

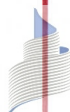
KNOWLEDGE CULTURE
AND
THE CONCEPT OF 1MALAYSIA
BUILDING A DEVELOPED AND HAPPY NATION



WAN MOHD NOR WAN DAUD

Translated and edited by
RATNAWATI MOHD ASRAF

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Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud

Translated from the Malay Original and Edited by
Ratnawati Mohd Asraf



Akademi Kenegaraan BTN
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Foreword by The Prime Minister of Malaysia

All praises be to Allah the Almighty. I am grateful that this monograph, which you now hold in your hands, has been published, adding one more valuable contribution for the benefit of all. I appreciate the earnest efforts of Professor Dr. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, who also took part in the efforts to elucidate the concept of 1Malaysia to her citizens so that they may have a deeper and more profound understanding of it. It is quite evident that this book explains the concept in a clear and scholarly manner, and in a manner that is close to the heart of her citizens.

The concepts of unity, a developed nation, happiness, *the people first*, social justice, and the cultural values that are espoused by the concept of 1Malaysia to enable us to be a progressive nation have been clearly and accurately explained. It is also interesting to note that the concept of a blessed tree of governance, as outlined by Imam al-Ghazzali, has been harmonized with that of the shady and bountiful tree of 1Malaysia. This is indeed a pertinent comparison, which the author brought forth to demonstrate the importance of 1Malaysia in fostering unity as well as in bringing about a developed Malaysia in the near future.

What is even more worthy of mention is his approach as well as the sincerity and honesty of his opinions on the issues surrounding this concept. Only a man of knowledge, and one who is patriotic and who has a keen sense of awareness is able

to recognize how fortunate we are to inhabit this land, and therefore to shoulder our responsibility to work hard so that our beloved country will enjoy the fruits of our success. We need to ensure that this country remains safe and peaceful, and that the citizens continue to be happy, for these are important aspects of a developed and progressive nation. It is the responsibility of all our citizens, especially the scholars, the technocrats, and the professionals, to ensure that Malaysia remains a progressive and peaceful country, united in its diversity. This is my personal view of this monograph.

The call of the *azan*, or Islamic call for prayer, “Let us perform the *salah*” (our prayers) and “Let us head towards success” has strengthened my conviction and understanding that to defend peace and prosperity for the continued success of our country is a religious requirement and responsibility.

Lastly, I wish to record my gratitude to Professor Dr. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, who saw the importance of the concept of 1Malaysia, and who subsequently gave his support by providing sound arguments, which clearly demonstrate the maturity of his thinking. I urge many more scholars, thinkers, and professionals to participate more actively, and with honesty and sincerity, to think of effective means of conveying an understanding of the concept of 1Malaysia from various perspectives and in many languages, as well as to provide constructive comments and criticisms. It is hoped that this book will have a large impact and that the concept and experience of 1Malaysia will open new dimensions in thinking for the benefit of all.

Thank you.

Y.A.B. Dato’ Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak.

Preface

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful. All praises are due to Him. Prayers and salutations be upon Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him), his family, his companions, and those who remain sincere and steadfast in following his footsteps until the Day of Judgement.

This humble piece of writing that rests in your hands, is an elaboration of my earlier work with a similar title in a book edited by Dato' Shahlan Ismail, *1Malaysia Menjana Negara Sejahtera dan Bahagia Menjelang 2020* (Kuala Lumpur; Pustaka Ilham Baru 2010). Some of the readers had requested that I explain some parts of it, which then led to this monograph.

As a citizen and a scholar who is concerned about the fate of all the people of our beloved country, I feel called upon to present some of my opinions on the concept of 1Malaysia that was introduced by our prime minister, Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak, especially given an increasingly challenging national and international political climate. I consider this effort as not only fulfilling my duty as a citizen and a professional, but indeed, as a religious duty as well. Islam enjoins us to cooperate and work together towards achieving good; guided by the love of God and the constant awareness of His presence, and not towards actions that lead to wrongdoing as well as hostility and enmity. We have also been instructed to advise each other with regard to true and right action. The Prophet is reported to have said that our religion is a *nasihat*, which includes sincerity in understanding and in the embodiment of *i'tikad* (belief), character, and the tenets of our religion at the personal, societal, and civilizational level.

