

## **THE CONCEPT OF 1MALAYSIA FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES**

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### **Abstract**

*The 1Malaysia concept (People First, Performance Now) is a vision introduced by the sixth Malaysian Prime Minister YAB. Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib Tun Abdul Razak on 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2009 soon after his sworn-in ceremony. The 1Malaysia concept protects the rights of all ethnic groups in the country and is able to bring Malaysia forward. The concept of 1Malaysia does not stray a single inch from the provisions of the Federal Constitution or the Rukun Negara (Five Pillars of the nation). The opposition parties claimed that they have introduced earlier the so called Middle Malaysia vision (originally from their Malaysian Malaysia slogan). Actually they were worried that the 1Malaysia concept has been accepted by most ethnic groups in Malaysia and there was a renewed spirit among the people to bring the country to greater heights. The government wants the Malaysian people to adopt the attitude of acceptance instead of tolerance. This is because tolerance carried a connotation that people were too much exposed to a painful or unpleasant condition because of their religious and ethnic differences whereas acceptance meant all Malaysians accepted and understood the diversity of Malaysian multiracial society which was a greatest source of strength. A very determined effort by the multiracial society will ensure that all citizens of Malaysia either the rich or poor will achieve real acceptance and integration. Malaysians should accept the reality and condition of its multiracial society and various faiths. The Malays should honour the non-Malays as equal to their rights in the constitution and to deal with them honestly. What is interesting however is that a lot of what Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib clarified was blended with Islamic teachings and religious ideas. This paper covers major elements of the 1Malaysia concept with its values and outlines the challenges faced by Malaysian multiracial society in adapting the 1Malaysia concept.*

**Key Words:** *1Malaysia, Islam, Ethnic Relations, Malaysia.*

**JEL Classification:** Z 000

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper answers many questions about the idea of 1Malaysia: "People First, Performance Now" which was introduced by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak who had caused various reactions from the society. Individual starts making their own interpretations of the idea. Touching on the topic in general, what is the implementation of this idea from the perspective of Islam? Some important messages in this idea should be understood in order to realize the implementation. What are the key messages? Ideas developed in the context of 1Malaysia concept have some critical features. Four of them are related to the cultural diversity, religious differences, economic imbalance and equality and the existence of various political parties. Within this framework, how the implementation of this idea can become a reality? There are also concerned and worried among the Malays that the 1Malaysia concept will erode the privileges of the Malays as enshrined in the Federal Constitution. Are these claims true?

The idea of 1Malaysia concept does not contradicted the spirit of unity which is the key element in the Charter of Medina which was developed during first year of the Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina. What is the real explanation and how the ideas associated with the importance of unity to the Malays and the significance of unity between Muslims and non-Muslims in this country? Allah says ( in Surah Al-Anbiya': 21, 107): "And we have sent You (O Muhammad ) not but as a Mercy for the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinns and All that exists)." What is the meaning of "rahmatan lil 'alamiin" and how it can be associated with our life today?

Turning to the overall implementation of this idea from the perspective of Islam coincided with the phrase "rahmatan lil 'alamiin. The approach does not contradict the idea 1Malaysia the spirit of unity to be the major element content of Medina Charter that was developed in the first year of the Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina, who is also based on the approach rahmatan lil 'alamiin. The importance of unity among the Malays and the claims of unity between Muslims and non Muslims in this country can not be denied again. We also must understand that when we introduced the idea 1Malaysia facing globalization challenges. Implementation of ideas in the context of the appreciation of the philosophy 1Malaysia "rahmatan lil 'alamiin" can assist in overcoming the challenges of globalization. Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib Razak (2009) during his last speech as Deputy President of UMNO has stated: "History has shown when the Malays are holding fast to the practice of Islam, our nation will be respected ... UMNO and Malays should make migration to make a total and comprehensive transformation. Looking back at history, it can be concluded that national unity must start with the unity among the Malays." This is the milestone of the transformation to be made by Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib when he became the UMNO President and Prime Minister of Malaysia. Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib emphasized that the Malays must hold fast to the teachings of Islam in order to be a united nation and respected by the others. It was a clear message to young people and women in UMNO and also to all Muslims in this country that he did not take it easy on the struggle of the Islam. Next, he put the conditions required for the mission of national unity in the country with the establishment of unity among the Malays. In other words, the effort to create unity among people of various races and religions in the country through the concept of 1Malaysia must be preceded by a strong and close unity among the Malays and Muslims in this country. Without unity of the Malays, the effort to unite the nation and people of different faiths in this country will face a problem.

