

ความเป็นเอกภาพและความหลากหลายในโลกมุสลิม

อิมติยาซ ยูซุฟ

Ph.D.(Religion), ผู้เชี่ยวชาญประจำวิทยาลัยอิสลามศึกษา

มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์

บทคัดย่อ

บทความเรื่องนี้ มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อนำเสนอข้อคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับการศึกษาเรื่องความเป็นเอกภาพและความหลากหลายที่มีอยู่ในโลกมุสลิม รูปแบบของความเป็นเอกภาพและความหลากหลาย กลุ่มความคิดทางศาสนา สำนักคิดในอิสลาม ภาษา ศิลปวิทยาการ การเมืองกับความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศที่เกี่ยวข้องกับโลกมุสลิม รวมทั้งสิ่งท้าทายร่วมสมัยที่มุสลิมกำลังเผชิญในยุคสมัยของการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางด้านวัฒนธรรม

ความแตกต่างด้านเชื้อชาติ ภาษา และวัฒนธรรมที่มีอยู่ในหมู่มุสลิมในส่วนต่างๆ ของโลกที่มีมาตลอดระยะเวลาอันยาวนานถึง 1,418 ปี ได้มีส่วนช่วยเสริมความจริงที่ว่า อิสลามเป็นศาสนาสากล ความเป็นเอกภาพและความหลากหลายเป็นกฎแห่งการสร้างสรรคของพระเจ้า ความสัมพันธ์เชิงพลวัตระหว่างวัฒนธรรมที่แตกต่างกันภายในกลุ่มประชาชาติมุสลิมทั่วโลกนำไปสู่ความเป็นเอกภาพในความหลากหลายและความหลากหลายที่มีเอกภาพ

ความเป็นเอกภาพและความหลากหลายที่มีอยู่ในอารยธรรมอิสลาม สามารถเป็นได้ทั้งคุณูปการและหายนะ ในส่วนของคุณูปการนั้น ได้ช่วยก่อให้เกิดพันธะทางศาสนาอันนำไปสู่ความเป็นภราดรภาพต่อกัน และถือเป็นหลักความเสมอภาพที่โดดเด่นที่สุดในหมู่มุสลิมที่มีความแตกต่างทางด้านเชื้อชาติ สัญชาติ และสถานภาพทางเศรษฐกิจ ความหายนะจะเกิดขึ้นเมื่อมันได้กลายเป็นชนวนสำคัญที่นำไปสู่ความรุนแรงในการแก้ไขข้อพิพาททั้งในหมู่มุสลิมและศาสนิกชนอื่น ทั้งนี้เนื่องมาจากความไม่เขลาเบาปัญญาของมนุษย์

ความเป็นเอกภาพและความหลากหลายเป็นลักษณะสำคัญที่ทำให้อารยธรรมอิสลามมีความสูงส่ง ความเป็นเอกภาพในด้านศาสนาและความหลากหลายทางด้านวัฒนธรรมช่วยให้โลกมุสลิมสามารถปรับตัวให้อยู่ในภาวะสมดุลแห่งความหลากหลายของความสัมพันธ์ที่มีอยู่ทั้งภายในและภายนอก ทำให้อิสลามเป็นวัฒนธรรมที่มีความสลบซับซ้อน มีรูปแบบทางสังคมและศาสนาที่เป็นเอกลักษณ์ ในขณะที่เดียวกันก็มีขอบข่ายที่กว้างขวางครอบคลุมและเป็นพลวัต ทำให้เกิดเครือข่ายอารยธรรมโลกมุสลิมที่เชื่อมโยงซึ่งกันและกันทั่วทั้งโลก

โดยสรุป การศึกษาเรื่องความเป็นเอกภาพและความหลากหลายในโลกมุสลิม ทำให้เกิดการยอมรับว่า อารยธรรมอิสลามคือส่วนที่ได้จากการบูรณาการอารยธรรมของมวลมนุษยชาติ และการตระหนักถึงความสำคัญของบทบาทของศาสนาในการทำให้เกิดดุลยภาพระหว่างความเจริญรุ่งเรืองและพัฒนาการของอารยธรรมอิสลามกับการพัฒนา

คำสำคัญ : ความเป็นเอกภาพ, ความหลากหลาย, โลกมุสลิม

Unity and Diversity in the Muslim World

Imtiyaz Yusuf

Ph.D.(Religion), Visiting Specialist,
College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkla University

This paper discusses some pertinent aspects about unity and diversity in the Muslim world and comments briefly upon the following related topics : studies on unity and diversity in the Muslim world; forms of unity and diversity in the Muslim world such as religious sects, schools of Muslim jurisprudence, languages and the arts; Muslim intellectual contributions to the world of learning; the interactions between politics and international relations between the world of Islam and the world at large. The article also examines some of the contemporary challenges facing the Muslim world in the era of globalization and cultural transformation.

