



MEMAHAMI PENDEKATAN WASATIYYAH DALAM KONTEKS NEGARA BERBILANG KAUM DAN AGAMA

**Ucaptama Seminar Pendekatan Wasatiyyah Sebagai Dasar Negara, 27 April 2015
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DEFINITION OF WASATIYYAH

THE TERM **WASAṬIYYAH** AS DERIVED FROM SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2: 143 REFERS TO THE “**JUSTLY BALANCED QUALITY**” OR “**JUSTLY BALANCED NATURE**” OF ISLAM AND THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO SERVE AS ALLAH’S TRUSTWORTHY “**WITNESSES OVER MANKIND**” IN THIS WORLD AND IN THE HEREAFTER (Q. 2: 143).

UNDERSTANDING WASATIYYAH HOLISTICALLY

**RELATE CONCEPT OF
“BALANCE” (TAWAZUN, I`TIDAL
KESEIMBANGAN) TO THE QUALITIES
OF JUSTICE (‘ADĀLAH), and
EXCELLENCE/GOODNESS/CHOICEST
(KHAIRIYYAH) AS EXPLAINED BY THE
WELL-ESTABLISHED CLASSICAL
COMMENTATORS OF THE QUR’ĀN
SUCH AS AL-ṬABARĪ, AL-RĀZĪ, AL-
QURTUBĪ, IBN KATHĪR.**

THE QUR'ĀNIC MEANING AND CONNOTATIONS OF *WASAṬIYYAH*:

1. **JUSTICE** (*`adālah*, *`adl*)

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا

“AND THUS WE HAVE MADE YOU A JUST COMMUNITY (OR JUSTLY BALANCED OR MIDDLEMOST COMMUNITY) **THAT YOU WILL BE WITNESSES** OVER THE PEOPLE AND THE MESSENGER WILL BE A WITNESS OVER YOU.”

(Q. 2: 143)

WITHOUT THIS QUALITY OF COMPREHENSIVE JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS, AND MORAL EXCELLENCE THE *UMMAH* CANNOT BE SUITABLE WITNESSES FOR MANKIND OR THOSE PEOPLES OR HUMAN BEINGS WHO HAVE FAILED TO FULFIL THE DIVINE TRUSTS PLACED UPON THEIR SHOULDERS.

IT IS REPORTED BY IMĀM AḤMAD ON THE AUTHORITY OF ABŪ SA'ĪD AL-KHUḌARĪ THAT THE PROPHET (Ṣ.'A.W.) INTERPRETED THE WORD "**WASAT**" IN VERSE 143 OF *SŪRAH AL-BAQARAH*(Q.2) TO MEAN JUSTICE (**AL-'ADL**). JUSTICE REQUIRES BEING IN THE MIDDLE-MOST POSITION BETWEEN TWO OR MORE OPPOSING SIDES, WITHOUT INCLINING TO OR FAVOURING ANY OF THE SIDES, AND NOT SWAYED BY EMOTIONS, BIASES OR PREJUDICE IN MAKING JUDGEMENTS, DECISIONS OR SOLVING DISPUTES. HENCE THE CONNOTATIONS OF "BALANCE", "EQUILIBRIUM" OR "MODERATION."

THE MUSLIM UMMAH AS THE “**JUSTLY BALANCED COMMUNITY**” IS TO UPHOLD THE PRISTINE PURITY OF THE RELIGION OF **TAUHĪD**, AND EXECUTE THE COMMANDMENTS OF ALLAH (S.W.T.), ACCOMPANIED BY A GOD-FEARING MINDSET (**TAQWĀ**), THEREBY *BECOMING THE MOST SUITABLE WITNESSES OVER MANKIND* REGARDING THE PURITY OF ALLAH’S ONENESS,, TRUTH VERSUS FALSEHOOD, GOOD VERSUS EVIL, AND THE PRACTICE OF TRUE BALANCE AND TRUE MODERATION IN THIS WORLD AND IN THE HEREAFTER FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLES OF THE PROPHET (S.A.W.)

SOME QUR'ĀNIC PRINCIPLES REGARDING JUSTICE:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلّٰهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللّٰهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىَّ أَن تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلَوْا أَوْ تَعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا﴾ (١٣٥)

“O you, who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allāh, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allāh is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever acquainted with what you do.” (Q. 4:135)
(Source: <http://quran.com/4>)

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾

“Indeed, Allah commands justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.” (Source: <http://quran.com/16>)

(2) EXCELLENCE, BEST, MOST PREFERRED AND GOODNESS (*khairiyyah*)

The Muslim community is entrusted by Allāh (S.W.T.) to represent all that is good (*al-tayyib*, *al-khair*, *al-ma'rūf*), enjoin the right/good (*al-ma'rūf*) and prohibit the bad/wrong/evil (*al-munkar*).

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ
لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ
الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

“You are the BEST COMMUNITY brought fourth [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.”(Q. 3: 110)

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

“AND LET THERE BE [ARISING] FROM YOU A NATION INVITING TO [ALL THAT IS] GOOD, ENJOINING WHAT IS RIGHT AND FORBIDDING WHAT IS WRONG, AND THOSE WILL BE THE SUCCESSFUL.” (Q.3:104)

This responsibility of “enjoining what is good/right and prohibiting what is bad/evil,” is a very important tenet of Islam and a part of *wasatiyyah*. Below we reproduce the explanation given by Ibn Kathir in his commentary of Q. 2: 143

COMMENTARY OF IBN KATHIR

THE VIRTUES OF MUHAMMAD'S NATION

“ALLAH STATED THAT HE HAS CHANGED OUR *QIBLAH* TO THE *QIBLAH* OF IBRAHIM AND CHOSE IT FOR US SO THAT HE MAKES US THE BEST NATION EVER. HENCE, WE WILL BE THE WITNESSES OVER THE NATIONS ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION, FOR ALL OF THEM WILL THEN AGREE CONCERNING OUR VIRTUE. THE WORD *WASAṬ* IN THE *ĀYAH* MEANS THE BEST AND THE MOST HONORED. THEREFORE, SAYING THAT (THE PROPHET'S TRIBE) QURAYSH IS IN THE *WASAṬ* REGARDING ARAB TRIBES AND THEIR AREAS, MEANS THE BEST. SIMILARLY, SAYING THAT ALLAH'S MESSENGER(SAW) WAS IN THE *WASAṬ* OF HIS PEOPLE, MEANS HE WAS FROM THE BEST SUBTRIBE. ALSO, 'ASR, THE PRAYER THAT IS DESCRIBED AS '*WUSTA*'(A VARIATION OF THE WORD *WASAṬ*) , MEANS THE BEST PRAYER, AS THE AUTHENTIC COLLECTIONS OF AHĀDĪTH REPORTED. SINCE ALLĀH MADE THIS UMMAH (MUSLIM NATION) THE *WASAṬ*, HE HAS ENDOWED HER WITH THE MOST COMPLETE LEGISLATION, THE BEST *MANHAJ* (WAY, METHOD, ETC.,) AND THE CLEAREST *MADHHAB* (METHODOLOGY, MANNERISM, ETC).”