I have had this conviction since the 1980's, when I returned from my studies overseas (1973-1986), benefitting a great deal

from public funding and the wise policy of the Government. I have written, for example, about Vision 2020, the culture of knowledge, the development of a nation, the concept of an Islamic State, and the civilised Muslim society. These efforts were not intended to shower praises on the leadership of the time; and neither were they intended to obtain positions or awards; nor were they intended to criticize, in a partisan fashion, as the opposition, to gain popularity and political power; and certainly not to become known as an objective or a courageous author. But rather, they were to lend support to the good intentions behind such concepts and to clarify and elaborate on them based on my abilities; as well as to look at the possibilities and potentials inherent within these concepts; and the errors and weaknesses that can be improved upon.

To weaken the Government is not a prudent strategy to promote justice, enhance transparency, protect human rights, as well as to fulfill the other demands of a civil society. We argue that although a weak government may be indirectly incapable of *perpetrating* some forms of injustice, it may be directly incapable of *preventing* other forms of injustice. A weak government will also be incapable of doing good, preventing evil, and addressing injustice for the sake of religion, race, nation, and the world community. The recent experiences of several neighbouring countries as well as countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and a large number of the Middle East countries and Africa have strengthened my conviction.

The best means to promote justice, transparency, and good governance, as well as to reduce rampant injustice, corruption, and other symptoms of a dysfunctional and corrupt government is to strengthen the government of the day, and to always give our advice and support so that unjust practices are corrected, ineffective policies are put straight, and those that are incapable of correction dropped. At the same time, the leaders and government officials who have been found guilty of crimes and acts of injustice are to be given just punishment. We

are fully aware that it is not easy to accomplish these tasks, that they may take a long time to succeed, and that they may even end in failure. But we are convinced that in this non-radical and gradual manner, racial and religious harmony—as well as social-economic and political stability, which are increasingly being challenged, are preserved.

We are also fully aware that a strong and stable government, if it does not heed the sincere advice and opinions of capable scholars and other persons of integrity, may become proud and arrogant; ignoring the scholars and true experts; and abusing power to satisfy their desires and interests as well as those of their cronies. Nevertheless, we believe that a strong and stable government, with the support and advice of sincere scholars and persons of integrity and virtue, as well as the various strata of society, can bring about prosperity and continued peace and security for its citizens as well as the other inhabitants of this nation. Such a government will be cognizant of the fact that a reasonable critique and peaceful protest against a particular policy, or leader, or an official is not necessarily a protest against the government itself. A wise government will be pleased to recognize and acknowledge the open views of its citizens, who are becoming more mature and educated, especially given the rapid developments in the national and global political climate.

It is hoped that this work will be able to achieve its aim of contributing, in a small way, to the unity and prosperity of all races in this country based on our history, religious values, and common interest. I would like to thank the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Y.A.B. Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Razak, for agreeing to pen the foreword for this book. Our gratitude also goes to Professor Dato Dr. Ir. Zaini Ujang, Vice-Chancellor, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, who has actively instilled a high culture of knowledge at the institution in which he leads, and who continues to lend his strong support to our academic struggle at CASIS. I would also like to convey my gratitude to

Dato' Shahlan Ismail, Political Secretary to the Prime Minister, Y.M. Raja Arif bin Raja Ali, Director-General of BTN, and *Akademi Kenegaraan* for their relentless efforts in ensuring, in an academic and wise manner, the success of the 1Malaysia concept.

Wabillahi al-taufiq wa'l-hidayah wa'l-hamdulillahirabbal-'alamin. .

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud
Kuala Lumpur 1 Jun 2011

Introduction

In the history of mankind, no man or nation has managed to develop without knowledge, although they may possess wealth and political power. And no major religion and civilisation has ever upheld ignorance as the hallmark of their civilisation. In fact, all nations, religions, and civilizations uphold knowledge and wisdom, although there are fundamental differences in the interpretation, method, and yardstick in measuring the two. In fact, from an Islamic point of view, the superiority of Adam, the father of mankind, as the highest order of creation is recognised even by the angels, who prostrate before him, recognising Adam's superiority in knowledge, which was granted to him by God, enabling him to shoulder the responsibility of being God's caliph on earth.¹

To attain progress and to achieve unity among the various races in this country, and to be the ultimate role model to other nations in the world, we have to inculcate and put into practice—in a systematic, moderate, assertive, and wise manner—a healthy culture of knowledge in understanding the various concepts and thoughts as well as their implementation at all levels.

