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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Religious Tolerance in Malaysia: An Exposition

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ABSTRACT

Religious tolerance in Malaysia is acknowledged by many and disputed by few. One of the many factors contributed to Malaysian economic development and growth is the existence and maintenance of religious tolerance and harmony among Malaysian multi-religious and multi-racial citizens. This article aims at explaining the reasons or factors for the existence of religious tolerance and harmony in Malaysia although its citizens are Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and other religious adherents. The highest leaders of Malaysia namely the Prime Minister and the King are Muslims. Malaysians are able to maintain the religious tolerance and harmony because there are reasons or factors supporting the Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians in Malaysia; these factors are the religious teachings and approaches encouraging their adherents to live in a moderate, tolerant and harmonious situation, the constitution of Malaysia which guarantees the rights of each Malaysian citizen regardless of their religious adherence and ethnicity, the Malaysian legal system provided for all Malaysians and Islamic legal system for Muslims only in relation to their personal laws, marriages and inheritances, and the Malaysian government declared policies and orientations promoting religious tolerance and harmony such as Islam Hadhari and One Malaysia.

Key words: Malaysia, Religious tolerance, Islam Hadhari, One Malaysia

Introduction

Malaysia was officially and legally formed on September 16, 1963. On that historic day, the Federation of Malaysia consisted of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak.(Andaya and Andaya 1986: 274). However, in 1965 Singapore withdrew from the Federation of Malaysia. Until today, Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak remain in the Federation of Malaysia. It is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic independent nation state in Southeast Asia. Ethnically Malaysia has been populated mainly by the Malays, Chinese, Indians and other minor ethnic communities. According to The 2010 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia (Census 2010), "the total population of Malaysia was 28.3 million, compared with 23.3 million in 2000" and the 91.8 per cent of the total Malaysian population of 28.3 million are Malaysian citizens and 8.2 per cent are non-citizens of Malaysia. About the religions in Malaysia, Census 2010 states, "Islam was the most widely professed religion in Malaysia with the proportion of 61.3 per cent. As a multi-racial nation, other religions embraced were Buddhism (19.8%), Christianity (9.2%) and Hinduism (6.3%).(Malaysia, Department of Statistics, 2012).

Based on the racial and religious data published by Malaysia, Department of Statistics that based on the Malaysia 2010 census, this article plans to explore the factors leading to the prevailing religious tolerance and harmony in Malaysia. One of them is Malaysians prefer religious teachings promoting religious tolerance and harmony. In addition to the religious teachings emphasizing religious tolerance and harmony, there are other factors found in Malaysia supporting and promoting the religious tolerance and harmony namely the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Malaysian legal systems and government orientations or directions toward promoting religious tolerance and harmony among Malaysians.

Religious Teachings Promoting Religious Tolerance and Harmony:

The religious teachings regarding tolerance and harmony are found in Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism. Islam teaches Muslims to tolerate and cooperate with Muslims and non-Muslims. Islamic teachings on tolerance are found in the Koran. For example, the Koran (Baqarah 2: 256) states, "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy bond that never breaks and Allah hears and knows all things." The Koran (Baqarah 2: 256)

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clearly prohibits Muslims from forcing or compelling non-Muslims to convert to Islam since Islam wants people to voluntarily and willingly convert to Islam; their conversion to Islam must solely depend upon their wills and faiths in Islamic beliefs and practices or in Islamic teachings in general.

Islam asks Muslims to invite people to Islam using one of the three persuasive and non-violent methods depending on their situations, skills and educational or intellectual levels. The three prescribed methods of inviting people to Islam are the wisdom method, the advice method and the debate or dialogue method. The Koran (Nahl 16: 125) explains these three methods or ways to call or invite people to Islam or the way of Allah. Neither compulsion nor force method is prescribed by Islam when Muslims would like to convey Islamic teachings to non-Muslims.

If these three methods of calling or inviting any non-Muslim to Islam do not work, the Muslims have to adhere to another command or principle found in the Koran (Kafirun 109: 6) stating "for you is your religion and for me is my religion". This means that the Muslims who have invited any non-Muslim to embrace or accept Islam and they have failed to convince him, they should let him remain in his own religion of his choice.