Allah said:

**“HE HAS CHOSEN YOU (TO CONVEY HIS MESSAGE OF ISLAMIC MONOTHEISM TO MANKIND), AND HAS NOT LAID UPON YOU IN RELIGION ANY HARDSHIP: IT IS THE RELIGION OF YOUR FATHER IBRAHIM. IT IS HE (ALLĀH) WHO HAS NAMED YOU MUSLIMS BOTH BEFORE AND IN THIS (THE QURAN), THAT THE MESSENGER (MUHAMMAD (SAW)) MAY BE A WITNESS OVER YOU *AND YOU BE WITNESS OVER MANKIND!*”
(22:78)**

Moreover, Imām Ahmad reported that Abu Sa ‘īd narrated: Allah’s Messenger (SAW) said:

يدعى نوح يوم القيامة, فيقال له : هل بلغت؟ فيقول : نعم , فيدعى قومه فيقال : ما أتانا من نذير وما أتانا من أحد, فيقال لنوح :من ”لهم: هل بلغكم فيقولون يشهد لك ؟ فيقول : محمد وأُمَّته , قال فذلك قوله: (وكذلك جعلكم أمّة وسطا) قال : والوسط العدل , فتدعون فتشهدون له بالبلاغ ثمّ أشهد عليكم“

“Nuh will be called on the Day of Resurrection and will be asked , “ have you conveyed (the Message)?’ He will say, ‘Yes’. His people will be summoned and asked, ‘Has Nuh conveyed (the Message) to you?’ They will say,’ No warner came to us and no one (Prophet) was sent to us.’ Nuh will be asked, ‘Who testifies for you?’ He will say, ‘Muhammad and his Ummah.’ ”

3) BALANCE (*Tawassuṭ, Tawāzun, I'tidāl*)

BALANCE OR MIDDLE POSITION IN PERSONAL CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR IS EMPHASIZED IN SEVERAL VERSES OF THE QUR'AN, E.G.:

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ
مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٨﴾

“AND DO NOT TURN YOUR CHEEK [IN CONTEMPT] TOWARD PEOPLE AND DO NOT WALK THROUGH THE EARTH EXULTANTLY. INDEED, ALLAH DOES NOT LIKE EVERYONE SELF-DELUDED AND BOASTFUL” (Q. 31: 18)

وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَأَغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ
الْحَمِيرِ ﴿١٩﴾

“AND BE MODERATE IN YOUR PACE AND LOWER YOUR VOICE; INDEED, THE MOST DISAGREEABLE OF SOUNDS IS THE VOICE OF DONKEYS.” (Q. 31: 19)

Cont.

BALANCE BETWEEN OTHER-WORLDLY GOALS AND THIS-WORLDLY RESPONSIBILITY is underscored in the following verse:

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ
مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

“BUT SEEK, THROUGH THAT WHICH ALLAH HAS GIVEN YOU, THE HOME OF THE HEREAFTER; AND [YET], DO NOT FORGET YOUR SHARE OF THE WORLD. AND DO GOOD AS ALLAH HAS DONE GOOD TO YOU. AND DESIRE NOT CORRUPTION IN THE LAND. INDEED, ALLAH DOES NOT LIKE CORRUPTERS.” (Q. 28: 77)

BALANCE IN ECONOMIC CONSUMPTION IS INDICATED IN THE FOLLOWING VERSES:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَحْرِمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا
تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

“O YOU WHO HAVE BELIEVED, DO NOT PROHIBIT THE GOOD THINGS WHICH ALLAH HAS MADE LAWFUL TO YOU AND DO NOT TRANSGRESS. INDEED, ALLAH DOES NOT LIKE TRANSGRESSORS.” (Q. 5: 87)

وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ
مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

“AND EAT OF WHAT ALLAH HAS PROVIDED FOR YOU [WHICH IS] LAWFUL AND GOOD. AND FEAR ALLAH, IN WHOM YOU ARE BELIEVERS”. (Q. 5: 88)

BALANCE AND MODERATION IS ALSO REQUIRED IN THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM, WITH THE EMPHASIS ON THE USE OF WISDOM, GENTLENESS AND RATIONAL ARGUMENTS, AS INDICATED IN THE FOLLOWING VERSE:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَدِلْ لَهُم
بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

“INVITE TO THE WAY OF YOUR LORD WITH WISDOM AND GOOD INSTRUCTION, AND ARGUE WITH THEM IN A WAY THAT IS BEST. INDEED, YOUR LORD IS MOST KNOWING OF WHO HAS STRAYED FROM HIS WAY, AND HE IS MOST KNOWING OF WHO IS [RIGHTLY] GUIDED.” (Q. 16: 125)

EXTREMISM IN RELIGION PROHIBITED BY THE PROPHET (S.A.W.)

Sahih al-Bukhari: Volume 1, Book 2, Number 38:

عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إن الدين يسر ولن يشاد الدين أحد إلا غلبه فسددوا وقاربوا وأبشروا واستعينوا بالغدوة والروحة وشيء من الدلجة

Narrated Abu Hurairah:

THE PROPHET 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."

(See Fath al-Bari, p.102, Vol. 1).

GENTLENESS AND KINDNESS IN THE SUNNAH (1)

فحين اشتدت أم المؤمنين عائشة رضي الله عنها على اليهود الذين دخلوا على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم سابين له بصيغة التسليم فقالوا: السام عليك بدل السلام عليك، قال لها وهو فطن لما قالوه: يا عائشة إن الله رفيق يحب الرفق ويعطي على الرفق ما لا يعطي على العنف وما لا يعطي على ما سواه.

'A'ISHA, THE WIFE OF ALLAH'S APOSTLE (MAY PEACE BE UPON HIM), REPORTED THAT ALLAH'S MESSENGER (MAY PEACE BE UPON HIM) SAID: 'A'ISHA, VERILY ALLAH IS KIND AND HE LOVES KINDNESS AND CONFERS UPON KINDNESS WHICH HE DOES NOT CONFER UPON SEVERITY AND DOES NOT CONFER UPON ANYTHING ELSE BESIDES IT (KINDNESS).

GENTLENESS AND KINDNESS IN THE SUNNAH (2)

ومتمثلاً أيضاً قول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: (إن الرفق لا يكون في شيء إلا زانه ولا ينزع من شيء إلا شانه).

'A'ISHA, THE WIFE OF ALLAH'S APOSTLE (MAY PEACE BE UPON HIM), REPORTED ALLAH'S APOSTLE (MAY PEACE BE UPON HIM) AS SAYING: KINDNESS IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANYTHING BUT THAT IT ADDS TO ITS BEAUTY AND IT IS NOT WITHDRAWN FROM ANYTHING BUT IT MAKES IT DEFECTIVE.

EXTREMISM IN RELIGION PROHIBITED BY THE PROPHET (S.A.W.)

THE PROPHET (S.A.W) DID NOT PROHIBIT THE GOOD THINGS (*AL-TAYYIBAT*) IN THIS WORLD FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING, BUT THOSE GOOD THINGS WERE NEVER A PART OF HIS PRIMARY CONCERN AS HE PREFERRED TO LIVE A LIFE OF SIMPLICITY, FRUGALITY, HUMILITY AND MORAL RESTRAINT. IN ONE OF HIS FAMOUS SUPPLICATIONS, THE PROPHET (S.A.W) SHOWED HIS HOLISTIC AND COMPREHENSIVE VISION OF LIFE, AND PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIS RELIGION (*AL-DIN*), THE WORLD (*AL-DUNYA*), THE HEREAFTER (*AL-AKHIRAH*), LIFE (*AL-HAYAH*) AND DEATH (*AL-MAWT*):

“O ALLAH, IMPROVE FOR ME MY RELIGION WHICH SAFEGUARDS ALL MY AFFAIRS; AND IMPROVE FOR ME MY WORLDLY EXISTENCE FOR IN IT IS MY LIVELIHOOD; AND IMPROVE FOR ME MY HEREAFTER FOR TO IT IS MY RETURN; AND MAKE THIS LIFE AN INCREASE FOR ME IN ALL THAT IS GOOD; AND MAKE DEATH AS A RELIEF FOR ME FROM ALL THAT IS BAD.”

THE PROPHET (S.A.W) USED TO URGE HIS COMPANIONS TO STRIKE THE PROPER BALANCE BETWEEN THEIR RELIGIOSITY AND THEIR WORLDLY AFFAIRS, AND BETWEEN THE LEGITIMATE PLEASURE OF THE BODY AND THE FELICITY OF THE SPIRIT.

“VERILY, YOUR BODY HAS A RIGHT ON YOU, AND YOUR WIFE HAS A RIGHT ON YOU, AND YOUR VISITORS AND GUESTS HAVE A RIGHT ON YOU. THEREFORE GIVE TO EACH ONE THAT HAS A RIGHT UPON YOU HIS/HER RIGHT.”

cont...

However, when he witnessed some of the Companions enthusiastically waiting and desiring to get a share of the booty brought back by Abu `Ubaidah from al-Bahrain, he seized the opportunity to warn them of the “temptation of this world” (*fitnat al-dunya*) and its deceptions and illusions (*al-ghurur*), saying:

Rejoice (for a while) and become weary (after that). By Allah, it is not poverty that I am afraid of for you: I am afraid that material wealth (al-dunya) would be spread over you abundantly as it spread over those before you. Then you will be competing with one another for it as they had competed for it, and then it will destroy you as it had destroyed them.