The Concept of a Developed Nation

The concept of a 'developed nation', or *negara maju*, in Malay, is generally derived from the Malay translation of the English term; hence carrying with it the values, worldview, culture, and civilisation of the West. The modern Western conception of the term has been very influential in that it has come to be adopted by other nations as well. However, it also cannot be denied that from several angles, the Western understanding of development does not contradict, but in fact, overlaps with some

¹ *al-Baqarah* (2): 30-34.

aspects of the worldview of Islam as well as the cultures and traditions of the Malays. This is also true of certain viewpoints and characteristics of other cultures and civilisations such as those of China and India. Those aspects that overlap and that are not contradictory can be easily accepted and absorbed without creating conflicts within our minds or the value systems of our society, while those aspects that are contradictory will have to be adjusted to conform to our views, values, and needs if possible. If they cannot be adjusted, they have to be firmly put aside, with wisdom.

From the Islamic perspective, which is already firmly ingrained in the hearts of the Malays, a developed nation is a nation that is successful in meeting the broad purposes of Islamic law (*al-syari'ah*), which is to uphold the quality of life, religion (*din*), intellect (*'aql*), property, and the protection of one's lineage². In the current popular definition of a developed nation, the focus is on daily life and material wealth while religion and lineage are not given the priority that they deserve. Instead, they see religion and lineage as an obstruction to progress. For us to develop, the basics of religion cannot be interpreted merely to suit the needs of and changes affecting present day society. In fact, these basic tenets must be upheld and constantly put into practice in facing these challenging times and in building a new civilisation for mankind that is progressive, morally upright, and that would allow their citizens to attain a state of happiness.

² Islamic Development Bank, *Vision 1440 H: A Vision for Human Dignity* (Jeddah: IDB, 2006), p. 11-15. IDB 1440 Hijrah Vision Commission under the chairmanship of Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. See also Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Pembangunan di Malaysia: Ke Arah satu Kefahaman Baru yang Lebih Sempurna* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 2001) p. 41-56; idem, "Reflections" in the National Institute of Public Administration, *Malaysian Development Experience: Changes and Challenges* (Kuala Lumpur: National Institute of Public Administration, 1994), p. 859-863.

The Human Development Index—which has become an important indicator of a developed nation—is constructed by taking into account the Gross Domestic Product per capita, higher education attainment, and longevity rate. The indicators created by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), are not considered accurate in providing a picture of man’s true needs; which is, to achieve a state of well-being and happiness.³ It has to be admitted that happiness and well-being are not something that is easy to understand and to measure, but scholars of all religions and races agree that the objective of what a man does in his personal capacity and within the confines of society is to achieve well-being and happiness.⁴ This is also the aim of Vision 2020 and the 1Malaysia concept, which is to make Malaysia a truly developed nation using our own mould, taking into account the relevant ideas and best practices from various sources.

From the perspective of our worldview, happiness and well-being are two important aspects in the development of an individual and society. This is the kind of goodness that we aspire to achieve in this world and in the hereafter.⁵ A developed country is one that allows its citizens to attain happiness and well-being, and to achieve *maqasid al-syari’ah* (the purposes of Islamic law). This, then, is the *baladatum tayyibah*, a nation that is blessed by Allah the Almighty.⁶

³ For a more detailed analysis on UNDP’s criteria, refer to Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Pembangunan di Malaysia: Ke Arah satu Kefahaman Baru yang Lebih Sempurna* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 2001), p. 25-40.

⁴ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Pembangunan di Malaysia*, p. 41-56; idem, “Reflections”, p 859-863.

⁵ For an excellent elaboration on the concept of happiness, see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Ma’na Kebahagiaan dan Pengalamannya Dalam Islam*. Translated from the English with notes and introduction by Muhammad Zainiy Uthman (Kuala Lumpur: *International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 2002).

⁶ *As-Saba* (34): 15.