Religious tolerance and harmony in Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism are also part and parcel of their religious teachings. In Buddhism, the Buddhists are demanded not to hurt or do harm to other human beings and animals. The Buddhist holy book named Udana-Varga (5: 18) says, "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful." The Buddhists are asked to live in harmony and peace in any locality and community by avoiding the ten courses of unwholesome action namely:

"1. Destroying life 2. Taking what is not given 3. Wrong conduct in regard to sense pleasures 4. False speech 5. Slanderous speech 6. Harsh speech 7 Idle chatter 8. Covetousness 9. Ill will 10. Wrong view". (Bodhi 1994). The Buddhists stress on ending suffering. Hence they do not want to suffer as well as they should not make others suffer.

There are five precepts found in Buddhism intended to maintain peace and harmony with oneself and others. They are: 1. Do not kill or do not do harm or do not commit violence. 2. Do not steal including fraud and economic exploitation. 3. Do not lie. 4. Do not misuse sex. For monks and nuns, they have to live in celibacy. For ordinary Buddhists, adultery and sexual harassment are forbidden. 5. Do not consume alcohol or other drugs. The virtue, good conduct or morality in Buddhism is known as Sila based on two fundamental principles namely the principle of equality that all living entities are equal, and the principle of reciprocity that do not do onto others what you do not want them do onto you.(Robinson 2007). .

In Christianity, there are Christian teachings related to religious tolerance and harmony. Christianity vigorously preaches and spreads love among human beings. The Bible demands all Christians to love their neighbors and other human beings even though they are their enemies. For example, Luke (6: 27) asks all Christians to love their enemies and do good to those who hate them. Luke (6: 30-31) stresses, "Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise."

The idea that Christians do not advocate violence but tolerance is stressed by their own Pope. On 12 September 2006, Pope Benedict XVI delivered his lecture at the University of Regensburg and he was reported to have said that "The use of violence in advancing religion is a violation of reason… and to act against reason is to act against the nature of God. This understanding of the necessary connection between faith and reason … is the product of centuries of philosophical and theological reflection resulting in a synthesis of Hellenic and biblical understandings of reality."(Neuhaus 2006).

In Hinduism, there are Hindu teachings concerning religious tolerance, moderation and cooperation. For example, Mahabharata (5: 1517) explains "This is the sum of duty; do naught onto others what you not have them do unto you." There are some moral ideals in Hinduism that are very similar with some Islamic ethical principles namely truthfulness, friendship, compassion, fortitude, self-control, purity and generosity. Subhamoy Das lists 5 principles and 10 disciplines found in Buddhism. Out of the five principles, there are three principles related to religious tolerance and cooperation. They are "All human beings are divine", "Unity of existence through love", and "Religious harmony". Out of ten disciplines, there are eight disciplines related to human relationship and co-existence in harmony and peace; they are "1. *Satya* (Truth)", "2. *Ahimsa* (Non-violence)", "3. *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy, non-adultery)", "4. *Asteya* (No desire to possess or steal)", "5. *Aparighara* (No-corrupt)", "6. *Shaucha* (Cleanliness)", "7. *Santosh* (Contentment)" and 8."*Tapas* (Austerity, perseverance, penance)"(Das 2007).

V. Jayaram who posted his article on "Hinduism and Religious Tolerance" stressed that "To believe that some people need to be forced or lured or convinced or encouraged or threatened to agree with our religious beliefs and dogmas has been and will always be the cause of the instability of this world."(Jayaram 2007). For V. Javaram, "Hinduism is a religion of the individual, for the individual and by the individual with its roots in the Vedas and the Bhagavad gita. It is all about an individual approaching a personal God in an individual way according to his temperament and inner evolution. If he does not like Siva, he can choose Vishnu. If he does not like either of them, he can become a Shakta worshipper. If he is still not comfortable, he can bring in a few elements from other religions like Buddhism or Jainism or even Islam and Christianity and add them to his

rituals or ways of worship."(Jayaram 2007). Hence, Hinduism is very tolerant according to Jayaram but why were some Hindus in India intolerant to Muslims and Christians? His reply to such question was "The concept of religious tolerance in Hinduism is very ancient but its practice is of recent origin. Today in India, Hindu fundamentalism is a palpable phenomenon. And this is mainly because of the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism and Christian missionary activity."(Jayaram 2007).

In Malaysia, there has been no resurgence of Hindu fundamentalism or Muslim fundamentalism or Christian fundamentalism. The Government of Malaysia always looks after and goes after the religious extremists in order to avoid the clashes among the religious groups due to their religious fundamentalism and extremism. Dr. Mahathir as reported on 28th April 2005 stated that Malaysia would not be ruled by the religious extremists. During his meeting with Mr.Lee Kuan Yew from Singapore at his office at Perdana Leadership Foundation located in Purtajaya, Dr. Mahathir said that Malaysia would not become an extremist Islamic state or ruled by the religious extremists because the Muslims in Malaysia are rational and they would not be easily influenced by the religious extremist group. The majority of Muslims in Malaysia know the true Islamic teachings and they would not be easily influenced by the religious extremist group propagations. (Shamshul Azree 2005).