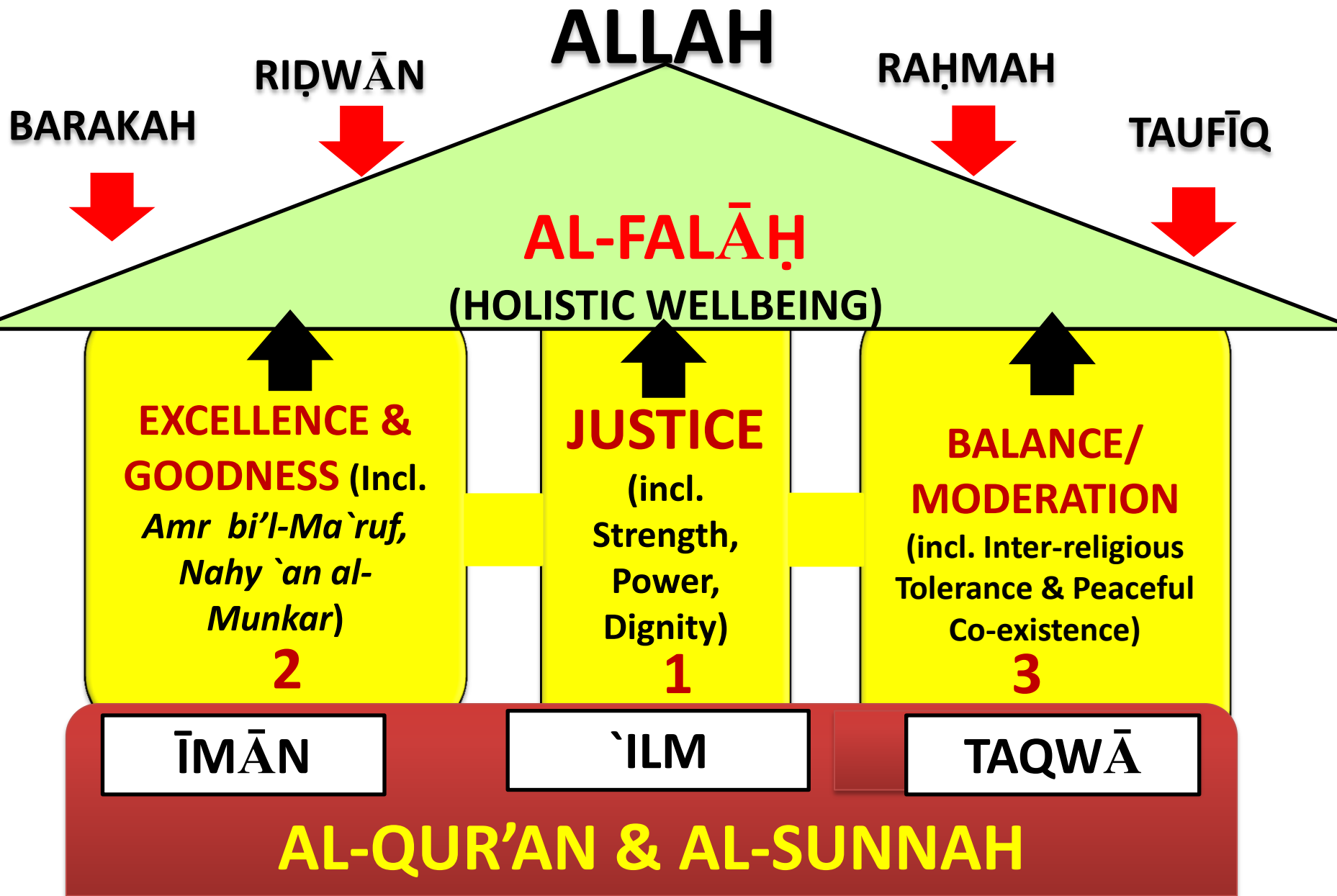
TRUE MODERATION, BALANCE OR FOLLOWING THE MIDDLE PATH IS NOT AN EXCUSE OR JUSTIFICATION FOR MORAL LAXITY, UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR OR LIBERALISM IN PERFORMANCE OF RELIGIOUS DUTIES

It should be pointed out that “Balance” or “TRUE Moderation”, must not be misunderstood as justification for indulgence (*tasāhul*), carelessness or an excuse to be negligent in performance of religious obligations. With regard to performance of religious obligations, the nature of moderation in them is clearly defined and stated in the Sunnah (the normative statements and practices) of the Prophet (ﷺ).

IT IS, THEREFORE, THE DUTY OF OBJECTIVE AND QUALIFIED MUSLIM SCHOLARS TO MAKE THE NECESSARY CORRECTIONS OR CLARIFICATIONS. OTHERWISE, “MODERATION” COULD BE UNDERSTOOD IN DIFFERENT SUBJECTIVE WAYS, INCLUDING AS A LICENSE OR PERMISSION GIVEN BY RELIGION TO BE LAX IN THE PERFORMANCE OF RELIGIOUS DUTIES.

GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPT

- From a comprehensive understanding of the concept of **WASAṬIYYAH** as constitutive of the core qualities of **JUSTICE, EXCELLENCE and BALANCE** as mentioned above, it is possible to present the comprehensive and holistic meaning of the Qur'ānic concept in the following illustration, on the next page. It is our humble attempt to simplify the intellectual discourse on the concept and to convey its holistic and inter-related nature.



THE STRUCTURE OF AL-WASATIYYAH

Cont.

In explaining or elaborating the concept of *WASATIYYAH*, it is important to remind our Muslim leaders, community and scholars not forget the issue of fulfilling the role of being A) “witnesses unto mankind” and B) “enjoining all that is good/ right and prohibiting all that is bad /wrong” which are made obligatory upon the Muslim community, being Divinely designated as “The Just and Best Community brought forth for mankind.” ***It should be remembered that the Prophet (S.‘A.W.) had warned that dire consequences would befall Muslim communities who fail to fulfill or neglect the obligation of “enjoining all that is good/right and prohibiting all that is bad/evil”.***

CIVILISATIONAL WITNESSING

(al-shuhud al-hadhari)

To fulfill this key “civilisational witnessing” and leadership mission, the Muslim community has to also strive for comprehensive excellence in religious and worldly sciences, in the spirit of absolute and uncompromising monotheism (*Tauhīd*), fulfilling the Divine Trust (*Amānah*), performance of comprehensive worship of Allah (*`Ibādah*), vicegerency (*Khilāfah*) and desiring to spread the mercy of Allah (S.W.T.) to all the worlds (*Rahmatan li al-`alamīn*). This point has been stressed by innumerable reformist Muslim scholars over the centuries, particularly after the period of colonization by Western powers until the present.

THE MUSLIM-MALAY COMMUNITY AS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF BALANCE AND MODERATION

Respect

Muslims around the world say that the one thing the West can do to improve relations with their societies is ***to moderate*** their views toward Muslims and respect Islam.



(www.gallup.com/press/104209/Who-Speaks-Islam-What-Billion-Muslims-Really-Think)
-accessed 26 April 2011-

3rd Biggest Sleeping Buddha in S.E. ASIA
in the “Veranda of Mecca”



©2004 PC & Jon J.

