Abstract- This paper aims to overview selected historical anecdotes on Muslim and Christian initiatives on the realization of religious harmony as it crucial for global peace and national stability. The two most popular Abrahamic religions, Islam and Christianity, accounts for more than half of the two world population and the majority of intra and inter faith is traced to the two religions. This signifies the important to explore the initiatives of both religions on promoting peaceful coexistence throughout the history. The role for peace building process had been initiated by Muslims since the caliphate of Umar al-Khattab and this continuously been practiced with the role played by Said Nursi, the most influential Muslim thinkers of the 20th century. The methodology used in this conceptual study is the critical analysis of literature surveyed on the selected history of peaceful coexistence of Muslim and Christian society. There have been numerous initiatives from Muslims and Christians to set examples in the history of fostering peaceful coexistence. Thus, the focal study of discussion of this paper would be on the history of the spirit of La Convivencia in Andalusia of Spain, the spirit of living together in Sicilian Italy, open letter of A Common Word between Us and You as well as Nostra Aetate, the most important turning points in the history of Catholic-Muslim relations. The findings are deemed necessary for the sustainable framework for enhancing inter-religious harmony in the Malaysian context of plural society.

Keywords- historical anecdotes, inter-religious harmony, peaceful coexistence, La Convivencia, Nostra Aetate, plural society

Introduction

Religions can be a site of reconciliation and have the potential to become a preventive element and resolution of local and global conflict. The moral principles are common in all religions of the world, as is peace. It is therefore, the faith-based peace building is considered one of the central issue in the discussion

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of inter-religious relations nowadays. On the historical overviews of Muslim-Christian relations, the encounter of these two religions had not only led to the conflict but also creating initiative for peace building and peaceful coexistence. The lessons behind the initiatives had informed us the significance of living together in pluralistic society and consequently applicable the Malaysian context of living together. The most prominent studies on Muslim-Christian relation has been conferred by Hugh Goddard “A History of Christian-Muslim Relations” (2000). It is designed to give an introductory overview of the encounter of Christianity and Islam which highlights the civilizational character of the Christian-Muslim encounter and the history of the over the centuries from their initial encounters in the medieval period to the modern period (Goddard 2000). The history of Christian-Muslim relation has further discussed by Jane I Smith (2007) on the issue of encountering each other as the dialogue process as well as the legacy of engagement which explore the ways in which conflict and peaceful coexistence shared by these two religions. The ways in which Muslim and Christians worldwide have encountered one another and the ways in which they are engaged today signify the contribution of the two religions in the global peace.

Based on the premise of study, this article intends to elucidate some historical anecdotes on Muslim and Christian initiatives on the realization of peaceful coexistence as it crucial for the national stability in pluralistic society. The focal study of discussion of this paper would be on the history of the spirit of La Convivencia in Andalusia of Spain, the spirit of living together in Sicilian Italy, open letter of A Common Word between Us and You as well as Nostra Aetate, the most important turning points in the history of Catholic-Muslim relations. The methodology used in this conceptual study is the critical analysis of literature surveyed on the history of peaceful coexistence of Muslim and non-Muslim society. The significance of the findings of this study deem to be necessary for the sustainable framework for enhancing inter-religious harmony in the Malaysian context of plural society.

The Concept of Peaceful Coexistence

In Islamic perspective, the term of fiqh al-`ayusu is synonym with the word co-existence as well as focus on promoting unity. This concept has been discussed widely among Western and Islamic scholars as it holds a comprehensive meaning. Ta`ayusy literally means going through a harmonious life despite having different faiths and races. (Al-Ma`any, entry: “ta`ayusy” achieved on 4th June 2020, https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar). Zulkifli and Anis further described that ta`ayusy means living together as a community that is based with the spirit of love, high tolerance, acceptance of diversity, mutual understanding, trust and complementing each other. (Zulkifli bin Aini and Wan Nurul Anis binti Wan Ismail, 2018). As explained by Kamar Oniah in her study on pluralistic co-existence, she stated that co-existence means each community has its own identity and uniqueness that comprise of different ethnic, race, religion and language. They live together as a society or in the same country. (Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman, 2010: 27). She argued that the basis of producing a successful nation is through harmonious and happiness co-existence. (Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman, 2010: 17).

However, by looking back to the role of Muslims as vicegerents of Allah, it is an obligation for Muslims to prioritize aqidah above all as the basis of unity among humankind. (Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki, 2016). Khayr Ummah as stated in the verse below shows that aqidah is the root of spreading da’wah. A strong level of aqidah influence people towards spreading goodness and avoiding munkar: “You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in
Allah. 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” (Qur’an, 3:110).

