

The Essences of Unity in Cultural Diversity: An Analytical Review on Prophet's Farewell Address

Hakikat Perpaduan dalam Kepelbagaian Budaya: Analisa terhadap Khutbah Terakhir Nabi

Ibrahim Shogar

Department of Computational and Theoretical Sciences, Kulliyah of Science, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

Article progress

Accepted: 4 Mac 2020

Reviewed: 25 Mei 2020

Published: 31 Mei 2020

*Corresponding author:

Ibrahim Shogar, Department of Computational and Theoretical Sciences, Kulliyah of Science, International Islamic University Malaysia

Email: shogar@iium.edu.my

Abstract: Appreciating goals of the United Nations and emphasizing its role, the global community is currently united by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in many aspects. Close cooperation between countries and helpful assistance between communities are taking place among the different nations regardless of their cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. In many verses, the holy Qur'an reminds about the unity of mankind and the necessity of their cooperation. Developing some theoretical principles to articulate and sustain foundations for such unity is of a great value, not only to the multiethnic and multicultural societies, but also to the entire global community. The religious heritage, especially the great legacy of Islamic civilization, can provide useful guidelines on this matter. This article investigates fundamentals of unity in multicultural society, based on Prophet's Farewell Address, which delivered in a great gathering of companions (*sahabah*) during Prophet's final pilgrimage to Makkah. Adopting the analytical method, the paper has derived from the Sermon eight principles as essential elements for unity in cultural diversity. It includes the principle of universal humanity, the principle of basic human rights, the principle of accountability and others. Although foundations of unity in multicultural society can be investigated empirically, however, the method adopted by this article was theoretical and analytic in nature. It analyzes the basic ideas of the above historic document to formulate the principles. Besides the Sermon, the religious texts (Qur'an and Sunnah) which related to unity of mankind, peace and harmony are analyzed. The paper has concluded that a careful study and wise application of the identified principles of unity is essential for effective management of multicultural societies to create harmony and peace to improve the quality of life.

Keywords: unity in diversity, universal declaration, principles of unity, the Farewell Address, multiculturalism, human rights

Abstrak: Menghargai matlamat PBB dan peranannya, masyarakat global kini bersatu dengan wabak COVID-19 dalam pelbagai aspek. Kerjasama erat antara negara dan bantuan antara komuniti berlaku antara pelbagai negara tanpa mengira latar belakang budaya, etnik, dan agama. Dalam banyak ayat, Al-Quran mengingatkan tentang kesatuan umat manusia dan perlunya kerjasama. Membangunkan beberapa prinsip teoretikal untuk mengartikulasikan dan mempertahankan asas-asas kesatuan itu sangat bernilai, bukan hanya kepada masyarakat multi-etnik dan multikultural, tetapi juga kepada seluruh masyarakat global. Warisan keagamaan, terutama warisan tamadun Islam, dapat memberikan garis panduan berguna mengenai perkara ini. Artikel ini menyelidiki asas-asas perpaduan dalam masyarakat multikultural, berdasarkan Khutbah Perpisahan Nabi, yang disampaikan dalam pertemuan para sahabat (*sahabah*) semasa ziarah terakhir Nabi ke Makkah. Menggunakan kaedah analisis, makalah ini berasal dari lapan prinsip khutbah sebagai elemen penting untuk kesatuan dalam kepelbagaian budaya. Ia merangkumi prinsip kemanusiaan sejagat, prinsip hak asasi manusia, prinsip

kebertanggungjawaban dan lain-lain. Walaupun asas-asas perpaduan dalam masyarakat multikultural dapat diselidiki secara empirikal, namun kaedah yang digunakan artikel ini bersifat teori dan analitik. Ia menganalisis idea asas dokumen bersejarah di atas untuk merumuskan prinsip. Selain Khutbah, teks-teks agama (Qur'an dan Sunnah) yang berkaitan dengan kesatuan umat manusia, keamanan dan keharmonian juga dianalisa. Makalah ini menyimpulkan bahawa kajian yang teliti dan penerapan prinsip kesatuan yang telah dikenal pasti penting untuk pengurusan masyarakat multikultural yang berkesan untuk mewujudkan keharmonian dan kedamaian untuk meningkatkan kualiti hidup.

Kata kunci: kesatuan dalam kepelbagaian, deklarasi sejagat, prinsip kesatuan, khutbah perpisahan, multikulturalisme, hak asasi manusia

INTRODUCTION

As a Divine revelation, the holy Qur'an provides all the necessary guidelines for human welfare and success in this world and the next. Such guidelines can be deduced directly from the Qur'anic verses, or from the practices of the Prophets (S.A.W.S) (*sunnah fi'liyyah*), or from his the sayings (*sunnah quliyah*), or his the approves (*sunnah taqririyah*). These are the original sources of knowledge, in Islamic perspective, which guide a human being for correct thoughts, rightful conducts and virtuous acts. As such, it is not only reasonable to investigate principles of unity in cultural diversity in the Prophet's Sunnah (S.A.W.S), but also necessary, as Sunnah is a practical form of the holy Qur'an. The analytical study of the Prophet's Farewell Address to drive foundations of unity in cultural diversity is, therefore, important.

