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Wasatiyyah Discourse according to Muslim Scholars in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Wasatiyyah concept is often referred to as the appropriate method practiced in the application of all aspects of human life. This is due to the fact that moderation and balance is the best approach in eliminating extremism in all matters. Yet, this concept which is upholding the principle of Islam is often being misunderstood by most people. The contributing factor is that there are few people who put *wasatiyyah* as a platform to justify all means to achieve his personal ambitions. Thus, in order to provide a thorough understanding of the *wasatiyyah* concept, this paper will discuss the extent to which this ideology is, from the perspective of Muslim scholars in Malaysia. This study will use the method of document analysis to discuss the matter in composite. Study results showed that according to Muslim scholars in Malaysia, *wasatiyyah* means fair, the best, selected, moderate and balanced. Even with different definitions, it consists of entirely positive meanings. Additionally, *wasatiyyah* also means that Islam disagrees with the extremist group that symbolizes their triviality in knowledge and inflexibility in facing various issues and questions. On the other hand *wasatiyyah* requires an attitude of balance / intermediary to highlight the characteristics of justice. Wasatiyyah concept according to Muslim Malaysia is indeed also in line with the concept introduced by the government, as it sourced from the Koran and Hadith. However, from the point of implementation it is seen as something that is not comprehensive.

Key wrods: *discourse, wasatiyyah, scholars, Muslim, Malaysia*

Introduction

Establishment of the Institute of *Wasatiyyah* announced by Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on 17 January 2012 is one of the government's latest initiatives to promote the concept of moderation and balanced movement in all aspects of life. The concept of *wasatiyyah* and moderation is appropriate to be practiced in Malaysia to curb extremist activities in all matters. Modesty and balanced are the best approach in eliminating extremism, as violence which is confronted with violence would only lead to more destruction. When the world is in a state of fear with various crises such as humanitarian, political and economic crises, the concept of *wasatiyyah* is the best method to overwhelm these disorders (Utusan Malaysia Online 01/24/2012).

Based on the description above, it is understood that the concept of *wasatiyyah* is a noble effort in creating a prosperous generation in accordance with the composition of the various races in Malaysia in order to maintain peace and harmony attained. However, humans are normally not able to create a method that is fair, as it is beyond of their power and capability. Justice demands knowledge, either in the aspects of soul care, heart demands along with the balance preservation with other living creatures.

Therefore, the method is not taken unless it is sourced from Allah and Prophet Muhammad SAW. The question is, in country's determination to promote the concept of *wasatiyyah*, what is meant by this concept? Why must *wasatiyyah*? How is the mode of implementation? Will the introduced concept of *wasatiyyah* is based on the Koran and Hadith in all its aspects? This is to prove its authenticity to ensure that the concept can really be embraced and applied in daily life in accordance with the government's desire to see the people of this country to always practicing the concept *wasatiyyah* in any aspect of life.

Therefore, this paper is trying to dwell on the question above according to the discourse of Muslim scholars in Malaysia. In an effort to describe the *wasatiyyah* discourse, the authors can not refrain from quoting some writings and views of Muslim scholars in Malaysia who either supporting or opposing the *wasatiyyah* system introduced by the government. The opposition meant in this paper is a demand to implement the concept as a whole and not only in part of the aspects in life. The authors cited their views to get a clearer and comprehensive picture on the newly introduced concept.

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Definition of Wasatiyyah from the point of Language:

From the point of language, Ismail Ibrahim (2012: 5) defines *wasatiyyah* derived from the Arabic word *wasat* which means middle or intermediate. Abdul Hayei Abdul Sukor (2011 2: 13) also defines *wasata* as a place that is located in the middle of equal length around it. It is also said as a praiseworthy attributes, because there is no extreme elements of it, such as generous which is located between the lavish and griping, brave which is located between the cowards and brave blindly. The definitions of these two scholars were supported by Faris (1979 6: 108), Ibn Manzur (n.d.: 4832), al-Zabidi (1966 5: 238) and al-Asfahani (1970: 819).