According to Syed Qutb (1972), although literally the sequence of aqidah in this verse is later than the action of \textit{amar ma’ruf nahi munkar}, he translated that in spiritual meaning, the action of \textit{amar ma’ruf nahi munkar} is actually influence by aqidah. This is because by truly abiding the principles of tauhid, it is indirectly affecting the spread of goodness and avoidance of munkar. Example of this description can be proven from the greatest time of Islamic history during the ruling of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The unity of Aus and Khazraj, as well as Muhajirin and Ansar proves that by having strong faith and loyalty towards Allah S.W.T., a long conflict relationship drastically transforms into a vivid relationship that unite strongly.

Hence, in summary, peaceful co-existence is not only about building relationship, but also involves moral improvement, ethical values, and thoughts. Having aqidah as the foundation in every interaction, clearly shows that the priority of good values and akhlak Islamiyyah is very important to be instilled in the society.

**Muslim Initiatives on Fostering Peaceful Coexistence**

The culture of peaceful coexistence had been initiated by early Muslims who lived together with Christians and other faiths in peace and practiced their faiths without fear of harassment or intimidation. Goddard (2000) states a variety of models for the relationship between Muslims and Christians can therefore be found in the Prophet’s career between 622M/1H and 632M/11H in Yathrib/Medina. In his attitude towards Christian and Jews community, the Prophet’s action sometimes manifests a broadly tolerant attitude, as seen in the Constitution of Medina and sometimes a more antagonistic one, as seen at Khaybar. Towards the end of his life, as seen in the negotiations with Himyar and Najran, a kind of mediating position emerges, where both Jews and Christians are given a kind of conditional acceptance, whereby they may retain their faith on condition that they submit peacefully to Islamic rule and pay some kind of tribute to the Muslim community.

The Prophet (PBUH) during his life in Makkah and Madinah and within the period of twenty-three years, employed very strong strategies which brought about peaceful coexistence in the Arab society. There are five strategies as identified by Shehu (2018); which are: negotiation with Makkan Elites, diplomacy with the king Negus, pluralistic state, treaty of Hudaibiyyah, treaty with Christians of Najran and focus on treaty between Umar Assurance of Aman, The Spirit of La Convivencia in Andalusia of Spain, The Spirit of Peaceful Coexistence in Sicilian Italy, The role of Said Nursi in Turkey, A common word between I and you (ACW) 2007.

In this paper, we would like to emphasize on history of Muslim and Christians relationship anecdotes and only focus on selected treaty on the Spirit of La Convivencia in Andalusia of Spain, the Spirit of Peaceful Coexistence in Sicilian Italy, the role of Said Nursi in Turkey, a common word between I and you (ACW) 2007 as they are the most important turning points in the history of Muslim- Catholic relations.

i) The Spirit of La Convivencia in Andalusia of Spain

La Convivencia often refers to the interplay of cultural ideas between the three religious groups and the ideas of religious tolerance. The period of tolerance would reach its zenith during the period of Abdul
Rahman’s rule wherein not only days with religious connotations were respected, but also in the palaces wherein the great intellectuals of the three religions lived and coexisted with another in an able manner. One such prevalent example would be the cooperation between eminent scholars such as Ibn al-Kattani, Hasdai ibn Shapirut and Rabi’ ibn Zaid of Muslim, Jewish and Christian backgrounds respectively and much respected in their own fields and religious communities, in assembling and undertaking the task of studying the works of Dioscorides (http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images, 2018).

La Convivencia is the glorious peak that was Andalusia saw the period of peaceful coexistence among Muslims, Christians and Jews. They were able to live and cooperate successfully towards the advancement of arts, science and humanity among others. This golden period of Muslim rule not only help continues the knowledge of the Greeks but also paved the way for modern success, to be enjoyed upon by the Western world. The period of Islamic rule in Andalusia serves as a noteworthy model for the capabilities of the spirit of coexistence given that the Muslim conquerors at the time ensured for the preservation of their citizens’ cultural and religious complexities via freedom of their faith and places of worship, protection of family and assuaging to their security as well as general well-being (Nasharudin 2017).

