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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 59 (2012) 550 – 557

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

UKM Teaching and Learning Congress 2011

The importance of learning islamic history and civilization of Malaysia in the building of human capital and identity of the muslim society in Malaysia

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study the importance of learning Islamic History and Civilization in Malaysia for human capital building and identification of the muslim society in Malaysia. Its aim is to clarify the importance of this course, specifically at the Department of Arabic Studies and Islamic Civilization, and the need to produce graduates who are conversant in this field in order that they may utilise it in their lives regardless of whichever field they venture into. This study uses the library research method by analysis and evaluation with an argumentative as well as narrative approach. The results of study finds that knowledge and conversance in this field is integral in the formation of human capital and identity of the muslim society in Malaysia. Knowledge and conversance in this field would enable Malays to know the 'true' history of the muslim ummah in Malaysia. This knowledge is crucial to help them form and build a Malay-muslim generation in Malaysia, strongly attached to Malay traditions which have once brought the muslims to the pinnacle of success.

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Keywords: History; human capital; Islamic civilization; Malay; muslim generation; muslim society; true history

1. Introduction

The course, Islamic History and Civilization in Malaysia, was first offered to undergraduates in the 1st semester of Session 2000/2001. This course is an improvement on the course, History of Islam in Malaysia. It is a compulsory course at the Department of Arabic Studies and Islamic Civilization in line with the objective of the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIS) to produce graduates who are truly knowledgeable, generally in the field of Islamic studies, and specifically in the field of Islamic history, and who are able to use their knowledge to guide society. Through this course, the faculty would be able to produce society which truly understands Islam, possesses sound ways of thinking, awareness and realization as well as feelings of responsibility to the country based on Islamic principles,

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philosophy and thinking so that a disciplined society is formed (Guide for Undergraduates 2000-2001). This course is important in the formation of a generation with a strong Islamic identity and character because transparent exposure to the ummah's history and civilization will give them awareness of past history which enable them to recognise their self-potential as well as to foster the spirit of love, pride and loyalty to the country. The emphasis on Islamic history and civilization in Malaysia is very important as knowledge of history is essential for a nation to chart its future life. The importance of learning history cannot be denied because a nation or ummah may learn its lessons from history so that adverse incidents or matters may serve as a warning.

This field is important in order that the human capital formed possesses the knowledge and conversance of the history and achievements of the muslim ummah in Malaysia as that is the true picture of their history. They are responsible for re-evaluating history in planning and producing an Islamic generation with a strong identity when facing the many challenges of a globalized era. It is only with knowledge of Islamic history and civilization in Malaysia that the Muslim ummah, specifically the Malay race of Malaysia will know the history of their race. They cannot deny Islam's role in their lives. All matters are viewed through Islamic law such as forbidden or permissible; obligatory or optional; and disapproved or commendable. Certainly there is a 'virtual' reward or punishment which cannot be visible, that is, merit and sin. The muslim ummah should be concerned with the concepts of mercy and plague or calamity (punishment) from Allah SWT. Thus, this field is important to be emphasized at higher learning level to produce human capital which is able to make history as a guide in re-building the position and strength of his race and country (Abd Rahim 1999). Some even hold the opinion that history is like a basic mould for the young generation's life (Abdul Razaq 2007).

2. Malay-Islam History Through One's Own Eyes

As a muslim, whether young or old, illiterate or educated, there is one thing we must sincerely admit, that is, the reality that we are muslims. The Malay race has long embraced Islam and their history is a picture of the reality of their lives as muslims. As muslims, do we desire to see our history through other people's eyes? Would a race recognise the real faces of their ancestors through the interpretation of others' eyes? How should we deny the influence and status of Islam in the history of the Malay race which has lasted for hundreds of years? Thus, Islamic history and civilization in Malaysia is very important for the Malay race to recognise the real faces of their ancestors. The history of the Malay race must be seen with their own eyes so that the vast confusion which appears in their history may be resolved. How should the history of the Malay race be used to arouse national spirit and patriotism in the new generation (Abd Rahim 1999) when such history is seen from the eyes of others who are negative and scornful? Western scholars who do not understand Malay culture give a very unsatisfactory and incorrect view of local history (Abd Rahim 1999), and we blindly follow their theories and opinions. Are the new generation Malays proud of their ancestors who are constantly associated with being dirty and lazy? Are they proud of their ancestors who are considered bandits and pirates?