World's Happiest Countries

Many scholars, including religious scholars—particularly among the Muslims—agree that prosperity and well-being are not restricted to subjective feelings or pleasure—although these elements cannot be separated from the meaning of the experience. True happiness is, in fact, a spiritual experience based on one's certainty of the vision of truth and reality, as reflected by one's character and comprehensive personal and social discipline (*adab*).⁷ To modern psychologists, *subjective well-being* (SWB) is a collection of indicators that represent a society's happiness, which, in turn, is a criterion for the success of a country and the policies of its leadership. SWB is tied to the underlying state of happiness, which is different from the feeling of pleasure or the kind of happiness that constantly changes; and is meant as “*a sense of satisfaction with one's life, both in general and in specific areas...such as relationships, health, and work.*”⁸

A study in 2006 reported that 81% of the population in the UK agreed that the main aim of the Government is to ensure the happiness of the people—as opposed to the accumulation of wealth. In relation to this, David Cameron (currently the Prime Minister), who was the opposition leader in the English Parliament at the time, had placed happiness as his main political agenda and said: “*It's time we admitted that there is more to life than money, and it's time we focus not just on GDP, but GWB—General Well-being.*” (BBC 2006).⁹

⁷ Al-Attas, *Ma'na Kebahagiaan*, p 1-25.

⁸ Pavot and Diener (1993) cited in A. White (2007). “A Global Projection of Subjective Well-Being: A Challenge to Positive Psychology?” *Psychtalk* 56, 17-20.

⁹ White, “*A Global Projection of Subjective Well-Being*”, p. 1. The scholars and policy-makers of developed countries are increasingly keen to associate happiness with the aim of the national development policy framework. On 29-31 March 1993, *The Institute for Advanced Studies* Japan organized an important symposium in Kyoto on “*The State of Happiness.*” Then, the *Joint Research Centre of the European Commission*, *Organisation for Economic*

Based on this realization, several academicians from the United Kingdom came up with *A Map of Global Happiness 2006*, which received widespread reaction worldwide. The following is the ranking of several countries on the map¹⁰ while in the brackets are the populations of the highest ranked countries:

- 1 Denmark (5.5 million)
- 2 Switzerland (7.5 million)
- 3 Austria (8.2 million)
- 4 Iceland (300,000)
- 5 Bahamas (303,000)
- 6 Finland (5.2 million)
- 7 Sweden (9 million)
- 8 Bhutan (2.3 million)
- 9 Brunei, (380,000)
- 10 Canada (33 million)
- 11 Ireland (4 million)
- 12 Luxembourg (475,000)
- 13 Costa Rica (4.2 million)
- 14 Malta (412,000)
- 15 The Netherlands (16 million)
- 16 Antigua and Barbuda (85,000)
- 17 Malaysia (26 million)
- 18 New Zealand (4.3 million)
- 22 United Arab Emirates
- 23 United States of America
- 26 Australia
- 30 Oman
- 31 Saudi Arabia

Co-operation and Development (OECD), Bank of Italy, and the Centre for Economic and International Studies (CEIS), University of Rome, "Tor Vergata", organized a conference on 2-3 April 2007 in Rome on "*Is Happiness Measurable and What Do Those Measures Mean for Policy*". This conference is one of several preparations for the *World Forum on Measuring the Progress of Societies* held in Istanbul in June, 2007.

¹⁰ White, "*A Global Projection of Subjective Well-Being*", Appendix.

41	United Kingdom
53	Singapore
62	France
63	Hong Kong
64	Indonesia
68	Taiwan
76	Thailand
82	China
89	Japan
90	Yemen
125	India
133	Turkey
167	Pakistan
174	Sudan
179	Burundi.

Although the concept of happiness as reflected by the SWB indicators does not conform fully to the concept of happiness from the Islamic perspective as well as that of the other major religions, especially where the spiritual and moral aspects are concerned, generally it can still be accepted. It is found that SWB is closely related to a nation's state of health, economy, and basic education. From the above list, it is quite obvious that of all the countries that are recognised as being happier than Malaysia, only Canada has a bigger population. In fact, it is much harder to administer Malaysia compared to the 16 countries that are ranked higher, given Malaysia's multi-racial, multi-lingual, and multi-religious population, which come from civilisations that differ greatly in terms of its history. Besides, compared to most of the top 16 countries, we have been colonised much longer by different nations, which has transformed radically the orientations and institutions of our society.

