



[MUSLIM... MODERATE... SINGAPOREAN]

Muhammad Haniff Hassan



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by Muhammad Haniff Hassan

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CONTENT ■■■

INTRODUCTION TO THE AUTHOR	v
FROM THE PUBLISHERS	vii
FOREWORD	viii
INTRODUCTION	x
PART 1 - DIMENSIONS IN THE ISSUE OF MODERATE MUSLIM	3
PART 2 - SIX PRINCIPLES OF MODERATE ISLAM	8
• Principle 1 - Upholding Peaceful Means	8
• Principle 2 - Upholding The Principles Of Democracy	11
• Principle 3 - Upholding The Principle Of Rule Of Law	15
• Principle 4 - Contextual	18
• Principle 5 - Respecting The Opinions And Rights Of Others	20
• Principle 6 - Upholding Islamic Teachings	25
PART 3 - MODERATION IN ISLAM	30
• <i>Da'wah</i> in Kindness	30
• Moderation in <i>Jihad</i>	32
• Kindness Towards Those Who Transgressed	33
• Extremism Is Prohibited	34
CLOSING REMARK	36
GLOSSARY	38

■■■ **INTRODUCTION TO THE AUTHOR** ■■■

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- Bachelor Islamic Studies (Syariah & Law), Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1993
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- Member, Religious Education Advisory Panel, MUIS 2003
- Member, Islamic Advisory Board, Keppel Insurance - SGM (Curently known as Islamic Advisory Board, HSBC Insurance) 2000 - present
- Member, Madrasah Al-Irsyad Management Committee, 1996 - present
- Member, Association of Islamic Scholars & Religious Teachers (PERGAS) Executive Committee, 2001 - present
- Lecturer, Diploma Pengajian Al-Quran & As-Sunnah, AIM – PERDAUS (Current)
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- Regular contributor to Berita Harian & Berita Minggu
- Syariah Appeal Board member, 1997 – 2001
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- Vice-Chairman, Al-Istighfar Mosque Building Committee, 1997 - 1999
- Member, Asatizah Training Committee, Religious Education Committee, MUIS, 1996 - 1998

Areas Of Specialities

- Management & administration of organisations
- Management of part-time madrasah
- Management of full-time madrasah
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- Development of training programmes
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- Islamic law
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Books Published

- *Pesanan Perjuangan*, published by PERDAUS, 2002.
- *Noktah Hitam : Ajaran Sesat Di Singapura*, published by MUIS, 2001. A collaboration project between MUIS and PERDAUS.
- *Pandangan Umum Islam Terhadap Kesihatan & Perubatan*, published by PERDAUS, 2001.

Papers In Seminars

- *Pendidikan Islam Di Singapura*, Seminar Pendidikan Islam di Pusat Pengajian Tinggi ASEAN III, Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia & Jabatan Agama Islam Melaka, Melaka, 2001.
- *Ajaran Sesat Di Singapura*, Seminar Ajaran Sesat Serantau, Kolej U gama Islam Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 2000.
- *Penerapan Fiqh Kontemporari Dalam Konteks Masyarakat Kosmopolitan Singapura*, Muzakarah Ulama II, MABIMS, Penang, 1997

■■■ FROM THE PUBLISHERS ■■■

It is with great pride and glad tidings that PERDAUS and Al-Khair mosque collaborated in publishing this book.

We hope that this initiative will proliferate positive contribution on two points;

- a. provide a stimulus for our local writers and spur more publications on local religious issues
- b. further flourish co-operations between the various local Islamic organisations

We believe that the two abovementioned points are critical and important elements in ensuring that the Muslim community achieves its vision of becoming *A Muslim Community of Excellence*.

We hope that more individuals will step forth in contributing religious articles and texts for the Muslim community in Singapore, especially so if the materials exert Islam in the context of Singapore.

We urge the Muslim community in Singapore to realize the importance of knowledge in building our community and that reading is the key to that knowledge.

Therefore, read this book, in the name of your God that has created you.

Sujadi Siswo

Chairman, Al-Khair Mosque Management Board

Assoc. Prof. Abdul Wahab Abdul Rahman

Vice President I, PERDAUS

■■■ **FOREWORD** ■■■

Logicians argue that one cannot pass a judgment on something unless one has a clear conception of it, because the unknown and undefined cannot be judged. Despite this assertion, Muslims were labeled as fundamentalists, extremists, conservatives, traditionalists, and more recently, moderates, without any attempt to define these terms in its context.

From its title, this book appears to be an expression of tautology given that the Quran states that the Muslim *ummah* is a community of moderation (*ummatan wasatan*). However moderation is indeed dynamic in time and space, and multi-dimensional in expression. Like any relative construct, what some considers moderate may not be considered the same by others. Failing to relate to context, situation and social condition, any attempt to define or describe the term moderates or moderation will lead to, at best confusion, and at worse misunderstanding.

Beyond mere definition and description, Ustadz Muhammad Haniff Hassan has, through this book, offered a discourse on Moderate Singaporean Muslims – who are guided by Islamic principles and defined by the reality and context of Singapore. He has ventured into what many consider as uncharted waters – juxtaposing Islam, Muslims and Singapore, and weaving the social, political and religious threads into a rich tapestry.

Not all will be pleased with what he writes. Some find his opinions and analysis difficult to swallow. But what cannot be denied is that Ustadz

Muhammad Haniff's writings often seek to provoke thought, open new avenues of thinking and challenge Muslims to critically re-examine some of their existing interpretations of Islam.

Ustadz Muhammad Haniff's contribution to knowledge is both original and seminal. The six principles and the substantiating arguments, which he postulated in this book, should be read as the work of an Islamic thinker, whose intellectual lenses are framed within the Islamic tradition and are focused on the here and the now. Whilst he claims that the principles offered in this book are not exhaustive, it inherently provides opportunities for further research and may well be the seed for several dissertations.

I am delighted and honoured to write this foreword primarily because this book has raised many important issues and conveyed a message of peace, understanding and harmonious relationship. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Ustadz Muhammad Haniff, PERDAUS and Al-Khair Mosque Management Board on the publication of this book.

May God bless this effort and reward the author and all who have contributed to its publication.

Dr Albakri Ahmad

Director, Religious Development and Research Division
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■■■ INTRODUCTION ■■■

Praised be to Allah *taala*. Prayers and peace be upon His Messenger (peace be upon him) and his families and the companions who followed in his path.