However, the definition stated by Abdul Hayei Abdul Sukor is drawing criticism. As learned in his definition, *wasat* means something between the good and bad. al-Shamri (2005: 20-24) is among those who criticize this definition. According to his view, there is no halfway between something good and something bad. This is due to the use of the term *wasatiyyah* which is found only in two situations, *first*, when it was in between the two positions which are equally bad, as the generous among lavish and griping. Thus Islam does not accept the two features, as the Messenger of Allah prohibits the lavish attribute in his saying:

"The griping attribute put you away from Allah and heaven and even closer to Hell".

(al-Bayhaqi, 1990, *Sha^{c}bu al-iman*, chap. (74) *fi al-jawd wa al-sakha'*, hadith no. 10847, vol. 7, p. 428).

In the same way, the Koran disapproves lavish attribute in Surah al-A^{c}raf verse 31. *Second*, when it is between two conflicting positions (good and bad). In this case, the meaning of *wasatiyyah* is as a metaphor (*kinayah*) against the bad things rather than good. For example, when it is said "He/She is in the middle of being lavish and griping", then that meant that he/she is stingy. According to al-Shamri this possibility is what it meant by the supporters of this opinion.

However, the meaning of *wasatiyyah* in the first condition is the truest according to those who did verification (tahqiq), because the second condition is in the form of metaphor, whereas the fact is more important, followed by metaphor. In addition, if there are two mutually exclusive matters, then *wasatiyyah* are the third party and not the one between the two. For example, the saying "Islam is intermediate" is confusing if the meaning is Islam is a religion that is located between right and wrong, because it is understood that there are other religions, other than Islam, are better. But Islam is a perfect religion and the only religion acceptable in the sight of Allah SWT in al-Maidah verse 3 dan Ali ^{c}Imran verse 19.

Based on the explanation above, the characteristics of *wasatiyyah* specified by Abdul Hayei Abdul Sukor and JAKIM (Malaysia Department of Islamic Development) need to be refined. JAKIM (2011: 3), for example, states that *wasatiyyah* emphasizes balanced, fair and diversity to prove that Islam is able to sort and organize the community and establish the existence of superior civilization by creating the principle of unity in diversity and subsequently able to create a good state and forgiven by Allah SWT (*baldatun tayyibah wa rabbun ghafur*). If the balance in the faith meant by JAKIM is the Islamic faith which lies between lost and straight, then it is wrong, because it shows that there is other faith that is better than the Islamic faith. But if it means that there are other religions that believe in many gods and religion / belief which does not recognize the existence of god, then the *wasatiyyah* characteristics in this faith is true, as stated by Zulkifli Mohamad al-Bakri (2011: 101) which states that faith of monotheist is fair and modest as it is located between two extreme ideology, namely the availability of multi-god faith with faith without god. The argument was also supported by al-Sha^{c}rawi. n.d. 1: 372).

Zainal Kling (2012: 1) also added the definition of *wasatiyyah* according to language with fair, the best, selected (in quality), most refined (as art) and honour. His definition is supported by al-Jawhari (1987 3: 1167) dan Mustafa, et.al. (n.d. 2: 1031). In fact it is also consistent with the words of Allah in Surah al-Qalam verse 28:

*Said one of them, **fairer** (than the rest): "Did I not say to you (when you want to disappoint the poor people of their sustenance), `Why not glorify Allah (and cancel your bad plan)?"*

Ibn Kathir (1999 8: 196) has quoted an interpretation from Ibn ^{c}Abbas on the word *awsatuhum* in that sentence as the best meaning. al-Tabari (2000 23: 549) also states that the meaning *wasat* is *khiyar* and *afdal* (the best and fair). Many commentators gathered the two meanings (the best and fair) as mentioned above by Zainal Kling, without eliminating one of them. Among them are al-Zamakhshari (1998 6: 187), al-Shanqiti (1995 1: 45) and al-Haim (1992 1: 422). Although both words are different, but they have a same meaning, as fair is good and good is fair.