Based on the religious tolerance and harmony found in Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism, it is very clear, evident, reasonable and sound to deduce that the Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and Hindus in Malaysia have preferred the religious tolerance and harmony found in their respective religions instead of their opposites because they indeed cherish peace and harmony as well as stability in Malaysia for Malaysian multi-ethnics and multi-religious societies. Hence as an independent modern nation state Malaysia has been able to enjoy the fruits of religious tolerance and harmony such as a peaceful life and economic growth and stability. The religious tolerance and harmony found in their respective religions are able to be maintained, nurtured and operative because they are strongly supported by the constitutional and legal provisions on the religious freedom and rights as well as by some policies implemented by Malaysian ruling political party as explained below.

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia:

"The Federal Constitution of Malaysia is the highest constitution and law in comparison with other constitutions and laws in Malaysia. Other constitutions and laws in Malaysia refer to the state constitutions and laws since Malaysia is a Federation of 13 states and 3 Federal Territories", after the establishment of the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur, Labuan and Putrajaya consecutively.(Ibrahim 2003a: 21). Chronologically, the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur was the first created and then followed by Federal Territory of Labuan in Sabah, and then the Federal Territory of Putrajaya in 2001 during the premiership of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. The Putrajaya has become the federal administrative capital of Malaysia.

The three federal territories have neither a Malay ruler nor a Yang DiPertua Negeri as their Malay religious and Malay custom heads. In other states in Malaysia, they have either a Malay ruler or sultan or a Malay leader called Yang DiPertua Negeri. The states headed by Yang DiPertua Negeri in each state are Penang, Malacca, Sabah and Sarawak. The states headed by the Malay ruler in each state are Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Selangor, Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan. The Malay ruler or sultan is also the Islamic religious head in his state. Meanwhile the states of Penang, Malacca, Sabah, Sarawak and the three federal territories, their Islamic religious head is called Yang DiPertuan Agong or the King of Malaysia. He is selected among the Malay rulers for a period of five years in his leadership as the King of Malaysia.

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia has granted the power and jurisdiction to the Malay rulers and Yang DiPertua Agong and their respective states for Islamic religious affairs or matters. Muslim or Islamic courts are under the state jurisdiction and power to bring Muslim offenders to justice in the Islamic religious matters. Muslim courts are for Muslims only. Non-Muslims are not subject to Muslim courts according to the Federal Constitution of Malaysia and the states constitutions in Malaysia.

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia clearly states the status of Islam and the rights of other religions to be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of Malaysia. The Article 3 (1) in that constitution states, "Islam is the religion of the Federal; but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation." (Ibrahim 2003a: 22). Based on this constitutional article, all religions and their adherents are able to practice their religious teachings and practices in harmony and peace in any locality in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, religion is not a basis or criterion for employment except the employment connected to or related with the affairs of any religion or any religious institution or body managed by a particular religious group. For example, a Muslim is required to become an imam or leader in a mosque, and a Christian in a church and a Buddhist in a Buddhist temple and a Hindu in a Hindu temple. The Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Article 8 (2), states, "Except as expressly authorized by this Constitution, there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the ground only of religion, race, descent or place of birth in any law or in the appointment to any office or employment under public authority…"(Ibrahim 2003a: 23).

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia differentiates between practicing and propagating a religion in Malaysia. Everyone is allowed to practice his or her own religion but not everyone is allowed to spread or propagate his or her religion to other persons. Some restrictions are imposed for spreading or propagating religious teachings to members of other religions. These restrictions are made in the state constitution and law. For example, many states in Malaysia do not allow non-Muslims to spread or propagate their religions to Muslims in their respective states. Muslims themselves are required to apply for the permissions from their respective state religious authorities if they want to spread Islamic teachings to other Muslims outside their family members. The state religious authorities demand Muslims to apply for the permissions because they do want to see some Muslims spread misleading or deviating teachings on the name of Islam to other Muslims. The differentiation made by the Federal Constitution of Malaysia between practicing and propagating a religion is clear from the Article 11 (1) that states, "Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion and subject to Clause (4), to propagate it."(Ibrahim 2003a: 23).