Creating harmony or even unity among members of a community of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity is increasingly becoming important in globalizing world of today for practical purposes. Harmony, peace and sustainable development are major implications of a successful management of such communities. For better life, everything needs to learn how to live with and benefit from others in the created world. Although our communities today are geographically separated by nation-state boundaries, in fact we are living together, in terms of exchanging values, cultures, ideas, perspectives, and other cultural elements. These cultural aspects of contemporary community have created a new definition to the 'globalization'. Researchers are now observing the gradual shift that occurring in concept of 'globalization' from the economic and political sphere to cultural sphere, where various issues, such as human rights, religion, ethnic heritage and arts, health and quality of life, family and women issues, vulnerable groups, the rural life, environmental ecosystems, and preservation of species are addressed. Many observers insist that the cultural sphere should be the final goal of economic and political concept of globalization, which can profoundly facilitate and enrich the process of communication to open minds to new ideas and experiences, and strength

the theory of forming the finest universal values for humanity. (Rifkin, Jeremy 2001).

To realize such noble goals of unity in cultural diversity, it is necessary to explore the great legacy of human history, especially heritage of Islamic civilization. On 9 Dhu al-Hijja, 10AH (6 March 632), at Mount Arafat, the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.S) delivered his Farewell Sermon (*khutbah al-wida*) to provide the guiding principles for meaningful life and to create foundations of unity and solidarity in the newly born Muslim *Ummah* (nation) at that time. The inspiring source of the Sermon was the holy Qur'an, which calls for unity in its absolute sense.

Aiming at exploring foundations of unity in cultural diversity, this article analytically reviews the text of the Prophets Farewell Sermon, which will be divided into specific themes based on the investigated foundations or principles, as in the (table 1). Besides the introductory part, the entire subject of the paper has been divided into three basic parts. The first part introduces the reader to the text of the Prophet's Farwell Sermon, its historical background and its major themes. The second part investigates principles of unity in the cultural diversity, as derived from the Prophet's Address. The last part of the paper summarizes the basic ideas and draws the important conclusions.

BACKGROUND OF PROPHET'S FARWELL SERMON (خطبة الوداع)

The essence of religious experience, in Islamic perspectives, is to realize that a human being is responsible to change himself, society and environment so as to conform to the divine pattern. Only by the change of self and development of society, based on Divine guidance, man fulfils the Divine will on the earth. (Al-Faruqi 2002). As such, the global community is in dire need to be united against all kinds of disaster and hardship, such as hanger, disease and war, which facing mankind today. Harmony, unity and solidarity among members of the newly born Muslim community were the major concern of the Prophet (S.A.W.S) in the last few years of his life. Historically, the Farewell Sermon

(*khutbah al-wida`*) of the Prophet was delivered, for that purpose, during the Farewell Hajj (pilgrimage), on 9 Dhu al-Hijja 10AH (6 March 632).

The Content of the Sermon

The Sermon is a composite of few statements made by the Prophet (S.A.W.S) during the pilgrimage of that year, at three different places, Mina, Muzdalifa, and Arafat. Therefore, the Sermon is narrated in different composts and in different lengths, both in books of Hadith and books of Prophet’s biography (*Sirah*). The longest version available is in “*al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*” by Muhammad Ibn Ishaq (d.151H/761) and in “*Al-Bayan Wa al-Tabiyeen*” by Abu Othman al-Jahiz (d.255H/869) Although the Sermon is based on narratives, however, its content and its themes are established by the holy Qur`an and emphasized by other texts of the Sunnah of Prophet (S.A.W.S). The sermon, therefore, summarizes the core principles of the holy Qur’an and Sunnah that related to human rights and creating unity in multicultural communities for a meaningful life. It illustrates the Islamic contribution to develop foundations of universal human rights in the globalizing world of cultural diversity. The text of the Sermon and its basic themes are in the table (1) bellow, together with its Arabic version in the bottom:

The Major Themes of the Sermon

No.	Texts of the Sermon	Themes / Principles
1	"O People! Lend me an attentive ear, for I may not meet you after this year any more. Therefore, listen carefully to what I am saying and take these words to those who could not be present here today.	<i>The principle of conveying the true message</i> (derived from principle of source of guidance) bringing attention of the people indicate importance of the message)
2	O People! just as you regard this month, this day ,this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of everybody as a sacred trust. Return things entrusted to you to their owners.	<i>The principle of basic human rights</i> . Here focuses on two of the most fundamental rights: 1. The right for life (protection of human life is a principle objective of Islamic law ‘ <i>Shari`ah</i> ’. Therefore, taking life of a human being is totally forbidden, regardless of

		faith, except in specific cases) 2. The right for ownership (right of personal ownership is basic pillar of a healthy economic system)
3	Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that he will indeed reckon your deeds.	<i>The principle of responsibility and personal accountability</i> (mankind must understand that he/she is responsible and personally accountable either in this world or the next (this principle establish two other principles which are (i) principle of moral values, and (ii) principle of rule of law and justice)
4	“If a black slave is appointed to govern you according to the Book of Allah, listen to him and obey him.”	<i>The principle of common interest</i> (includes the principle of good governance which based on principle of the universal humanity and no discrimination) (This part of the texts is found in <i>Sahih Muslim</i>).
5	"Allah has forbidden you to take usury (Riba), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital is yours to keep, you will neither inflict nor suffer any inequality. Allah has judged that there shall be no interest and that all interest due to Abbas Ibn 'Aal-Muttalib be waived."	<i>The principle of a healthy economic system</i> , including ownership and fair distribution of the wealth

