CRITICAL READINGS IN
ISLAMIC SOCIAL
FINANCE

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FOREWORD CHAIRMAN OF YAYASAN TUN
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NASIONAL BERHAD
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ZAKAT: BRIDGING HARMONY AMONG NEW MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM RELATIONS AND SOCIAL ECONOMIC PROGRESS

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INTRODUCTION

In general, Islam brings justice to this world which added with enough evidence by al-Qur’an to justify the truth of its message by providing logical reasoning and it reflects to open space of human hearts to accept Islam. Equality, and a sense of collective responsibility towards one another has been a hallmark of the early Muslim community, and has resulted in an influx of the poor, the underprivileged and slaves into Islam, escaping the brutal and rigidly hierarchical social structure that prevailed in previous human civilization. With this justice, it has attracted the non-Muslims to embrace Islam and become a new Muslims (Muallaf).

Muallaf (New Muslims) is a person who converted or some interpreted as people who reverted to Islam regardless of race and nation. Multi-religion, ethnicity and diversity is vital in bridging harmony. This chapter will highlight the uniqueness of zakat distribution in multi-ethnic and multi-religion country. It’s a fact that Islam is for everyone not for some specific races thus, the cultural values of specific races in the early assumption should not affect Muallaf lifestyle or decision in policy.
and anonymity that they might have for the rich. In this context, Khalid
(1998) also argues that zakat has six own strength as it binds the
Muslims, builds better relations among them, and makes the
Muslims work together. Zakat also functions as a welfare instrument
to overcome economic issues or as a means to stabilize the economy
of the Muslims.

Rashadah Mahamat et al. (2012) sets out to explore the exact level of
the social aspect of assimilation between Chinese Muallaf and their
Malay counterparts in Kuala Lumpur. It was sure that assimilation
in social aspect is a dilemma that Chinese Muallaf faces when they
convert from their own religion to Islam. It suggests that when these
converts begin to practice Islam, their behaviour changes in line with
the identity of the Malays. This is because Islam is often associated
to the Malays in the Malaysian context. Whilst they are welcomed by
their Malay counterparts, it is nevertheless hypothesised that they may
not assimilate fully into the Malay community. Through this research,
the social assimilation level of Chinese Muallaf is at the low level.

"Conversion is a process of religious change which
transforms the way the individual perceives the rest
of society and his or her personal place in it, altering
one’s view of the world."

Lofland and Skonovd (1981), describe the process of conversion
from one religion to another: a) intellectual; ‘response to teaching’
(Kosic, 1994) through reading, media, talks, b) affection; through
having good and positive personal experience with members of
the Muslim society, c) mystical; through visions and supernatural
experiences, d) experimental; going through the process of trial and
error in the religion of choices, e) reviver; conforming to the crowd;
involve emotional inspirations (Ishak, 2004); and: f) coercive;
through pressure.

Meanwhile, Poston (1992) came up with four factors of conversion:
“Example and imitation, the desire to follow out a moral idea, teachings
of Islam and extra cult-affective-bonds”. While Abdul Wadod Shalabi
this case, conversion is noted not only for producing sincere religious adherence related to belief and conviction, but also for generating a significant ethical predisposition toward social transformation.

ZAKAT AND MUALLAF DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW

Mahyuddin Haji Abu Bakar et al. (2011) states that zakat distribution to the Muallaf can help to strengthen their faith and creates a sense of belonging among Muslims to aid those who are in need like fetus group of people. Aishah M et al. (2011) seeks to investigate the conversion patterns among muallafs in Malaysia. Its focus is to find out the demographic information of muallafs and to identify the popular conversion patterns among Muallafs in Malaysia. From the study conducted, the following conclusions can be derived: a) majority of the Muallafs come from Sabah and belong to other races found in Malaysia such as Iban, Asli, Myanmar, Kadazan and Thai, b) many of them are unemployed despite having adequate academic level, c) majority of the new Muallafs agree that they get the first source of information regarding Islam from people who are close to them like family members, friends, colleagues and neighbours, d) majority of the new Muallafs associate their conversion process with the affection pattern, followed by the intellectual pattern and lastly the mystical pattern. This coincides with the first source of information they obtain regarding Islam.

Moreover, zakat distribution aims to alter the lives of the poverty-stricken community by making them live in comfortable life. Al-Kasani (n.d.) is also of the opinion that the distribution of zakat serves to cater for the needs of its recipients. For this purpose, zakat does not necessarily be given to all recipients, priority is given to those who need more zakat. According to al Kasani, the government has the power to identify the ways in zakat distribution. With regard to this, Muhamad Abdul Mun'im (1997) maintains that the obligatory nature of zakat should become a catalyst to aid the Muslims in four aspects through the goal of zakat distribution: to resolve poverty issue, to establish social justice, to develop a society based on love, mutual solidarity, brotherhood and to purge from the poor feelings of hate.
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This book endeavors to justify the importance of the first economy. The book not only emphasizes the need for a sustainable economy but also introduces the concept of Islamic social finance. The focus is on the need for a sustainable model of economic development that addresses poverty and inequality. The book provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of finance in promoting social welfare and achieving sustainable development.