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia also does not compel Malaysians to pay the religious taxes. The Article 11 (2) states, "No person shall be compelled to pay any tax the proceeds of which are specially allocated in whole or in part for the purposes of a religion other than his own."(Ibrahim 2003a: 23) The religious taxes for the religious purposes are imposed by the religious groups upon their religious members. For example, the Muslims in Malaysia can impose the religious taxes upon Muslims only. They are not allowed to impose the religious taxes upon non-Muslims. The non-Muslims in Malaysia also cannot impose their religious taxes upon the Muslims. Hence, each religious community in Malaysia is permitted to impose any tax or fee upon its members only.

If someone happens to visit the website of the U.S. Department of State Diplomacy in Action, there are yearly reports by Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor for International Religious Freedom Report. For 2010 the report was dated November 17, 2010 on Malaysia. The report states, "The constitution provides for freedom of religion but also gives state and federal governments the power to `control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrines or belief among persons professing the religion of Islam'. The constitution also defines ethnic Malays as Muslim." Regarding the attitude of Malaysian government toward the religious freedom, the same report of 2010 expresses, "There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the government during the reporting period."(U.S. Department of State 2010). Almost the same statements of the religious freedom in Malaysia found in the International Religious Freedom Reports of 2002 and 2006 released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.(U.S. Department of State 2002).

The 2006 Report states, "The constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, the Government places some restrictions on this right. Islam is recognized in the constitution as `the religion of the Federation,' but the practice of non-Sunni Islamic beliefs was significantly restricted, and those deviating from accepted Sunni beliefs could be subjected to `rehabilitation'. Non-Muslims were free to practice their religious beliefs with few restrictions. There was no material change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report."(U.S. Department of State 2006).

The 2002, 2006 and 2010 reports from the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the U.S. Department of State admit the existence of religious freedom in Malaysia since her constitution has provided for the religious freedom. These three reports acknowledge that the tolerant or amicable relationship has existed among Malaysian religious groups.

Malaysian Legal Systems:

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia provides for the establishment of two different legal systems in Malaysia. One legal system is for both Muslims and non-Muslims in Malaysia and another one is for Muslims only. The legal system for Muslims only is called Muslim, Islamic or Syariah legal system consisting of the state Islamic laws and their enactments as well as their bylaws passed by the State Legislative Assembly in each state in Malaysia. The Islamic laws and rules are executed by the state Islamic religious council or department and the Syariah courts in each state in Malaysia. The legal system for all Malaysians, the Muslims and non-Muslims is called civil or federal legal system consisting of the federal laws and enactments passed by the Parliament of Malaysia.

It is clearly stated in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Article 121 (1A) that, "The courts referred to in Clause (1) shall have no jurisdiction in respect of any matter within the jurisdiction of the Syariah courts." The courts in the Clause (1) are the two High Courts, one for Malaya and another one for Sabah and Sarawak. (Legal Research Board 1988: 105).

Some legal problems in Malaysia according to some personal views are the problems of inter-religious conversions such as from Muslims to become non-Muslims or from non-Muslims to become Muslims. According to the legal system in Malaysia, when a non-Muslim converts to Islam and becomes a Muslim, he or she is under the jurisdiction of the Syariah courts for her or his Islamic religious matters. When a Muslim wants to convert to other religions, he or she has to apply for his or her new religious conversion in the Syariah court

in the state or the federal territory where he or she lives.. The Syariah court is empowered by the law to decide on his or her application to leave Islam and to convert to other religion for any reason.

There are court cases whereby the high courts in Malaysia have adhered to the provision of the Article 121(1A) in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia and have decided not to intervene in the Islamic religious conversion cases brought before them. That article empowers the Syariah court to decide on the Islamic religious matters. A conversion case from a Muslim to become a Christian, or Hindu or other religious person or for a Muslim to renounce Islam, his case must be decided by the Syariah court. Moreover, Malay is defined as a Muslim in the Constitution of Malaysia. According to the Article 162 (2) the expression "Malay means a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom and – (a) was before Merdeka Day born in the Federation or in Singapore or born of parents one of whom was born in the Federation or in Singapore, or is on that day domiciled in the Federation or in Singapore; or (b) is the issue of such a person;"(Legal Research Board 1988: 153). Therefore any Malay who wants to renounce Islam has to be decided by the Syariah court located in the state or federal territory where he or she lives.