6	"Every right arising out of homicide in pre-Islamic days is henceforth my feet, completely abolished, and the first such right that I waive is that arising from the murder of Rabiah Ibni al-Harithiah."	<i>Principle of invalidating the negative traditions and customs which violate the basic human rights.</i> (many of such traditions and customs were found in Arab community in pre-Islamic period, and even in many of contemporary communities)
7	"O people! unbelievers indulge in tampering with the calendar in order to make permissible that which Allah forbade, and to prohibit what Allah has made permissible. With Allah the months are twelve in number. Four of them are holy, there are successive and one occurs singly between the months of Jumada and Sh`aban."	<i>Principle of rule of law</i> (derived from the principle of responsibility and personal accountability) (playing around with rule of law is immoral and impermissible)
8	"Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will be able to lead you astray in big things, but be aware of following him in small things."	<i>Principle of Divine revelation as source of guidance, values and commitment in human community</i> (following mere personal desires leads to regrettable consequences)
9	"O People, it is true that you have certain rights over your women but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they	<i>The principle of a healthy family as foundation of a healthy society.</i> (Family, in Islamic perspective, is the foundation and the constitutional part of the community, therefore no a healthy society without a healthy family.

	abide your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness.	Observation and respecting the mutual rights between males and females in community creates a healthy environment for production and growth of new generations)
10	"Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well never to be unchaste."	<i>The principle of especial care and protection for the vulnerable groups in society</i> (Woman). Derived from the <i>Principle of a healthy family as foundation of a healthy community</i>
11	"O People! listen to me in earnest, fear Allah, and perform your five daily prayers, fast during month of Ramadan, pay taxes (Zakat) of your wealth, and perform Haj if you can afford it."	<i>The principle of importance of the religious practices</i> (rukun Islam) as indispensable part of the theoretical part of the religion (rukun Iman) (derived from the <i>principle of necessity of religion in human society</i>)
12	"All mankind is from Adam and Adam is from earth, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a White except by piety and good action."	<i>The principle of universal humanity and no discrimination.</i> (human beings are universally equal by birth, regardless of colours, ethnicity, and languages. The discriminating among people advantages should be based only on their efforts, the gained qualities and skills)

13	<p>"Learn that a Muslim is a brother to a Muslim, and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not therefore do injustice to yourselves."</p>	<p><i>The principle of Islam as foundation for brotherhood among Muslim</i> (although Muslims are brothers based on faith, but this brotherhood does not eliminate the personal ownership as the case in communism). This principle can be derived both from: (i). <i>the principle of universal humanity and no discrimination among people</i>, and (ii) <i>the principles of a healthy economic system</i>.</p>
14	<p>"Remember one day you will meet Allah and answer your deeds. So beware, do not astray from the path of righteousness after I am gone."</p>	<p><i>The principle of responsibility and personal accountability</i> (remembering the death, and judgment day is a powerful source of morality and social commitment)</p>
15	<p>"O People! No Prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Therefore, be careful and understand words I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and the Sunnah and if you follow these you will never go astray."</p>	<p><i>The principle of source of guidance</i> (from Islamic perspective, the Divine revelation, i.e., the holy Qur'an and Sunnah, are the permanent and the final sources of guidance to all mankind, that guide the human intellect)</p>
16	<p>"All those who listen to me now should pass on these words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my</p>	<p><i>The principle of conveying the true message</i> (derived from the principle of source of guidance), accordingly, disseminating of knowledge and true</p>