In addition, the definition of *wasatiyyah* by Zainal Kling as 'honoured' is found based on the Prophet's saying as the following:

*"When you ask from Allah for heaven, then ask Firdaus because it is the most **noble** of Heaven".*

(al-Bukhari, n.d. *Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-jihad wa al-sayr*, hadith no. 2581).

Thus it can be concluded that the meaning of the term *wasatiyyah* from the point of language according to Muslim scholars in Malaysia refers to the intermediate, justice, the best, and honoured. Although the term is being used in different context, but it is consisting entirely a positive meaning.

Definition of Wasatiyyah from the point of Term:

From the point of the term, Muhammad Mustaqim (2012: 12) defines *wasatiyyah* as a middle path approach, which means performing obligations and duties in a moderate, balanced, and fair in line with the requirements of religion as Islam is very concern with comprehensive balance and moderation in all aspects of life. Haron Din also defines *wasatiyyah* as a middle path and balance. According to him (2007: 44-49) Islamic principles in holding balancing policy between the spiritual and the physical is acceptable to the natural human habits, for Allah does not make instinct, passion, and strength in vain. Instinct needs to be pushed with a good purpose so that people can master it for a healthy development. Inclination to spiritual and physical attitude is unhealthy and unrealistic for the realization of security, prosperity and happiness in this world and the hereafter. His definition is also supported by M. Quraish Shihab (2011: 704) who stated that *wasatiyyah* is a position that is not washed away by materialism and not blew away high into the spiritual realm that is not grounded. Middle position makes a person to has the ability to gather the spiritual and the physical, material and spiritual together in all his/her behaviors and deeds.

Mohd Shauki also defines *wasatiyyah* as a middle approach and not excessive. According to him (2004: 301) Islam has a nature of intermediate in all the good teachings of faith, worship or morals. Such attribute becomes the main feature that distinguishes Islam from other religions. In this context, the attitude of religious extravagance that which is held by some people are not from the teachings of Islam, as Islam prefers moderate attitude in every aspect of their lives. In fact, Islam reminded his followers not to fall on two astray, which is being exaggerate or being negligent.

Wan Mohamad Wan Kamaruddin, Abdullah Md Zin and Khairil Annas Jusoh tend to define *wasatiyyah* as a moderation approach. Wasatiyah according to Wan Mohamad (2005: 1) is an attitude that does not take for granted and do not exceed the limit in doing something, but it does not meant to do anything less than Islam. Wan Kamaruddin (2012: 2) stipulates that *wasatiyyah* refers to the character of a person or group of people who to makes the principle of moderation as their way of life. Abdullah Md Zin and Khairil Annas Jusoh (Berita Harian: 01/27/2012) also defines *wasatiyyah* with the meaning of moderation and balanced practice that is anchored to the teachings of Islam as a whole for the benefit of the community and the world generally. However, Zainal Kling disagrees with the definition as stated by some scholars above. According to him (2012: 7) it is not possible that the moderate life is fair and balanced life, even if it is a poor and subsistence only life. Thus so, the moderation may bring negative consequences and less good if interpreted as a minimum or just alone meaning. Such interpretation is often the case and the practice of the community who was not able to achieve the level of excellence as asserted by *wasatiyyah*.

As such, he tends to define *wasatiyyah* as fairly or justly balanced or can also be interpreted as reasonable and suitable. Although other meaning is often highlighted as a middle point between the two ends or in between two poles (pole), or between two extreme positions, but the meaning of fairly balanced is a pointed sense of meaning by the term *wasatiyyah* itself. Balanced idea (*tawazun*) according to him could be perceived as a stationary state, and has a strong middle and has a pure compound between its various components. This balance is not tilted or biased, do not sit on the outskirt or the edge and all its components or elements falls and not compatible with each other and opposing each other.

Zainal Kling definition on the meaning of *wasatiyyah* is supported by al-Qaradawi. According to him (1977: 127) *wasatiyyah* means middle or just between two conflicting positions, with no inclination to one of them to deny the right of the others. Religious teaching that is *wasatiyyah* is in line with its system and legislative. It is a fair and balanced system which is unbiased, not excessive or too less.