Lately some Muslims and non-Muslims have aired their views on the issue of the inter-religious conversion. They want the high courts to decide on such cases because some non-Muslims do not want to go to the Syariah courts to settle their legal disputes involving their wives or husbands or children who have converted to Islam. Meanwhile, some Muslims do not want to go to the Syariah court if they want to renounce Islam. This happened, for example, to Lina Jailani who renounced Islam few years ago and she went to the high court to approve her conversion to Christianity, The high court in 2005 decided not to intervene and rejected her application to remove the word Islam from her Malaysian identity called MyKad. In May 2007, the Federal Court of Malaysia, the highest court in Malaysian legal system affirmed the decision made by the high court on Lina's case. Hence, she legally has to go to the Syariah court to decide on her inter-religious conversion from Islam to Christianity since she is Malay and Malay is a Muslim in the Constitution of Malaysia.

In connection with the problems faced by few individuals who have done the intra-religious conversions, few people have regarded Malaysia as a Muslim nation that does not uphold the principle of religious freedom. One of such persons is Giraldus Cambrensis who posted his or her view on September 1, 2006 in Western Resistance website to severely and irrationally criticize and condemn Malaysia. G. Cambrensis presents the definition of the religious freedom accepted by him or her and mentions the inter-religious conversion cases and religious renouncement cases in Malaysia. The inter-religious conversion cases are three mentioned by Cambrensis. One is the case of Nyoya Tahir who converted to Buddhism and the Syariah court allowed her dead body to be buried according to Buddhist rituals even though she was reported to be a Malay woman prior to her death. Second is the case of a Malaysian soldier named Moorthy who converted to Islam before his death according to his friends in the Malaysian army but his wife named Kaliammal Moorthy contested in the high court about the validity of her husband's conversion to Islam. The high court decided not to intervene in the decision made earlier by the Syariah court that Moorthy was a Muslim when before he passed away and hence he was allowed to be buried according to Islamic rituals. Third is the case of a Muslim woman named Lina Jailani who changed her name to Lina Joy after she wanted to convert to Christianity; she was in love with her Christian male friend. She asked the high court to decide on her case but the high court decided not to intervene in the Islamic religious matters because she was a Muslim and her conversion to Christianity should be decided by the Syariah court. Two cases of Muslim woman and man who renounce Islam in the Syariah court but their renouncements were rejected by the Syariah court in Kelantan. They were husband and wife named Muhammad Ya and his wife Kamariah Ali. Based on these three court cases of the inter-religious conversions and two cases of Muslims renounced Islam, Cambrensis condemned Malaysia and portrayed Malaysia as a tyrant Muslim nation.(Cambrensis 2006). In our minds, Cambrensis was one of the few persons in this world who did not want to understand and respect the two legal systems practiced in Malaysia. Every nation in this world has its own legal system and that nation judges the legal problems or disputes among its citizens and non-citizens as well based on its legal systems. In Malaysia, any Muslim has to go to the Syariah court to settle his or her legal issues related to Islamic religious matters. A Muslim's renouncement of Islam and a non-Muslim's conversion to Islam fall under the Islamic religious matters and they are to be decided by the Syariah court, not the high court or the court of appeal or the federal court. People should not see and say unfair or unjust when someone's application is rejected by the Syariah court since the court relies on the documents, evidences and witnesses produced before the court. If they see and say to that it is unfair and unjust to reject the application by a Muslim to renounce Islam, it is the court decision that has to be accepted by the plaintiffs and the defendants in any case including the inter-religious conversion case. Abiding by the court decision is the civilized man is said to be civilized, not to settle the legal case by his or her illegal means.

Malaysian Government Orientations Promoting Religious Tolerance and Harmony:

What we want to expose here are some of the Malaysian government tendencies that have direct connection and relation with the religious tolerance and harmony in Malaysia. They are the religious official public

holidays, the religious festival celebrations, the religious financial assistance, the rejection of religious extremism, the national pillars.

The Government of Malaysia has made official public holidays in Malaysia for Malaysian religious citizens to celebrate their main religious festivals for Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Christians. For Muslims, their religious festival days are called Fasting festival days, and Pilgrimage festival days, and their religious festivals are decided based on the Muslim lunar calendars. For the Buddhists, their religious festival is called Wesak Day fixed on every 1st May every year. For the Hindus, their religious festivals are called Thaipusam fixed on the 1st February every year and Deepavali fixed on 8th November every year. For the Christians, their religious festival is Christmas fixed on 25th December every year. There two days of official public holidays for Chinese New Year. For 2007 the Chinese New Years were on 18th and 19th February celebrated by the Chinese in Malaysia.