The global population of Muslims today, nearly one billion, is made up of different races and ethnic groups speaking different languages and dining on a variety of cuisines. The 1,418 year-old Islamic civilization has continued to illustrate its unity and diversity in a multifarious and colourful display in different parts of the world. Hence, the commonly heard remark that Islam is "a cosmopolitan religion." The existence of unity and diversity in the Muslim world is perceived as a normal phenomenon from the perspective of Islam. The Muslim world has also seen dynamic interaction between the different cultures within the worldwide Islamic community (Ummah) leading to the building of unity in diversity and diversity in unity within it.

Unity and diversity within Islamic civilization has been both a boon and a curse to it as evidenced from various historical events. It built a bond of religious fraternity within the Muslim world by championing the principle of equality between people of different races, nations and economic status. It has been a curse, when it became the cause for resorting to violence in settling conflicts both among the Muslims and with the followers of other religions, largely due to our human folly.

In the end, what sustains unity and diversity in the Muslim world is its enabling the Islamic civilization to face and respond to various kinds of challenges in both a unitary and varied fashion. This has facilitated the Muslim world to balance the variety of relationships both within and outside it. The unity of variety in the Muslim world makes Islam "a complex of cultural traditions" which while having its own specifically religious and social pattern also grows, changes and broadens in scope, resulting in the building of a globally interwebbed/interwoven Islamic civilization.

The study and research about unity and diversity in the Muslim world leads to the recognition that Islamic civilization is an integral part of our common human heritage and helps realize the central and crucial role played by religion in balancing the growth and development of Islamic civilization.

Key words : unity, diversity, Muslim world

The 1,415 years old Islamic civilization has continued to illustrate its unity and diversity in a multifarious and colorful display in different parts of the world. The existence of unity and diversity

in the Muslim world is to be seen as a normal phenomenon of a world religion. In fact, the Quran refers to diversity with humanity as an act of God's creation with the purpose to build righteousness :

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

Quran Hujurat 49 : 13

If thy Lord had so willed He could have made mankind one People : but they will not cease to dispute.

Quran Hud 11 : 118

A nearly billion global population of Muslims today is made up of different races and ethnic groups speaking different languages and dining a variety of cuisines. There are Muslims of Arab, Asian, African and more recently of European and American backgrounds and nationalities. Hence, the commonly heard remark about Islam is that, "it is a cosmopolitan religion."

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world of about 200 million followed by Pakistan, Bangladesh and India (a Muslim minority country) while the Arab countries in the heartland of Islam have much lesser populations.

Both Muslims and followers of other religions residing in the Muslim lands have contributed to and benefitted from the building of Islamic civilization. This is evident from the legacy and the cultural heritage from the times of early Muslim empires in Arabia, Egypt and north Africa, Persia, Muslim Spain, Mughal India and Ottoman Turkey (Schacht and Bosworth, eds., 1979).

Islamic civilization grew, developed and expanded over time imbibing the best from other human civilizations in different fields of knowledge. And at the same time it made original contributions toward advancement of world civilization. Furthermore, there has been a dynamic interaction between the different cultures within the Muslim world leading to unity in diversity and diversity in unity within Islam.

Unity and diversity within Islamic civilization has been both a boon and a curse to it as evidenced from various historical events. It developed a bond of religious fraternity within the Muslim world and also championed the principle of human equality between people of different races, nations and economic status. It has been a curse when it became a cause for resorting to violence in settling conflicts both among the Muslims and with the followers of other religions largely due to our human folly. Such instances reflect the forgetting of an important advise of the Quran :

And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate. And remember Allah's favor unto you : how ye were enemies and He made friendship between your hearts so that ye became as brothers by His grace; ... Thus Allah maketh clear His revelations unto you, that haply ye may be guided;

Quran al-Imran 3 : 103

For that cause We decreed ... that whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind. Our messengers came unto them of old with clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), but afterwards lo! many of them became prodigals in the earth.

Quran al-Maidah 5 : 32

In this paper I will highlight some pertinent aspects about unity and diversity in the Muslim world and comment briefly upon challenges posed to it today.