## **2. WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF 1MALAYSIA?**

Soon after Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib swearing-in as Prime Minister on 3 April 2009, he began his maiden speech with the concept of 1Malaysia: People First, Performance Now. Many of the Malaysians are still confused and doubtful about the idea of 1Malaysia. It is said that this idea is similar to the idea of DAP; the "Middle Malaysia" and "Malaysian Malaysia". Are these allegations true? This paper was written specifically to provide information and explanation on the connection of 1Malaysia concept with Islamic teachings. Thus, this paper is an attempt to get an accurate picture of the concept of 1Malaysia from Islamic perspective and the transformation of leadership by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib Razak.

Bernama (2010) reported Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak as saying that the idea of 1Malaysia concept among others, focuses on the spirit of tolerance and social justice. So, the concept is in line with Islamic principles. The concept of 1Malaysia also suits with the requirements of Islam. Commenting on this particular issue after attending the Putrajaya Premier Lecture Series by Profesor Dr. Ali Al'Amin Mazrui entitled "A Muslim Century: Myth or Reality? In Search of Modern Pillars of Wisdom", Datuk Seri Najib said: These are the principles of tolerance and social justice which also has been given emphasis by Allah s.w.t. (in Surah Al-Hujurat; 13): "O mankind! we have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allâh is that (believer) who has at-Taqwa. Verily, Allâh is All-Knowing, All-Aware." (Najib, 2010a) This verse mentions about the facts that God has created man in a form of group, tribe and nation so that we know each other and differ in terms of devotion to Allah. Najib said the concept means that all parties need to respect cultural diversity as it is something created by Allah, so that people can adopt the way of life and leadership, thus appreciate what God has created. Earlier in his lecture, Professor Ali Al'Amin Mazrui said that the concept of 1Malaysia triggered the approach that continues the tradition of democracy in a multi-ethnic society such as recommended in Islam. He said Malaysia is a country that is more democratic than other Muslim countries where the Malays are with other people and the Muslims learn about the management of multi-ethnic society. He also said that the management of a plural society, including inter-ethnic alliances, is a key challenge for the Malays not only in Malaysia but also in Indonesia and the Malay Archipelago as a whole. He also said that the Malays were found scattered in many countries and authorities in some countries involved. They are often surrounded by non-Malays. He raised another question; are the Malays given a test by God to learn the skills to manage diversity and democratization? "Is the evolution of various religions of the Malays meant to be a preparation for multi-cultural leadership in the future. Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib also said that there is a principle of Islam that has been cultivated and the concept of 1Malaysia is in line with Islamic teachings. All parties need to respect cultural diversity as it is something created by Allah so that people can practice how to live together. He also said that Islam was a way ahead in practicing tolerance, social justice and recognizing the women's status in the society. (The Star, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010)

## **3. THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD S.A.W. AS ASPIRATION**

What is the basis and core of the idea of 1Malaysia? Is it derived from the Quran and Hadith? Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib said that in the tradition of Malay Muslims, if one was lost in the middle of the road, we are taught to return to the basis through a process of reflection and introspection. So, after months celebrating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad's s.a.w., let us take the spirit and

learn the course of his history as a great example of transformational leadership. He had successfully led his community from the age of ignorance (darkness) into the light of civilization.

Datuk Seri Najib (2009) also said that during the migratory history of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w., he had united the people of 'Aus and Khazraj. But nevertheless, later after that he also united the Muslims and non-Muslims as well. All efforts were done because Allah is aware of the importance of unity as the basic strength of the city of Medina at that time. Datuk Seri Najib further describes the core values that determine the national integration are; comradeship, discipline, respect of time, stick with promise, dedication, efficient implementation, diligence, and placing the public interest above self interest. Consequently, Datuk Seri Najib who takes over as the new President of UMNO, promises that he will empower and enhance the appreciation of the Islamic agenda and its implementation at all angles including spiritual, economic, social, or cultural life. The same has also been clarified by Datuk Seri Najib before government officials and civil servants in his prime speech to the civil service officers. He said: "In the case of the idea of "People First", let us reflect on the history of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. as a great leader, that he placed a high priority to the interests and welfare of the community. His last word shortly before death was my *Ummah*, my *Ummah*, and my followers." Further, as the new Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib calls upon all civil servants to take lessons from the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. who loves and caring to all people during his life.