The history of Malaysia or the Malay race specifically, should not be seen merely with Malay eyes but must be viewed through Malay-muslim eyes. Then many differences will show up because the Malay race of the past had charted history based not only on tradition but also on Islamic teachings. In some situations, the Malay customs are a mixture of Malay traditions and Islamic precepts. At times, Islamic law itself was adopted as Malay tradition. When this happened, if seen through the Malay eyes only, the true side of Malaysian history still remains to be seen, remains blur or, even sadder, deviates from the true story. Take for example, the issue of Malay opposition to British action in repealing the traditional land system or procedure. In the Malay customary land system, the right of ownership of the Malay society is obtained by exploring the jungle, clearing and cultivating the land. The Malays did not have to pay anything for the land (Rahimah 2000). This was the land system practised by the Malays before the Westerners came. This system was regarded by the British as backward and was replaced by a more systematic land procedure. Some of the Malayan population rose up against the abolition of the Malay traditional land system. Without Islam, opposition to the repeal of the traditional system would have been regarded as only a normal opposition to a change from the old to a new system. It would be a matter of course that something obsolete or backward be replaced by a more suitable new system.

However, on comparison of the traditional land system to the Islamic land system, it is clear that the traditional land system originated from the latter (Ridzuan 1994). Thus, when viewed through the Malay-muslim eyes, the factor of the Malay opposition to the British system changes. Their struggle was not merely a normal opposition but

was related to the muslim ummah's duty to defend the Islamic law which was being abolished by the non-muslim colonizers. And, if the land system is seen as only a Malay custom, the real view of Malay history, in my opinion, is still unrecognised. With that, the history of Malay struggle against the colonizers whether they were Portuguese, Dutch, Thai or British as well as Japanese can arouse the spirit of willingness to sacrifice in the interest of religion, race and country. In this situation, the commitment and resilience of the people in defence of their country had definitely been increased (Abd Rahim 1999). The duty of jihad (holy struggle) found in Islam would guarantee that the new generation will be ready to sacrifice in defence of their religion, race and country.

Interpretation of Malay history through others' viewpoints, for example, western researchers, caused Malay history to be riddled with negative elements which are not something to be proud of. The true history is concealed by such interpretation. Thus, Malay history must be re-interpreted and re-written based on the Malay-muslim viewpoint. Researchers and writers can highlight historical evidence which can be the basis of rebuilding the strength of a race. Rethinking the history can shape the future of a race toward excellence in addition to correcting historical 'facts' which are false (Abd Rahim 1999). Presently, Malay history can be the source of inspiration for the present and future Malay generations to rise again as heroes in going through their lives (Hariyono 1995) However, for this to occur, Malay history must be seen through Malay-muslim eyes, for only then can their history be seen with their own eyes, as their history itself proves that the Malays have embraced Islam for hundreds of years.

As the easiest example, we can take the issue of the opening of Penang Island. Francis Light was named its founder in the year 1786. The Sultan of Kedah received material remuneration (monetary compensation) from the British for his Majesty's readiness to surrender Penang Island as a British base in the Straits of Malacca. Penang Island became developed after it was made a freeport by the British. Here, Francis Light appeared great whereas the Sultan of Kedah seemed negative. The true facts are hidden because this history was seen from the British viewpoint. The above explanation gives an impression as if Francis Light was the first to explore and make settlements in Penang Island (Muhammad 2008), at once concealing the reality of true history that at the time Francis Light landed in Penang Island, the Malays had already settled in the island for a long time to the extent of having a complete social organisation. How many in contemporary Malay generation know about Dato' Jenaton? (Muhammad 2008). And how many actually know that Francis Light occupied Penang Island through deceit? How many do not know that the Sultan of Kedah actually attempted to re-take Penang Island? The Malays' religious beliefs were apparent when in their efforts to garner support from the inhabitants of Penang Island, the nobles of Kedah were found to draw on the spirit of Muslim unity to call on " all Moslem, that is, Bugis, Acehnese, men of Minangkabau, Malays and Chulias (Indians from Coromandel) who dwell at Pulau Penang God will assist us and our Lord Muhammad the Guardian of the Moslems and the last of all the Prophets"(Andaya 1982). If this incident were to be seen from a Malay-Muslim viewpoint, the religious element could be more clearly seen. The nobles of Kedah had depended on the spirit of Muslim unity and declared a jihad movement to gather the support of Penang Island's inhabitants for the purpose of expelling Francis Light from trespassing on the province of Penang Island which was under the rule of the Kedah government.