Section 1

Studies on Unity and Diversity in Muslim World

Islam can be described using Prof. Wilfred Cantwell Smith's words as a "cumulative tradition," (Smith, 1991) meaning it evolved as a civilization out of the various the contributions by different

Muslim groups over a period of time. Muslims of different racial, ethnic, cultural and professional backgrounds interacted between themselves and with members of other religions, cultures and civilizations. This interaction had two effects :

a) it influenced the development of Islamic life and thought.

b) the Muslim world shared and borrowed with other members of humanity in various areas of life, thought and knowledge, at the same time making its own contributions to them. For example, some concepts, principles and practices in Hellenistic philosophy, Indian arithmetics and medicine, African social institution of brotherhood and South-east Asian social attitude and behavioural pattern of moderation and compromise. Muslims saw them as not being in contradiction to the Islamic principle of Tauhid - "moralistic monotheism" of the Quran.¹

Since, "Every major tradition is a product of the confluence of contributory traditions, not only in its origin but in the course of its history", (Shils, 1981 : 97) in the case of Islam it resulted in the building of the global commonwealth of Islam, cosmopolitan in character but united in its religious belief and identity.

The issue of unity and diversity in the Muslim world has been studied by many scholars who tried to analyse it from different aspects. Robert Bulliet in his study of *monde musulman periphérique* observes that Islam at the center is defined by the edge. He remarks, "though the view from the center focuses upon a succession of great capital cities, almost to the exclusion of the countryside, the view from the edge is not from a geographical (or political) periphery. The edge in Islamic history exists wherever people make the decision to cross a social boundary and join the Muslim community, either through religious conversion, or, under modern conditions, through nominal Muslims rededicating themselves to Islam as the touchstone of

their social identity, or recasting their Muslim identities in a modern urban context" (Bulliet, 1994 : 9).

Gustave Von Grunebaum sees the cultural cohesion within the Muslim world as being the outcome of the Muslim conviction that they together, "form a part of a larger and religiously defined entity (the Ummah)" (Von Grunebaum, 1955 : 18).

H.A.R. Gibb, a doyen of the Western tradition of Islamic Studies observed that, Islam superimposes "a common veneer of general religious culture" but does not cause those groups "to lose the peculiar shade of mystical-magical feeling of their own particular life" thus allowing for unity in diversity. (Von Grunebaum, 1955 : 19) In other words, a Chinese, an African, an Indian and a Malay Muslim pray the same prayers, perform the same rituals in the same religious language, yet, eat different types of foods, dress differently and speak their own mother tongues all of which is subject to the fundamental doctrine of moralistic monotheism. Gibb studied unity and diversity within Arabian and Sunni Islam (Gibb, 1953).

Philip Hitti, an Arab-Christian historian also studied the history of the Arab-Muslim world. For him Islamic history constitutes the impact of the Arabs on world history and civilization. (Hitti, 1989) Much similar is the approach of Albert Hourani whose study of Arab-Islamic history covers events until recent times (Hourani, 1991).

On a much larger scale is Marshall Hodgson's acclaimed *The Venture of Islam* a three volumes comprehensive study of Islamic civilization with special focus on the Irano-Semitic Muslim world (Hodgson, 1974).

More recently there has appeared a detailed history of Islamic societies written by Ira M. Lapidus, a comprehensive and handy reference work (Lapidus, 1989).

One reason behind this interest in study of

¹Prof. Fazlur Rahman of the University of Chicago, defines the concept Tauhid as follows, "the basic elan of the Quran (which) is moral, whence flows its emphasis on monotheism as well as on social justice." See Rahman, Fazlur. 1979. *Islam*. Chicago : The University of Chicago Press., p. 79.

unity and diversity in the Muslim world according to Prof. Ismail al-Faruqi is the great diversity which the Muslims display.

"Muslims have great diversity in appearance. They are divided into many cultural groups, each carrying its own dress, customs, and ways of life. In the past, the Muslim world has witnessed a great deal of mobility among its peoples. The brotherhood, the racial tolerance, and lack of color discrimination - - the common institutions of the Muslims- - once made it possible for anyone to move from one end of the empire to another without estrangement. As a direct effect of this mobility, Muslim urban populations are very mixed. This is more than evident to anyone sitting at a sidewalk cafe in Rabat, Tripoli, Cairo, Damascus, Jiddah, Baghdad, Teheran, Lahore, Delhi or Jakarta. Passing are by automobiles as well as camels; veiled women as well as women in saris and, jeans, and sarongs; fair and blue-eyed northerners as well as blacks, West African Hamites, Chinese, or Mongols; small-built Malays or large bodied Afghans; men with parted hair and men with fezzes and turbans; men in Western clothing and men in flowing robes. All of them are Muslims" (al-Faruqi, 1995).

Ismail al-Faruqi and his wife Lamya wrote together a comprehensive history of the Muslim world in form of a cultural atlas viewing the Muslim world from the perspective of Arabo-Semitic monotheism as it binds a billion people today. (al-Faruqi and al-Faruqi, 1986) While Prof. Seyyed Hossein Nasr of George Washington University has written several works about the Persian dimension of Islamic religious tradition (Nasr, ed, 1987, 1990).