The issue of the moderate Muslims is not simply an internal matter for the Muslims. Since the tragic events of 11th September 2001, non-Muslims too have also been swept up in a flurry of events that require their participation in the issue of the moderate Muslims due to its implication on social harmony, economic development and the survival of a nation or race. It is no longer an issue exclusive to a particular community.

Therefore, should Muslims be less forthcoming in providing their own definition of moderation, then, they should not be surprised if others were to take on this task and fill in the void.

While I feel inadequately qualified to present all the views on this issue, I am compelled to produce this book on the basis of the Islamic principle that “What cannot be done in full should not be abandoned altogether”.

Although this book cannot possibly provide the total picture on the issue of the moderate Muslims, I hope that it will open the doors for more engagements and enriching discussions, that will eventually lay the foundation for better understanding in the future.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed their moral support, thoughts and ideas for this book – my friends in PERDAUS, my parents,

my dearest wife, my wonderful children and siblings.

May this small effort be Blessed by Allah *taala* and bring about blessings on others.

Muhammad Haniff Hassan

2003

MUSLIM... MODERATE... SINGAPOREAN

PART 1

■■■ DIMENSIONS IN THE ISSUE OF MODERATE MUSLIM ■■■

Following the September 11th incident, and the discovery of the *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI) plot and the arrest of its members, the issue of the moderate Muslim was raised by many different individuals. Among them was Singapore's Prime Minister Mr Goh Chok Tong who made it a talking point following his 2002 National Day Rally speech.

That it has remained a contentious issue till today, highlight the need for Muslim organisations to come forward and discuss issues such as what it means to be a moderate Muslim and our stand on social harmony and national integration. It is only through such close collaboration and consensus that these organisations can move on to educate the public.

While Muslims in Singapore generally practice Islam in moderation, we should not assume that all Muslims manifest "moderation". As a result we find the existence of the *Jemaah Islamiyah* group, and people who refuse to sit with non-Muslims who are drinking or eating pork in our society.

Similarly, it is even more important for non-Muslims to have a clear understanding of "moderation" as defined by Muslims themselves. Instances of this gap in knowledge are evident in their perception of the "*tudung*" as a symbol of inflexibility and extremism and their ignorance of everyday Muslim practices.

Unless Muslim organisations that are recognised as being moderates, define what it means to be "moderate" in Islam, then it will be a matter of

time before others will choose to define the term for us. Without a clear definition, it will be difficult to set the moderates apart from the extremists. The danger is that the moderates are seen as being extremists and vice versa.

What follows are some discussion points to help us come to a consensus on what define Moderate Muslims.

1. Moderate Muslims should be guided by Islamic principles and defined by the reality of Singapore's context – not that of Indonesia or Turkey. In a sense, this is similar to the concept of democracy, which in Singapore, cannot be defined by the context of America or Europe.

Even after 37 years of independence, Singapore is still struggling in finding its own national identity. This search is echoed at a micro level as Muslims in Singapore themselves try to define what it means to be "Singaporean Muslims". This process has become more critical since the development of recent events in Singapore.

2. Moderate Muslims have to accept modernisation, although not the definition or models that were adopted by *Kamal Ataturk* or Indonesia's *Abangan*.

In reality, Muslims in Turkey have moved away from *Kamal Ataturk's* original model to the essence of pure Islam. We need only to look at the how the *Refah Party* led by Dr. Erbakan rose to power through democratic avenues, only to be toppled by the supposedly moderate military power.

The rejection of these alternatives by the Muslim *ummah*, points to the inherent inconsistencies between these models and that of mainstream Islamic teachings. Otherwise, there would not have been a need for Islamic revivalism or reformation. Unfortunately, moving away from the models has led some Muslims to adopt more extreme viewpoints.

This is a reality that non-Muslims have to accept as part of Islamic revivalism. It is unrealistic to expect Muslims to adopt models such as those presented by Kamal Atartuk and Indonesia's *Abangan* or others like them, as long as they are inconsistent with mainstream Islamic teachings. Muslims will not return to the Islam as practiced by either *Kamal Atarturk* or *Abangan*. As Muslims move away from these models, a question then arises as to where the point of moderation takes place?

3. Efforts at defining the Moderate Muslim can never produce homogenous results. Hence when conflict arises, we need to determine if the perpetrators are amongst the moderate Muslims or between the Moderates and the extremists.

4. The moderates are sandwiched between two extremes where one group uses aggression and the other trivialises religious practices. This reality is stated in the Quran;

"Thus We have made you an ummah justly balanced. That you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger, a witness over yourselves."
(*The Holy Quran 2 : 143*)

5. Society has to differentiate between those who hold extreme opinions but expresses it via democratic and legal means versus those who takes extreme measures. Both have to be dealt with differently. For the first group, efforts should be made to engage them in intellectual discourses to the point that their arguments are thwarted and influences eradicated. It would be unwise to treat this group like those who take extreme measures, as it would be contrary to the spirit of democracy.

Our past scholars had always been open minded when it came to differences of opinions to the point that the *Muktazilahs* were able to replace the *Ahlis Sunnah* (Sunnis) as the official school of thought during the Abbasid Caliphate. In dealing with the situation, the scholars did not

resort to violence to defeat the *Muktazilahs*. Instead they debated and educated the society until the *Ahlis Sunnah* (Sunnis) regained its status as the official school of thought.

6. Groups that are assumed to have moderate views such as the secularists can also fall into the trap of extremism. This can happen when they try to champion their cause or defeat their opponents through violent means as seen in Algeria where the military suppressed the Islamic groups, and in Turkey where the military suppressed the democratically elected *Refah Party* led by Dr Erbakan.

7. Extremism is not exclusive to the Muslim *ummah*. Often, extremists secular groups escape persecution due to their political or military might, much to the disappointment of Muslim moderates. As a result, some chose force to retaliate, unfortunately gaining strong criticism for their efforts in fighting injustice.

8. We have to list the characteristics and principles that define moderates. Amongst those we should analyse are;

- Upholding peaceful means
- Upholding the principles of democracy
- Upholding the principles of rule of law
- Contextual
- Respecting opinions and rights of the others
- Upholding Islamic teachings

The issue of Moderate Muslim and others pertaining Muslims in Singapore will become more critical in the future. Soon we should expect Muslims in Singapore to be required to make their stand on the issues of the *Hudud* law and establishment of an Islamic state.

With a clear concept of Moderate Muslims, Singaporean Muslims

should be able to explain concepts like national integration, social integration, nation building and the Singapore identity, which are often posed by non-Muslims.