	<p>words better than those who listen to me directly."</p>	<p>information is important. It is unethical to spread fake, fabricated and false news as the case most of social media today.</p>
17	<p>"O Allah, be my witness, that I have conveyed your message to Your people."</p>	<p><i>The principle of conveying the true message</i> (derived from the principle of source of guidance. Allah, as creator and source of everything, provide the total framework of our acts, value system, and the worldview)</p>
<p>Prophet's Sermon in Arabic</p>		
<p>خطبة الوداع</p> <p>أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، اسْمَعُوا مِنِّي أُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ، فَبَيِّنِي لَا أُدْرِي، لَعَلِّي لَا أَلْقَاكُمْ بَعْدَ عَامِي هَذَا، فِي مَوْقِفِي هَذَا. أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنَّ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ وَأَعْرَاضَكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ حَرَامٌ إِلَيَّ أَنْ تَلْفُتُوا رَبَّكُمْ، كَحَرَمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا فِي بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا. وَإِنَّكُمْ سَتَلْقَوْنَ رَبَّكُمْ فَيَسْأَلُكُمْ عَنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ عِنْدَهُ أَمَانَةٌ فَلْيُؤَدِّهَا إِلَى مَنْ انْتَمَنَتْ عَلَيْهَا. وَإِنْ كُلُّ رَبِّا مَوْضُوعٌ وَلَكِنْ لَكُمْ رَعُوسٌ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلُمُونَ وَلَا تَظْلَمُونَ، وَقَضَى اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا رَبِّا، وَإِنْ رَبِّا عَمِي الْعِبَاسُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْمَطْلُبِ مَوْضُوعٌ كُلِّهِ. وَأَنْ كُلُّ دَمٍ كَانَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوْضُوعٌ، وَإِنْ أَوَّلُ دِمَائِكُمْ أَضْعُ دَمِ عَامِرِ بْنِ رَبِيعَةَ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمَطْلُبِ، وَإِنْ مَأْتَرُ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوْضُوعَةٌ غَيْرُ السَّدَانَةِ وَالسَّقَابِيَةِ وَالْعَمَدِ قَوْدٌ، وَشِبْهِ الْعَمَدِ مَا قُتِلَ بِالْعَصَا وَالْحِجْرِ وَفِيهِ مَانَةٌ بَعِيرٌ فَمَنْ أَزْدَادَ فَهُوَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ. أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَدْ نَبَسَ مِنْ أَنْ يَعْبُدَ بَارِضَكُمْ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّهُ يَطْعَمُ فِيمَا سِوَى ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ رَضِيَ بِهِ بِمَا تَحْقِرُونَ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ عَلَى دِينِكُمْ. أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ﴿ إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ يُضَلُّ بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُحْلِقُونَ عَامًا وَيَحْرَمُونَ عَامًا لِيُوَاطِنُوا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فَيَحِلُّوا مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ ﴾ إِنَّ الزَّمَانَ قَدْ اسْتَدَارَ كَهَيْئَتِهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ﴿ وَإِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا ﴾ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حَرَّمَ تَلَاثَةٌ مِتْوَالِيَةٌ وَرَجَبٌ مَضْرُوبٌ، الَّذِي بَيْنَ جَمَادَى وَشَعْبَانَ. أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنْ لِنَسَائِكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ حَقًّا، وَلَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ حَقٌّ، لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَ أَلَا يُوطِنَنَّ فُرْشَتَكُمْ غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا يُدْجَلَنَّ أَحَدًا تَكَرُّهُنَّ بِيُوتِكُمْ، وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِفَاجِسَةٍ فَإِنْ فَعَلْنَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَذَنَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَتَضْرِبُوهُنَّ ضَرْبًا غَيْرَ مَبْرَحٍ فَإِنْ انْتَهَيْنَ فَلَهُنَّ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا، فَإِنَّهُنَّ عِنْدَكُمْ عَوَانٌ لَا يَمْلِكُنَّ لِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ شَيْئًا، وَإِنَّكُمْ إِنَّمَا أَخَذْتُمُوهُنَّ بِأَمَانَةِ اللَّهِ وَاسْتَحْلَلْتُمْ فُرُوجَهُنَّ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَاعْقِلُوا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَوْلِي. أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ، فَلَا يَحِلُّ لِأَمْرِيءٍ مَالُ أَخِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ طَيِّبِ نَفْسٍ مِنْهُ، أَلَا هَلْ بَلَغْتُ، اللَّهُمَّ اشْهَدْ. فَلَا تَرْجِعُوا بَعْدِي كُفْرًا يَضْرِبُ بَعْضُكُمْ رِقَابَ بَعْضٍ فَإِنِّي قَدْ تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ مَا إِنْ أَخَذْتُمْ بِهِ لَمْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدَهُ، كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَسُنَّةَ نَبِيِّهِ، أَلَا هَلْ بَلَغْتُ، اللَّهُمَّ اشْهَدْ. أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ رَبَّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، وَإِنْ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، كُلُّكُمْ لِأَدَمَ وَأَدَمٌ مِنْ تُرَابٍ، إِنْ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْفَاكُمْ وَلَيْسَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ فَضْلٌ عَلَى عَجَمِيٍّ إِلَّا بِالْقَوَى، أَلَا هَلْ بَلَغْتُ، اللَّهُمَّ اشْهَدْ" قَالُوا: نَعَمْ قَالَ: فَلْيَبْلِغِ الشَّاهِدُ مِنْكُمْ الْغَائِبَ.</p>		

Reference: Ibn Ishaq, M. (d.151H/761). *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*. (Arabic version) (Dar al-Kotob al-ilmiiyyah, Beirut- Lebanon-2004), pp 670-671.

Table (i)

Analytical View on the Sermon

The Prophet's Sermon can be viewed from various dimensions, such as the legal and the basic human rights perspectives. These two parts are considerably investigated by the contemporary Muslim scholarship. The present paper, however, aims to focus on foundations of unity in cultural diversity as embedded in the Sermon. An analytical view on the text enables to derive many relevant themes and principles, as presented in the above table (1), and explain how it can serve the unity in a multicultural society. Including subtopics, these foundations can be summarized into eight basic principles as following:

- (i) The principle of universal humanity and no discrimination (theme 12) (this theme also includes the subtheme (13) which emphasizes on special brotherhood among Muslims that established by *Tawhid* (unity of God);
- (ii) The principle of basic human rights (theme 2) (the subtheme 6, i.e., invalidating the negative traditions and harmful customs which violate the basic human rights, is also related to this principle;
- (iii) The principle of responsibility and personal accountability (theme 14) (this theme establishes two other principles (i) the principle of rule of law and (ii) principle of moral values);
- (iv) The principle of source of guidance (theme 15) (this theme includes the subtheme of conveying the true message, repeated in 1, 16,17);
- (v) The principle of necessity of religion in human society (theme 11) (this theme also includes the principle of Divine revelation as source of knowledge, guidance, values and commitment. It emphasizes that the religious practices '*rukun Islam*' are indispensable part of the theoretical part of the religion '*rukun Iman*');
- (vi) The principle of family as foundation for a healthy community (theme 9) (this includes the principle of especial care for the vulnerable groups in society, especially 'Woman and children, in this case' (subtheme 10);
- (vii) The principle of common interest (theme 4) (this establishes the principle of good governance to create and protect the common interest);
- (viii) The principle of a healthy economic system (theme 5). (Based on this principle Islam forbids all unhealthy economic activities, such as usury (*riba*) and gambling.