Based on the explanation above, Muslim scholars of Malaysia generally agree to define *wasatiyyah* from the point of term based on the manner and purpose. The mean is through the justice, intermediate and balance approaches. This meaning was mentioned by al-Zuhaili (1991 2: 8-9) in his interpretation that defines the *wasatiyyah* as selected, fair, the best and is in intermediate in everything without exceeding limitations and negligent. In the matter of religion, not excessive and not neglecting duties are in line with the words of Allah in Ali ᶜImran verse 110. The objective is to ensure the well being of the world and in the hereafter. Thus it can be concluded that *wasatiyyah*, by definition, means denial of extremism and taking for granted any one thing, as it symbolized triviality in knowledge and inflexibility in facing many issues and questions. In contrast, it requires a balance of attitude to highlight the characteristics of justice.

Wasatiyyah Discourse according to Muslims scholars:

Discourse about *wasatiyyah* according to Siddiq Fadzil (2012: 78), one of the top leaders of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM) usually intensify during the onset of symptoms of triviality of understanding and loosening in the practice of religion manifested in various forms of religion negligent, the spread of permissive attitudes and cultural attitudes, hedonistic and materialistic that transcends the religious boundaries and during the onset of symptoms of various religious extremism transformation, arbitrary

committing violent acts in the name of religion, labelling other Muslims easily as Tagut, heathen, pagan, heretic and forcing his/her own opinion on those who hold other opinion (which have their own reasoning according to shari^{c}ah). Such atmosphere raised awareness about the need to restore *wasatiyyah* and the two thoughts into the mid-way of the fair and balanced.

Thus, to get a clearer picture on the discourse of *wasatiyyah* according to Muslim scholars in Malaysia, commentary begins by interpreting Surah al-Baqarah, verse 143 as follows:

Thus, have We made of you an Ummat justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves and We appointed the Qibla to which you were used, only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels (From the Faith).

Ismail Ibrahim, former Malaysian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (2012: 5) tends to interpret the word *ummatan wasatan* in this verse as a moderate and balanced people, in other word as the best community. His interpretation is also supported by al-Naysaburi (1996 1: 420) and al-Baidawi (1988 1: 91) in their interpretation stating that the letter *kaf* is used to express similarity (*li al-tashbih*), and when is placed on the word *ism al-isharah* (*dhalika*), similarity refers to the previous verse. Thus, these words mean "As We gave favor to you in the form of guidances or has shown great Qiblah (*awsat al-qiblah*), We also make you a great people".

Many Malaysian Muslim scholars also interpreted the meaning as justice. Muhammad Said (1971H. 1: 44), the author of *Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan* for example has interpreted the word *ummatan wasatan* as an intermediate, good and fair community. Similarly, the Deputy Director (Human Development) of JAKIM, Razali Shahabudin (n.d.: 4) defines the word as the selected community who have the dignity with superior features that differentiate them with all other peoples, because they inherited the characteristics of fair and balanced either in principle of faith, jurisprudence and the way of life. Abdul Hayei Abdul Sukor (2011 2: 13), the author of *Tafsir al-Muttaqin* when interpreting the verse, understands the word as balance, justice and prudence. He said that Islam is *wasati* in the administration and organization of society, not too rigid nor too soft, rigid in places that require rigidness and soft in places that require softness. Relationship among the people and the country was fairly balanced, people's personality are not crushed in the country's personality and also did not released till they are not shy to commit corruption, being greed and abusing. People should not be abandoned, they should be taught and admonished, not to knock on the head, but should be consulted and discussed. Some scholars' interpretation mentioned above is also supported by others, such as Abu Hayyan (1993 1: 595), Ibn ^{c}Atiyah (1993 1: 219) and al-Samarqandi (1993 1: 164) who interpreting the word *wasat* as justice. Furthermore, it is very appropriate to the meaning intended by the Prophet in his saying, which means:

"al-wasatu is justice"

(al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari, kitab ahadith al-anbiya'*, hadith no. 3091).