Chinese Style Minarets in Malacca



Unique Chinese Mosque in Kelantan



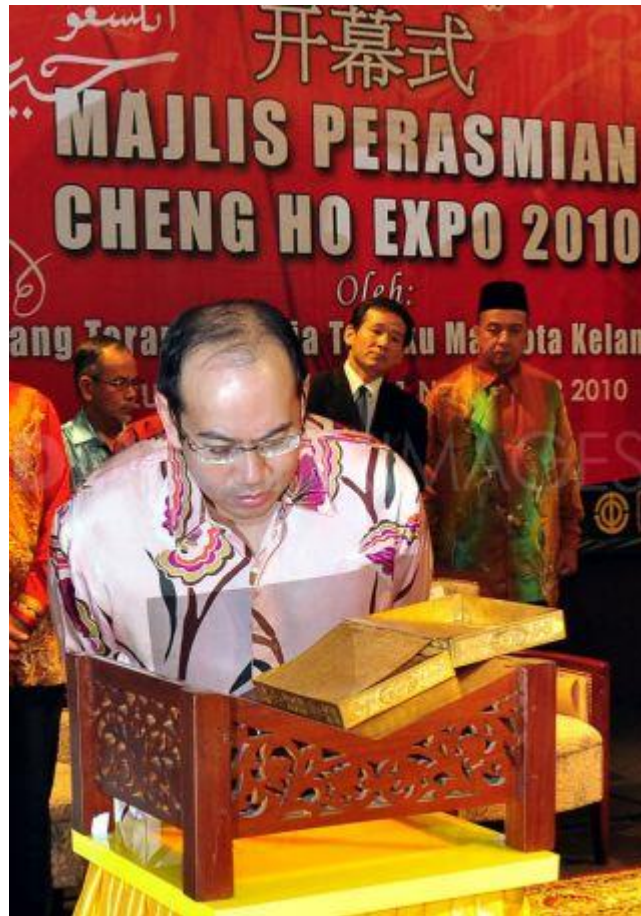
Sharing of Political Power: Institutionalised and Indigenised Democracy since 1955



Gate to the Chinese Mosque *in the* *“Verenda of Mecca”*



Cheng Ho Expo in the “Verenda of Mecca”



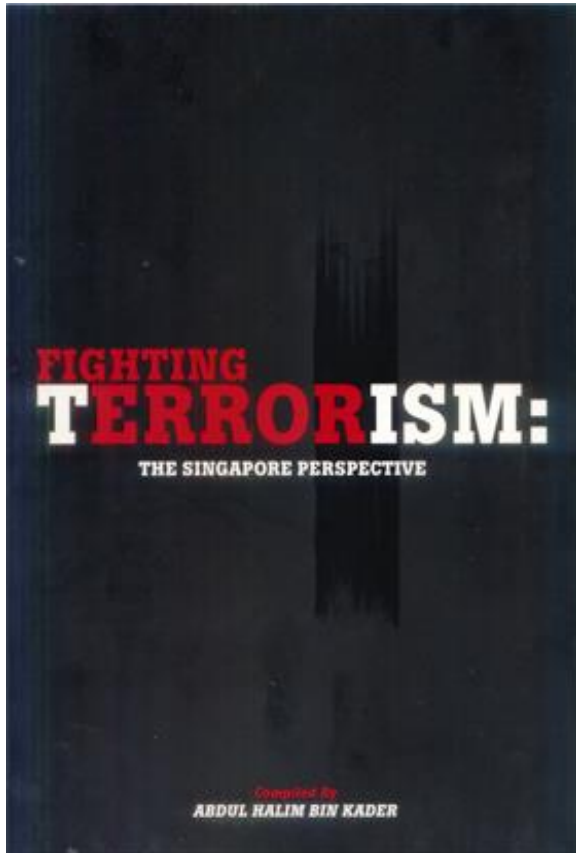
Gate to the Chinese Mosque *in the* *“Verenda of Mecca”*



Sharing of Power between Muslims and Non-Muslims



MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN SECULAR SINGAPORE FIGHTING TERRORISM



IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT THE IDEA AND PRACTICE OF SHARING POLITICAL POWER BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS IS THE HALLMARK OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY OF MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA, WHILE THIS WOULD BE SEEN AS A NOVELTY OR IMPOSSIBILITY IN SEVERAL MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, SINCE 9/11 SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES HAVE WITNESSED THE EMERGENCE OF MUSLIM MILITANCY AND EXTREMISM, FOLLOWED BY BUDDHIST EXTREMISM IN MYANMAR AS WELL AS EXTREMIST SECULARISM AND LIBERALISM.

Countering Extremist or Militant Tendencies among Muslim Groups

1. Changing from Form and Outer Appearance to Reality and Substance

The substance of Islam is not about “growing the beard and lengthening it; shortening of the robe; carrying the *miswāk* (teeth-cleaning stick); joining one’s foot with other’s foot in prayer; placing the hands on the chest or above the navel; eating while seated not while standing; forbidding all kinds of songs or music; making the wearing of the *niqāb* (face cover) obligatory for women, etc.” The substance of Islam as an *‘aqīdah* is *Tawḥīd*, that of *‘ibādah* is sincerity, that of *mu‘āmalah* (transaction) is truthfulness, that of *khuluq* (character) is mercy, that of *tashrī‘* (legislation) is justice, that of *‘amal* (work) is perfection, that of *adab* (ethics) is spiritual consciousness, that of *‘alāqah* (human bonds) is brotherhood, and that of civilization is balance. (Ref. Al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyyah*, pp. 10-52)

2. FROM SENTIMENTAL (‘ĀṬIFIYYAH) AND CLAMOUROUS BEHAVIOUR (GHAWGHĀIYYAH) TO RATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE

Allah (S.W.T) demands His servants and vicegerents always to be just in dealing with fellow creatures and not to be influenced by the destructive emotion of base desires:

O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) the rich or the poor, for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. (Q. Al-Nisa' 4: 135)

In this regard Muslims need to change from the emotional thinking and behaviour syndrome to the realistic, objective and rational attitude” (*al-naz`ah al-`aqlaniyyah wa al-mawdhu‘iyyah wa al-waqi`iyyah*) in assessing matters, evaluating works, interpretation of events, interpretation of history, perceiving of supporters and adversaries, defining of positions to be taken and in decision making.(p. 106.)

4. CHANGE FROM BIGOTRY (*AL-TA`ASSUB*) AND EXCLUSIVISM (*AL-INGHILĀQ*) TO FORBEARANCE (*AL-TASĀMUH*) AND INCLUSIVISM (*AL-INṬILĀQ*).

An absolutist fanatical attitude towards a group, regardless if the group is right or wrong, is a *Jahiliyyah* characteristic which is condemned by the Prophet (ﷺ) (“He is not one of us who calls to group fanaticism, or fights in the name of group fanaticism or dies in the name of group fanaticism (*`asabiyyah*).

This is different from the act of helping the victims of injustice or preventing the unjust person from committing injustice – an act that is encouraged in Islam. Therefore the fanaticism that is blameworthy (*al-ta`assub al-madhmum*) or bigotry is the kind of blind fanaticism towards one's beliefs, or school of thought or one's ideas and opinions, or one's community or group, to the point that one does not accept any dialogue with those holding different views and shut all doors of peaceful interaction or communication.

5.CHANGE FROM VIOLENCE AND RANCOUR TO GENTLENESS AND COMPASSION

The methodology of Islamic propagation is based on gentleness (*al-rifq*). (“Verily Allah is gentle; He loves gentleness in all affairs.” *hadith* reported by Muslim on the authority of Aishah. See *Ṣaḥih Muslim*, *hadith* number 2593., p. 279). Tenderness (*al-lin*), graciousness (*al-riqqah*), compassion (*al-rahmah*), dialogue in the best possible manner with “the other”, are part of the religion of compassion (*din al-rahmah*). Therefore Muslims who use violence in promoting the cause of Islam are in fact violating the teachings of Islam and do great disservice to it. Unfortunately groups which espouse the use of violence in the name of Islam have appeared in Muslim countries and one of the reasons for the emergence of this phenomenon – dubbed as “Neo-Khawaarij” by al-Qaradāwī – is traceable to their faulty and defective understanding of *jihad* (*khalal fi fiqh al-jihad*), changing wrongdoings by force (*fiqh taghyir al-munkar bi-al-quwwah*), fighting or revolting against the rulers (*fiqh al-khurūj ‘ala al-hukkam*) and accusing others of disbelief (*fiqh al-takfīr*).

