop is suitable in showcasing the country as an example to the world.

The third and final series of the Seminar-Workshop was inaugurated by Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohd. Noh Bin Dalimin, the Vice Chancellor of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and was officially opened by Datuk Hj. Nasir Bin Tun Sakaran, Minister in the Chief Minister Department. In his speech, Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohd. Noh Bin Dalimin stressed on the importance of this Volume, and how it will serve as a meeting point of research that can bring many benefits to future

generations. He went further to address the importance of Islam and how its history and global movement are intertwined. The importance of the publication thus, lay in Islam and Malaysia and its influences on psychology, social and cultural aspect of the country. In the official opening address, Datuk Hj. Nasir Bin Tun Sakaran, spoke of the challenges ahead, and the need to understand this fundamental aspect of the country. He went further to acknowledge the importance of intellectual curiosity of the Islamic community and how this is important to create a dynamic society, and the capability to eradicate any negative perception from the international community towards Islam.

This Volume has been prepared based on the discussions in these series of Seminar-Workshop. We would like to thank Prof. Khalijah Mohd. Salleh for proofreading all the chapters in this Volume. The task of editing all the manuscripts was accomplished with financial support from UMS. We would like to thank the Vice Chancellor of UMS and Prof. Dr. Mohd. Sarim Mustajab, Head of the Publication Unit, UMS for providing administrative and financial support. Finally, we would like to thank Dato' Dr. Mat Saat Mohd. Baki, Alfred Chan and all staff of the Psychology and Social Health Research Unit who had helped to finalize this Volume.

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