As mentioned by Datuk Seri Najib to Women, Youth and Puteri UMNO Assembly earlier, either we like it or not, we must transform and change for the benefit of the people. Changing of bad attitude to good attitude is praiseworthy. We have to change from less friendly to more friendly, from selfishness to give more emphasis to the charity of the people, from laziness to hard working, changing from less serving to love to serve efficiently. If we are not able to change then we will fall. It is clear and very convincing that the idea of "1Malaysia: People First, Performance Now" which was introduced by Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak is the idea and philosophy that have aspirations from Islamic thoughts. It is an appropriate concept and consistent with the message of Islam and the da'wah carried out by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. which is to spread mercy to all mankind. (*Rahmatan 'il-'alamin*).

#### **4. BACKGROUND OF THE IDEA OF 1MALAYSIA**

As mentioned before, the idea of 1Malaysia has been introduced by the 6th Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib Tun Abdul Razak soon after he began his duties as Prime Minister on 3rd April 2009. The idea was announced in his inaugural speech upon taking over the duties of Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. In his maiden speech, he felt deeply responsible to pursue the agenda of the government to eradicate poverty, to restructure the Malaysian society, to broaden the access to quality education for all and to uplift the spirit of a new generation of dedicated services to fully contribute to Malaysia. Then, on the first day of his appointment as Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib has pledged to work hard without exemption and serve for the benefit and fate of the people. Commitment to serve the people and enhancing their income could be realized through a major transformation of the country with the spirit of '1Malaysia - People First, Performance Now '.

While speaking at the Civil Service Officers Monthly Assembly (MAPP) on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at PICC, Putrajaya, Datuk Seri Najib has clarified that this idea is not new. It is really a continuation of what was pursued since the late Tunku Abdul Rahman. Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's first Prime Minister has managed to consolidate through the inclusion of Singapore, Sabah and

Sarawak into the Federation of Malaya and further the formation of Malaysia in 1963. But then, Singapore has been removed from Malaysia. So far, the concept of 1Malaysia does not mean only the consolidation of physical, but more towards the unification of mind, the spirit of struggle, cultural and living standards regardless of ethnicity, race, religion and region or province. The Hon. Prime Minister has declared "Malaysia Day" which falls on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September as a public holiday since 2010. It is in line with our philosophy of inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak into Malaysia. This fact needs to be recognized by all that Malaysia is not only comprising the states in West Malaysia but also included Sabah and Sarawak after the decision made by them to join Malaysia in 1963. We also support government efforts to commit to memory the history of united Malaysia through the establishment of programs for the strengthening of national unity, racial integration and to organize various programs among the people of Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia.

## **5. THE MAJOR VALUES OF THE CONCEPT OF 1MALAYSIA**

Datuk Sri Najib in his personal website gives an explanation of some important values which need to be embedded within the machinery of the government and the public as well to achieve the concept of 1Malaysia. He has identified and elaborated eight values that are inter-related each other. The values are:

- The Culture of Excellence
- Perseverance
- Humility
- Acceptance
- Loyalty
- Meritocracy
- Education
- Integrity

### **5.1 The Culture of Excellence**

Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib really believes that in order to transform Malaysia to the level of success and higher achievements is by cultivating the culture of excellence. This is because if we have a set of values that determine our culture of excellence, everything will grow up from this culture practically. Islam teaches its followers that man are inheritors of this earth (Khalifatullah fi Al-Ard – the vicegerents of Allah on the earth) in order to balance the worldly life and the life in the Hereafter accordingly. Islam does not forbid its followers from working for the well-being in this world and to make charitable efforts for the Hereafter. The methods applied by Islam distinguish it from other systems. There are three trusts within the culture of excellence namely the principle of accuracy, performance-based leadership and the punctuality of time. The first trust in term of accuracy can be elaborated by defining Malaysian products and services which have excellent quality and values as determined by the world standard. Second, the government of Malaysia emphasizes on performance-based leadership which any performance can be measured thoroughly and making changes when necessary. Third, Datuk Seri Najib also wants all Malaysian to always be punctual and to be on time on every occasion. He also urged the multiracial society to remain united to strengthen unity that had existed all these years. He argued that when the country enjoyed unity and peace, the government can efficiently focus on development agenda for the benefit of the people.