These are only one or two issues. What about other incidents in Malaysian history over the duration of hundreds of years? Thus, Malay history must be viewed from the Malay-muslim viewpoint. Research must be done with care to avoid biased attitude on our part. All must be done to reveal the hidden secrets so that the true image of the Malay race prevails and the love of the Malays for their ancestors is deepened. The present generation will then know the history of their race and be proud to be Malays. With that, whatever that needs to be fostered will flourish whether it be the spirit of Malay unity, spirit of love for the country as well as loyalty to the nation's leaders.

3. The True Picture of Malay Ancestors in Malay-Muslim History

Islam is actually blended in the life of the Malay society and is the main element in the formation of the Malay identity itself. The blending of Islamic precepts in the life of the Malay society is absorbed in Malay customs and traditions. The life of the traditional Malay society is rooted in Malay customs and traditions which are full of Islamic elements and teachings. This blending of Islamic teachings encompass all aspects of life whether of beliefs, governance, law, social and also economics. Islamic teachings play the main role in the formation of Malay traditional identity. Islam is so closely linked with the Malay society of Malacca, so much so that when a person embraces Islam, he is said to ' become Malay'(Andaya 1982). However, Malaysian history has become 'secular'. This has caused Islam to be separated from the historical interpretation of Malay history causing the present

generation to be ignorant of the course of history and the achievements of the Muslim ummah in Malaya (Tanah Melayu or Malay Land). They are confused with their own identity. They drift in the currents of modernity and receive negative influences to the extent of readily committing acts contradictory to Malay custom and Islamic law at the same time. At this point, it is crucial for the Muslim ummah to look back into the Islamic history and civilization of Malaysia as an alternative, to recognise and return to their Malay identity, followed next by the building of human capital and identity of the Muslim society in Malaysia.

Ask any Malay history researcher, when did the Sultanates of Pasai, Malacca, Aceh or even of Pattani enjoy their era of excellence. All of them achieved an era of excellence after their rulers and inhabitants accepted the doctrine of Islamic faith. Malay-muslim history is very important to be studied so that the reality of the earlier Malays is known. The excellence and greatness once achieved by the Malays after they embraced Islam must be exposed to the present generation. All these are important because the history of a race can instil a feeling of pride towards one's self, race and country (Abdul Razaq 2007). Thus they will not be embarrassed to be known as Malay and muslim, and they will always desire to live as and be very proud to be muslim. Not only can they be proud of their history and the achievements of their ancestors, they can even build their self-confidence to emulate their ancestors.

As the muslim ummah, today's young generation specifically, must know the history of their own ancestors, from being a race who lived merely to serve the ruler during the time of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom, to become a grand and great race after they were enlightened by the Islamic faith. When did they accept the Islamic faith? Who preached the Islamic faith to them? How did they accept the Islamic faith? Why did the change occur after they accepted the Islamic faith? What did Islamic teachings offer to cause such a change in the status of the Malays? To answer all these questions, the history of the coming and preaching of Islam to the Malay world, specifically Malaya, must be delved into or anyone who wished to do so should be given the opportunity to delve into it.

Local scholars who should not only debate the theory of Islam's coming, which has not been finally determined even to date, must use it to make the young generation realize that the Malay society did not just practise Islam for a century long but since hundreds of years ago. They must also think a thousand times and not just accept the theories put forward by Western scholars about the date of Islam's coming to Malaya because all these give an impact to the history of the muslim ummah in the Malay world. They must be introduced to the early evidence of the history of Islam's coming as discovered in the old tombs in Kedah as early as 3H/9 AD such as the gravestone of Syeikh Abdul Kader al-Yarah, the stone tablet of Ibn Sardan (Othman & Abdul Halim 1990), as well as the discovery of dirham and glass lamp of the Abbasid era in Baghdad. The discovery of these evidence proves the existence of a muslim society in Kedah and the early relations forged between the inhabitants of this region and the traders from the Abbasid caliphate or at least trade relations with traders from the Abbasid caliphate. Studying the history of the coming of Islam at this early stage is not merely to understand what is written but requires an understanding of all the implications in the written.