Nonetheless, in this process, we should not ingratiate ourselves by trying to please all parties or specific groups.

We have to be clear on the areas in which we disagree on, and where disagreement exists, we should uphold the principles of peaceful process, law and harmonious ties with society.

PART 2

■■■ SIX PRINCIPLES OF MODERATE ISLAM ■■■

Principle 1 - Upholding Peaceful Means

One of the main principles of *da'wah* is upholding peace and to give priority to peaceful means.

We should adhere to this principle based on the following reasons:

1. The name "Islam" means peace and tranquility. Hence any acts of aggression would not be consistent with its meaning.
2. The Prophet (*pbuh*) was appointed as a blessing on the world as stated in the Holy Quran 21 : 107;

"And We have sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a mercy for the universe."

Again aggression would not sit well with our understanding of "blessings".

3. In the Holy Quran 10 : 61, Allah *taala* commanded that the Prophet (*pbuh*) place peaceful means as a top priority.

"And if they (the enemy) incline towards peace, you (also) incline towards peace and trust in Allah, verily He is the All-Hearer and the All-Knower."

4. Aggression goes against the nature of man and Allah *taala* prohibited the Prophet (*pbuh*) from such behaviour in the Holy Quran 3 : 159;

“And by the mercy of Allah you dealt with them gently and had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from you: so pass over (their faults) and ask for Allah’s forgiveness for them and consult them in the affairs.”

This message was also repeated in by the Prophet his *hadith*,

“Give good tidings and do not make them turn away, make it easy, do not make it difficult.” (Narrated by Muslim)

5. The Prophet (*pbuh*) has been taught to return evil with kindness rather than aggression. Allah says in the Holy Quran 41 : 34

“The good deed and the evil deed can not be equal. Repel (evil) with one, which is better. Then verily! He, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as thou he was a close friend.”

6. Violence will only bring about complications, difficulties and burden for the individual. The Messenger (*pbuh*) said:

“Verily the religion is simple and a person should not make it difficult lest he is defeated by it.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

7. The Messenger used peaceful means to establish the city of Medina as his political base.

8. Islam will be more effectively propagated in a peaceful environment. This can be seen from the large number of people who reverted to Islam after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah than in the 19 years prior to it.

9. History has shown that Islam has been propagated under peaceful conditions such as the spread of Islam in the Malay Archipelago and in China.

Thus as long as there are peaceful means for *da'wah*, we should pursue it in place of any acts of aggression or violence.

Nevertheless, this understanding should not make us reject *jihad* in its broader or specific definition. We have to believe that *jihad* is part of the *syariah* of Islam. Allah says;

“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress limits” (The Holy Quran 2 : 190)

The prophet said;

“The pinnacle of Islam is jihad.” (Narrated by At-Turmuzi).

We still believe that those who are in *jihad* hold privilege positions next to Allah *taala* as stated in the Holy Quran 4 : 95;

“Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) except those who are disabled. And those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons, Allah has granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than those who sit (at home).”

And we should not procrastinate in preparing ourselves for *jihad*. Allah *taala* says;

“Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power.” (The Holy Quran 10 : 60)

Nonetheless, in considering means for our cause, we should look at their relevance from the viewpoint of *syara'* rather than the “status” attributed to such means.

Jihad should not be defined as simply going against non-Muslims.

Jihad is also upholding justice and fighting evil. We should be prepared to defend our country if it is unjustly attacked, just as we should be ready to defend those who are unjustly treated or discriminated due to their ethnicity.

This is similar to the concept of national defense where the government would try to resolve matters through peaceful diplomatic means while always being prepared for any external attacks.

Hence there is no conflict between our commitment to peaceful means of *da'wah* and *jihad*. We should not be a threat to anyone, unless they choose to behave like Milosevic.

When faced with the options of *jihad* (war) and peace in carrying out our *da'wah* responsibilities, our scholars have reminded us to avoid any actions that would result in a bigger calamities or greater evil and aggravate injustice.

Principle 2 – Upholding The Principles Of Democracy

One of the main pillars of *da'wah* in the context of Singapore is our commitment to upholding the democratic system.

It is important to understand the rationale for our commitment to democracy, as there are too many opinions on it. Even among Islamic scholars, there are those who criticise or reject this position. Failing to clarify the “why”, will only lead to a state of confusion that contradicts the spirit of conviction and true understanding that should drive *da`wah*.

What are the substance and characteristics of democracy? In his book *Introduction to Political Science* by Rodee, Anderson, Christol dan Greene, McGraw Hill International Edition, Fourth Edition, 1983, page 139 it was written:

“The broadening acceptance of the democratic philosophy led to idealisation of the role of public opinion in a representative democracy. According to this idealised view; (1) the public was interested in making the laws of the land; (2) the public was informed (3) it would deliberate and reach rational conclusions; (4) rationally conceived individual opinions would tend to be held uniformly throughout the social order; (5) the public, would make its will known at the polls and elsewhere; (6) the public’s will or at least the views of majority would be enacted into law; and (7) continued surveillance and constant criticism would ensure the maintenance of an enlightened public opinion and consequently a public policy based upon the principles of social morality and justice.”

In Singapore’s context, the systems that support the above are (1) an electoral system that gives citizens the right to elect their representatives or government; (2) representative government; (3) channels for communication and consultation between the government/ government representatives and the people, such as the Feedback Unit, Meet the People Session, Speakers’ Corner and “freedom” of the mass media; (4) a parliamentary system of government with separation of power between the executive, judicative and legislative bodies, (5) a constitution that ensures individual freedom and basic humanitarian rights.

When we place all these in the context of Islam, then the closest concept to democracy is “*syura*” or the practice of consultation as stated in The Holy Quran 3 :159;

“And consult them in the affairs.”

and in 42 : 38;

“And who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation.”

The importance of *syura* is highlighted in a *hadith* where Ali r.a. said,

“O Messenger of Allah! There will come a time after you, when a matter is raised that is not in the Quran or hadith.” The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) answered “Then gather all those strong in faith among my ummah and hold a consultation on the matter. Do not decide based on the opinion of one person only.” (Narrated by Al-Khatib, in Ad-Dur Al-Mantsur by As-Suyuti, vol 10, page 6)

There were also other examples where the Prophet held consultations such as during the Battle of Badr and the decision to leave Medina in order to confront the aggressors in the Battle of Uhud.