We should all understand that the yardstick in determining the level of well-being as discussed above is based on information that can be regarded as being objective, without taking into

account the feelings and views of the citizens of a particular country. This fact must be balanced with other research that would take into account such issues. This is probably what was aimed by the researchers of the *Gallup World Poll*, who had interviewed thousands of people from 155 countries between 2005-2009 to determine their level of well-being and happiness. They inquired about the respondents' daily experience, which include factors such as whether they were *well rested, respected, free from pain* and *intellectually engaged*. However, the position of the top six countries did not differ very much from the *A Map of Global Happiness 2006*, where Malaysia was ranked at the 94th place, whereas other countries that are currently facing various challenges to their nations were ranked well ahead—such as Bahrain (48), Pakistan (58), Libya (67), Lebanon (73), and Bangladesh (91). Tunisia and Yemen are tied at 96, while Iran was ranked 81st and Indonesia 85th. Three others—Sri Lanka, India, Afghanistan and Syria—were ranked at 115, while China, at 125.¹¹

A national high ranking does not exclude some major problems within certain population groups. For instance, the *Gallup 2005-2009* study placed South Korea at level 56, but a sizeable number of its youth are found to be unhappier compared to their peers in China and Japan.¹² These factors may have contributed to the high number of suicide cases among its youth, at 13.5 for every 100,000 aged between 15 and 24. Suicide is the main cause of death among the youth in this country. This phenomenon is also on the rise in Malaysia, although it has not reached the level as that of some other countries.¹³ In 2006, it

¹¹ <http://www.forbes.com/2010/07/14/world-happiest-countries-lifestyle-realestate-gallup-table.html>. Downloaded 4/5/2011.

¹² “Korean Youngsters Unhappier Than Chinese, Japanese”. <http://www.english.chosun.com/site/data/html/dir/2011/03/08/201103800446.html>.

¹³ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2010/health/2010-05/04c_13277938.html.

was also reported that 13 of 100,000 Malaysians committed suicide compared to eight in the 1980s, and that 3 out of every 100,000 youth died of suicide.¹⁴ In reality, happiness and well-being are personal in nature. However, a society's well-being and happiness will surely influence this personal experience. Taking into account both these studies and their limitations, we can consider our country as having performed quite well. The overall state of happiness should be improved upon and made the thrust of a united and progressive agenda for 1Malaysia. This is a fact that should not be forgotten; as more often than not, a section of our population is prone to noticing our internal weaknesses without taking into account the state of well-being and happiness that our country has achieved. This is contrary to the experience of a large number of countries that are far more advanced economically and technologically, and which have an even smaller population. Therefore, leaders at all levels of our multi-racial and multi-religious society should recognize and acknowledge our existing strengths and help to reduce our weaknesses.

The Concept of 1Malaysia

As previously mentioned, each new leader will try to introduce new concepts to focus the people's attention and efforts towards the new Government's agenda.¹⁵ In the Malaysian context, this involves specific emphasis on facing new challenges and taking new approaches to solve existing challenges. This does not mean that the new Government rejects the fundamental policies of the previous administration. Even opposition parties focus on new slogans and concepts at each general election to attract voters to their political agenda.

¹⁴ http://www.dhrramalaysia.org.my/dhrramalaysia/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=142:nst-police-consider-using-the-law-on-suicide&catid=74:news&Itemid=76

¹⁵ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Masyarakat Islam Hadhari*. (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2006).

The 1Malaysia concept with the tag line, “People First, Performance Now” was conceptualized by the Government led by Prime Minister Dato’ Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, but the concept of uniting Malaysians of various races and religions had existed prior to the nation’s independence. Many, including former Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, have said recently that the concept of 1Malaysia has been interpreted according to the worldview and interests of the various groups. Some are worried that the concept mirrored that of *Malaysian Malaysia* propagated by Lee Kuan Yew before Singapore separated from Malaysia. Many also doubted the concept, claiming that it was based on the recommendations of foreign non-Muslim consultants.

The fact is that the spirit of 1Malaysia has long been etched in the lyrics of the national anthem, *Negaraku*, which described the state of the country since the early days of independence, for example, *Rakyat hidup bersatu dan maju* (The people live together, united and progressive). The same is true with regard to seeking happiness and the grace of Allah S.W.T. as contained in the line, *Rahmat Bahagia, Tuhan Kurniakan* (May God bestow upon us happiness and His blessings). Aspirations towards national unity and the policies needed to achieve them was formulated and implemented through the education system—as can be seen from the Razak and Rahman Talib reports, through the National Culture Policy, the Alliance political system, and later on, the Barisan Nasional (BN). These aspirations were emphasised by Encik Khir Johari, Malaysia’s education minister at the time, in his speech at the Penang Free School on 17th October 1967:

“Our entire educational policy is dictated by the need to mould a single united nation out of a plural society. Our task is a tremendous one. Common ideals, common ambitions, and common loyalties must be fostered and not enforced and the schools are our most powerful tools for peaceful persuasion.”

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