Apart from the above mentioned comprehensive studies there a number of regional studies concerning unity and diversity within the Muslim world, the most popular among them being Clifford Geertz's anthropological comparative study of Islam

in Indonesia and Morocco titled *Islam Observed* (Geertz, 1971). While Islam in the Indian sub-continent, Africa and Southeast Asia have been studied by different scholars. All of them adding to our knowledge about monde musulman in variety of ways and with different approaches (Ahmad, 1964; Schimmel, 1982; King, 1979; Hooker, 1983; Abdullah and Siddiqi, 1986; Haddad and Smith, 1994).

Forms of Unity and Diversity in the Muslim World

The geographically diverse but ideationally united Muslims societies have collectively contributed toward building of the Islamic civilization of Islam which flowered between 660-1492. This was followed by the age of the last of the great Muslim empires such as Safavid empire of Iran (1501-1732), Ottoman Turkey (1342-1924), Mughal India (1483-1857) and the Malay kingdoms from 1600 until the occupation of Malacca by the Portuguese in 1511 followed by the Dutch in 1641 and the British in 1826. This marked the entrance of the Muslim world into the yoke of Colonialism only to emerge as group of independent Muslim nation-states after the Second World War.

The glaring forms of unity and diversity in the Muslim world are found in various areas of Muslim life ranging from religious sectarianism, schools of jurisprudence, language, arts, intellectual contribution, politics and international relations.

a) Religious Sects

Just like other religious traditions Islam has its own sects which are largely the outcome of politico-religious tensions in early Islam. The two main theological sects of Islam are viz., the majority Sunni and the minority Shia sects.

The Sunnis make up about 88 percent of the total Muslim world population while the Shia constitute about 13 percent. The Shia are further divided into two sub-sects viz., the **Ithna-ashari** (Imamis/Twelvers) and **Ismailis** (Seveners). The Ismailis are divided into two groups of **Nizari**² and

²They are the followers of the Aga Khan. See Daftary, Farhad. 1992. *The Ismailis*. New York : Cambridge University Press.

Mustali Ismailis (known as the **Bohras** in India and Thailand).

b) Schools of Jurisprudence

The Muslim world also has a variety of schools of jurisprudence which are the products of attempts by the learned doctors of Islamic law (**Fuqaha**) to apply Islamic *weltanschauung* to different life styles and environments in the vast geographic expanse of the Muslim world.

There are currently in existence four Sunni *madhahibs* (schools of jurisprudence) namely, the *Hanafi*, *Maliki*, *Shafii* and *Hanbali* each having a majority in different regions of the Muslim world. In the past there were several other schools some of which died out or got outdated.

There is a single school of jurisprudence among the Shia known as the Jafari school of jurisprudence.

Yet, behind this variety and difference all Muslims believe in the same God, read the same Quran and follow the same prophet .

c) Languages

The cosmopolitan character of the Muslim world is best exhibited in the multiplicity of languages the Muslims speak. Arabic is no doubt the main religious language of Islam. The importance of Arabic lies in its being the language of the revelation of Islam viz., the Quran is the word of God/Allah and constitutes the textual foundation of Islam. All Muslims learn to recite the Quran in Arabic from early age while some go beyond that by learning the language itself.

The expansion of Islam to different parts of the world led to both the assimilation of some older languages and invention of new ones. For example, Persian and Turkish got Arabized during the Islamization of Persia and Turanistan. Islamization of Persia and Turkey led to the adoption of Islamo-Arabic religious vocabulary and Arabic script by the host languages. Similar was the case with the Malay language which got Islamized during the Islamization of Southeast Asia and is today known as Jawi.

The spread of Islam to the Indian sub-continent and Africa led to the invention of new languages

of Urdu in the Indian sub-continent, Swahili in East Africa and Hausa in West Africa. This development marks the religious, cultural and linguistic encounter between the Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Pali, Bantu, and Hamito-Semitic languages, cultures and civilizations.

Interestingly, the Arabo-Persian/Muslim encounter with Sanskrit-Pali/Hindu-Buddhist religions in Central Asia and India left a deep impact on the Indian language scene. It led to the invention of two new Indian languages i) Urdu which is mostly spoken by the Muslims and is written in Arabo-Persian script and has borrowed Sanskrit/Pali vocabulary, ii) Hindi which is mostly spoken by the Hindus and written in the Devanagari script with a lot of borrowed Arabo-Persian vocabulary.

Surprisingly, some of the best writings in Urdu are written by Hindus and some of the best works in Hindi have been written by Indian Muslims. In this case, there occurred an extensive dissolution of the cultural and religious identities between two religious groups.

Today the newly founded languages of Urdu, Swahili and Hausa are the national languages of East African nations of Pakistan, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria, respectively.