In terms of concept, what differentiates *syura* from democracy is the extend of power given to the citizens in formulating laws. *Syura* in Islam is permissible only for those matters in which there are no *hukm qat’ii* and that do not conflict with what is in the Quran and *Sunnah*. *Syura* must also recognise the authority of the Quran and *Sunnah* as the “constitution” above all in our way of life. Democracy on the other hand gives absolute rights to citizens or mankind, where all matters may be legislated as long as it receives the support of the majority, even if it involves matters which are against Islamic teachings, such as marriages between couples of the same gender.

However the Quran and the *Sunnah* do not provide specific instructions on how *syura* should be operationalised. This is to provide mankind with the flexibility and freedom in promulgating suitable systems as long they adhere to the principles of consultation, justice and efficiency. Hence contemporary Islamic scholars accept the parliamentary democratic system as an alternative system to *Ahlul Halli Wal ‘Aqdi* that was presented by our past scholars. This is because the parliamentary system can fulfill the need of *syura* and it is an *urf’* (custom) that is now acceptable by all.

Due to its close similarity to *syura*, we can now accept democracy as

an alternative for us despite there being elements that contradict Islamic teaching such as the absolute power of human being to legislate rules. This is a case of the 'lesser of two *mudarat*'.

Despite such differences between democracy and *syura*, we must acknowledge that such elements can be changed through a process of true democracy and not via autocracy. But Islam also acknowledges that there are some wrongdoings that cannot be eliminated except by a person in a position of authority.

The commitment to democracy is also strengthened by the fact that Islam opposes dictatorship. This is highlighted in the Quran's stories of the Pharaohs, Nimrod, *Ashabul Ukhdud* and *Ashabul Kahfi*. The Messenger of Allah *taala* said,

"The best leaders are those that you love and they love you in return, that you pray for and who in turn pray for you, and the worst leaders are those that you dislike and they dislike you in return, and you ridicule them and they ridicule you" (Narrated Muslim)

Many may dispute our position towards democracy. To us this dispute and differences are natural because Islam does not elaborate on how to run a government. Even the *sahabah* had different means of choosing a caliph. What is important is that our position is based on valid and sound arguments. Since this is an area that is disputed by Islamic scholars, we should respect the opinions of others and hope that others would act likewise.

Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi in his book entitled *The Fiqh of Islamic Governance In The Perspective of the Quran and Sunnah* (Malay translation), pages 192-193, 205, wrote:

"We are of the opinion that it is not wrong for us to learn from the

democratic system as a tool for ensuring justice and syura, respecting human rights and obstructing tyranny in this world. The basis of this opinion is that when an act that is obligatory requires another act for it to be fulfilled, then the second act will automatically become obligatory. In addition, conditions for the implementation of a syariah becomes a prerequisite in itself. There is nothing in the syariah that prohibits taking the ideas or practical solutions from non-Muslims.... As such syura in Islam is in the spirit of democracy, even the substance of democracy is similar to the spirit of syura.”

Principle 3 – Upholding The Principle Of Rule Of Law

Apart from following the *syara'*, *da'wah* should be operationalised according to the law of the country we are in. This is because Islam places great emphasis on being orderly in every matter. Hence our *ibadah* such as *solat* and *wudhu* can be nullified should we fail to observe them in their correct order.

Allah *taala* has prohibited the Muslim *ummah* from being extreme in their actions. Allah *taala* says;

“But do not transgress limits” (The Holy Quran 2 : 190)

The term '*ta`taduu*' (transgress) is further defined in the following verse:

“These are the limits ordained by Allah, so do not transgress them” (The Holy Quran 2 : 229)

Although this verse specifically prohibits transgression of the *syariah*, its application in the context of the legal system is just as relevant based on these conditions;

- a. if the laws do not contradict the teachings and principles of Islam

such as when it comes to observing traffic regulations.

b. even if the laws contradict Islamic *syariah*, we are still obligated to respect and uphold them. Hence while the laws with regards to theft, for example, do not fulfill the requirement of the *syariah*, we cannot simply neglect or refuse to uphold the laws. Otherwise we will cause lawlessness in the society, which is a greater *mudarat*.

In the context of the nation, when a person chooses to be the citizen of a country, he has in fact signed a contract that includes his pledge to observe the law. Adhering to the law is, therefore, falls under general command of Allah *taala*;

“O ye who believe! Fulfill (all) obligations” (The Holy Quran 5 : 1)

“To fulfill the contracts which you have made” (The Holy Quran 2 : 177)

We cannot deny that the legal systems in most countries often do not share the philosophy of Islam. Nevertheless, this is not a justification for us to totally reject all existing laws or to live in total disregard of the laws.

In the context of *da'wah* in Singapore, failure to operate according to the laws will only invite negative perceptions from non-Muslims and raise doubts as to the loyalty of the Muslims. The irony is that the *ummah* should be the best example for others to emulate and respect.

One of the issues in relation to this is that of the available policies and laws as objects of change. Such policies and laws have to be carefully differentiated and categorised. We should not be silent to the policies and laws that are opposed to the principles of the *syariah*. These are the “*munkar*” that we are obligated to correct either with our hands, words or at least in our hearts. Now how do we accomplish this?

We need to prioritise the issues that have to be addressed based on the degree of the *maslahat*, *mudarat*, reality, capability and the existing *da'wah* scenario. This should be accomplished through the process of consultation between the various official religious authorities, *ulama* and religious organisations. Laws that are in conflict with the *syariah* are of various types, and each should be addressed differently.

There are a few aspects of criminal laws in Singapore that may be inconsistent with the *syariah* or *Hudud*. Nevertheless to change them now would be unrealistic and beyond the capability of existing *da'wah* work while raising them as issues would be a waste of current resources. In addition, such actions may raise unnecessary oppositions that will only complicate *da'wah* activities and the practice of Islam. On the other hand to neglect or the failure to uphold those laws could result in social problems that will affect the Muslim community as well.

It is also important to note that in areas where there are conflicts, the solution may not necessarily be to promulgate or change the particular laws. Instead in the issue of banking, a better solution would be to offer an alternative to the current banking institutions. With such alternatives, Muslims are able to free themselves of the unIslamic practice while displaying the beauty of Islam.

But there are laws that cause Muslims to act contrary to the *syariah*. An example is the prohibition for wearing the *tudung* in national schools. There are also laws that affect the welfare of not only the Muslims but also that of the non-Muslims such as those on gambling and entertainment. While these are areas that requires our attention, we must ensure that our actions must be carried out with due regards to the process of law. Using force or violence would be totally inappropriate.