Based on the views of Muslim Scholars in Malaysia on *wasatiyyah*, it can be concluded that its meaning through interpretation of surah al-Baqarah verse 143 is fair and balanced. However, there are few scholars who distinguish the meaning of *wasatiyyah* with balance. Ghazali Basri (2008: 155 & 156), former Director of the Islamic Center of University Putra Malaysia said that *wasatiyyah* is more to a means or as an alternative approach, whereas *al-tawazun* is a condition that is born in a state of stability. That is, when it is said that Islam is *al-tawazun*, it means that Islam itself is balancing two different atmospheres in a harmonious, in line with the nature of men and the rule of Allah (*sunnatullah*).

For example, Islam demands a balance between the needs of the world and the hereafter. While *wasatiyyah*, in the other hand, is an alternative approach to the two extreme conditions. For example, to capitalism, wealth is the absolute right of an individual (capitalist), while for socialism, wealth is a joint ownership. This is clearly different from the concept of *wasatiyyah* in Islam, as Islam teaches that the wealth is absolutely belongs to Allah and men are entrusted to use as what necessary. Therefore, with that Islam is commanding almsgiving, charity, endowment and others.

The view of Ghazali Basri above is summarized and supported by Nurul Huda (2011: 5), one of the researcher in the Centre for Islamic Development Management Studies (ISDEV) Science University Malaysia (USM) who states that *wasatiyyah* is used for matters of life which is not determined by Islamic law, such as the distribution of wealth and politics power, while *al-tawazun* is used in matters related to the Islamic law, such as balancing the conflicting demands of both world and hereafter. This point coincides with the 1Malaysia concept which is whereby used to administer the affairs of the community in Malaysia. In particular, it aims to unite Malaysians of various races, religions and cultures.

According to the authors, this view contains a secular motive for having denied that *wasatiyyah* is not related to Islamic law, but the implications of the meaning shows that the 1Malaysia concept introduced by the government are not based on Islamic law. If that is the case, what is the use of *wasatiyyah?* Why the concept of *al-tawazun* which is based on shari^{c}ah is not chosen? As what is important for the people is that all the concepts created by humans to be centered on the requirements of shari^{c}ah. In addition, the true distribution of wealth and political power is not determined by Islamic law as his claim? Has not Allah SWT has revealed dozens of verses related to charity, endowment, almsgiving and others as evidences of Islam is concern about the less fortunate people?

Mohd Rapi (2010: 27), the author of the *The Koran, Civilization, Human and Political* states that the verses of the Quran that describe the question of politics and governance have proved that Islam is a religion that encompasses all fields. Consequently, Lecturer of Faculty of Shari^{c}ah and Law Islamic Science Universiti Malaysia, Nik Salida Shuhaila (Berita Harian: 09/06/2011) states that *wasatiyyah* could shape the community to keep in tandem with the religious order. Islamic presence in the Archipelago is to create a moderate society based on the principles of *wasatiyyah* or moderation based on the shari^{c}ah.

Unknowingly, Nurul Huda actually acknowledged that *wasatiyyah* and the idea of 1Malaysia have strong ties with Islamic law. As understood in the description and her argument (2011: 6) which states that when unity among multi-ethnic society is associated with *wasatiyyah* concept and at the same time the society also understand the concept, then it will be easily accomplished and strengthen. To strengthen her statement, she was arguing by quoting the words of Allah in the surah Ali ^{c}Imran verse 103.

Thus, the concept of *wasatiyyah* is very close to Islamic law, and even (as mentioned earlier), it is sourced from the Quran and Hadith. As such, it is exactly as what was said by Ibn Kathir (1992 2: 111) that as the Muslims is created to be the best, Allah SWT specially perfected us with a perfect shari^{c}ah, straightest system and a very clear doctrine.