Yet the Quranic Arabic remains the religious language of the Muslim world.

d) Arts

In the area of arts of calligraphy, sound, and architecture Muslim masters developed a common artistic pattern called the Arabesque which has been identically and typically reproduced across the Muslim world.

The symbolic philosophy of the Arabesque is in line with the Quranic principle of monotheism "There is no god but God." Muslim artists have sought to express this vision of God through the use of Arabesque seeking to portray the un-portrayable using the principles of non-development, repetition and symmetry.

The use of the Arabesque pattern in calligraphy, the chanting of the Quran, recitation of poetry, vocal or instrumental music, build of wide, spacious, open but empty mosques are works of arts through

which the Muslim artists seek to express the inexpressibility of God in a sensible and most beautiful manner. (al-Faruqi and al-Faruqi, 1986)

This evident from the similarity in the design of art works produced across the Muslim world e.g. the architectural similarities between a mosque architecture in Pattani, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur with magnificent mosque of the Prophet in Medina and the Sulamaniye mosque in Istanbul, in the resemblance of styles of Quran recitation performed by an Indonesian and Arab reciters. And also in the works of Quranic calligraphy produced in China, Pakistan, Zanzibar or India where the artists produce the same text in different styles of writing but based on the Arabesque pattern.

e) Intellectual Contributions

Muslim contributions in the areas of science, medicine and philosophy in the period between 8th-17th centuries prior to the Western Renaissance constitutes an important part of the intellectual heritage of humanity.

Islamic philosophy is the product of a complex intellectual process in which Syrians, Arabs, Persians, Turks, Berbers and others took an active part. The Arab element is so preponderant, however, that it might be conveniently termed Arabic philosophy. The medium in which writers, hailing from such distant countries as Khurasan and Andalusia, chose to express their thoughts from the eight to the seventeenth century was Arabic. The racial element that provided the cohesive force in this cosmopolitan endeavour and determined its form and direction, at least in the early stages was Arabic; without the Arabs' enlightened interest in ancient learning, hardly any intellectual progress could have been made or maintained. Moreover, it was the Arabs who, while they assimilated the customs, manners, and learning of their subjects peoples, contributed the one universal element in the whole complex of Muslim culture, i.e. the Islamic religion (Fakhry, 1983).

Everyone is familiar with names of Muslim intellectual luminaries such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna)

from Persia, Ibn Tufayl (Abubacer), Ibn Bajja (Avepace) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), from Spain, al-Biruni from Afghanistan who wrote an objective account of Indian religions, (Fakhry, 1983 : 32) al-Shahrastani from Persia who studied Indian Hinduism and Buddhism and is regarded as the first scholar of history of religion, (Sharpe, 1986 : 11) and the north African Ibn Khaldun of Tunisia, "the real founder of the science of sociology" (Hitti, 1989 : 568).

Pursuit of knowledge or learning in the Islamic world was never restricted only to the Muslims. Some of the famous Jewish philosophers lived in Muslim Spain, studied with Muslim philosophers and wrote in Arabic e.g. Solomon Ben Gabriol "the Jewish Plato" and Musa Ibn Maymun (Maimonides) the author of the famous "Guide of the Perplexed" who tried to reconcile Jewish philosophy with Muslim Aristotelianism (Hitti, 1989 : 580-584).

With Arabic serving as the main language of intellectual discourse and learning, the European renaissance borrowed much of Arabic vocabulary whose presence are still used in European languages such as English from Arabic derived words such as sugar, alcohol, alchemy, cable, syrup, orange, admiral, nobel and algebra, etc. (Makdisi, 1981; Makdisi, 1990; Watt, 1972).

f) Politics and International Relations

Of course, the wide Muslim world was divided under different political regimes as evident from the political history of Islamic empires (Lapidus, 1989). Yet, in keeping with the Quranic concept of **Ummah** which envisions the Muslim community as a single unit medieval Muslim political philosophers classified the world into **Dar ul Islam** (The lands of Islam), **Dar ul-Aman** (non-Muslim lands with whom the Muslims had entered into contracts of peace and friendship) and **Darul Harb** (the land of war).

The Muslims have always seen themselves as a single unit that even during the era of Colonialism there emerged political thinkers like Jamuluddin al-Afghani who talked of Pan-Islamism built upon the concept of the unity of Muslim world (Adams, 1933).

In the post-colonial era of Muslim nation-states

the idea of political unity of Muslim world was given an organizational structure through the formation of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) inaugurated in 1969 and is today made up of more than 50 Muslim member countries (Banner, 1995 ; al-Ahsan, 1988).