At a time when the Western civilization was at its depths of darkness, the Muslim world, exemplified by Muslim Spain, was at the time, the cradle of human civilization. The eminent Western historian and philosopher, John Locke in his 1689 classic, Letter Concerning Toleration, commented on tolerance and the irony of Christians being able to enjoin in their faith freely in Muslim lands as compared to when in Christendom, “… the Turks would meanwhile silently stand by and laugh to see what inhuman cruelty Christians thus rage against Christians” before urging this contemporaries to learn and emulate on how the Muslims tolerated the Christians and Jews of their time (Nasharudin 2017).

Nasharudin (2017) further argues that it was the Spanish Jewry flourished in Andalusia which is referred by its descendants to be one period of golden age. Such an observation is concurred by Fazlur Rahman who noted that “… under Muslim leadership, no Jewish holocaust were committed at the hands of Muslims. It was under the Muslim rule that Jewish philosophers such as Ibn Gabirol and Musa ibn Maymun (Maimonies) excelled. In fact, the Jewish experience in Spain, under Muslim rule, was looked upon as a ‘Golden Period’ as mentioned by 19th century Jewish Prime Minister of Britain, Benjamin Disraeli. During his Golden Period, ranging from 1000 – 1140 C.E., the Jews in Spain lived peacefully under the Muslim rule. The Jews recognized, as they were given certain political positions for example Hasdai ibn Shapirut was a counsellor for Caliph ‘Abd Rahman III in Cordoba and Ibn Ghanzalah was a minister in Granada. Being able to live in peace and enjoy the spirit of tolerance under Muslim rule, had given the Jews the opportunity to develop their intellectual enterprise, so much so this period was also known as The Golden Age of Hebrew Literature. It is most pertinent to add that such instances of coexistence are congruent to the principles of the Maqasid Syariah in Islam itself; a principle which ensures for the protections of one’s faith, life, lineage, wealth and intellect.

ii) The Spirit of Peaceful Coexistence in Sicilian Italy

Sicilian Italy would also exemplify the spirit of peaceful coexistence between Muslim and non-Muslims. During the time of Roger II’s reign it was one of particular tolerance that al-Idrisi was able to complete his work Tabula Rogeriana. While the La Convivencia may represent the pinnacle of coexistence, similar experiences were observed in Sicily of Italy that was just as resounding in its celebration of diversity and
respect of religions to that of Al-Andalus; not only embracing pluralism but recognition and acceptance of the plurality of religions. It was thus in Sicily that over the course of several centuries that interfaith exchanges in cultural, religious and scientific fields took place. It was in Sicily as well that an active diverse melting pot of cultures and traditions where free to intermingle with each other and for a time, Sicily was truly the crossroads between East and West, Islam and Christianity. The island was one of the rare bright spots of the Middle Ages with much of the growth and expansion stemming from the earlier Muslims’ introduction of technological and agricultural innovations which help cultivated a state-of-the-art living conditions and products, which in turned help spur other industries such as textiles as well as producing silk and paper. (Nasharudin 2017).

iii) The role of Said Nursi in Turkey

Said Nursi is one of the most influential Muslim thinkers of the 20th century. He had called for dialogue and cooperation between Christians and Muslims 54 years before the Nostra Aetate. Said Nursi proposed dialogue and collaboration between Muslims and Christians before a congregation of over 10,000 Muslims, including 100 prominent religious scholars in the Umayyad Mosque, Damascus. The strength of Nursi’s proposal comes from his foresight when other Muslim thinkers were on the defensive against the invading colonial forces. Nursi held this approach even after the Ottoman Empire had collapsed after a turbulent conflict between the Empire and Europe. It was over half-a-century after Nursi’s proposal that the Second Vatican Council declared Nortra Aetate, “The Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions” in 1965 (Zeki Saritoprak 2005).

Nursi strongly believed that the source of international aggression is materialistic philosophy. The problem was not East vs. West or Christian vs. Muslim, but the philosophy that he regarded as “the evil of civilization”. For Nursi, there are two types of Europe” the first follows the sciences which serve justice and activities beneficial for the life of society through the inspiration it has received from true Christianity”. The second is “corrupt, through the darkness of the philosophy of naturalism which has driven humankind to vice and misguidance.” This philosophy drives people to greed, which then causes major conflicts from individual to global levels. This was the reasoning behind his call for unity and collaboration between followers of the two major faiths, Muslims and Christians. Both have common enemies, such as the problems of poverty, ignorance and enmity. Therefore, Nursi encourages dialogue between Muslims and Christians as the two religions can share their thoughts, exchange views and reach mutual understanding and respect through focusing on common ground. Nursi further urges the interfaith dialogue needs to be institutionalized and collaboration must take place through joint projects for there to be any effectual dialogue in the current atmosphere of skepticism.