In addition, the meaning of words *wasat* in Surah al-Baqarah, verse 143 in accordance with Prophet Muhammad's explanation is justice. Fair in question is certainly not from the perspective of common sense and human desires, but according to Islamic perspective. The practice of law or judgment is fair if in accordance with Islamic law. Instead, the practice which is ignoring Islamic law, even though only part of it, is injustice and transgressors (al-Maidah 5: 45&47), and if is rejected, could cause the perpetrator to fall into non-believer (al-Maidah 5: 44). In addition, the use of pronoun *na* on the word *wama ja^{c}alna al-qiblah* shows that Allah SWT has absolute power in determining the direction of the Kiblah. Humans must obey the rule. Obedience is necessarily transparent simply because of Allah SWT. By doing so, Muslims are expected to obey all that has been in Islamic law. al-Sha^{c}rawi (n.d. 1: 374) states that it is a test of faith from Him to know the men, either follow the Messenger of Allah or return to disbelief. In addition, the use of the word *yanqalibu ^{c}ala ^{c}aqibaih* (which means apostasy from the faith and turn to disbelief) is to mention those who do not want to follow the Messenger of Allah. This verse shows the firmness of the obligation to follow Islamic law. Those who do not mind to follow the Islamic law is regards as a person who obtains guidance (*al-ladhina hadallah*), proving that those who object the Islamic law is at lost. Thus, the above verse has made all Muslims to bow and obey all His commands and prohibitions. It is clear that this verse is therefore rejects the ideology that wants negligence in part of Islamic law.

Therefore, the Government through *wasatiyyah* approach as stated by JAKIM (2011: 4) to develop Malaysia to achieve developed nation status, fair leader and prosperous united people, rejects all violence and extreme approach that could destroy the peace and unity, and need to be supported from various quarters. However, it should be noted that the main purpose of Allah made the Muslims as a *wasatiyyah* people is to be the witnesses against other peoples in religious matters. Of course religious matter is not being narrowed down to faith alone, in fact, Islam is a complete (*syumul*) religion. Therefore, efforts to develop the country, forming a fair leader, bringing prosperity to the community, urged the good and prevent the disobedience is including in the religious obligations. Thus, it should be ensured that it is in line with the requirements of Islamic law.

Mohd Rumaizuddin (2011: 76), a lecturer in Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) stated that *wasatiyyah* future is dependent on the extent to which the policies is tied to Islam with a clear understanding, a willingness to meet the requirements of modern society and their various demands either in material or immaterial, having a strong influence in the community and is widely grown in the community. Therefore, the principle of *wasatiyyah* undertaken by the Government in 1Malaysia concept according to JAKIM (2011: 4) is an approach that is comprehensive and integrated that can solve the people's problems. *Wasatiyyah* demanded each people to practice their religious teachings in all areas of individual and community life. By focusing on faith and piety, unity and brotherhood and to enhance knowledge, *wasatiyyah* bring the whole of human life towards a more brilliant and success living in this world and the hereafter.

Siddiq Fadzil (2012: 85-88) noted the same that *wasatiyyah* is a key characteristic of Islam and should be manifested in all spheres of life, political, economic, education and others. *Wasatiyya*h political principles should be implemented with respect to the rule of law and the people. Thus the people are the source of power, the validity of a rule is subject to people consent. *Wasatiyyah* also need to be manifested in the economic field with the basic premise that the ultimate owner of all wealth is Allah SWT, and the human being is just a mandate receiver with limited rights in its management and utilization. *Wasatiyyah* economy does not allow monopoly so that the wealth is not confined only in the small group of tycoons. When the economy gap between classes is that broad, the government should intervene to restore *wasatiyyah* within the meaning of balance and social justice.

Wasatiyyah feature should also be applied significantly in the national education system with emphasis on balanced character building through a balanced curriculum, spiritual and physical, intellectual and moral, academic performance and love for the knowledge. Failure to implement *wasatiyyah* education has resulted in

generation who loss the balance, knowledgeable but not educated, have brain-but not moral, simply remember the facts but not able to solve the problem, simply know to ask for job but can not afford to create jobs.