The symbolic display of international Muslim unity takes place annually during the Hajj-pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, participated in by 2 million Muslims from all parts of the world. Though culturally different they collectively perform the same rituals in the same language in the spirit of religious unity. The Hajj is the great unifier of the

Muslims.

Hence it is normal for Arab Muslims from the heartland of Islam on meeting other Muslims such as those in China, India, Thailand or Indonesia to be surprised by what he/she may see in the dietary and cultural customs and even adherence to different schools of Islamic law, "but he will not, in general, be inclined to contest the provincial claim to orthodoxy as long as he is satisfied of the community's determination to identify itself with the *umma Muhammadiya*" (Von Grunebaum, 1955 : 21) -the community of Muhammad.

Section 2

Islamic Civilization Amidst the Challenge of Civilizational Transformation :

Entrance into post-Colonial era was envisaged by Islamic political leaders and thinkers as a time to embark upon the reconstruction, renewal, revival or renaissance of Islam in face of new developments and challenges. The general goal was, "forging a new and important synthesis that reflected, on the one hand, the maturity of Muslim thinkers, and, on the other, the deep sense of crisis facing Muslim society" (Abu Rabi, 1996 : 9).

In terms of its relation to unity and diversity within the Muslim world, their aim was to address internal crisis collectively as well as regionally within the paradigm of the Islamic world view. The reason being the complex nature of post-Colonial world order.

This new era saw the emergence of several Islamic revivalist movements in different part of the Muslim world committed to the reconstruction and reform of Muslim societies (Haddad, *et al.*, 1991). In fact, not only the Muslims but also the secularists, Marxist and the pro-Western forces in the Muslim world were engaged in the same task, of course, with different orientations and programs. The outcome of these undertaking of reconstruction activities has sometimes been bloody and non-be-

nefitting, one reason being, the long and continued political instability in most of the Middle Eastern countries. And the swift impact of super power politics and international events on the Third World countries. The Muslim world today like other Third World countries is facing the urgent challenge of cultural transformation through the emergence of capitalist Globalization for which it is less prepared. In fact, the Muslim world is facing "a multi-national leviathan of economic mechanism which does not recognize any set of ethical prerequisites or normative presuppositions" (Davutoglu, 1994 : 19).

Some political analysts are foretelling the coming of the "Clash of Civilizations" (the most important battle of which will be the clash between the Islamic and Western/Christian civilization) as we enter into the era of "End of History" (Fukuyama, 1990 : 33-36; Huntington, 1993). This could well be the last stage of the "Great Western Transmutation" (Hodgson, 1995 : 44-71) as described by Marshall Hodgson.

The impact of these political and global event have led to the emergence of new divide and difference in the Muslim world, that between Middle East and Southeast Asian world of Islam. This is large due to factors such as geo-politics, economic preferences of the multi-national corporations, develop-

ment of infrastructure and levels of human resources development. This development has severe implications for the unity and diversity in the Muslim world. In other words, there have occurred significant change of complex type in the realm of world political economy.

Contemporary Middle Eastern Muslim world is currently engaged in sorting out its problems so that it can catch up with the rest. On the other hand, the Muslim countries of Southeast Asia along with their neighbours have experienced considerable success in their experiments with quasi-democracy as result of which they have experienced a sort of political stability enabling them to pay serious attention to matters such as the educational advancement of their citizens and undertaking initiatives in technological advancement. Their success in these ventures is making them emerge on the world scene as representing the new face of Islam, which is intelligent, politically stable and peaceful, stable, modern, dynamic, technologically advanced and economically prosperous with intact Islamic identity (Walsh, 1996). Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei in spite of their shortcomings are emerging as the new representatives of Islam on the world stage. Their success is actually the outcome of their philosophical success in addressing the issue of how to resolve the problem of integration of Islam and development. An issue which has become a perennial philosophical and political predicament in other parts of the Muslim world, as reflected in the on-going violent political clash between armies which are in favour of secularism and democratically elected pro-Islam governments as seen in the cases of Algeria and now Turkey.

While admiring the Western scientific success, work ethic, values such as efficiency, hard work, critical and analytical outlook; Southeast Asian Muslims are weary about the cultural dimension of pro-Western movement of capitalist Globalization. For it emphasis only upon the materialist dimension of life while ignoring the spiritual dimension of humanity thereby seeking to efface the civilizational variety within humanity. Such development can only result in the producing cultural clones of the West

all over the globe.

In face of such a critical civilizational challenge, Malaysian Muslim political leaders and intellectuals as new representatives of Islam on the world stage (in the past this war undertaken by the Arabs, Persians, Indians, African and Turkish Muslims) have responded to the cry of "clash of civilizations" by calling for the "dialogue between civilizations." Prime Minister Mahathir (Mohamad, 1995) and his Deputy, Anwar Ibrahim (Ibrahim, 1997) along with other Malaysian intellectuals and thinkers such as Prof. Osman Bakar, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, (Academic) University of Malaya and Prof. Chandra Muzaffar have given much thought to the issue how to building harmony and peace between world civilizations in the highly complex and volatile contemporary era of Globalization.