While we focus to champion our rights as normal citizens in this country and ensuring that it is done in accordance to the law, we need to

understand that what is consistent with the law and endorsed by law does not mean that it is the wisest and most appropriate action to take. The wisest and most appropriate actions have to take into account various other factors.

As Muslims, we have to consciously dislike living in a situation that is far from ideal in terms of the *syariah*, but are currently unable to change. Without this consciousness in our hearts, what will be left from our faith?

Principle 4 - Contextual

Da'wah has to operate within its own ecology. Ecology refers to the environment as it relates to living organisms; the branch of biology concerned with the relations between organisms and their environment. Refer to www.dictionary.com

In principal, religious scholars are in consensus that *fatwa* and *ijtihad* should apply according to the reality and context in question, so long as they are consistent with the principles and methodologies that are recognised by the scholars.

For *da'wah* to operate in the appropriate ecology requires an appreciation and understanding of the ecology in which we exist. This in turn requires an understanding and appreciation of the roles of the elements and organisms within that ecology. We also need to distinguish the more significant elements and their roles, whose oversight may eliminate *maslahat* and produce *mudarat*.

Once we are familiar with all the important elements, it is time to measure them against the standards of Islam with regards to the principles and the *siyasa syar'iyah*. These principles serve to guide the *ummah* in their *da'wah* effort, with clear awareness of the elements within their own environment or the ecology as a whole.

For example, if we were to regard the minority position of Muslims as an element within the *da'wah* ecology here, we should place it against the standards of Islam and produce principles of *da'wah* relevant for the minority position of Muslims in Singapore.

But what are the elements that shape the *da'wah* ecology in Singapore? This is a question that requires in-depth study and research, beyond the capacity of this writing.

Nevertheless, until research is conducted and a consensus reached, we might consider the following as some of the elements that shape the ecology of *da'wah* in Singapore.

1. There are 400,000 Muslims in Singapore representing 15% of the population. Nevertheless Muslims form the largest minority group here.
2. Muslims in Singapore are predominantly Malays. This is unlike the Muslim minority groups in America or Europe, which are less homogenous. In these countries, the Muslim population consists of people from different cultures and countries of origins.
3. The dominant group is made up of Chinese who are mainly Buddhists.
4. The government practices democracy that in general provides our citizens with a fair amount of freedom. While there have been criticisms of our democratic system and the existing government, we can safely say that our government do not practice the dictatorship style of government found in former Yugoslavia. Neither are the Muslims here persecuted for their religion or race, unlike the Muslims' plight in Chechnya.
5. With secularism in practice, the government ensures a non-partisan approach when it comes to religious matters. This is to ensure religious

harmony. While Islam is critical to secularism as a philosophy, we should distinguish the secular practices in Singapore from that practiced by *Kamal Atatürk*.

6. Singapore has a society that is cosmopolitan, open and urban by nature. These characteristics have been fortified by the effects of globalisation. As a result Singaporeans are affected by events happening around the world and not just influenced by internal factors or their immediate environment. Globalisation also offers Muslims in Singapore a wealth of resources and opportunities.

7. Although we acknowledge that Muslims in Singapore are still lagging behind economically, we have the benefit of living in an advanced developing economy and financial centre.

8. Singaporeans are generally affluent with a relatively high gross income.

9. Muslims in Singapore are surrounded by other Muslims groups that together, form a majority in this region. For example our neighbour Indonesia, has the largest Muslim population in the world.

10. Muslims in the region are experiencing a revivalism – a return to the fundamentals of Islam.

The principles that direct *da'wah* should then be regulated by a dynamic system of prioritizing. This is because priorities will continually change the elements in the ecology, subject to the consideration of *maslahat* and *mudarat* in Islam.

Principle 5 - Respecting The Opinions And Rights Of Others

We should expect that a person of any faith would be confident of the

truth and principles of his or her religion compared to those of others. After all, it is only through conviction in Christianity that a person chooses to become a Christian instead of a Buddhist, a Muslim or a Hindu.

Each person should be convinced that what he or she believes in is not only true but also closer to the truth than what is found in other religions. Hence Muslims should not be apologetic in proclaiming the supremacy of their faith.

Nonetheless, while we acknowledge the perfection of Islam, we should never insult, condemn or look down upon other religions or their believers. Our conviction should never bring about undesirable behaviour such as the lack of respect for others.

As Muslims, we should respect differences, be receptive and respectful of others' opinions.

Hence Muslims should not mock the images of the Hindu deities, or the statues of Buddha, or use the cry of “*we!!we!!*” as a joke or use the term “*Cina mampus*” to describe the funerals of their Chinese neighbours. Just as we would like others to respect the commandment for *tudung* and the permissibility of polygamy in our religion, we should also be respectful of the practices of others such as the Hungry Ghost festival.

The following are some of the arguments that endorse being respectful to believers of other faiths.

Allah *taala* prohibits the act of mocking others in the following verses. He says;

“O believers! Let no men laugh at other men who may perhaps be better than themselves; and let no woman laugh at another woman, who may perhaps be better than herself. Do not defame through sarcastic remarks

about one another, nor call one another by offensive nick-names. It is an evil thing to be called by a bad name after being a believer, and those who do not repent are the ones who are the wrong doers.” (The Holy Quran 49 : 12)

“Say: O unbelievers! I worship not that whom you worship, nor will you worship that whom I worship. I shall never worship those deities whom you worship. Nor will you ever worship Allah, whom I worship. To you be your religion and to me mine.” (The Holy Quran 109 : 1-6)

While these verses remind Muslims to abstain from imitating the practices of believers of others faiths, it also enforces the need to respect others and ensure their freedom in practicing their own faiths – *“To you be your religion and to me mine”*

Allah *taala* tells us in the Quran;

“ O believers, do not insult those, whom these mushrikeen call upon besides Allah, lest in retaliation they call bad names to Allah out of their ignorance. Thus We have made the deeds of every group of people very fair to them. In the end they will all return to their Rabb and then, He will inform them of the reality of what they had done.” (The Holy Quran 6 : 108)

Underlying the prohibition on mocking other religions in the above verse, is the message of respect for people of other faiths. How can a person abstain from making a mockery of other religions without the conscious sense of respect for the inherent differences?

Allah *taala* prohibits the use of force in bringing others to Islam in the following verse.