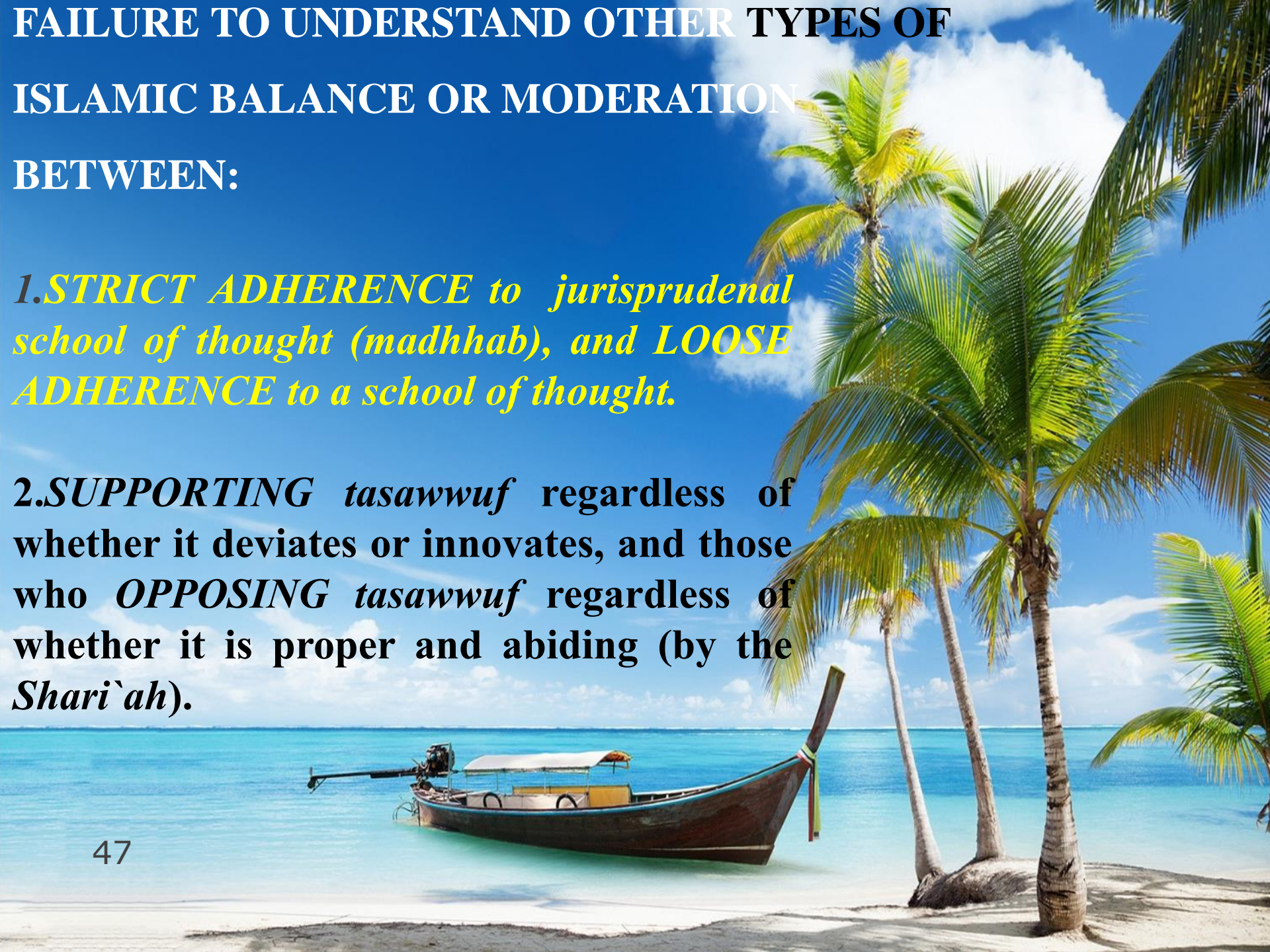
FAULTS IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF *JIHĀD*.

Those who espouse the violent approach are mistaken in assuming that it is obligatory to fight the disbelievers even though they are at peace with the Muslims. In this regard they are guilty of transgressing the limits imposed by Allah (S.W.T), as stated in the Qur'an, "... And fight in Allah's cause against those who wage war against you, but do not commit aggression, for verily Allah does not love aggressors." (Q. *Al-Baqarah*2: 190.) This verse, contrary to the claim of some of the militants, is not abrogated and the categorical statement that "verily Allah does not love aggressors" is a permanent principle in Islam.

FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND OTHER TYPES OF ISLAMIC BALANCE OR MODERATION BETWEEN:

1. STRICT ADHERENCE to jurisprudential school of thought (madhhab), and LOOSE ADHERENCE to a school of thought.

2. SUPPORTING tasawwuf regardless of whether it deviates or innovates, and those who OPPOSING tasawwuf regardless of whether it is proper and abiding (by the Shari`ah).



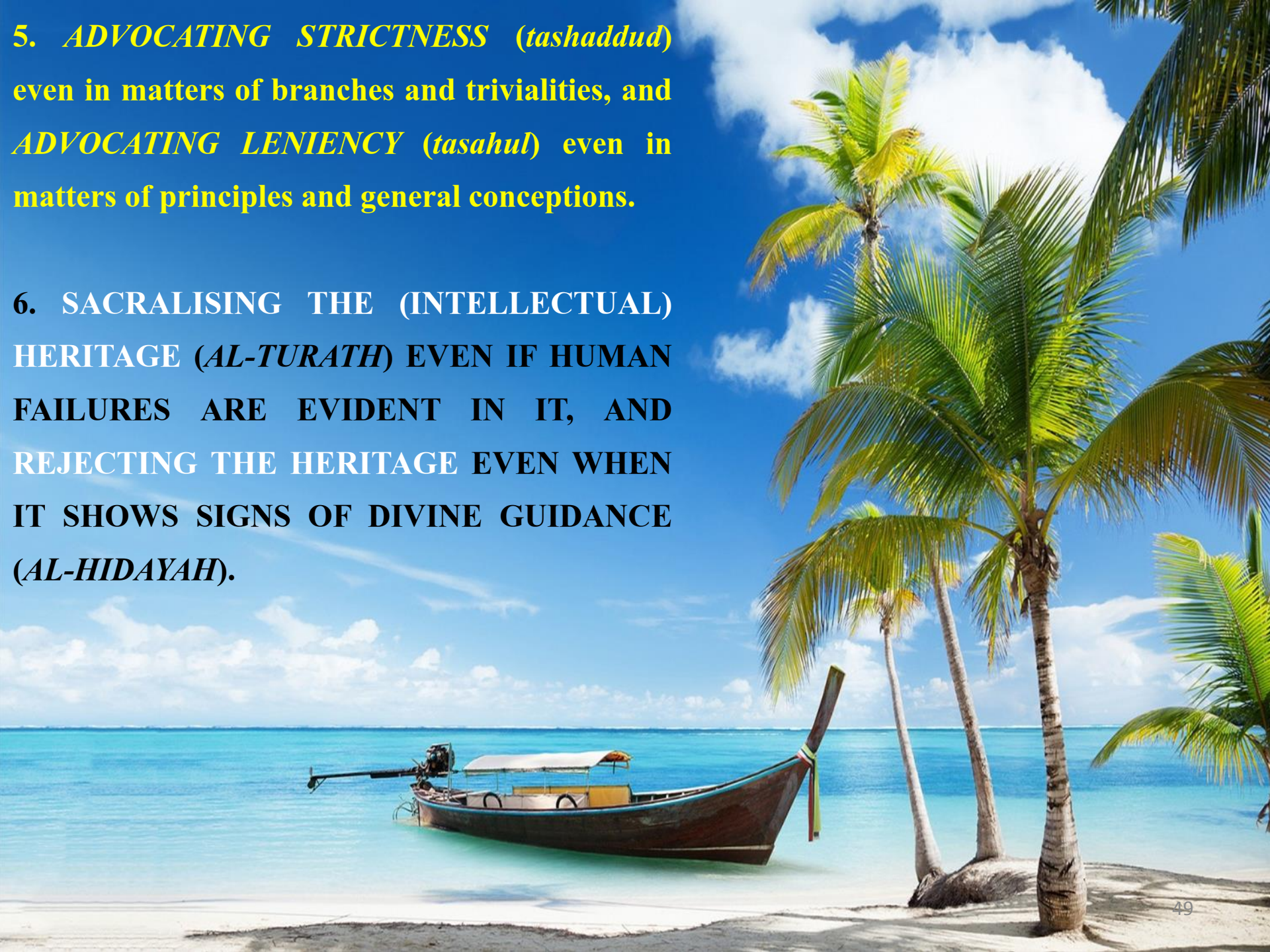
3. ***PREFERRING REASON*** (*al-‘aql*) even it goes against the conclusive text (*al-naṣṣ al-qāṭi*), and ***NEVER REFERRING*** to reason even in understanding the (revealed) text.

4. ***TAKING FROM WESTERN CIVILIZATION*** its good as well as its evil, and ***REJECTING IT COMPLETELY***.