Nursi’s philosophical approach on Muslim-Christian relation then further developed by the leading Muslim thinker and the spiritual leader of a global movement, Fethullah Gulen. He studied Nursi’s approach to other religions specifically Christianity, and applied Nursi’s philosophy beyond Nostra Aetate. In 1986, Gulen asked his followers to engage in dialogue with people from all diverse segments of Turkish society and inspired his followers to establish the Journalists’ and Writers’ Foundation in 1994 and other dialogue there by becoming the first leading person behind the institutionalization of dialogue in the Turkish context. Gulen has been called “one of the most persuasive and influential voices in the Muslim community” calling for dialogue (http://en.fgulen.com/content/view). Gulen regards interfaith cooperation as “compulsory for
Muslims to support peace” (Zeki Saritoprak 2005). Gulen does not rely on theological sources alone. These two concepts (tolerance and dialogue), first developed on a small scale, have turned into a search for a culture of reconciliation on a world scale. Gulen strengthens this search with religious, legal and philosophical foundations.

From the establishment of the Republic of Turkey up until around 1990, the meeting of Muslim and non-Muslim leaders was considered unacceptable. However, Gulen broke this unwritten rule and met with the Chief Rabbi of Turkey David Pinto, the Armenian Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan, Sephardic Chief Rabb of Jerusalem Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, Christian Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomeos in Istanbul, and former Vatican Representative Monsignor George Marovich. Gulen’s meeting with Pope John Pal II at the Vatican in 1998, Gulen proposed the establishment of a joint school of Divinity in Urfa, Turkey, the birthplace of Abraham, to disprove the idea of “a clash of civilizations”. Which such meetings may be welcomed today, it was almost taboo during the 1990s in the political and religious atmosphere in Turkey. The meetings, especially with the Pope, were harshly criticized by ultra-secularists and some Islamists. A group of young Islamists argued that Gulen should not have humiliated himself to the extent of going to the Vatican and meeting with the Pope. Gulen, however, responded this kind of reductionism by saying that humility was an attribute of Muslims.

One of the reasons for the success of the Gulen Movement (also known as the Hizmet Movement in Western countries) is the universal nature of Gulen’s vision, exemplified by his non-violent and tolerant approach during a time marked by fear of religious extremism. These dialogue centres do not engage with the religious segment alone. Besides the usual dialogue activities such as dinners, seminars and conferences, these centres organize joint projects such as food drives, interfaith education curriculum design and trips to holy sites in Istanbul, Jerusalem, Rome and London. Through high school and university student exchange programs, these centres are reaching out to the younger demographic in order to achieve their aim of the cultural acceptance of dialogue.

Over the course of time, the activities of the Hizmet Movement eventually gained more attention through public relations works and general publicity. It attracted the attention of the academic world which slowly began studying its global projects and productions. After some years of study, Gulen’s followers and admirers, both Muslim and non-Muslim, founded tertiary institutes devoted to the study and research of interfaith relations, faith and spirituality. Among these are the Nursi Chair in Islamic Studies at John Carroll University in Ohio, the Fethullah Gulen Chair in the Study of Islam and Muslim-Catholic Relations at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, Australia, the Fethullah Gulen Chair at Syarif Hidayetullah Isla, University, Indonesia, Gulen Institute at Houston University and Fethullah Gulen Chair for Intercultural Studies at Catholic university of Leuven in Belgium.

iv) A Common Word Between Us and You (ACW) 2007

In 2007, 138 Muslim scholars and leaders signed an open letter called “A Common Word between Us and You” to Pope Benedict XVI as a response to the Pope’s remarks at the University of Regensburg lecture (Veijorn L 2018). “Let us resolve to overcome past prejudices and to correct the often distorted images of the other which even today can create difficulties in our relations; let’s work with one another to educate all people, especially the young, to build a common future” (Benedict XVI 2008).
The prime mover behind the letter A Common Word was Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal of Jordan is King Abdullah II’s cousin and has held a number of important positions in Jordan, including chief adviser for religious and cultural affairs, a Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Amman. Ghazi’s involvement in interreligious dialogue have been exceptional in the Middle East in their promotion of interreligious harmony. Before Ghazi, Prince Hasan bin Talal became a mover for interreligious dialogue on the global scene and established an academic institution in Amman to promote the message of religious harmony.