Aiming to explain how these principles serve unity in multicultural society, the proceeding part of the paper elucidates the above principles of the Prophet's Sermon as essences of unity in cultural diversity.

THE ESSENCES OF UNITY IN CULTURAL DIVERSITY

This part provides a brief explanation on how each of the above principles can contribute in finding unity and harmony in cultural diversity. Unity, peace and harmony are the key factors for community development. However, creating unity in a multicultural society is a major challenge to many countries today. The analytical study of the Prophet's Farwell Address can provide useful foundational principles, as shown above, which enables to deal with this challenge for better management of the contemporary multicultural societies. Beside its religious value, the study of this historic document is very important because the Prophet (S.A.W.S.) was grasping the chance of largest multifaceted gathering before his death in farewell pilgrimage to disseminate principles of unity and solidarity among the multicultural Muslim community that had newly born. The author of this paper presupposes that a wise application of the above principles provides the basic guidelines for effective management of the multicultural society that creates unity, harmony and social development. How every principle can contribute to achieve this noble goal is explained in the proceeding part of this article.

The principle of the universal humanity with no discrimination (theme 12)

The principle of unity of mankind in their humanity and dignity is a basic right that identified by '*The Universal Declaration of Human Right*' (UDHR), which was proclaimed and adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly in 1948. The first Article of (UDHR) declares that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". And the Second Article emphasizes that "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty".

The Prophet's Sermon which delivered on 6 March 632 (9 Dhu al-Hijja, 10 H) declares that "All mankind is from Adam and Adam is from earth, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any

superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white except by piety and good action.” (theme 12). Before that the holy Qur`an had declared: [“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, then made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other”¹. (Qur`an, 49:13)]. In fact, the basic part of UDHR Articles, if not all, is already declared by the holy Qur`an and Sunnah of the Prophet (S.A.W.S), but in a religious context. The principle of unity in humanity with no discrimination is emphasized by many of Qur`anic verses (e.g., Qur`an, 4:1, 23:12, 32:7, 37:11, 49:13), and explicitly highlighted and articulated by the Prophet` s Sermon.

The Universal Declaration of Human Right, thirty (30) Articles, is regarded as a milestone document in modern history of human rights, but it is still far behind from full recognition and application, except by few countries. This fact is proved by atrocities, wars and wide violation of human rights in many parts of the world today. Unity in diversity, peace and development for all is possible when the principle of universal humanity is adopted as a common standard for all people and by all nations.

One of the positive aspects of ‘globalization’ is that people with different ethnic backgrounds, cultures, and religions, are need to live together due to many factors. As obviously approved by the current pandemic of COVID-19, there is a dire need for unity and solidarity of the global community, regardless of ethnicity, religion, culture, colour, nationality or geographical location. This will emphasize the role and importance of United Nations (UN) and its organizations in the near future. In fact, such humanity based unity is already introduced by the holy Qur`an. The above explanation obviously emphasizes that if principles of unity in humanity is properly understood and wisely applied it will provide a solid ground for unity in cultural diversity.

The principle of the basic human rights

The progress of nations and civilizations, in terms of respecting the basic human rights, economics and social development, is a gradual process. For instance, the slavery-based economy which violate the basic human rights was flourished as basic business system in the pre-Islamic Arab community, which named by the holy Qur`an as (*Jahiliyyah*), i.e., the period of ignorance. However, through guidance of the holy Qur`an, the pre-Islamic Arab community escaped the ignorance and become a leader of the world in science and technology,

civilization and recognition of human rights. Different forms of violation of human rights have taken place across human history in different parts of the world until this moment. Therefore, developing a new culture that is based on universal humanity and respecting the basic human rights is necessary.

The basic human rights, according to the Universal Declaration, are such as the right of life, religious freedom, liberty, freedom of thought and expression, personal security, the right of ownership, and the right for protection of law. Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) emphasize many issues highlighted by the Prophet` s Sermon which could be well appreciated as a human rights’ declaration. However, UDHR provides more details, some of which might be inconsistent with Islamic perspective, such as the absolute equation between different genders (males and females). Islam adopts justice (*Adalah*) rather than equality (*Musawah*)

Human rights, from Islamic perspective, are not of equal values, thus the basic right are identified by the five principle objectives of Islamic law (*Maqasid al-Shari`ah*) which are: (i) the freedom of thought, especially the religious freedom; (ii) the right of life; (iii) the right of mental health, (iv) the right of progeny and reproduction, and (v) the right of personal ownership. Accordingly, protection of religion, human life, mind, reproduction, and property are protected by the top legislative authority, that is Almighty Allah. The Prophet` s Address highlighted two of these fundamental rights, which are the right of life, and the right of ownership. Protection of human life is the principle objective of Islamic law ‘*Shari`ah*’, thus taking life of a human being is totally forbidden, regardless of faith, except in specific cases. The right for ownership is also protected by the five principle objectives, because the right of personal ownership in Islamic perspective is a basic pillar of a healthy economic system. As emphasized by the UN universal declaration, observing the basic human rights definitely have positive implications on unity of multicultural communities.