The practical result of their brain-storming has appeared in the form of the establishment of Center for Civilizational Dialogue at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur and its holding of civilizational dialogues on topics such as "Islam and Confucianism" and "Islam, Japan and the West." These undertakings represent the enlightened perspective of Southeast Asian Islam with its moderate and dialogical approach to co-existence. The goal being to building just and equitable relations within and between cultures and civilisations.

Apart for the intellectual and institutional dimensions of civilizational dialogue. The Southeast Asian Muslim world also has the task to prepare itself both morally and ideationally to represent Islam on the world stage by balancing both the spiritual and material aspects of life and thought. Prof. Muhammad Kamal Hassan describes the task as follows :

It is not impossible for the new Malay (read Southeast Asian Muslim) generation to ... fulfill the agenda of qualitative changes and civilizational transformation, provided it adheres to God-given formula of integration - - that of material well-being with spiritual values, action with inward reflection, human sciences with revealed knowledge, politics with divine guidance, science and technology with accountability to God, and professional skills with

moral-spiritual values. It has to be deeply ingrained in the minds of the present and future generations that it is a divine imperative for the *muminun* (believers) to attain 'izzah (honour and dignity), overall strength (*al-quwah*) and leadership status (Hassan, 1994 : 205).

The urgent call for "Civilization Dialogue" by Southeast Asian Muslims amidst the cry for imagined "Clash of Civilization" tells a lot about the positive contemporary Muslim view about the issue of unity and diversity. It also says that rapid economic development and social transformation of Asian and the Muslim countries and regions is meaningless if it does not benefit from the spiritual, moral and humane values of our civilizations and cultures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I will remark that the issue of unity and diversity in the Muslim world has enabled the Islamic civilization to face and respond to various kinds of challenges, displaying at the same the religious unity and cultural variety in the Muslim world. It has enabled the Muslim world to balance variety of relationships both within and outside it. And though in doing so it has sometimes tilted toward the extremes, yet, it has been a boon to the Muslim world. After all, the problem of maintaining unity and diversity is a human activity.

In the end, what sustains unity and diversity among Muslims is the eye and the heart of a Muslim believer who views himself and his society in relation to his Creator (Allah/God). This makes him recognize his/her insignificance yet a member of the dignified community of the Prophet Muhammad (Von Grunebaum, 1955 : 32).

Islamic civilization has grown and expanded from the initial city state of Medina to different parts of the world, it built dynasties, empires, developed and invented languages, contributed to the world of knowledge and arts in different parts of the world thereby illustrating the dialogical approach of Islamic civilization. The unity of variety in Muslim world makes Islam "a complex of cultural traditions"

which while having its own specifically religious an social patterns also grows, changes and broadens its scope (Hodgson, 1974 : 79).

In regard to the interactions among Muslims, the unity and diversity among them has resulted in building of globally a inter-webbed/interwoven Islamic civilization, "... Islam helped to knit together peoples who otherwise would might have remained remote, or would have drifted apart if they were close to begin with" (Hodgson, 1974 : 94).

There are several lessons to be learned from study and research about the Muslim world and the unity and diversity within it :

- 1) it leads to the recognition that the Islamic civilization is an integral part of our common human heritage,
- 2) it helps realize the crucial role played by religion in balancing the growth and development of Islamic civilization.

These are lessons which often get obscured or narrowed down by our media-dependent understanding of ourselves, our neighbours and fellow human beings in the world.

Marshall Hodgson reminds us of this through his candid remarks on the significant role played by the Islamicate civilization as an integral part of human heritage :

"Its visual arts, for instance, include surely the greatest ever known in which the element of sheer visual design could be given priority over all other considerations. Its literatures, richly unmatched in their most distinctive genres, are perhaps unparalleled in - - in among other things - - their mastery of the esoteric as a dimension of human experience. Its philosophical and scientific and religious thought has not merely made a lasting contribution to subsequent knowledge; much of it presents continuing points of enduring challenge. As we watch the unfolding of the civilization as a whole we will gain, at the same time, essential background for appreciating the monuments of Islamicate culture which can still enrich our understanding and our life ... Islamicate culture is supremely important because it represents the highest creative aspirations and achievements of

millions of people. Whoever we are, the hopes, the triumphs, and the failures too of any human beings are properly of concern to us; in the moral economy of mankind they are also our hopes and failures" (Hodgson, 1974 : 98 - 99).