“But Allah also prohibits the use of force in bringing a person into the

folks of Islam; "There is no compulsion in religion" (The Holy Quran 2 : 256)

and He says;

"Would you then compel mankind against their will to believe?" (The Holy Quran 10 : 99)

If Muslims fail to respect those of other religions, they may inadvertently be turning these people from Islam. This goes against the message of the following *hadith*,

"Make easy and do not make complicated, give good tidings and do not cause others to turn away." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

The history of Islam has proven that Muslims were able to peacefully live together with non-Muslims when there were mutual principles of justice and respect, regardless of whether the Muslims were in authority or otherwise.

An example of a situation when Muslims were not in positions of authority was when some of the companions sought refuge in Ethiopia (*Habsyah*) where the citizens were mainly Christians. When a revolt occurred in the country against the King of Ethiopia (*Habsyah*) the migrant Muslims were in full support of him. When they were in a position of authority, Muslims forged an alliance with non-Muslims for peaceful co-existence. Such mutual respect ensured freedom of faith, religious practices, the sanctity of houses of worship and peace in the conquered territory.

Saidina Ali r.a. also practiced this philosophy when dealing with the *Khawarij* who were his strongest critics. He permitted them to move freely as long as they did not threaten the security of the country.

The prohibition from the Almighty tells Muslims that they should respect the rights of others to not believe in what they (Muslims) choose to believe and to choose their own faiths. This prohibition should not necessarily be enforced by legal means, as its application would be more effective when it is based on mutual respect.

Nevertheless, while we uphold this respect, Muslims should not simply be passive and not make any efforts to share the message of Islam with non-Muslims. Failure to carry out the responsibility on *da'wah* is also condemned in Islam.

But Allah *taala* reminds us,

"Do not argue with the People of the Book except in good taste" (The Holy Quran 29 : 46)

The verse clearly encourages Muslims to have dialogues with the People of the Book. Maintaining "good taste" would mean refraining from mocking other religions.

No one would want his or her religion to be insulted, made fun of or mocked. Just as we would not accept non-Muslims mocking Islam, we should not allow ourselves to do anything that would offend others when it comes to discussing religious matters.

Often the sight of Muslims being attacked by others will arouse extreme anger that could tempt us to retaliate likewise. When such instances occur, we have to remind ourselves that *da'wah* cannot function based on vengeance and deep-seated anger. And we should not use such actions as examples for us to emulate.

Allah *taala* tells us in the Quran,

“Good deeds are not equal to evil ones. Repel other’s evil deeds with your good deeds. You will see that he with whom you had enmity, will become your close friend.” (The Holy Quran 41: 34)

and He says

“Repel evil with good. We are fully aware of what they utter” (The Holy Quran 23 : 96)

Principle 6 – Upholding Islamic Teachings

One of the important pillars that we should uphold in our *da’wah* efforts is to remain within the guidance of Islam at all times.

What we understand and practice should always suit the spirit and principles of Islam.

To ensure this, our main source of reference for any issues, tasks or problems should be the Quran and the *hadith*. But it is just as important that one understands how these two references should be used. This is where we should hold on to the following guideline.

“The glorious Qur’an and the purified tradition (Sunnah) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are the references of every Muslim for the realisation of the rules of Islam. The Quran can be understood according to the principles of the Arabic language without affectation or controversy, and the Sunnah can be acquired by reference to the trustworthy transmitters of Hadith (collected sayings of the Prophet). [No 2 of the 20 concise principles of Hasan al-Banna]

Apart from this we should also acknowledge the important role of the experts in interpreting the rules of Islam. Just as each discipline has its

own specialists, the same should be expected of the various disciplines relating to Islam.

Islam ensures freedom of speech by enjoining every Muslim to spread the message of Islam. Hence every Muslim has the right and freedom to speak of his or her belief. Nonetheless this does not mean that every individual, whether Muslim or otherwise, has the authority to speak on Islam or derive their own rules of Islam.

This is not to imply that matters on the rules of Islam should be monopolized exclusively by a small group as the Brahmin caste does for Hinduism. The intention is to ensure that only the experts will deal with complicated issues relating to religion. Anyone can be an expert on Islam by following the path of Islam and mastering its various branches of knowledge.

But practicing Islam without the guidance of the more knowledgeable may cause a person to stray from the truth. Hence, we should treasure and respect both the past and current *ulama*.

The views of the past scholars of Islam reflect their righteous, just and dignified behaviours. This is especially true of the *ulama* among the *sahabah* who were educated and moulded directly by Prophet Muhammad, and the subsequent *ulama* close to that era. These scholars truly understood the spirit and principles of Islam.

Our respect should also be extended to the *ulama* of today whose views reflect their understanding of the current context within which we are living in.

We should accept that Islam has to be practiced according to current conditions just as we should acknowledge that there are some *ijtihad* made in the past that are no longer relevant in certain situations or in

today's contexts. Even the *ulama* of the past acknowledged that rules of Islam will undergo changes due to changes in circumstances and contexts.

“The opinion of Imam (Ruler) or his deputy is acceptable in matters, which are of proven benefit to the public, provided that his opinion does not conflict with any established principle of Islam. In this regard, the opinion of the Imam is allowed to marginally differ from similar preceding rulings by virtue of changing circumstances, customs, and conventions of the society. [No 5 of the 20 concise principles of Hasan al-Banna]

When it comes to the role of the *ulama* and the community in tackling current issues, we hold to the opinion that:

“Every Muslim who reaches the level of understanding the arguments of legal deduction and jurisprudence is encouraged to investigate the works of the four great Imams of Islamic jurisprudence and see which of them attracts him most. With the help of the arguments of that Imam and the proven opinions of trustworthy workers of his own age, he should be able to increase his knowledge of Islamic Law and find the Islamic solutions to the contemporary problems of his society. Those Muslims who are unable to do so are advised to exert the necessary efforts to acquire such a level of understanding. [No 7 of the 20 concise principles of Hasan al-Banna]

Nevertheless the works of the past *ulama* provide a corpus of knowledge that is priceless. They should not be neglected based on the arguments that they are no longer relevant or that times have changed or that we need new *ijtihad* for today's circumstances. The treasury of knowledge we have today has been painstakingly put together over hundreds of years.

To ensure righteousness in our practices and truthfulness in our

understanding, we will have to make references to this early corpus of knowledge while keeping our perspective on today's circumstances.

