

Let's bury them for good
Malaysiakini.com
Sep 14, 2009
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Extremism, as defined by well-known Islamic scholar Yusuf Qardhawi, means being situated farthest away from the point of centre. In our case, it indicates remoteness in religion and thought as well as behaviour.

Extremism's greatest consequence on our society is its ability to create insecurity and instability. For the record, before we continue, keep in mind that Allah S.W.T says in the Quran:

"Thus have we made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that you might be witness over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves...(2:143)."

It is clear that Islam promotes moderation and a balance in everything. More importantly, the Quranic verse clearly indicates that the Muslim Ummah is a nation of justice and moderation.

Based on this, the characteristics of Muslim behaviour and actions are defined clearly. That is, the role of the Muslim to be tolerant, moderate and uphold justice in all its forms towards every living being.

Imam Ghazali clearly states that the role of the Muslim is to realise a system whereby injustice is detailed and judged, whether perpetrated by rich or poor, high or low.

We have established that extremism is indeed unjust and therefore, clearly against the teaching of Islam. Due to the recent events, it becomes imperative to look at extremism itself.

Islam classifies extremism in three major types: *ghuluw* (excessiveness), *tanattu* (transgressing, meticulous religiosity) and *tashdid* (strictness). Excessiveness relates to overzealousness in performing an insignificant action such that it develops unwittingly into a menace.

Transgression is another type of extremism that refers to "those who go beyond the limit in their utterance as well as their action. Strictness refers to the extreme position of excessive prayers or *ibadah*.

Our concern today is the transgression extremism delineated above. The Prophet S.A.W says, *"Ruined were those who indulged in tanattu"*. It is evident that the actions of the cow head protestors are a clear violation of the principles of Islam.

More importantly, it is an insult to Allah and His Prophet. Islam seeks to create a balance of the life in this world and the next. Yusuf Qardhawi aptly puts it:

"Islam has laid down certain forms of ibadah to purify the human being, both spiritually and materially, individually and collectively, thereby establishing a harmonious community in which feelings of brotherhood and solidarity rule, without hindering man's duty to build culture and civilisation."

Khalid Samad and Khalid Ibrahim made the right choice by engaging the locals. The two Khalids created a forum to encourage a dialogue and an outlet for solutions. Instead, the behaviour and attitude displayed by the protestors was most horrendous.

Imam Ghazali advises Muslims to think steadily every moment as a true believer, to do what is in the hand with perfect and simple dignity and feeling of affection, justice and a mind that is free from all other thoughts. Furthermore, the Imam also adds that:

"A man's true greatness lies in the consciousness of an honest purpose in life, founded on a just estimate of himself and everything else, on frequent self examination, and a steady obedience to the will of Allah."

It is my contention that the two Khalids behaved as required by Islam. By portraying honest purpose, piety, perfect and simple dignity, and a free mind, they won the larger war against injustice, extremism, intolerance and provocation.

The cow head protestors should sincerely re-evaluate their purpose in life and consider whether a "just estimate" of themselves will ensure Allah's pleasure.

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious (16:125)."

The cow head protestors clearly violated the Quranic verse above and therefore, did not heed Allah's command. Furthermore, they have shown harsh treatment of Khalid Samad and Khalid Ibrahim by hurling insults at them.

The epitome of roughness and crudeness occurred when one of them pulled the chair from underneath a man, which caused him to fall.

It is my opinion that they should judge themselves during this month of Ramadan and ask for forgiveness from Allah S.W.T and from those whom they insulted.

Finally, it is my opinion that the temple should stay where it is, if the Hindus wish so. Under an Islamic state, its right to exist and operate is guaranteed.

The temple should not be moved. Instead, it must be preserved and Hindus be given the right to practice their religion in peace and freedom. This should apply to all religions.

Furthermore, the cow head protestors have created a sense of insecurity and instability. They have sowed the seeds of suspicion and distrust. It is imperative for us to think objectively to avoid falling into their trap.

Their role is to create discord amongst us. They are mere pawns of "tyrants who have used their powers over men's lives with terrible insolence."

Let's not give them an inch. Stoic resolve! Unwavering determination! Let's bury them for good.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/112825>