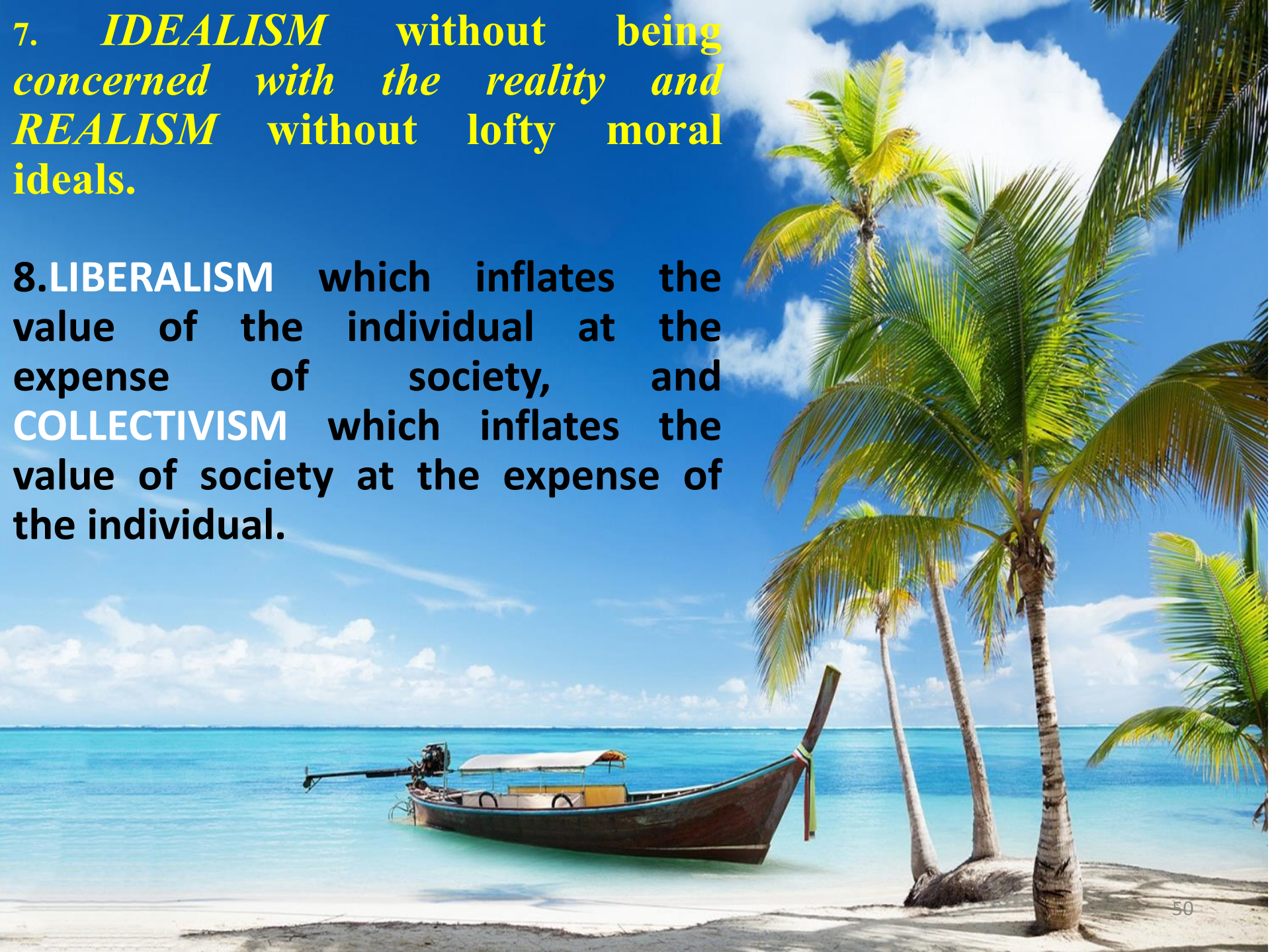
5. *ADVOCATING STRICTNESS* (*tashaddud*)
even in matters of branches and trivialities, and
***ADVOCATING LENIENCY* (*tasahul*)** even in
matters of principles and general conceptions.

**6. SACRALISING THE (INTELLECTUAL)
HERITAGE (*AL-TURATH*)** EVEN IF HUMAN
FAILURES ARE EVIDENT IN IT, AND
REJECTING THE HERITAGE EVEN WHEN
IT SHOWS SIGNS OF DIVINE GUIDANCE
(*AL-HIDAYAH*).



7. *IDEALISM* without being concerned with the reality and *REALISM* without lofty moral ideals.

8. **LIBERALISM** which inflates the value of the individual at the expense of society, and **COLLECTIVISM** which inflates the value of society at the expense of the individual.



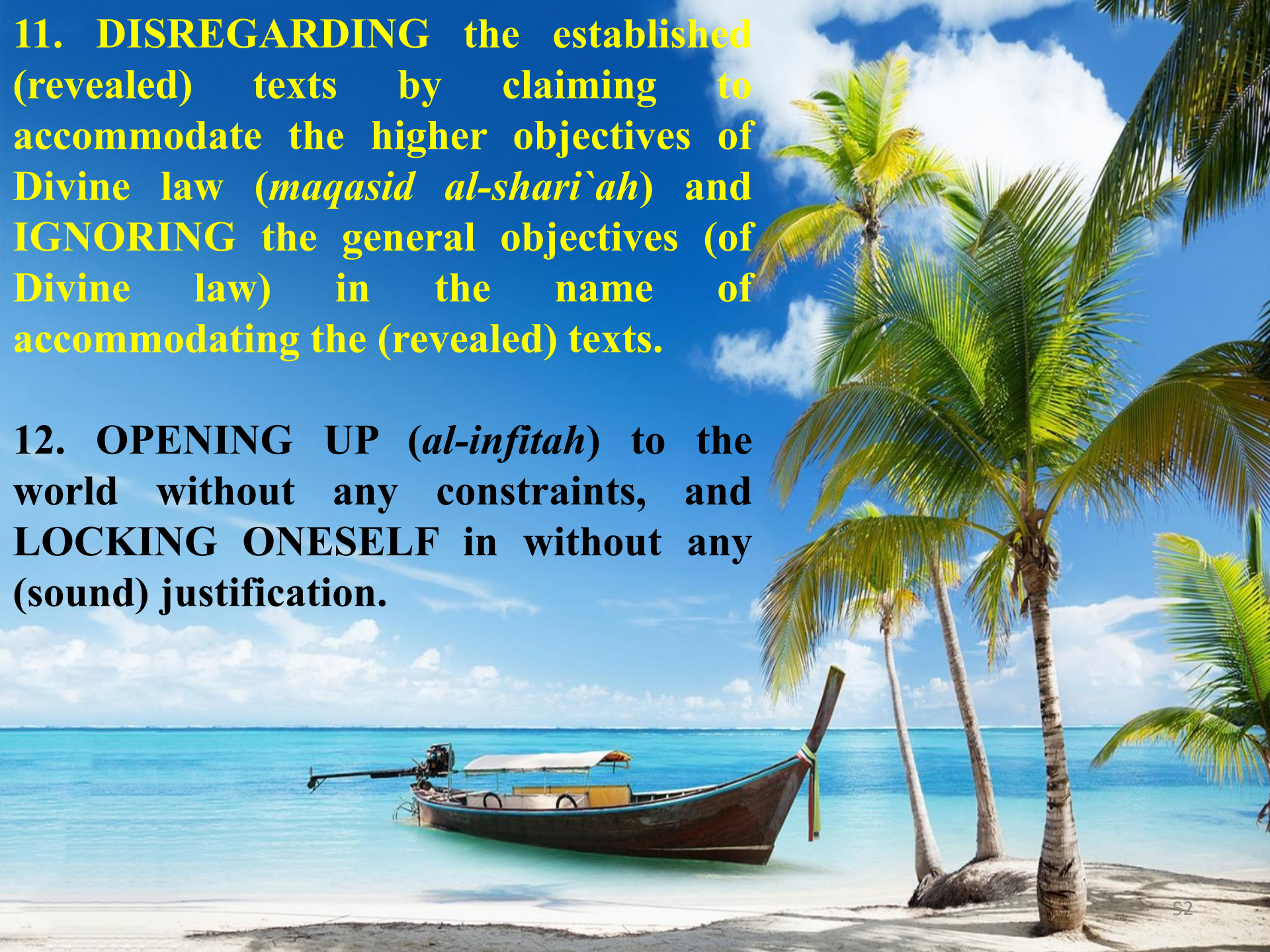
9. INFLEXIBILITY even in matters pertaining to means (*al-wasa'il*) and devices (*al-alat*), and **LOOSE FLEXIBILITY** even in matters of principle and ends.