Flip through any history book, and discover that most of these books state that the Malay Malaccan Kingdom (later Sultanate) was founded at the end of the 14th Century AD or beginning of the 15th Century AD, and achieved its glory during that century. However, the latest studies finds that the Kingdom was founded in 1262AD (Berita Harian 2010). The founding of the Malaccan Kingdom in the 15th Century has been accepted for a long time, even by the Malays themselves even though it is sometimes felt as unreasonable because there is much evidence which show that Islam came much earlier. In Kedah, for example, old relics discovered show that Islamic teachings had reached this state as early as 3H/9AD. Its geographical location near Northern Sumatra which had already accepted Islamic teachings corroborates this evidence. There is also opinion which states that historical discovery proved the existence of a group of refugees from turbulence in China in the 9th Century which made them seek a better life in the South including Kedah. But, Kedah is not the only place. Tombstones dated 419H have been discovered in Pekan, Pahang (Othman & Abdul Halim 1990). It is possible that muslim refugees from China were stranded in Pekan because of its location on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia which faces the South China Sea.

Local researchers use these evidence discovered in Malaya to prove the coming or existence of Islam in this region such as the Inscribed Stone of Terengganu which was discovered in Kuala Berang, Trengganu in the year 1902. It contains the legal charter of a Muslim Sultanate of about the 8H/14AD. The date 702H stated on the Inscribed Stone of Terengganu is not the date Islam was accepted but the date of declaration of the Charter which became the laws of a Muslim Sultanate. The coming of Islam probably occurred much earlier by half a century from the date chiseled on the Inscribed Stone of Terengganu (Asmah 2011). The charter carved in the Inscribed Stone

reflect the existence of a muslim society which had deep Islamic knowledge because the laws in it were formulated with care (Izziah Suryani 2011). And that is not all, this discovery shows that the Malay language was already considered as the language of administration, and had an orderly system of writing since the 8th Century. The beauty of the writing displayed on the Inscribed Stone of Terengganu shows the skill of carving letters on stone pieces which did not crack or break during the process. Surely, this is due to their intelligence of choosing the right type of stone or having a suitable method.

All the same, only this stone remains as evidence that a muslim kingdom or sultanate once existed there, proving that the Malays were already civilized, to be able to inscribe on the stone, possessing mental intelligence as well as physical skills. The disappearance of the said kingdom can be a lesson to today's generation, as to the reason this muslim kingdom or sultanate led by Mandalika met with the same fate as the muslim kingdom or sultanate led by al-Mutawakkil in Kelantan. However, the sole legacy of this kingdom, that is the Inscribed Stone of Terengganu, reflects the greatness of the Muslim society of that time. Such historical stories as these can be used to foster confidence and belief in one's own ability, to be followed by the creation of a competitive Malay race (Abd Rahim 1999) to face life in this era.

The Malay society's peak of glory occurred in the 15th Century during the reign of the Malaccan Sultanate. The greatness of the Sultanate was renowned internationally and described by Tome Pires as a city incomparable in the world in terms of importance and prestige. Malacca became the main political and maritime power in the Straits of Malacca, its port was the focus of merchants from around the world, and the city became the focus of Islamic studies from which Islamic knowledge spread. These great achievements proved that this Malaccan maritime empire had great charismatic leaders who led people who were intelligent, law abiding, competitive, industrious, etc. The port city which was the pride of the Malays finally fell to the Portuguese in the year 1511. The Portuguese was attracted to the wealth and prosperity or the Islamic characteristic of the port city or both. The great history of Malacca is really still not that clear. The Portuguese had destroyed all physical or material evidence of the Malay Sultanate. Alfonso de Albuquerque was said to have sworn that he would destroy all evidence which showed that Islam was in power in Malacca (Dakers 1939:3).

But, unfortunately, that is the fate of Malay muslim sultanates which had charted their history in our homeland. Very little evidence remain for us to reflect on the greatness of the Malay-muslim Sultanate of Malacca. Other than the greatness of the Malaccan Sultanate recorded explicitly in the Malay Annals (*Sejarah Melayu*), there is among the historical relics, the Laws of Malacca (*Hukum Kanun Melaka*) with Islamic legal provisions neatly stated in it. Pondering on the Islamic legal provisions enshrined in it, the present generation should realize the probable reasons of Allah SWT in preserving it, as is the case with the Islamic law in the Charter of the Inscribed Stone of Terengganu, such that we are able to contemplate them. Is it possible that the opulence and prosperity of the Malaccan Sultanate was due to it implementing Islamic law such as that recorded in the Laws of Malacca, to the extent that the rich merchants in Malacca had used the bahara unit (= 3 piculs=180 kg. =400 lbs.) to weigh their gold? (Andaya 1982) Why was everything destroyed in the blink of an eye when the Portuguese defeated Malacca? Was it opulence which snatched Islam from the practice of the Malay muslim Sultanate or was it that they practised some other law other than Islamic law (Syed Zulfida 2006) such that the loss of His mercy and assistance caused them to be unable to defeat the power from the said Iberian Peninsula?. The legal provisions contained in the Laws of Malacca portray Islamic teachings as already established in the Sultanate. Islamic law was beyond being taught in learning sessions, but was actually implemented in the state administration to form a harmonious society. Hence, the history of the Malay muslim Sultanate of Malacca and any other historical incidents recorded and charted by the old generations must be interpreted according to Islamic view so that the muslim ummah may see the real picture, whether in terms of governance, law, economics or even social. With that, the actual reality of the Malay race may be known because history is not just to be studied by students or historians, but must be known by all parties to learn the morals or lessons from history, the good to be emulated, and the adverse to be avoided.