This does not mean that we will blindly follow the *ulama* of the past or even those of today. Blind followers were reminded by Allah *taala* in the Quran;

"And pursue not that of which you have no knowledge. For surely the hearing, the sight, the heart, all of those shall be questioned of." (The Holy Quran 17 : 36)

Islam calls on its followers to practice Islam with knowledge and comprehension. While reading the Qur'an we should try to comprehend its meanings. A similar yardstick should be used when faced with the views of *ulama* who we acknowledge are not infallible. Allah *taala* says;

"Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Quran, or is that there are locks upon their hearts?" (The Holy Quran 47 : 24)

While we uncover the wisdom of the past, we should not limit our understanding of Islam in today's context or be less sensitive to its inherent differences.

In brief, we can abide by the following:

"The opinion of everyone except the infallible Prophet (peace be upon him), is liable to changes and modifications. All that has reached us of the opinions and rulings of the righteous early Muslims is acceptable to us as long as it is in agreement with the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In case of disagreement, the Book of Allah and the practice of His Apostle are more deserving of our adherence. However, we do not criticize or attack any of those individuals who were in disagreement, since we do not know

what their intentions were nor the circumstances that necessitated their decision.” [No 6 of the 20 concise principles of Hasan al-Banna]

PART 3

■■■ MODERATION IN ISLAM ■■■

Islam is an easy religion that practices moderation and gentleness. This can be seen in many aspects but it is more evident in the manners in which Muslims are advocated to deliver the message of Islam and deal with those who have gone against the laws of Islam.

***Da'wah* in Kindness**

The basis of *da'wah* requires that we speak kindly and politely to others, even to those who have diverted from the guidance of Islam. This can be seen from the advise that Allah *taala* gave the Prophets Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) when they were sent to the pharaoh to deliver the message of Islam.

“But speak to him mildly; perchance he may take warning or fear Allah.”
(*The Holy Quran 20 : 44*)

The call for gentleness was also the instruction given to Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) as a principle in his *da'wah* and is a guide to all those who preach the message of Islam.

“Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. For your Lord knows best, who have strayed from His Path and who receive guidance.” (*The Holy Quran 16 : 125*)

From this verse, Allah *taala* teaches us the important aspects of

conducting *da'wah*;

1. To use wisdom
2. To provide good examples
3. To debate in the best manners possible

The exhortation for good conduct is to instill gentleness and kindness in Muslims. Hence the violent and aggressive manner that they are often depicted to have is totally at odds with the conduct enjoined in Islam.

In the Quran are also specific instructions on the manner in which Muslims are to speak to the People of the Books i.e. the Christians and the Jews. Allah *taala* says;

“And dispute you not with the People of the Book except in the best way, unless it be with those of them who do wrong. But say, “ We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our God and your God is One; and it is to Him we submit (in Islam).” (The Holy Quran 29 : 46)

Despite the call for moderation, Muslims are not prohibited from fighting and going to *jihad* when they are prevented from delivering the message of Islam, or when they need to protect people of other religions who are oppressed and their places of worship, or to protect the honour of an individual. This is not a contradiction of the principles of kindness and gentleness in Islam as *jihad* can only be called for when all peaceful means has been explored but have proved ineffective.

The prophet himself was well-known for his gentleness and patience. Even when faced with 13 years of strong oppositions to his preaching, he did not waver. It was only when all avenues for delivering the guidance of Islam in Mecca was obstructed, did he leave the city and used *jihad* as a means of ensuring the continuity of *da'wah*. More often than not, the

Messenger still preferred the use of peaceful means in *da'wah* rather than *jihad* as exemplified in the signing of the Treaty of *Hudaibiyah*.

Moderation in *Jihad*

When war was inevitable, the prophet would give the following advise to every military expeditions that were sent out;

“Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war, do not embezzle the spoils; do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate (the dead) bodies; do not kill the children.” (Narrated by Muslim)

In another *hadith*, the prophet said:

“Do not kill the elderly who are sick, young children or women and do not behave excessively, accumulating the spoils of war. Be kind, for Allah loves those who are kind.” (Narrated by Abu Daud)

Hence a person is encouraged to practice kindness and moderation at all times. Being in *jihad* is not a license for a Muslim to behave excessively or in a hostile manner. Allah *taala* says;

“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors.” (The Holy Quran 2 : 190)

To fight for Islam - in order to deliver its guidance - is something that is honourable and respected. However it should not be carried out in anger or revenge, or cross the limit set by Allah *taala*. The prophet prohibited mutilation of the dead and the murder of children even in the cause of war. The Quran provides this guideline;

“O you who believe! Fulfill (all) obligations.” (The Holy Quran 5 : 1)

“With those Pagans with whom you have entered into alliance and who have not subsequently failed you aught, nor aided any one against you. So fulfill your engagements with them to the end of their term: for Allah loves the righteous.” (The Holy Quran 9 : 4)

As long as they are not facing hostilities, Allah *taala* enjoins Muslims to practice good conduct towards non-Muslims.

“Allah forbids you not with regards to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: For Allah loves those who are just. Allah only forbids you with regards to those who fight you for (your) Faith and drive you out of your homes and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such as turn to them (in these circumstances), that do wrong.” (The Holy Quran 60 : 8 – 9)

Compassion and mercy should be practiced even in war. A noble example is when the prophet forgave the people of Mecca when he returned to the city.

Kindness Towards Those Who Transgressed

Islam acknowledges that man is weak and prone to mistakes, and transgression. In this respect the prophet said.

“If you were not to commit sins, Allah would have swept you out of existence and would have replaced you by another people who have committed sin, and then asked forgiveness from Allah, and He would have granted them pardon.” (Narrated by Muslim)

The prophet (*pbuh*) told us of the different levels of transgressions and that each individual should be individually judged for his mistake – not in a collective manner.

Muslims should not brand a person who sins as being a disbeliever, or dishonour or punish him. Such behaviour will only turn the individual away from Islam. Allah *taala* says in the Quran:

"It is part of the Mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. Were you severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from you: so pass over (their faults) and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them: and consult them in affairs (of moment)." (The Holy Quran 3 : 159)

Muslims should take the time to explain to those who transgress their mistakes so that they can learn where they have gone wrong rather than criticising or branding them as disbelievers. This is so that the transgressors can repent and change their ways. This is the way in which Islam manifest peace – by showing compassion to both Muslims and non-Muslims.

It is this aspect that has attracted many to Islam. People in the Malay Peninsula did not accept Islam because they were threatened or forced to convert against their will. Many accepted Islam openly. There were even those, like the Mongols, who initially fought against Muslims but eventually embraced the faith because of the beauty they saw in Islam.