10. RENEWAL (AL-TAJDID) AND INDEPENDENT REASONING (AL-IJTIHAD) even in matters pertaining to theological doctrines and conclusive religious doctrines, and **IMITATION (AL-TAQLID)**, and even in contemporary issues which never crossed the minds of the earlier generations.



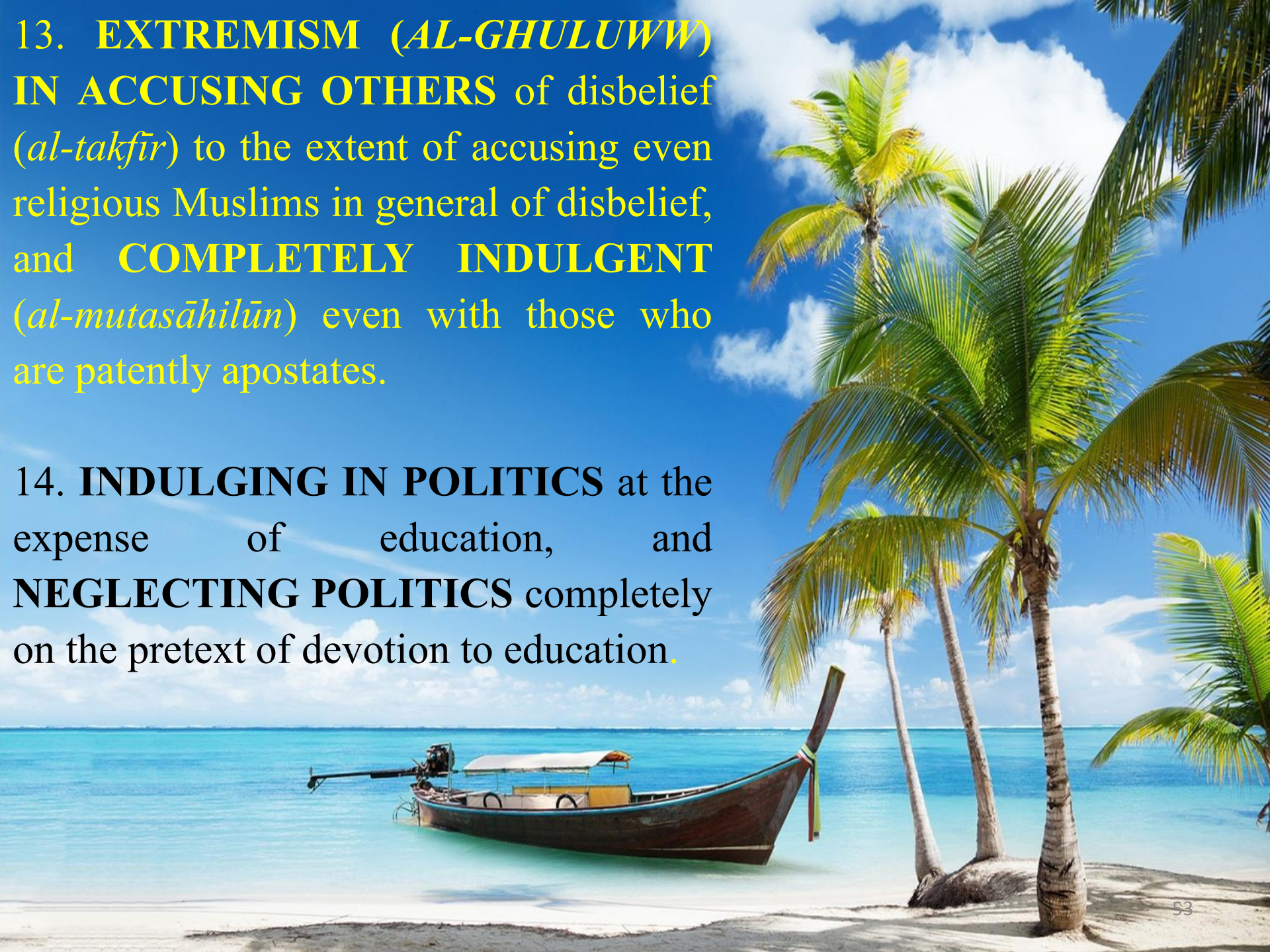
11. DISREGARDING the established (revealed) texts by claiming to accommodate the higher objectives of Divine law (*maqasid al-shari'ah*) and **IGNORING** the general objectives (of Divine law) in the name of accommodating the (revealed) texts.

12. OPENING UP (*al-infitah*) to the world without any constraints, and **LOCKING ONESELF** in without any (sound) justification.



13. EXTREMISM (*AL-GHULUWW*)
IN ACCUSING OTHERS of disbelief
(*al-takfīr*) to the extent of accusing even
religious Muslims in general of disbelief,
and **COMPLETELY INDULGENT**
(*al-mutasāhilūn*) even with those who
are patently apostates.

14. INDULGING IN POLITICS at the
expense of education, and
NEGLECTING POLITICS completely
on the pretext of devotion to education.



15. RUSHING in a hurry to pick the fruit before it is ripe, and **NEGLECTING** it until it falls into the hands of others after it becomes ripe.

16. PREOCCUPATION WITH THE PRESENT and are not concerned with the future, and those who **EXAGGERATING IN FORESEEING** into the future as if it is a book they are reading from.



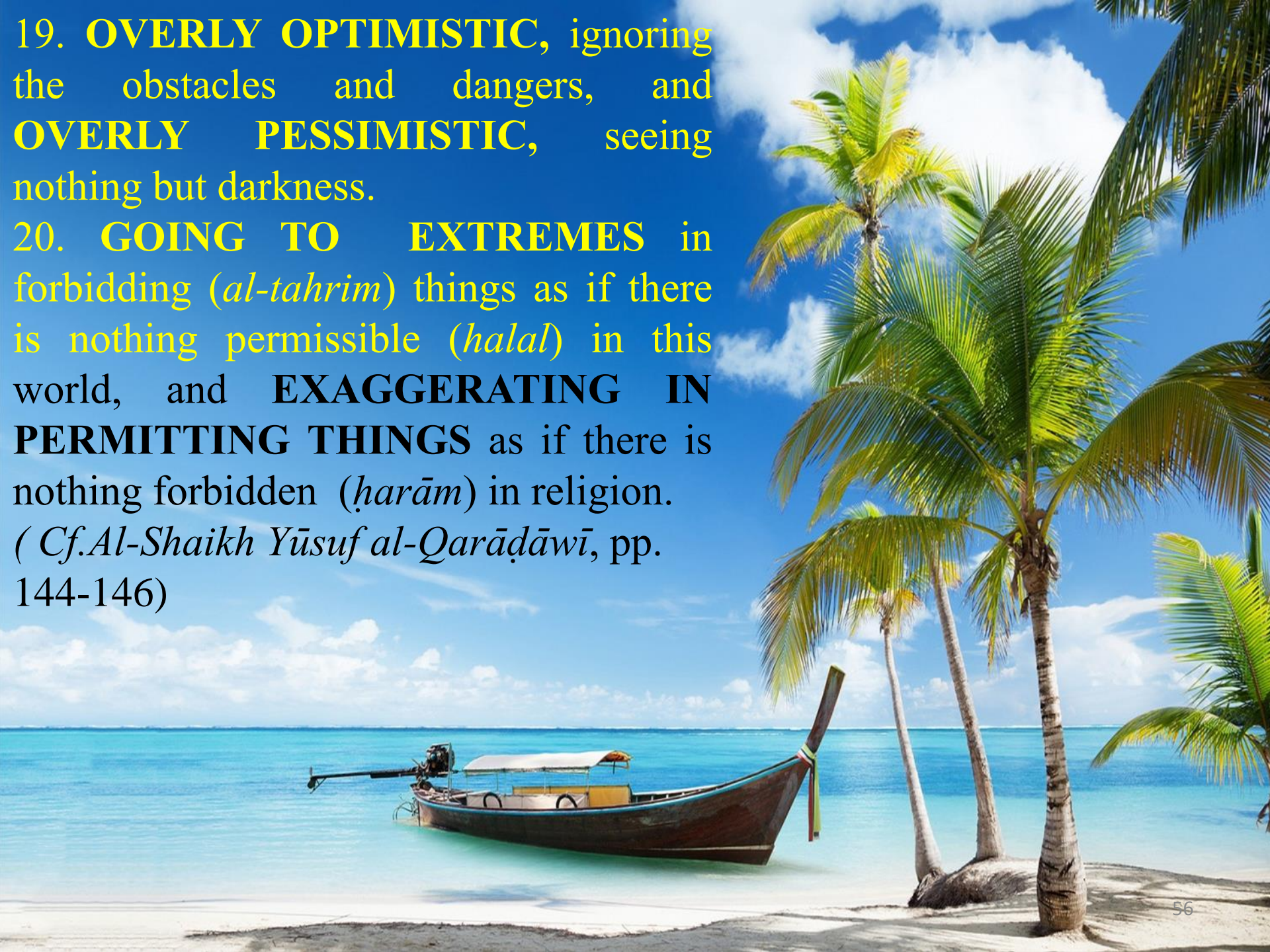
17. REGARDING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AS “SACRED” as though they are “idols” to be worshipped, and **SHIRKING ANY ORGANIZED WORK.**