4. Islam is the Backbone of Strength for the Malay Race

The influence of the Malay Sultanate of Malacca has spread beyond the Straits of Malacca to the whole of the Malay archipelago, because of the Islamic influence in its civilization. The Islamic influence during that time symbolised power and opulence. Opulence came to any port of call whenever Indian muslim traders came because they attracted traders from all corners of the Malay world. All traders flocked there because textile brought by the

Indian muslim traders was the main commodity. This had already happened to the Samudera-Pasai Sultanate after the ruler embraced Islam. The status of Malacca as a commercial centre as well as a religious centre made use of the Malay language of Malacca the language of the whole Malay Archipelago. And not just language, literature, art of governance, music, fashion, games, ranks, even poetry (pantun) were all followed by all levels of society in the Malay world. The main factor which enabled the Sultanate of Malacca to increase the prestige and influence of Malay culture is its synonymy with Islamic teachings (Andaya 1982).

Synonymy of Islamic teachings with Malay traditions portray Islam as the way of life for the Malay society which did not separate religion from politics, law, economics or even social matters. Islamic teachings had brought Malacca to the height of its glory at once uplifting the dignity of the Malay race and language. From the relics of the Sultanate, such as the Laws of Malacca and the coin currency, Islamic influence clearly prevailed in this Sultanate. Islam had made Malacca an internationally renowned maritime empire until it was coveted by the Portuguese power from the distant European continent. Thus, the Islamic characteristic of the Malay history experienced and civilization achieved must be highlighted so that the present generation may realize that 'with Islam', the Malay race once charted a great history in the Malay World. Islamic teachings was once the backbone of strength for the Malay race.

5. Islam is the Identity of the Malay Race

The Malay race was once known as a race with good manners and honorable temperament. Fine cultural elements such as politeness, being kind to the elderly, being cooperative and helpful, and many other good qualities had become the Malay identity itself. However, all these fine qualities are almost wiped out from society nowadays. Why is this happening? Today's adolescents are too easily influenced by outside cultures which corrupt them as Malays and even worse, profane their image as muslims. Among the probable reasons is that they are increasingly distant from Islamic teachings.

Malays have had a long history. Before embracing muslims, they had lived in darkness and humiliation through the cruelty of the Hindu caste system which was absorbed into Malay traditional life. Then, Islam came and changed the doctrine of belief for the Malay society to belief in one God (Monotheism). This change in doctrine was an important phase in the life of the Malay society because it was the backbone to the other changes in the whole aspect of life. The spread of Islam had gone through a long history and succeeded in uplifting the Malay race to be free and proud and to expand their power in the whole of the Malay World. The height of power for the muslim ummah in the Malay world occurred during the era of the Sultanate of Malacca in the 15th Century AD and was continued by the Aceh Sultanate until the mid-17th Century AD. The emergence of muslim Sultanates succeeded in removing the influence of Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms which previously controlled the Malay world. The Malay society worked hard to spread Islamic teachings even to the islands remote from the trade routes such as Ternate (Gallop 1994). They established a new way of life and thinking based on Islamic teachings. Islam had uplifted the status of the Malays and the Malay language emerged as the main language of the Malay World.

Islam became synonymous with the life of the Malay society although this effort took hundreds of years. Although it could not fully erase the old Malay customs based on Hindu-Buddhist-Animism, Islam became the pillar of Malay society. In the aspect of doctrine and faith, the Malay society believe in Monotheism. Even though Malay society was influenced by old beliefs full of superstition and myths, the muslim scholars attempted with determination to eradicate it from the Malay society. In terms of governance, the emergence of muslim or Islamic Sultanates occurred when the rulers embraced Islam. A Malay ruler clearly used the title such as *Sultan*, *Amir al-mukminin* (Leader of the faithful), (Saran Singh 1986) and the like. The glory achieved by the Sultanate of Malacca was coveted by the Portuguese power because of the Muslim characteristic of the Sultanate.