## 5.2 Perseverance

It is difficult to define perseverance. But it can be described by certain examples. Datuk Seri Mohd. Najib tells about his personal life history while experiencing disappointment in the General Election of 1999 by winning a very small majority (only 241 votes) in the Pekan Parliamentary Constituency of Pahang. At that time, many people said that he will soon be a history. But in the General Election of 2004, within four years, he obtained a large majority of 22,922 votes. And then in the General Elections of 2008, he won the seat with large majority of 26,464 votes; the biggest majority votes of Barisan Nasional as compared to other Parliamentary Constituencies. These are among the characteristics of resilience and perseverance which was elaborated by the Prime Minister himself when discussing about the values of 1Malaysia. This value, he added, should be cultivated by all leaders and people so that they can face any trials and tribulations that may hit them at any time.

## 5.3 Humility (*Tawaduk*)

Humbleness or humility is very valuable traits. This value is one of the praiseworthy attributes. As leaders, they must have always visiting their community to solve problems and not to restrict themselves from helping the needy people. The philosophy of "People First" is significant to this aspect. The people must be paramount to every elected leaders. The habit of listening to people's problems and grievances, especially the poor and needy would give a good image to the leaders. The Hon. Prime Minister asserted that the people want leaders who are always ready to serve and to go to the field even though they hold high positions.

## 5.4 Acceptance

Datuk Seri Najib said that there were significant differences between tolerance and acceptance. When we mention tolerance, we do not really like it, but we will accept it because there is no choice. But if we discuss about acceptance, it is important for us to move from the idea of tolerance per se to accept the reality around us. Acceptance means that we are willing to accept things. If we are willing to accept anything, it means we take the matter with consent. Therefore, our ability to look at all matters positively is better than mere tolerance.

## 5.5 Loyalty

The value of loyalty is the fifth value. It is a root of reliability. Usually, loyalty is associated with country, organization, and human relations. Loyalty to the organization does not mean that an employee cannot criticize his or her organization. But it should be voice out through proper channel, at the right time and place. Every criticism should be constructive and must be accompanied by good intentions and sincerity. Another thing that is associated with loyalty is the ability to make positive judgments. Without our loyalty to the nation, independence has no meaning at all. Malaysians should strive hard to defend their country from any internal or external threats which can be harmful to the faith, race and national security.

## 5.6 Meritocracy

The sixth value is the value of meritocracy. Michael Young in his book "The Rise of Meritocracy" which was published in 1958 has predicted that meritocracy will be the basis of trust in the ruling class of society in the century ahead. He formularized meritocracy as  $IQ + Effort = Merit$ . He also discussed in detail the basis of meritocracy in education and government. *Bumiputera* (sons of the soil) groups have IQs equivalent to non-*Bumiputera* groups. But the *Bumiputeras* groups need to

work harder and smart to grab the opportunity and to compete with the non-*Bumiputera* groups. The Hon. Prime Minister said that the rural communities need special consideration and not should be determined in the context of meritocracy. The government does not marginalize any opportunity to those who are really feasible. In addition to meritocracy, the government also hopes the competition will take place in the economic sector especially involving the private sector to stimulate the economy. What is intended by the government is implementing the principles of democracy within Malaysian style and the spirit and philosophy of the Federal Constitution.

### **5.7 Education**

The seventh value which is highlighted by the Prime Minister is education. He is of the opinion that education is life essential element that will create a culture of thinking and the application of knowledge in a positive manner. A holistic approach to education is vital for building the civilization of the nation. In addition, the integration of education with positive values will result in an educated society with good morality and integrity. The variety of knowledge in the national education system should not be an obstacle to foster national integration and to adopt a positive value system in a multiracial society. Malaysian education system is better than before. It is the main vehicle of communal vigour. We should reform the society through education system. Education system should spread the new idea of science and technology, humanism, attitude modification and goodness. Instead, our education system has been much more integrated. Our composite culture and our multi-religious heritage are highly valued. Parents and teachers should encourage more interaction among people of different communities and help reduce social ills. Nobody should be permitted to exploit religion for political purposes thus exacerbating communal tensions. We were much more tolerant.

### **5.8 Integrity**

The Eighth value of the concept of 1Malaysia is integrity. Integrity is a complement to the seven set of values which we explained before. This value is believed to be very important in shaping Malaysians to be constructive citizens in line with the concept of 1Malaysia. Integrity is the main tool to ensure that the seven values are upheld and all promises are kept. Once the Malaysians are able to fulfil the promise and become more transparent, they will have a strong foundation of trust. Integrity is the most part of the concept of 1Malaysia and the decisive factor to establish a developed Malaysia.