Siddiq Fadzil view is focusing on the purpose of the *wasatiyyah* implementation. He looks at the extent of its success is dependent on being able to meet people well-being in various fields but also to avoid the existence of socio-economic gap in politics people. With such purposes, people should support its success. Not to mention, the Prime Minister's anxiety expressed in *wasatiyyah* convention at Hotel Pullman Putrajaya on 10-11 June 2011 should be a concern. Najib said: "Why corruption, maladministration, mismanagement and inefficiency often mark the Islamic country management? While we know that the teachings of Islam as contained in Quran and His Messenger's *sunnah* offers a clear guideline. The answer is, we should rectify our affairs before we can be the guidance to mankind as Muslims once before ". Explanation shows that he was thoroughly committed to combating the causes of setbacks of Muslims, such as corruption and others. As a result, the President of Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), Abdul Hadi Awang (n.d.: 7) asserts that the meaning of *wasatiyyah* is not performing Islam poorly or selectively or in patchwork. Not just building a perfect mosque but not praying there, establishing Bank Islam without the power to prevent usury, holding competition (*Musabaqah*) just to listen without making guidance in practice and probation, loss of property to corruption and abuse of power and mismanagement greater than aid to the right and in conclusion upholding good imperfect, and growing disobedience. Then it is not eligible to show the model of *wasatiyyah* in Islam and not qualified to be a witness in this world and the hereafter.

Abdul Hadi Awang's view above explained that the main cause of Muslims setback, as worried by Najib, is the implementation of Islam in imperfect, selective or patchwork way. Such negative culture should be fought so it not is a cancer in a country. Therefore, the introduced *wasatiyyah* concept must be bounded with the Islamic policy. According to Information Chief of PAS Terengganu Scholars Hall, Nik Muhammad Zawawi Salleh (http://dupahang.wordpress.com/2012/03/15/wasatiyyah-najib-tak-sama-dengan-cara-rasulullah/) the real method of *wasatiyyah* is from the religion of Islam itself. So all principles or approaches adopted but contradicts with Islam is not regarded as *wasatiyyah.* According to him, *wasatiyyah* prescribed in Islam has matters that can be discussed and some matters that can not be negotiated, such as the policies concerning Islam. Hence, Islam is the basis of *wasatiyyah* policy that gives justice to all races and religions.

According to Khadijah Mohd Khambali, et. al (2012: 11), a lecturer in the Department of Faith, University of Malaya (UM), the practice of *wasatiyyah* concept in a multi-religious, customs and cultural traditions country such as Malaysia actually is a practice which has successfully founded, formed, and developed society with peace and prosperity, who are rooted from the practice of tolerance and befriend each other as commanded by Islam. It helps in avoiding contention, strife and aggression among religions which is also guided by a spirit of togetherness and helping organized by their religion. The patterns of social, political and economic is greatly influenced by the softness traditions and ethics and it is influenced by religious values which are passed through generations from the time of the arrival of Islam in the archipelago region generally. Such practices and human development in Malaysia is very unique and is a perfect example of a multi-ethnic country which successfully putting Islam in the mainstream and at the same time maintain the productive stability and cooperation among all races in Malaysia.

The description by Khadijah Mohd Khambali above clearly prove that there are many applications of *wasatiyyah* and its phenomenon in Islam in all sides of life, as each commanded by Islam contains elements of justice to ensure the stability of the whole people in a multi-religious, customs and cultural traditions country. In addition, the practice of the *wasatiyyah* in Malaysia, according to her (ibid: 12) can be seen when people are often able to resolve their internal and external problems in negotiations and consultations instead of force and violence, the women are decent and honorable and can participate in various activities of political, economic, social development without a very significant restriction. Ismail Ibrahim (2012: 11) clarifies *wasatiyyah* approach in foreign relations or international context in which *wasatiyyah* is taking diplomatic network construction approach which respects the idea of universal well-being and prosperity. In doing so, Malaysia according to JAKIM (2011: 9) is committed to cooperate in fighting against the radicals and rejecting the destructive extremism. The radicals and extremists, though a minority in society today, but has been rampant in all corners of the world and destabilizing the society who love peace and security. So in this context, civilized people would like to see this world is ruled by the moderates, to overcome the harmful extremists.