The Laws of Malacca (Hukum Kanun Melaka) is the most authentic evidence of Islamic law implementation in the Malaccan Sultanate, as is The Charter of the Inscribed Stone (Batu Bersurat) of Terengganu, which proves the implementation of Islamic law in the old Terengganu Sultanate. The issue of currency of coins with Islamic characteristics signify the authority of Malay Sultanates over the commercial sector. Socially, the Malay society were renowned for their good manners, politeness or courtesy and moral character, both in personal and social life. In addition, the Malay society also made learning as part of their culture. The tradition of attending religious lectures or teachings whether in the homes of religious teachers, prayer halls or mosques to the emergence of the pondok sytem of learning were alternatives to the Malays for increasing their knowledge. Scholars had a high social status

and were much revered by the Malay society. Briefly, Islam has organised the life of the Malay society from the cradle to the grave. Therefore, Islam is the identity of the Malay. This is the history that the present Malay generation must know.

6. How Malay-Muslim History can build Human Capital and Identity of Present Malays

Historical knowledge can help in forming and producing human capital which is strong in this world and blessed in the hereafter. Everyone admits that learning and knowing history is to learn the moral or lessons from past experiences. The good is emulated and the adverse can be avoided. By this, history can develop the potential of a race and prevent them from committing the same mistakes of the past generations (Hariyono 1995). This is what is meant by man will learn from historical events. In the present situation of the Malay-muslim generation, who are increasingly confused over their self-identity, can they change by only learning history? Would they be proud to be Malays if they knew that their ancestors were not lazy (as described by the British colonizers)? Will they then work diligently to achieve success after knowing that the Malay society did once achieve prestige and prosperity during the era of the Malaccan Maritime Empire? And would they be willing to make any sacrifices to defend their race and beloved homeland?

That is the reason Malay history must be looked at from its Malay-muslim viewpoint. Researchers must be honest in evaluating historical facts, the right must be admitted as true and the wrong must be interpreted as false. We must produce human capital with the ability to critically think about history. They will be the generation able to think differently from the routine or stereotyped way so as to understand the significance of past history (Nineburg 2006) In this way, Malay history will be understood and can play a role in generating human capital among the young generation. Understanding of history is essential to all those responsible in the formation of human capital depending on their position and role. They need to learn history not just for the sake of examinations, but as a source of inspiration, though it can be as a form of entertainment to release stress (Hariyono 1995).

For this reason, it is important to highlight knowledge of history and Islamic civilization in higher education because the human capital produced will be involved in all sectors, public or private, when they finish their studies. Whatever role and responsibility which they carry or bear on their shoulders, they would make past Malay history as a reference point when formulating a policy or solving a problem. The most important history which must be remembered by the Malays is that Islam has uplifted the prestige and position of the Malay nation. Is it true that the Malays became backward and declined when Islam was detached from their lives? When Malay history is 'attached to Islam', the present generation would on their own be cautious of the 'merit or sinfulness' of doing something. Islam has laid down the living guidelines for the Malay ancestors. After embracing Islam, the Malays did not once dismiss Islam from their lives. The only difference was the percentage of its practice. With Islam, they once built a glorious life, then agonized through the bitterness of the colonial era, and later toddled to develop themselves after independence. We now learn from their experience to organize our lives and the lives of the future generations. Perhaps this is what is meant by history helps us to build and shape the tomorrow's generation.

7. Conclusion

The history experienced by the Malays must be understood from the Malay-muslim viewpoint for without Islam, the true face of the Malay race is impossible to be recognised. History has proven that Islam has had an important position in the Malay society. Islam has become the way of life for the Malay society and the pillar for the formation of a noble Malay identity full of good manners and morality. The history of Malay life which is synonymous with the Islamic way of life must be studied and appreciated by the present Malay. They should not merely know that Islam once uplifted the Malay race to the height of its glory, but should use it as a model to develop and build a new Malay civilization. From their Malay-muslim history, the present Malay must learn the moral lessons so that they will not repeat the mistakes which were committed by their ancestors. These will form the guidance for the present generation in their efforts to produce a greater new Malay generation with a strong identity and immune to the challenges which threaten life in this era of globalization.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia for providing the research grant PTS-2011-110.

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