## **6. THE IDEA OF 1MALAYSIA IS NOT "ONE ISRAEL"**

There has been allegation that the concept of 1Malaysia is similar to the concept of One Israel. The concept of 1Malaysia is not similar to "One Israel" because 1Malaysia is a combination of the numeral "1" with Malaysia and the "One Israel", consisting of two words "One" and "Israel". We are not sure how one accused that the idea of 1Malaysia is originated from the concept of One Israel. Was it true what they say about One Israel?

The concept of 1Malaysia idea actually manifests an important concept that the country's ethnic diversity can be accepted by all and it is a source of strength. Historically, cooperation and solidarity attached to the nations and people in the country starting with what is called a "social contract" between the major ethnic groups in the country. Social contract is an agreement among the various ethnic groups through the process of cooperation and consensus towards self-government and the transfer of power from the British and manifested through the Alliance victory in 1955 Federal Elections. The success of Parti Perikatan (Alliance Party) was an evident of power

sharing and cooperation among multi-racial party which consists of UMNO, MCA and MIC and further they were able to achieve independence from British colonialism in 1957. The unity of Malaysian multi-racial society is the continuity of previous achievements and all the traditions of each ethnic group have long been assimilated into the national culture. The spirit of social contract is based on the spirit of friendship, cooperation and power sharing that was transformed in the struggle for independence and the drafting of the Federal Constitution. Consensus formula for power sharing has been agreed by all parties.

The concept of 1Malaysia does not connected to the slogan campaign of Ehud Barak's One Israel. In fact, APCO Worldwide is said to be involved with the campaign Ehud Barak's One Israel also appears to be a lie. APCO Worldwide has denied its involvement in the campaign of Ehud Barak's One Israel. Many parties do not feel happy to see the success of the idea 1Malaysia. So they attacked the idea and concept of 1Malaysia. They tried to destroy the noble intention of the government. It is clear that the concept of One Israel has no relevance to the idea of 1Malaysia. 1Malaysia idea actually manifests the attitude of togetherness, mutual understanding, mutual respect, peace and justice in a multiracial society like Malaysia despite the differences in religion, race and ethnicity. The relationship between the Muslim-non-Muslims will be more proper if it is based on religious teachings, faith and obedience to Allah. Islam as Al-Din is a holistic integration of human relations and community (including ethnic relations) with God, creatures, human beings and the human-environment relations. Thus, human and social relations are embodied in the teachings of Islam that emphasizes unity, peace, and harmony regardless of race and ethnicity.

## **7. THE AIMS OF 1MALAYSIA**

The concept of 1Malaysia aims to defend the right of the Malaysian people across all levels of society and ethnic groups. Datuk Seri Najib said that no one should feel left out or excluded from the national discourse and the mainstream. In the first Cabinet Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2009, the Prime Minister gave an assurance that the implementation of the concept of idea of 1Malaysia will not waive the government's affirmative policy to help the indigenous people. The policy will be implemented with just to those who qualify for any government aid. Strive hard and hard working for the people is a priority and the government is a catalyst for strengthening the people-oriented government without neglecting the welfare and needs of any racial or ethnic group. Government will not ignore the *Bumiputera* (sons of the soils) group through existing affirmative policies in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Constitution.

The concept of 1Malaysia is also completely different from the idea of "Malaysian Malaysia" as championed by the DAP (Democratic Action Party). The oppositions are trying to confuse certain parties. The concept of 1Malaysia means that we stand, we think and act as a nation (one people). The Prime Minister said, if we create a program to build houses for the needy, we must not forget the people of Sabah and Sarawak who live in long houses. If we fight to eradicate poverty, we must look at poverty across all communities, whether urban, rural estates, new villages or indigenous groups. The first person who introduced the Malaysian Malaysia slogan is Lee Kuan Yew when leading People's Action Party (PAP) based in Singapore and he had hoped to become the Prime Minister of Malaysia at that time. Tunku Abdul Rahman (Malaysia's first Prime Minister) sees the establishment of Malaysian Malaysia as a subversive ideology attempting to get the support of the Chinese community. The essence of Malaysian Malaysia slogan conflicted with the Federal Constitution, and among others, denied the rights and privileges of the Malays. Lee

accused that Malaysia does not allow differences of opinion, citizens are not allowed to convey their feelings and Malaysia, he said, wholly owned by certain race only.