Reference

- Abdullah, Taufik and Siddiqi, Sharon. 1986. **Islam and Society in Southeast Asia**. Singapore : Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
- Abu Rabi, Ibrahim M. 1996. **Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World**. Albany, NY : State University of New York Press.
- Adams, Charles. 1933. **Islam and Modernism in Egypt**. New York : Oxford University Press.
- Ahmad, Aziz. 1964. **Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment**. London : Oxford University.
- al-Ahsan, Abdullah. 1988. **OIC The Organization of the Islamic Conference**. Herndon, VA : The International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- al-Faruqi, Ismail. 1995. **Islam**. 3rd ed. Beltsville, MD : Amana Publications.
- al-Faruqi, Ismail and al-Faruqi, Lamy. 1986. **The Cultural Atlas of Islam**. New York : Macmillan.
- Banner, J.B. 1995. "Organization of the Islamic Conference", **The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World**. Vol 3. New York : Oxford University Press.
- Bulliet, Richard. 1994. **Islam : The View from the Edge**. New York : Columbia University Press.
- Daftary, Farhad. 1992. **The Ismailis**. New York : Cambridge University Press.
- Davutoglu, Ahmad. 1994. **Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World**. Kuala Lumpur : Mahir Publications.
- Fakhry, Majid. 1983. **A History of Islamic Philosophy**. New York : Columbia University Press.
- Fukuyama, F. 1990. "Are We at the End of History", **Fortune International**. pp. 33-36
- Geertz, Clifford. 1971. **Islam Observed**. Chicago : The University of Chicago Press.
- Gibb, H.A.R. 1953. **Mohammedanism**. London : Oxford University Press, currently republished under new title Islam.
- Haddad, Yvonne and Smith, Jane. 1994. **Muslim Communities in North America**. New York : Oxford University Press.
- Haddad, Yvonne *et al.* 1991. **The Contemporary Islamic Revival : A Critical Survey and Bibliography**. New York : Greenwood Press.
- Hassan, Muhammad Kamal. 1994. "The Malay Community Facing the 21st Century : Socio-Cultural Hindrances to Overall Progress", **Intellectual Discourse**. (2) 205.
- Hitti, Philip. 1989. **History of the Arabs**. 10th ed. New York : Macmillan.
- Hodgson, Marshall G. 1995. **Rethinking World History**. New York : Cambridge University Press.
- , 1974. **The Venture of Islam**. Chicago : The University of Chicago Press. 3 vols.
- Hooker, M.B. 1983. **Islam in South-East Asia**. Leiden : E. J. Brill.
- Hourani, Albert. 1991. **A History of the Arab Peoples**. Cambridge : MA. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Huntington, Samuel. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations", **Foreign Affairs**. Summer.
- Ibrahim, Anwar. 1997. **Asian Renaissance**. Kuala Lumpur : s.n.
- Keddie, Nikkie. 1972. **Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Afghani**. Berkeley : University of California Press.
- King, Noel Q. 1979. "Encounters between Islam and the African Traditional Religions." *in* Welch, Alford T. and Cachia, Pierre, eds. **Islam : Past Influence and Present Challenge**, pp. 296-311. Albany, NY : State University of New York Press.
- Lapidus, Ira M. 1989. **A History of Islamic Societies**. New York : Cambridge University Press.
- Makdisi, George. 1981. **The Rise of Colleges : Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West**. Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press.
- , 1990. **The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the West**. Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press.
- Mohamad, Mahathir. 1995. **The Challenge**. Kuala Lumpur : Pelanduk Publications.
- Nasr, S.H., ed. 1987, 1990. **Islamic Spirituality**. New York : Crossroads. 2 vols.
- Rahman, Fazlur. 1979. **Islam**. Chicago : The University of Chicago Press.
- Savory, R.M., ed. 1987. **Introduction to Islamic Civilization**. New York : Cambridge University Press.
- Schacht, Joseph and Bosworth, C.E., eds. 1979. **The Legacy of Islam**. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

- Schimmel, Annemarie. 1982. **Islam in India and Pakistan**. Leiden : E.J. Brill.
- Sharpe, Eric. 1986. **Comparative Religion : A History**. La Salle, I 11 : Open Court.
- Shils, Edward. 1981. **Tradition**. Chicago : University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, Wilfred C. 1991. **The Meaning and End of Religion**. Minneapolis : Fortress Press.
- Von Grunebaum, Gustave E. 1955. "The Problem : Unity in Diversity", in Gustave E. Von Grunebaum, ed. **Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization**. Chicago : The University of Chicago Press.
- Walsh, James. 1996. "The New Face of Islam." **TIME**. 30 September. Reprinted in June 1997, Readers Digest.
- Watt, W.M. 1972. **The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe**. Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press.