18. ADVOCATING WORLDWIDE ACTION without regard to local conditions and environment, and **ADVOCATING NARROW NATIONAL ACTION** that has no connection with the world movement.



19. **OVERLY OPTIMISTIC**, ignoring the obstacles and dangers, and **OVERLY PESSIMISTIC**, seeing nothing but darkness.

20. **GOING TO EXTREMES** in forbidding (*al-tahrim*) things as if there is nothing permissible (*halal*) in this world, and **EXAGGERATING IN PERMITTING THINGS** as if there is nothing forbidden (*ḥarām*) in religion.
(*Cf. Al-Shaikh Yūsuf al-Qarāḍāwī*, pp. 144-146)





**CHALLENGES:
UNDERSTANDING THE
LOCAL CONTEXT**

**MULTI-
RACIAL,
MULTI-
RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITI
ES**

NEGATIVE
DESTRUCTIVE FORCES,
INFLUENCES FROM
OUTSIDE & INSIDE

THE CHALLENGE OF
ENLIGHTENED
LEADERSHIP
FORMATION

THE CHALLENGE OF
COMPASSIONATE
DA'WAH, RELIGIOUS
PREACHING

DYNAMIC &
HOLISTIC
EDUCATION

POLITICAL,
CULTURAL &
RELIGIOUS BIASES

***NEGATIVE INFLUENCES,
FORCES FROM OUTSIDE
& INSIDE***

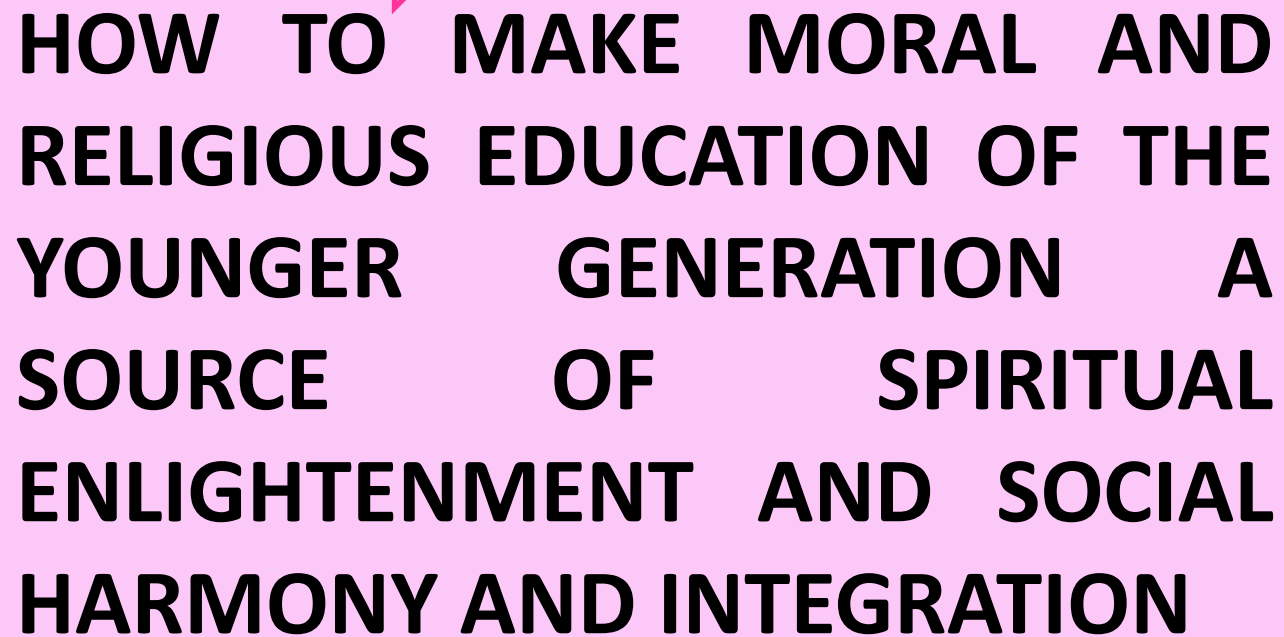
***HOW TO CONTROL NEGATIVE
RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, ETHNIC
OR SECULAR INFLUENCES ON
THE INTERNET & THE NEW
SOCIAL MEDIA IN UNETHICAL
CYBERSPACE WHICH HEIGHTEN
POLARISATIONS AND RIFTS***

POLITICAL, CULTURAL & RELIGIOUS BIASES

***HOW TO ENGAGE POLITICAL,
RELIGIOUS OR CULTURAL BIASES
AND MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE
WESTERN OR LOCAL MEDIA OR
FOREIGN AGENCIES.***



***DYNAMIC & HOLISTIC
EDUCATION***



**HOW TO MAKE MORAL AND
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE
YOUNGER GENERATION A
SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL
ENLIGHTENMENT AND SOCIAL
HARMONY AND INTEGRATION**

**THE CHALLENGE OF
COMPASSIONATE *DA`WAH*
OR RELIGIOUS PREACHING**

**HOW TO PRESENT ISLAMIC
DA`WAH AN ASPECT OF
RAḤMATAN LI'L-`ĀLAMĪN AND
DA`WAH BI AL-ḤĀL; AND THE
PREACHING OF NON-MUSLIM
RELIGIONS THAT RESPECTS LAW,
CUSTOMS, ETIQUETTE.**



THE CHALLENGE OF ENLIGHTENED LEADERSHIP FORMATION

**HOW TO PRODUCE GOOD
AND WISE LEADERS WITH
SOUND RELIGIOUS
KNOWLEDGE, SOCIO-
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL
SKILLS AND EXCELLENT
MORAL INTEGRITY.**

CONCLUSION

- ✓ **THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL CULTURE WITH THE PROPER UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF BALANCE OR ISLAMIC MODERATION , WOULD ENSURE A MORE PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT FOR THE MULTI-RACIAL, MULTI-RELIGIOUS AND MULTI-CULTURAL PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA.**

✓ **FOR TRANSNATIONAL AND TRANSCULTURAL MODERATION TO SUCCEED IN ASEAN AND, INDEED, IN ALL ASIAN COUNTRIES, LEADERS OF ALL RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES, NOT JUST MUSLIMS, MUST BE ABLE TO CURB ANY RISING TREND OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM OR AGGRESSIVE EVANGELIZATION INTO MUSLIM SOCIETIES, AS WELL AS THE TREND OF ASSERTIVE OR UNCOMPROMISING SECULARISM, OR THE MOVEMENT WHICH PROMOTES EXAGGERATED LIBERALISM AND ABSOLUTE FREEDOM OF INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS IN THE NAME OF DEMOCRACY AND FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS.**



MODERATION

Only actions give life strength; only moderation gives it clarity.

— Seneca —

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