The Hon. Prime Minister explained that there is no rigid basis for determining the basic principles of the concept of 1Malaysia. What is important is the attitude of acceptance, mutual respect and trust between people of various races. The Government wants the people to practice and the attitude of acceptance and no longer tolerance. This is because tolerance carries the connotations that people have to tolerate at all time and it does not show any improvement although time had changed. On the other hand, the attitude of acceptance will lead to greater understanding that everyone understand and accept the reality of people of various religions and races that will lead to a source of strength rather than weakness. The concept of 1Malaysia emphasized on the unity and harmonious relationship between the multiracial society. Good ethnic relations will contribute to the quality of life. Based on the Quality of Life Index, we find that ethnic relations can be related to many things in our lives. Quality of Life Index includes eleven aspects; the world of work, transportation and communication, family life, security and public order, income distribution, health, housing, environment, social involvement, and finally, culture and entertainment.

Sport appears to be creating a sense of patriotism among Malaysians as well as strengthening the relationship of race and national integration. There exist efforts to use sports as a tool to foster a good race relations. The Chinese already have involved in playing *sepaktakraw* which previously was dominated by the Malays. The Malays have been playing basketball, even before the game was dominated by the Chinese. We need some kind of sports that can strengthen the image of Malaysia internationally. To name a few, golf, badminton, hockey, soccer and squash are the sports that can elevate people's sense of patriotism. People can cry if the country lost in certain sports, and so people may cry when the country won in a game. Sports can actually help to realize the idea 1Malaysia.

The 1Malaysia concept is in line with the aspirations of the Malaysian people. It is also on the right track in uniting the multiracial society and resolving any conflicts. Although Najib is only one year in his position, the concept of 1Malaysia manifests his bright ideas, futuristic vision and a positive move to unite the Malaysian people. The 1Malaysia concept is one of Najib's transformation efforts. Others include administrative enhancement programs within Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), New Economic Model (NEM) and National Key Result Areas (NKRA). His mission in NKRA includes reducing crime rate, fighting corruption, widening access to quality and affordable education, raising the standard of living of the low-income group, improving infrastructure in the rural and remote areas, and improving public transport.

## **8. THE CONCEPT OF 1MALAYSIA FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES**

Islam has over the past 1432 years championing the idea of ethnic relations and human rights. Islam guarantees the rights of non-Muslims and citizens of the world. This assurance will strengthen ethnic relations in the country which was ruled by Muslims. The Universal Islamic Declaration on Human Rights in Paris on September 1981, among others recognizes human rights to live, human freedom, the right of equality and prohibition of unlawful discrimination, the rights of justice, fair trial rights, the right to protection from abuse of power, right to protection from torture, right to dignity and reputation protection, refugee rights, minority rights, the right and obligation to participate in the management of public affairs, the right to profess any religion, the right of speech, right to practice religion, right to assembly and association, right to involve in economic activities, right to the protection of property, status and dignity of workers, the right of

social security, family rights and related to it, rights of married women, rights to education, rights of privacy and the rights to move and stay. Of the 22 items, which is related to ethnic relations in Malaysia is the rights of minorities. It is expressed by Allah ( in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 256); "There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the right path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in t $\hat{a}$ gh $\hat{u}$ t and believes in All $\hat{a}$ h, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. and All $\hat{a}$ h is All-Hearer, All-Knower."

"There is no compulsion in religion" means none of the non-Muslims who may be forced to embrace Islam. They also have the right to believe any belief system and allowed to seek knowledge to find the real truth. Nobody else is allowed to insult or downgrade other religions, or incite others to do so. Respect the sentiments and feelings of people of other religions are a duty for Muslims. Everyone is entitled to have the freedom to perform religious practices in accordance with his belief system. Islam permits non-Muslims to freely practice their rights according to their religion in terms of personal, to maintain religious institutions and to establish educational institutions and finding funds for religious purposes.