The document A Common Word between Us and You was launched in mid-October 2007, near the Islamic feast of Eid Fitr signed by 138 Muslim leaders, scholars and politicians from across a wide spectrum of theological and geographical backgrounds. It is addressed to Pope Benedict XVI and 26 other named senior church leaders and was generally received as an invitation to dialogue. There have been numerous initiatives to utilize A Common Word on national and local levels and some publications seek to promote such grassroot engagement (Lejla 2011) such as the 2010 UN General Assembly resolution on the World Interfaith Harmony Week and the promotion of this initiative are also part of the Common Word process. The Common Word has broader participation than many other Muslim-Christian dialogue processes since evangelical Christians are well represented.

The publication of the open letter “A Common Word between Us and You” in October 2007 asserts that peace in the world can only be achieved through peace between Muslims and Christians and they invite church leaders to dialogue. Leaders of churches, especially in Europe and North America, soon provided overwhelmingly positive responses. The recognition that faith in the one God together with the twin commandment to love God and neighbour form a “common ground” for the two traditions.

A Common Word and the subsequent dialogue process can be seen as parts of a broader movement to counter the clash discourse and present Muslim-Christian relations within a different framework. It has been celebrated by Muslim and Christian leaders as a major achievement. It therefore deserves attention in its own right as one among the most important dialogue initiatives in recent years and also as an expression of widely shared longing for dialogical relations between Muslims and Christians.

The Common Word search for the religious commonality and seek to achieve new religious realities, which can be described as “feelings of brotherhood and sisterhood”. Such feelings – or “interfaith harmony”, “meaningful peace in the world” – all contribute to a “counter discourse” to other discourses about interreligious relations. One central concern in all interreligious dialogue which is very prominent within the Common Word dialogue process is the management of differences between and within religious traditions. Dialogue starts with the recognition that religious traditions differ, and one of the underlying questions is how this fact can be handled.

Christian Initiatives on Promoting Peaceful Coexistence

Talking about the Christian initiative on promoting peaceful co-existence as well as the approach to peacebuilding (Friesen 1986; Sampson and Lederach 2000; Schreiter et al. 2010), it might be said that no theology is required for a faith founded on the incarnation of God, that calls for practical witnessing in life, following the example of Christ, the peacemaker par excellence between earth and heaven. Schreiter et al. (2010) argue that peace building activities can be seen as a global activity of the Christian churches and of
Christian people, based on Christ’s atonement and reconciliation in order to restore the goodness of creation destroyed by evil (or to restore harmonious relations out of conflicting ones). A theology of peacebuilding should be intended as a response to evil, since Christian peacebuilding assumes conditions of no peace, is performed in realities of violence and aggression and try to offer constructive alternative of love, unity, compassion and forgiveness. Some specific characteristic that are fundamental Christian peacebuilding patterns are: truth telling, pursuing justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Biblical scripture call for the Christians to seek peace with one another (Romans 12:18), and by implication between their respective communities. This command to create a world filled with a holistic sense of peace, shalom, does not mean turning a blind eye to injustice, be it personal or structural. The achievement of justice is a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of peace, but the justice to be worked for cannot simply be identified with the demands of any one class or party grouping – it must be truly impartial, without bias to the rich or the poor (see Deuteronomy 1:17).

Beside the theological encouragement for promoting the peaceful co-existence, there are several practical initiatives had been done by the church institution for an example Nostra Aetate and The Christians’ Abyssinian Model. But in this paper, we would like to highlight on Nostra Aetate. This is because Nostra Aetate is the most turning points in the history of Catholic-Muslim relations as below:

Nostra Aetate

Nostra Aetate is a significant document that challenges Roman Catholics as well as Protestant Churches to open up, rethink their attitudes towards other religions, and reflect on the fact that all human beings are “but one community” Siddiqui (1997). It was the first step in promoting the culture of dialogue with Muslims. Despite the shared values between the two faiths and the urge to promote social justice and moral welfare. It is observed that all Muslim-Christian dialogue has so far achieved is the recognition of the Abrahamic roots of the two faiths (Takim 2004).