The principle of responsibility and personal accountability (theme 14)

Responsibility and personal accountability (*taklif*) are the basic philosophy of Islamic worldview in this world and the next. Al-taklif, responsibility or obligation laid down exclusively upon man based on his mental and physical capability. It is declared by the holy Qur`an and emphasized by Muslim scholars that responsibility is the basis of man’s humanity, its meaning and content. It constitutes his cosmic significance and the scope of man’s moral action. Accord to al-Faruqi, man’s acceptance of responsibility and its burden puts him on a higher level than the rest of creations. Based on taklif,

¹ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ (13) (الحجرات)

man stands under the obligation to change himself, society and environment so as to conform to the divine pattern in the natural world. (Al-Faruqi 2002)

This principle establishes two other principles: (i) the principle of rule of law and (ii) the principle of moral values. Without accountability the social life will run in chaos and after life have no real meaning. The Sermon of the Prophet (S.A.W.S) highlighted this principle: "Remember one day you will meet Allah and answer your deeds. So be aware, do not astray from the path of righteousness after I am gone."

People, in multicultural, have the right to exercise their freedom but within the rule of law. Observation of moral values and rule of law, definitely leads to unity, based on the fact that rule of law create system for all. Liberty and freedom presuppose responsibility and obligation; therefore they are extended at different levels in different communities. Islam extends the scope of freedom of thought, but with the condition that the personal freedom should not contradict with rights of others or with the public interest. Therefore, many things regarded as personal in what is called 'free communities' such as sexual relationship and abortion, are considered as violation of public interest in Islam; because such activities which seems to be personal determine future of community and the entire nation. Respecting rule of law definitely leads to unity because all are equal in front of law, regardless of the religion, ethnicity, or social rank. Emphasizing this principle, the Prophet (S.A.W.S.) in his Sermon reminds about the personal responsibility: "Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that he will indeed reckon your deeds." The holy Qur'an urge believers to uphold the justice as following: "*O you who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is more close to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do*" (Qur'an, 5:8).²

Rule of law is a solid foundation for unity in multicultural society and among the different groups. Application of justice, however, does not mean that only the people are convicted according to the rule of law, but it also includes other things such as the principle of accountability and personal responsibility, social justice, and fair distribution of the wealth.

The principle of source of guidance (theme 15)

Mankind needs guidance to deal with the complicated problems of life and answer his philosophical questions on life and after life. The secular perspective introduces "Science" as source of knowledge and guidance. This clearly adopted by many of modern communities. In spite of the practical value of science, however, it has failed to answer the fundamental questions of human thought on the metaphysical world and some aspects of the physical world. Islam introduces the Divine revelation as a major source of knowledge and guidance beside nature. Human mind and his faculties of knowledge are the effective tools to interact with both nature and revelation. This approach is capable of answering all questions of human thought on physical and metaphysical worlds. It provides both knowledge and moral values which constitute the foundation for unity in diversity, because it provides the common ground for virtues acts and sound behaviors for individuals, community and government. For instance, the knowledgeable and morally honest and truthful person is admired by everybody, and the same with the truthful government with the public. Islam, as final religion to mankind, is very concerned with moral values. Knowledge and good character are always appreciated.

The principle of necessity of religion in human society (theme 11)

The concept of religion in Islam is absolutely unique among the other religions of the world. Islam considers every activity conducted in piety and uprightness as a religious duty. The very activity of business, the very projects of scientific research, and the very purpose of history, are declared by Islam as form of religious activity based on righteousness. This concept of religion which defines all human activities as religious based on their objectives is much needed today.

The anthropological studies and modern psychology emphasize that religion is a human phenomenon, in the sense that it is necessary in every human society for various factors. Regardless of its nature, religion is generally regarded as source of spirituality, moral values, and social commitment. Therefore, role of religion in managing society is crucial and thus it recognized even by secular communities. Every religion consist of two parts: (i) the theoretical part, i.e., system of beliefs, which establishes principles of the worldview and explains meaning of life, and (ii) the practical part, i.e., ritual practices, which emphasizes the theoretical part. The Prophet's Sermon indicates the indispensable relationship of these two parts, and emphasizes the importance of the religious practice to maintain the theoretical part: "O People! listen to me in earnest, fear Allah, and perform your five daily prayers, fast during

² يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاَنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (المائدة) (8)

month of Ramadan, pay Zakat (taxes) of your wealth, and perform Hajj if you can afford it."