Therefore, Islamic *wasatiyyah* is back into important themes in present discourse as Islam is connected to a variety of symptoms of violence and terrorism nowadays. Siddiq Fadzil (2012: 82) recognize it, without intended to deny that there is violence and acts of violence committed in the name of religion, but he said the trigger is not actually stems from the religion itself. Symptoms are generally more due to political, social, economic factors as cruelty, oppression, corruption and others. The fact is Islam is not a religion of violence, but a religion of mercy. It is the manifestation of Allah's love and mercy, as the Messenger of Allah is sent to the mission of universal equality, carrying the right to enjoy the fruits of Islam not only to Muslims, but also to all human beings, including non-Muslims.

Malaysia is experiencing racial stability, peace, tolerance and freedom of religion because even though Islam is the official religion of the country but it does not ignore the role of other religions. Although the Malay language is regarded as the national language but the country does not forget the role of other languages. The special position of the Malays and the Bumiputeras of Sabah and Sarawak without denying the legitimate interests of other communities is a strong evidence of *wasatiyyah* principles adopted in the Constitution. Thus, the former Deputy Rector Islamic College University of Malaysia (KUIM), Abdullah Md Zin (http://komuniti.shahalamkini.com/2012/2012/06) states that even though Islam was given the position of the highest legislative and administrative, other religions still be assured by the Constitution and freely practiced in peace and harmony.

Zainal Kling (2012: 17) the Head of Heritage History and Socio-cultural Cluster of the National Professors' Council of Malaysia stated that *wasatiyyah* values in together will unite the hearts, feelings and thoughts of the people in the pursuit of progress and development in the efforts to safeguard the interests of fellow citizens and distributing the wealth fairly so that all levels of society will feel the well-being, safety and happiness together. In proving the matter, JAKIM (2011: 5) has outlined seven aspects of the *wasatiyyah* implementation desired by the government, such as: *wasatiyyah* in religious life, education, legal, social and cultural development, economics, government governance and the context of international relations. Therefore, Razali Shahabudin (n.d.: 10) states that the country's leadership of Malaysia regards unity element as a key component in determining the success of the country. Unity to be raised is not founded on the basis of extreme, radical and fanatic to a race and ethnicity, but is formed on a mold of unity and brotherhood, of course is consistent with the concept *wasatiyyah.*

Conclusion:

Wasatiyyah according to Malaysia Muslim Scholars means just, the best, selective, moderate and balanced. Although the definition is different, but it consists entirely a positive meaning. Additionally, *wasatiyyah* also means Islam denies extremist group that symbolizes the triviality of knowledge and inflexibility in facing many issue and questions. In contrast it requires a balance / intermediate attitude to highlight the characteristics of justice. The objectives are to clarify the tasks that must be undertaken by Muslims as a witness against other people both in this world and in the hereafter. Allah's recognition on their position as a just and selected people making it very suitable to be appointed to the task. However, associating it to the moderate ideology (which wants some part to be taken for granted) is obviously very confusing. Careful research with objectives on the text of *wasatiyyah* thus proving the obligation to follow the Islamic principles as a whole.

Wasatiyyah concept should not be interpreted as a way of life that brings Muslims backward, left behind in all their life in the world or hereafter. *Wasatiyyah* policy is more geared to create a Muslim community with attitudes, actions and practices which are not extreme or radical and inclined to extreme limits in each state, forgetting moral values and spiritual and beyond the boundary of civilization values for the rights and fulfill its obligations at the expense of innocent lives, clashes between religious and others.

Wasatiyyah concept according to Muslim Scholars in Malaysia, is certainly in line with the concept introduced by the government, because it sourced from the Koran and Hadith. However, there are some insights from the point of view that *wasatiyyah* concept to be introduced is a very good, but from the point of implementation is seen as something that is not comprehensive as stated by Abdul Hadi Awang. Therefore, the government should focus on the implementation of the concept as a whole, for the sake of Islamic prestige and the well-being of the people as a dream state is a state which is good and forgiven by Allah (*baldatun tayyibah wa rabbun ghafur*).

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