Nostra Aetate has been considered one of the most important turning points in the history of Catholic-Muslim relations (Scott C 2007). It is the Magna Carta of the Catholic Church in terms of Muslim-Christian relations. Since 1967, the popes have congratulated Muslims on Eid al-Fitr after the month of Ramadhan. In 1974, the Vatican formed the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims (CRRM). In 1976, the Vatican co-organized the Christian-Islam Congress in Tripoli with the World Islamic Call Society (WICS). In 1990, the Vatican established the Nostra Aetate Foundation. In 1994, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) led a conference with the Muslim World League, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the Muslim World Congress in Cairo. In 1995, the Muslim-Christian Liaison Committee was set up with four international Muslim organizations. The Permanent Committee for Dialogue set up a joint committee with Al-Azhar university’s Monotheist Religions Committee in 1998 with the signing of an agreement in Rome. In 2001, the previous Pope, John Paul II, visited the Umayyad Mosque as the first pope to visit a mosque. In 2008, the PCID and the Centre for Inter-Religious Dialogue of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organisation made a joint declaration in Iran. In February 2013, the Vatican and al-Azhar University’s Joint Committee for Dialogue signed a declaration promoting a culture of peace. In Catholic archdioceses in many countries, there is a committee devoted to interfaith relations. These are all fruits of the Nostra Aetate declaration.
The Peacebuilding Initiatives as A Sustainable Framework for Inter-religious Harmony in Malaysia

Looking at the situation in Malaysia that is also characterized by multicultural nation, there are yet many unsolved issues regarding racisms, oppressions and discriminations that surrounds Malaysian societies. Khadijah argues that differences of ethnicities, skin colors, faiths, cultures, and thoughts have given big impact as challenges in creating harmonious living among nation. In order to improve the situation, the cultivation of religious values and improvement of morality are much needed in the society. (Khadijah Mohd Khambali @ Hambali, 2018). Hence, the implementation of the concepts of interaction according to Islamic perspective as discussed above in selected historical anecdotes are practical in fostering good characters.

In relation to the situation of plural society in Malaysia, the peaceful coexistence has long been formed with the value of ‘muhibbah’. Kamar Oniah (2010) argues that ‘muhibbah’ is regarded a beautiful social philosophy compared to tolerance. Tolerance is a colonial word that signifies a superior-inferior relationship. It illustrates the arrogance and the obsession of the colonial power, who have always pushing the natives to the corner. Tolerance as a social philosophy indeed is condescending, chauvinistic, degrading and humiliating. ‘Muhibbah’ on the other hand signifies co-existence, togetherness, of kinship, love and affection, sympathy, empathy and respect. Muhibbah is a mutual love or the state of loving of each other. In reality, it is love that puts off hatred and anger. Haslina (2013) states that ‘muhibbah’ is built on the basis of agreement and sincerity of accepting each other among the Malaysians. It is ‘muhibbah’ instead of tolerance that became our legacy and our spirit.

Haslina (2013) further clarifies that the word ‘muhibbah’ has been accepted as a positive value that inculcated integration spirit among people of different races and religions in Malaysia. ‘Muhibbah’ involves the value of the five practical guidelines to the positive and healthy living of pluralistic society. They are: 1) Non-interference – non intrusion (not to interfere in intra-religious or intra-communal matters of other religions); 2) Defence and decorum (to respect differences and sensitivities of others); 3) Sympathy and empathy (to treat others as how one wishes to be treated); 4) Communal cooperation (to work upon common ethics of religions for the good of all); 5) Unity in diversity (to establish loyalty and patriotism).

Apart from that, living in a multicultural country as in Malaysia, dialogue can also be part of the important means in constructing a peaceful co-existence life. It cannot be denied that dialogue always happen in Malaysians interaction every day. Regardless of what topics being discussed, dialogue can actually play an important role to generate social unity. Suraya Sintang (2012) mentioned that due to its importance, there are many activities and discussions nowadays that encourage people to practice dialogue, more specifically in interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue can bring benefit to the people through discussion of current issues, misunderstanding inputs, as well as finding solutions on the problems arise among the society.

Nonetheless, looking through the discussion on the comprehensive concept of fiqh al-ṭaʿāyus, this concept is most probably the best concept to apply in a Malaysian multicultural nation. Accordance with its meaning of co-existence, living in a multicultural environment really urges individuals to practice living with ‘muhibbah’ and respect.

Conclusion
As a conclusion, the faith-based peace building has been initiated by the two Abrahamic religions, Islam and Christianity. The historical lessons behind the initiatives had informed us the significance of living together in pluralistic society and consequently applicable to the Malaysian context of living together. There are several historical anecdotes on the peace building initiatives from the encounter of the two religions; the spirit of La Convivencia in Andalusia of Spain, the spirit of living together in Sicilian Italy, open letter of A Common Word between Us and You as well as Nostra Aetate. Hence, one should study the history to reduce the gap between the two religions and search for the religious commonality to embrace the feelings of brotherhood and sisterhood. The peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians signifies towards building global peace and considered a framework for the establishment harmony in the national plural society.

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