In fact, modern social studies are increasingly highlighting the crucial role that religion can play in creating harmony in the community, when it properly understood and wisely used for that purpose. Thus, religion can be a major source of unity as well as it is a source of spirituality and moral values. Behind all the religious diversity, according to Islam, there stands the primordial religion of God, named by the holy Qur'an as *al-din al-hanif*, with which all mankind are born before acculturation make them adherents of this or that religion. Religious tolerance, accordingly, should transform confrontation and reciprocal condemnations between the religions into cooperation and a scholarly investigation of the genesis and development of the religions for betterment of human community. (Al-Faruqi 2002)

The principle of a healthy family as foundation of a healthy society (theme 9)

Family is the constitutional unit of the community. Therefore, a healthy family is the solid foundation of a healthy society. This principle also includes the principle of especial care for the vulnerable groups of the society, especially woman, disabled, and children. The Prophet's Sermon says: "Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well never to be unchaste". (theme 10)

In contrary to modern secularism, the main objective of Islamic social system is to fulfil the Divine will as presented by revealed sources. Al-Faruqi, rightly observes that the entire endeavour of society ought to be actualization of divine patterns. Islam wants human society to pursue its everyday activities: what to eat and drink, to have lodging and comfort, to make the world a garden, to enjoy desires, friendship, to investigate nature, to develop sciences and technology, to associate and build socio-political systems, in short, doing all such things righteously, without lying or cheating, without stealing or exploiting, without injustice, is considered as a form religion that fulfils the will of God. (Al-Faruqi 2002)

The social order of Islam is universal. It envelops the whole of mankind without exception, by virtue of being human. However, to see the picture from the top, we need to look how Islam builds a healthy society and a united nation? According to the holy Qur'an, there are various circles for unity. The largest one is the unity that based on humanity. Accordingly, all mankind are united as they are from the same substance, i.e. clay from which Adam was originated. Then, they are related to the some father and mother, who are Adam and Eve (Hawa). The

Prophet's Sermon has emphasized this point. The main objective of highlighting the humanity based unity is to eradicate any claim of superiority among people based on ethnicity, colour, income, tribe, language, social rank or position in society. The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously approved this fact recently.

The second largest circle of unity in Islamic context is the unity that is based on faith. Those who believe in the core principles of unity of God (*Tawhid*) have unity which establishes rights and obligations among themselves. Accordingly, Muslims are (brothers), as clearly termed by the holy Qur'an, and emphasized by the Sermon. Thus, all Muslim communities, in their different geographical locations, constitute a single *Ummah* (nation). This second circle of unity does not contradict with the first circle, but it is larger than the concept of nation-state which established in post-colonial era. Therefore, the concept of *Ummah* in Islamic context is different from the idea of 'nation-state' country which used in other contexts. Although 'sectarianism' is generally not acceptable in Islam, but the idea of political parties in its modern context may constitute the third circle of unity in Muslim communities.

The most foundational circle of unity in Islamic context, however, is the family which plays a vital role on the whole system of the community. Therefore, family management is protected by the five principle objectives of Islamic law (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*). In fact, a strong family as a solid foundation for a healthy community is highlighted by all divine religions, but building a solid family has become a major challenge for modern free society.

The principle of common interest (theme 4)

A leadership and good governance are necessary tools for unity of the country and nation. Without government it might be not possible to create the common identity and the common interest which unifies the nation. Through many narrations, known as (*القصاص القرآني*) stories of the Qur'an, the holy Qur'an provides principles of leadership and good governance.

Human beings are mainly concerned with the personal interest and they act based on that. Thus, *interest* logically leads to diversity rather than unity, because every individual or every group tries to maximize his own interest. This argument is initially true, but it must be taken in consideration that there are two types of interest: personal and public or individual common interest. The individual people are naturally inclined to and derived by their personal interests against the common interest, because the first one is immediate and direct while the second is indirect and less clear even though strategically it might be more important.

Therefore, this principle is closely related to the principle of leadership and good governance.

The key function of the government is to create the common interest to the nation and promote it to be less subtle and more important than the personal interest. This noble goal could be achieved by both proposing creative plans for the nation to make social and economic development; and also by creating programmes to develop the human capital which make citizens are fully aware of the common interest. Common interest is usually imbedded in core values of the nation, such as religion, unity of the nation, rule of law, political system, and good governance. The Prophet's Final Sermon has provided good examples for unity based on common interest. He said: "If a black slave is appointed to govern you according to the Book of Allah, listen to him and obey him." This principle is well explained by the case of Barak Obama, first black man who became a president of United States of America.

The principles of a healthy economic system (theme 5).

Good and healthy economic system, in Islamic perspective, is an indispensable part of a healthy community system. Therefore, Islam considers social justice is a basic aspect of a healthy economic system. Thus, as a principle, the Prophet (S.A.W.S) in the Sermon has forbidden all modes of unhealthy economic activities, such as usury and gambling. The Islamic economic system focuses on three ethical elements: (i) ethics of production and resource allocation, (ii) ethics of resource management, and (iii) ethics of distribution of the wealth (goods and services) in the society. It includes combination of various institutional entities, decision-making processes, and patterns of consumption that comprise the economic structure of Islamic community. Thus, the Islamic economic system aims to deal with three basic questions: (i) what to produce?, (ii) how to produce and in what quantities?, and (iii) how to distribute the output of the production? In other words, the Islamic economic system is mainly concerned with how the various agencies and institutions (public and private sectors) are linked together in collaboration, how information flows between them, and how wealth can be distributed?

The analysis of economic systems traditionally focused on comparison between capitalism and socialism; and the relationship between the actual market and planned economies. However, the categorization of economic systems now is expanded to include other topics and models. The dominant forms of economic systems today are based on mixed (market-oriented) economies, including the Islamic economics.