The concept of 1Malaysia also assures the rights of minority groups and women will be defended, and ensure that they are located within the mainstream of the country's progress and development. They included the minority groups of indigenous people, orphans, senior citizens, special children, the disabled, poor and single mothers. Grace of faith, piety and good health is a blessing of Allah that there is no par. Favor of a life of peace, prosperity and harmony are favor of God. The concept of 1Malaysia which emphasizes also the implementation of values to achieve national integration and solidarity among various races in the country. Unity and consensus in the community are the main prerequisite for achieving developed country status. Therefore, the concept is in line with Islamic teachings. Islam also teaches mutual understanding, mutual trust, mutual respect among people of various races. It is the recipe or the ingredients to the continuity of progress and prosperity that we have achieved since independence.

Islam emphasizes unity and gives great attention to the question of unity. Narrated from Anas bin Malik: "I heard Rasulallah s.a.w said: "Anyone who wants to have his provision expanded and his term of life prolonged should maintain ties of kinship.". (Imam A-Bukhari, 1999, p. 112) Is it the ties of kinship that can promote unity? Did it enhance the strength of ties of goodwill, love and harmony? Strengthening relations here means all efforts to promote love and human relationships in the context of family, community, society and nation. As we know, Rasulallah s.a.w. focuses on the friendly neighborhood relations. If the element of the neighborhood attracts the attention of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w., then the Prophet must had given more attention on the issues of community and nation in the context of a multiracial society. At one time, Rasulallah s.a.w. thought that the neighbor will inherit property. 'Aishah reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Jibril, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, kept on recommending that I treat neighbours well until I thought that he would order me to treat them as my heirs. The strength of faith will make us good in this world and the hereafter. The empowerment of faith will enable us to dominate all aspects of life. Cooperation and solidarity make us strong and mighty. Conflict and divergence bring disaster. The strength and weakness of a nation depend on unity. Our unity will be perfect if we have the will and sincerity. Leaders and scholars we often talk about unity. Old Malay proverb also deals with the question of unity, including "United we are strong, divided we fall".

Islam has long emphasized the aspect of solidarity and unity. Two words only really have enough faith to tie neatly the Islamic brotherhood of Muslims. Islam rejects any form of assessment based on human skin color and race. All Muslim men who pray before a direction that have same one direction and one purpose to worship God. Allah clarifies in Surah Ali 'Imran verses 102-103: "O you who believe! Fear Allâh (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. [Obey him, be thankful to him, and remember Him always], and die not except in a state of Islâm (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allâh. And hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allâh (i.e. This Qur'ân), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allâh's favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His grace, you became brethren (in Islâmic Faith), and you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allâh makes his Ayât (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc..) clear to you, that you may be guided."

Allah has stressed the fact that human were created in the form of man and woman. God created different people and nations as well as different tribes so that people can recognize each other and to build up social interaction. This is explained by Allah s.w.t. in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13: O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allâh is that (believer) who has Al-taqwa [i.e. one of the Muttaqûn (pious). Verily, Allâh is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

Ibn Kathir while interpreting this verse explains that the equality of all peoples in terms of origin is associated with the unique creation of Adam and Eve from soils. The advantage between the creations is the sense of religiosity; i.e. those who are more loyal to Allah and follow the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. Although men are created different in skin and colour, this does not prevent them from establishing ties of goodwill, friendship and social interaction especially in the context of multiracial society like Malaysia. (Ismail Bin Kathir Al-Qursyi Al-Dimashqi ( n.d. ), p. 350)

## **9. CONCLUSION**

Malaysia has fairly succeeded in creating unity and integration from the angle of ethnicity. There is still room for improvement and Islam with its universal values could be used as the catalyst in order to promote better unity, harmony, tolerance, mutual respect and mutual understanding. Let us, preserve our mutual understanding and cooperation which we had established since 47 years ago. Within the spirit of 48th Independence Day of Malaysia, and as our thankfulness to Allah. Minorities in our democracy are at a clear advantage. They have fair opportunities and enjoy the economic cake of the country. Per capita income of the Malaysians is among the highest in the region. Quality of ethnic relations in Malaysia is still modest and the condition is under control. Since independence there have been more than three riots (incidents). But it should be lessons for all Malaysians so that we could learn from previous history and strive hard to strengthen our togetherness, mutual understanding, solidarity, unity and mutual respect. As a conclusion, The concept of 1Malaysia will not be achieved without the help of Allah. Every citizen of Malaysia must be a responsible and discipline person and this is the main characteristic of the fulfillment of the spirit of 1Malaysia. We should always thank to Allah by appreciating every bounties from Allah by improving our ability to upgrade our knowledge and our economic condition as well family's economics status and contribute to our society and country.

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