Extremism Is Prohibited

Islam prohibits extremism in all matters. The prophet said,

"Woe to all extremists (he repeated three times)." (Narrated by Muslim)

He also said

"Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be

rewarded; and gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, the nights.”
(Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

Hence even in our acts of worships we are advised to be moderate. This is highlighted in the following *hadith* that was narrated by Aishah;

“A woman from the tribe of Bani Asad was sitting with me and Allah’s Apostle (pbuh) came to my house and said, “Who is this?” I said, “(She is) So and so. She does not sleep at night because she is engaged in prayer.” The Prophet said disapprovingly: “Do (good) deeds which is within your capacity as Allah never gets tired of giving rewards till you get tired of doing good deeds.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari & Muslim)

CLOSING REMARK

While the six principles may not be the complete guidelines, they would be useful and provide basic criteria in determining if a situation falls under the category of moderate or otherwise. Nonetheless, one should still expect differences of opinions to emerge.

The principles will help us to determine what are the moderate views as well as differences between what is moderate and what is not.

When laid out in a matrix such as the one below, the six principles can be use to evaluate the various viewpoints and options for a particular situation.

Issue: Getting permission for *tudung* in national schools

	V1*	V2*	V3*	V4*	V5*
Peaceful means					
Consistent with the principle of democracy					
Consistent with the legal system					
Consistent with the contexts					
Respects the rights of others					
Based on Islamic Teachings					

V1, V2, V3, V4, V5 – refers to the various points of view or options.

When more than one views meet the criteria, then it is worth considering if all the views are useful or which of the views would provide the most benefit.

It is important to understand that moderation in Islam is dynamic in nature, and closely related to factors such as time and space. For example what is deemed moderate at a point in time and a specific place may not be moderate at other time or space. Similarly what may be moderate for a person may not be so for another. In issues pertaining to the society at large, moderation should be based on the *maslahat* of the majority or general society rather than that of one or a few individuals.

The reality is that being moderate is being in the middle of two extreme ends, a position that requires one to balance and even resist the pull of either polarised views. This is certainly a difficult and unenviable position to be in for those who choose to consistently practice moderation. It would be much simpler for one to choose either of the extreme viewpoints.

But isn't being on a balance what true Islam is about? While Islam advocates simplicity, it also demands struggle among its followers to test those who are best in their deeds.

Piety lies in moderation and not showing off one's prowess. May Allah *taala* Guide us in remaining steadfast on the path of moderation.

GLOSSARY

Abangan – Indonesian Muslims known for their liberal and minimalist approach in practicing Islam. One who is not a strict follower of one's declared religion.

Ahlul Halli Wal 'Aqdi – Members of Consultative Body in a traditional Islamic country.

Ashabul Ukhudud – People of The Trenches, see The Holy Quran 85 : 4-10.

Ashabul Kahfi – People of The Cave, see The Holy Quran 18 : 19-22.

"Cina mampus" – An uncouth term referring to the death of a Chinese person.

Da'wah - Inviting others to Islam. Missionary work.

Erbakan – Necmettin Erbakan. He was the leader of Refah (Welfare) Party. He became Turkey's Prime Minister after winning the election in December 1995. His party was outlawed in 1997 and he had to relinquish his premiership after a long campaign led by the Turkish military and forces afraid of a disintegration of the country by its possible Islamisation.

Fatwa - Legal opinion concerning Islamic Law.

Fiqh - Understanding, comprehension, knowledge, and jurisprudence in Islam.

Hadith - Reports on the sayings and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) or what he witnessed and approved. These are the real explanations, interpretations, and the living examples of the Prophet (pbuh) for teachings of the Qur'an. His sayings are found in books called the Hadith.

Hukm qat'ii – Definite injunction.

Hudud - Islamic Penal Law.

Ibadah - Devotion or worship.

Ijtihad - Exerting the sum total of one's ability attempting to uncover Allah's rulings on issues from their sources (Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma', etc.).

Jemaah Islamiyah – Islamic Group/Organisation.

Jihad - It is an Arabic word the root of which is *Jahada*, which means to strive for a better way of life. The nouns are *Juhd*, *Mujahid*, *Jihad*, and *Ijtihad*. The other meanings are: endeavor, strain, exertion, effort, diligence, fighting to defend one's life, land, and religion. *Jihad* should not be confused with Holy War; the latter does not exist in Islam nor will Islam allow its followers to be involved in a Holy War. The latter refers to the Holy War of the Crusaders.

Kamal Ataturk – Commander-In-Chief of Turkey's army. He took over Turkey from the last Caliph of Ottoman Caliphate in 1924. He was responsible for the abolishment of the Islamic Caliphate and introduced secularism in Turkey.

Khawarij – Khawarij meaning "Seceders" or "the Rebels", is a name for a group of people who withdrew their allegiance from Ali, the fourth caliph of Islam. They unsheathed their swords against the rightful leaders, whose blood they considered permissible to shed, and whose property they considered lawful to confiscate. They branded all who opposed them as unbelievers. They also branded muslims who commit any major sin as unbelievers.

Maslahat – Interest, Advantage, Good.

Mudarat – Disadvantage, Harm, Detriment.

Muktazilahs - Literally meaning 'those who withdraw themselves'. This movement was founded by Wasil bin 'Ata' in the second century after Hijrah (or 800 CE). Its members were united in their conviction that it was necessary to give a rationally coherent account of Islamic beliefs. In addition to having an atomistic view of the universe, they generally held to five theological principles, of which the two most important were the unity of God and divine

justice. The former led them to deny that the attributes of God were distinct entities or that the Qur'an was eternal, while the latter led them to assert the existence of free will.

Munkar – The Prohibited, Act of Evil.

Mushrikeen - A polytheist or a person who ascribes partners to Allah *taala*.

(Pbuh) - These letters are the abbreviations for the words Peace Be Upon Him which are the meaning of the Arabic expression “ ‘Alaihis Solat Was Salam”. This expression is used when the name of a prophet is mentioned.

Rabb – God.

Sahabah – The Companions of the Prophet (*pbuh*).

Siyasah Syar'iyah – Islamic Public Administration Policy.

Sunnah – Same meaning with Hadith.

Syariah - The combined set of individual and social duties prescribed on every believer by Islam, or the sacred law.

Syara' – Same meaning as *Syariah*.

Syura – Counsel, Consultation.

Ta'ala - The Almighty.

Tudung – A piece of cloth used to cover Muslim women's head.