The main religious festival celebrations above are celebrated by Malaysians by visits and thanksgivings. The Government of Malaysia has celebrated those religious festivals by open houses whereby Muslims and non-Muslims are invited to such open houses held by Prime Minster, the Deputy Prime Minster and other ministers and their deputies, and chief ministers in the state level. The open houses provide food and drinks for their guests.

The Government of Malaysia has extended the financial assistances for Muslim religious purposes as well as for non-Muslim religious purposes. The Government has assisted finically in building some mosques for Muslims, some temples for Hindus and Buddhists and some churches for Christians.

The Government of Malaysia since 1970 has introduced Rukun Negara (The National Pillars) to be accepted and observed by all Malaysians regardless of their religious affiliations. The National Pillars consist of five pillars namely: 1. Belief in God. 2. Loyalty to the King and Country. 3. Respecting and obeying the Constitution of Malaysia. 4. Sovereignty of Laws. 5. Decency or decorum and morality.(Shamsul Amri 2007: 121).

The first pillar of the National Pillars is about the religious belief in God. This is chosen probably due to the importance of human beings to acknowledge the existence of God or an Ultimate Reality or a Supreme Being who is eternal, unchanging, only-one, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Muslims and Christians believe in personal Supreme Being called Allah and God respectively. Hindus believe in the impersonal Supreme Being as origin and target of all personal beings. Buddhists have their own super beings also.

Human beings who believe in the existence of God or Gods acknowledge that their God or Gods will punish them in this world or after their deaths if they live in this world without following or obeying the commands of their God or Gods. They also acknowledge that if they follow and obey the commands of their God or Gods, they are rewarded by their God or Gods in this world and or after their deaths.

Islam Hadhari:

When Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was the Malaysian Prime Minister of Malaysia (2003-April 3, 2009), his tendency was a moderate approach to Islam and he publicly declared Islam Hadhari for Malaysians. The Institute of Islam Hadhari was established at the National University of Malaysia (NUM or UKM in Malay) on May 10, 2007 and it was officially launched by Abdullah on February 12, 2008. The four main research focuses of this institute are namely 1. Science, technology, environment, and health. 2.Economics and business. 3. Social covering culture, media, conventional and Islamic laws. 4. Politics and leadership.(UKM 2008).

1Malaysia:

The vision named One Malaysia or 1Malaysia introduced by Mohd Najib Abdul Razak who succeeded Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as the sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia in April 2009 intends to unite all Malaysians under his leadership although they are different races and religions. According to this concept as presented by Mohd Najib himself, the 1 Malaysia concept is for Malaysians to think and act as a united Malaysians and this concept has eight main values namely “strength, humility, acceptance, royalty, meritocracy, education and integrity.”(Yusri and Tengku Ghani 2012: 96).

There are economic, religious and social schemes implemented by the government in connection with the 1Malaysia concept. Economically, the government has established the cheapest markets called People Market of I Malaysia, the cheapest restaurants called People Restaurant of 1Malaysia, the cheapest medical treatment offered at People Clinic of 1Malaysia. Moreover, in the Malaysian financial budget of 2011, the government has distributed the direct financial assistances of RM100.00 for all Malaysian primary and secondary students, of RM200.00 for all Malaysian undergraduates at the public and private universities, of RM500.00 for all Malaysian households whose income are below RN3000.00 per month. The receivers of these financial benefits are Malaysians of different races and religions.

Concluding Remarks:

Although there are some Christian writers and organizations have not been very happy because the legal restrictions imposed on their efforts to spread Christianity to Muslims in Malaysia, the religious tolerance and harmony has been historically existed and maintained in Malaysia. The main factors for the existence and maintenance of religious tolerance and harmony are presented in this article namely the large majority of the Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and Hindus in Malaysia have accepted and implemented their own religious teachings regarding religious tolerance and harmony within their own religious communities as well as outside their own religious communities. They are able to uphold and practice their own religious teachings because the Federal Constitution of Malaysia has guaranteed their religious freedom and rights; the two legal systems practiced in Malaysia do not force the non-Muslims to subject themselves to the Syariah laws and courts; and the government orientations promoting religious tolerance and harmony through official public holidays for religious celebrations of Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Buddhists, Islam Hadhari and then 1Malaysia concept. Malaysian government has promoted the Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and Hindus in Malaysia to prefer and uphold their religious tolerance and harmony because they are all intended for all Malaysians and they are for peace and stability and prosperity for all Malaysians regardless of their ethnic origins and religious affiliations. The Muslims and non-Muslims are free to practice their religious teachings in peace and harmony in any part of Malaysia.

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