Social Justice, fair distribution of the wealth, eradicating hard-core poverty and suffering are the major

objective of healthy economic system. Therefore, any economic activity that does not serve this objective must be invalidated in Islamic economics. Thus, some activities in conventional economic system, such as gambling, money interest (*riba*) and business on illegal items such as alcohol and drugs, are forbidden. Final goal of Islamic economic system is to create social justice which provides solid ground for social unity among the different groups.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of ethnic, religious and cultural difference, the global human community is increasing getting closer to each other. The current COVID-19 pandemic has shown the value of unity and cooperation among the different countries and nations. Unity in diversity has various intellectual and social implications on society. For instance, the contemporary educational studies have proved that diversity in education creates curiosity and development of scientific enterprise. Investigating essences of unity in cultural diversity is valuable to emphasize the goal of harmony, peace, and cooperation which are necessary for development of every community. Based on analytical study of the Prophet's Farewell Sermon, this paper has investigated and identified eight basic principles as essences of unity in cultural diversity, which are:

- i. The principle of universal humanity with no discrimination;
- ii. The principle of basic human rights;
- iii. The principle of responsibility and personal accountability;
- iv. The principle of source of guidance;
- v. The principle of necessity of religion in human society;
- vi. The principle of family as foundation for a healthy community;
- vii. The principle of common interest; and
- viii. The principle of a healthy economic system.

The paper has investigated how these principles can serve unity in ethno-cultural diverse society. The content of these principles, which derived from the Prophet's Farewell Sermon, is also emphasized by '*The Universal Declaration of Human Right*' (UDHR), which was proclaimed and adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly in 1948. Multiethnic, Multiculturalism and multi-religion are the major characteristics of many countries today, including Malaysia. Careful study and wise application of the above principles definitely assist for better management of multicultural societies to create harmony, peace and social development.

Acknowledgement

This article is part of research project, entitled “*Systemic Approach on Book of Life: Methods, Theories and Implications*” (Reference Code: *FRGS/1/2018/SSI04/UIAM/02/1*). This research project is granted by Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), therefore, the author acknowledges MOE for the financial support, and IIUM Research Management Centre (RMC) for encourage and good management. The author, also, acknowledges all writers who their valuable thoughts are benefited in this work; especially those who their texts and conclusions are cited.

REFERENCES

- Abdul Azeez, Y. & et al., (2019). *The Farwell Address of the Prophet Muhammad: A Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Malaysian Journal of Syariah and law, Vol 8, No. 2, December 2018, ISSN: 1985-7454, E-ISSN: 2590-4396.
- Ali, M. (n.d.). *The Farewell Address of the holy Prophet Muhammad* (P. B. U. H): the Islamic Charter of Humanity. <http://muslimcanada.org/farewell.htm> (accessed on 20th April, 2020).
- Ansari, M. F. (2001), *The Qur`anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society*. (Islamic Book Trust –Kuala Lumpur)
- Bunge, M. (1996). *Finding of Philosophy in Social Science* (Yale University Press- Canada)
- Al-Faruqi, I. R. (2002), *Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*. The International Institute of Islamic Thought (Herndon, Virginia –USA)
- Farouq, M. O., (2018). *The Farwell Sermon of Prophet Muhammad: an Analytical Review*. Islam and Civilisational Renewal, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 322-342 (2018).
- Al-Ghazali, M. (1989). *Mizan al-`Amal*. (Dar al-Kotob al-`ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon.)
- Ibn Hisham, A. (d.183H). *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*. (Arabic version) Dar al-Sahabah Lilturath, Tanta, Egypt (2007).
- Ibn Ishaq, (d.151H/761). *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*. (Arabic version) (Dar al-Kotob al-ilmiyyiah, Beirut- Lebanon-2004)
- Jahiz, U. (d. 255H /869). *Kitab al-Bayan wa al-Tabiyin* (Maktabat al-Khanji, Cairo, Egypt-1998)
- Iqbal, Muhammad (1996), *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Institute of Islamic Culture (Islamabad - Pakistan)
- Iqbal, M. (2007). *Science and Islam*. Greenwood Press, USA.
- Ibn Khaldun, A. *Al-Muqaddimah* (Arabic version) (Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmimmah, Beirut- Lebanon).
- Mele, P. and Polese (2010). *A Brief Review of Systems Theories and Their Managerial Applications*. Service Science 2(1/2), pp. 126 - 135, © 2010 SSG
- Mohammad R. M. et al., (eds. 1986). *Muslim Contribution to Science*. (Kazi Publications, Lahore, Pakistan)
- Mutahhari, Murtada (1985). *Society and History* (International Relations Department- Tahrán)
- Mutahhari, Murtada, *Understanding the Uniqueness of the Qur'an*. Translated from the Persian by Mahliqa Qara'I, (Al-Tawhid Vol I No. 1-3 Muharram - Rajab 1404 AH)
- Osman B. (2014). *The Islamic Civilization in Modern World: Thematic Essays*. Ubd Press, Brunei Darussalam.
- Shogar, I. (2018). *Fundamentals of Scientific Thinking in Islamic Tradition*. Revelation and Science (Vol. 08, No. 01, 1439H/2018) 38-49
- Siddiqi, M. (1984). *The Qur`anic Concept of History*. (Islamic Research Institute- Islamabad, Bakistan)
- Taylor, C. (1992). *Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition”* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tylor, E. (2010). *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*. The first edition was published in (1871); it digitally printed by Cambridge University Press. PDF format is available <https://ia802205.us.archive.org/32/items/primitivculture01tylouoft/primitivculture01tylouoft.pdf>
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Publications of United Nations. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf