

Islamic Influence on Malaysian and Turkish Society: The Spirit of Tolerance

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Abstract

Over the course of its more than 1,000-year history, Islam has been a major force in fostering peace and tolerance among other cultures. Islamic teachings have always placed a strong emphasis on peaceful coexistence and interfaith discussion, which are rooted in the Qur'anic values of justice, compassion, and respect for variety. This essay examines Islam's role in promoting cultural diversity and societal cohesiveness from a historical, theological, and modern standpoint. understanding, rahma (mercy), and adl (justice), which offer a moral foundation for peaceful intergroup interactions. The study also looks at historical instances where Muslim cultures protected and accommodated a variety of religious and ethnic groups, such as the Ottoman Empire's pluralistic policies and the convivencia in Andalusia. Through programs in education, diplomacy, and community involvement, Islamic scholars and institutions still promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence in contemporary settings. The study emphasizes how Islamic beliefs can be effective weapons against sectarianism, and cultural polarization when understood in their contextual and comprehensive aspects. Islam helps to create inclusive societies that respect the rights and dignity of every person, regardless of background, by encouraging respect for one another and a common set of human values. The article ends by urging fresh academic and interfaith initiatives to highlight Islam's long history of tolerance and to combat falsehoods that sow discord. In a globalized world where multicultural contact and obstacles are growing, it is crucial to comprehend Islam's true position on harmony and coexistence.

Keywords: Islam, cultural tolerance, harmony, interfaith dialogue, justice, coexistence, pluralism.

Islam is a universal religion. It caters all aspects of human life and guides its followers a lifestyle that is easy to adopt through the

authentic sources of the Holy Quran and the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Islam is flexible in adopting diverse cultures that are within the limits prescribed by Allah ﷻ and the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Holy Quran and *hadith* traditions prove the acceptance of diverse groups and cultures. The basis of society depends on culture. The word culture is derived from a Latin word '*cultura*' which literally means the result of human interaction. Technically, culture of a society means the shared values, understandings, assumptions and goals that are learned from earlier generations, executed by the present society and passed on to successive generations.¹ Culture generally refers to the customs and traditions practiced by a group of people or a community living together. It sometimes refers to certain personal characteristics of an individual. If a person is said to be cultured it means that the person has certain features such as speech, manner, and taste for literature, music or painting which distinguish from others.² According to H. T. Mazumdar, "*Culture is the sum total of human achievements, material as well as non-material, capable of transmission, sociologically, i.e. by tradition and communication, vertically as well as horizontally*".³

The term culture is perceived differently by people of different places. Culture plays a crucial role in our lives. It is composed of material and non-material things. Material culture is composed of the things that humans make and use. It includes a wide variety of things like buildings, technological gadgets, clothing, film, music, literature, and art. Aspects of material culture are known as cultural products. The non-material aspects of culture are the values and beliefs, language, communication and practices that are shared commonly among a group of people. A culture is built up of knowledge, intellect, traditions and expectations. It also includes of rules, norms, laws and morals that govern the society. Material and non-material culture can also be termed as tangible and non-tangible culture. Culture is also the behavior of people in the society. Behaviors of people are formulated through language, clothes, food, art, architecture, morals, values, ethics and literature.⁴ It includes the collective religious, customary and traditional practices one participates in. The stability of society based on its culture.

1. Elements of Culture and Diversity: Biological and Cultural Adaptation

Diversity means the differences of people living as a group among others. These differences can be individual or collective. The people can be from different societies, cultural, traditional, racial or religious backgrounds. There are various elements of culture such as values, symbols, flexibility, synthesized, coordinated, synced and systemized.⁵ When man came to the world his biological needs made him adapt

according to the sources of life available on Earth. Now humans have increasingly come to rely upon cultural adaptation. Some adaptations are for good as they are beneficial and dynamic but some are maladaptive and are negative in nature.⁶ According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries 'diversity' means "*a range of many people or things that are very different from each other*".

2. Diversity in Culture and Characteristics of Culture

The individuality and uniqueness in cultures highlight and separate them from each other. People from different parts of the world are recognized through the distinction of their culture, customary practices and traditions. The cultural characteristics are the developmental stages towards forming a society and its culture.

2.1 Expression and Language

The way humans communicate with each other and convey their feelings is the first stage of the cultural development. An individual express through gestures, expressions and language and it can be in the speech, signs, sound or symbols.⁷

2.2 Philosophy and Thinking

The way of analytical reasoning, logical thinking and philosophy and the creative thoughts are the roots of a civilization.⁸

2.3 Morality and Ethics

The piety and strong character of individuals of a society leads to a stable culture. A way of life that is pious and disciplined. Good behavior in the society is also essential.⁹ The morals of a person identify his ethical and moral values. It also helps in knowing the background and personality of a person. These are the personality defining traits.

2.4 The Marriage Contract

Marriage is a sacred contract that secures and preserves the human race and the lineage and procreation of a cultured civilization.¹⁰ The wedding ceremonies are an integral part of a culture to define its customary practices and traditions.¹¹

2.5 Art, Architecture, Literature and the Empirical Art

The wisdom of creating things for education, art and entertainment, it is the way of learning, writing and memorizing. These intellectual and knowledgeable steps take a civilization ahead. It is the blend of wisdom and skill. A way to find the guideline and direction of one's self.¹²

2.6 Finances and Economy

The basic necessity of mankind is the production of food and shelter without that they cannot flourish. Trade, commerce and economic prosperity are required.¹³ A society cannot run without a strong financial system.

2.7 Sciences, Education and Hikmah

The learning and education of the mankind is very important. The scientific and social knowledge of history, geography and medicine is a necessary requirement of a culture. The writings, sayings and traditions must be preserved for future assistance. The knowledge regarding climate and locations is also required. The blend of all this knowledge is the wisdom to recognize the purpose of one's life in this world, *hikmah*. The life of a Muslim is centered on the principle of *hikmah*.¹⁴

3. Terminologies Related to Culture

The term Multi-Culturalism is defined as an approach that is used for the management of culturally diverse societies. This approach respects and acknowledges the cultural needs of minority groups. A Multi-Cultural society lives together as one without judging others cultures as different from their own culture. It also refers to the existence of several different cultural groups within a society maintaining their own distinct identity.¹⁵ Inter-Culturalism emphasizes on integration and social inclusion. The terms Multi-Culturalism and Inter-Culturalism are used synonymously as well.

Cultural relativism explains that all cultures must be viewed in terms of their own values and belief and not by the standards of another. no culture is superior to the other. A culture of a society is formed to facilitate its people and is according to the fulfillment of their needs. The needs of the location, the geographical aspects, the weather, the way of living and it also may affect by the religion of the majority people of that specific area. To further elaborate cultural relativism: An individual's culture must be judged or evaluated by the culture practiced by him and not upon other cultures.¹⁶ Ethnocentrism is also similar to cultural relativism, which means when one assumes their own culture to be the best and perfect.

4. Islamic Perspective of Cultural Diversity: The Quranic Teachings

Islam is a dynamic religion that accepts the intervention of cultures according to a society. Muslims around the world are a blend of different and diverse culture attached through a tight string of faith (*Tawheed*). Islam developed and spread worldwide. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself sent the message of Allah ﷻ to different nations who were living in various areas of the world. These nations were already following and living according to their cultures and learned behaviors. Islam introduced a proper and well developed set of rules to lead a life for all mankind. The people became civilized and more cultured after the advent of Islam.

A new civilization emerged which was the Muslim civilization. It arrived with a universal, natural and practical manual. The Islamic

culture started in the society of Arabia and spread worldwide. The Islamic culture was vast and it diminished the dark period in which the world was stuck. The Muslim civilization of “The Golden Age” contributed culturally, socially, economically and intellectually. The field of knowledge and education was advanced. Art, language, architecture and sciences were also focused by the great Muslim scholars. An important feature of a society’s culture is Art. Art streams in human’s lives from the very beginning. The Islamic art consists of calligraphy and architecture. It is an important aspect of human civilization. The divine religions played a vital role in forming cultures and civilization especially Islam. It caters all aspects of one’s social and individual life. The Islamic culture is the demonstration of rationality. ¹⁷Islamic Culture contributed majorly to the world’s civilization. The Holy Quran is a complete guide that explains all aspects of the social and individual life. The adaptation of culture, customs and norms are also explained by Allah ﷻ in the Holy Quran. Allah ﷻ addresses the Muslims as one nation (*Ummah*) irrespective of their cultural, religious background or their caste and creed.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ

شَهِيدًا

{سورة البقرة: ١٤٣}

“Thus We made you a moderate community, that you may be witnesses to humanity, and that the Messenger may be a witness to you.”¹⁸

Ibn Kathir describes in his book Tafsir ibn Kathir the concept of Muslim *Ummah*. The *Ummah* of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is stated as the “*wasat*”, the best nation. The basis of the nation being the best among all is not their caste creed, or ethnicity rather their piety and relentless obedience.¹⁹

In the tafsir Tadabbur e Quran by Amin Ahsan Islahi he writes that the Muslim *Ummah* is superior because of its stability and steadfastness. This balanced nation stands in the center with strength and courage. They are following the path of Allah ﷻ in its natural and correct form without any changes. The Jews and the Christians have changed their scriptures but the nation of Muhammad ﷺ is following it in its original form without even a minute change.²⁰

In Tafhim ul Quran, Maulana Maududi defines the concept of “*Ummah Wasat*”. Allah ﷻ guided the Muslim *Ummah* to the path of truth together with the great responsibility of spreading the message of Allah. The *Ummah* of Muhammad ﷺ is the chief of all nations a super nation that will be the witness of the Prophet hood of Muhammad ﷺ on the day of Judgement.²¹ In Tafsir Jalalain by Imam Jalal ul Din al

Suyuti and Imam Jalal ul Din al Mahalli wrote that Muslims are the midmost community. They are the upright and excellent nation. The concept of a noble nation on the basis of its responsibility and obedience to Allah ﷻ is described in this tafsir.²² The ayah discussed below is clarifying the importance of Muslim *Ummah*. It describes how necessary it is to stay unified and work as team. The superiority of the Muslim nation is because of their piety and obedience not their physical appearance or lineage.

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ
فَأَحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا
مِنْكُمْ شُرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ
فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ.
{سورة المائدة: ٤٨}

*“And We revealed to you the Book, with truth, confirming the Scripture that preceded it, and superseding it. So judge between them according to what Allah revealed, and do not follow their desires if they differ from the truth that has come to you. For each of you We have assigned a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He could have made you a single nation, but He tests you through what He has given you. So compete in righteousness. To Allah is your return, all of you; then He will inform you of what you had disputed”.*²³

In Tafsir ibn Kathir, Ibn Kathir explains that Allah ﷻ Almighty reveled the divine books on His Messengers that were abrogated after the revelation of the Glorious Quran.²⁴ Amin Ahsan Islahi in his tafsir Tadabbur e Quran writes that the Muslim nation was bestowed with the Holy Quran whose authenticity is guarded by Allah ﷻ himself. The Muslims are distinguished from the previous nations on the basis of the religion Islam as it is unchanged unlike the other religions. The three nations are discussed and addressed in this Ayah are the, Jews, Christians and the Muslims. These three nations were given separate Shariah's and Prophets but the message was same i.e. the oneness of Allah. This was the test and trial from Allah ﷻ Almighty to define different ways and see the approach of His slaves. He tested how a person would be stuck in the fake worldly life and closes his eyes towards the truth and reality of Allah. Even the direction of prayer was changed from Bayt al Maqdas to Kabah tul Allah, Masjid ul Haram as explained previously in Surah Al Baqarah Ayah 143.²⁵

The freewill in this world is given whether one chooses Islam as a religion or any other religion. Then Allah ﷻ will judge how

successfully His choose the right path and the true religion i.e. Islam. Allah ﷻ himself says that I created separate nations and Shariah so the diversity cannot be denied neither in religion nor in culture. In Tafhim ul Quran, Maulana Maududi writes that the different nations were bestowed by Allah ﷻ with the Messengers to guide them to the straight path of Allah ﷻ Almighty. This was the trial by Allah ﷻ for His slaves.²⁶ In Tafsir Jalalain by Imam Jalal ul Din al Suyuti and Imam Jalal ul Din al Mahalli wrote that a clear path, the path of truth has been revealed by the Allah ﷻ Almighty for different communities of the world. He created separate laws to separate the obedient and the disobedient.²⁷ The ayah discussed above Allah ﷻ has revealed Islam and the Holy book Al-Quran to guide His creation. After giving the guide and rules He tests them and their intention of doing good or evil.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ.

{سورة الروم: ٢٢}

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colors. In this are signs for those who know.”²⁸

Ibn Kathir describes in his Tafsir ibn Kathir that the beautiful and unique creations of Allah ﷻ are the signs of his creativeness and glory. The variety of languages spoken by His people, the distinct appearances, and physical features are the signs of the divine presence of Allah.²⁹

In Tadabbur e Quran is the tafsir by Amin Ahsan Islahi. It explains that Allah ﷻ created variety in the earth and the heavens and the diversity created by Him alone is the beauty of his creation. Different languages of different nations, their accents are different, their color complexions are various no skin color is same as the other as all are the creatures of Allah ﷻ Almighty. These are the amazing qualities of Allah ﷻ that are only visible to the wise. The People who can differentiate among the creation of Allah ﷻ due to race, color, culture or language are doing shirk to Allah, creating corruption and ruining the peace of the world.³⁰

In Tafhim ul Quran, Maulana Maududi writes that all are the offspring of Adam (AS) and Hawwa (AS). One nation comprises of multi-lingual societies with different accents. Allah ﷻ himself states the diversity among His creation.³¹ In Tafsir Jalalain by Imam Jalal ul Din al Suyuti and Imam Jalal ul Din al Mahalli wrote that all mankind is from the same origin Adam (AS) and Hawwa (AS) but they have different colors, they speak different languages in different accents. These are signs of Allah ﷻ Almighty for the wise and knowledgeable.³² The world and all the magnificent creations in it are the signs and

witness of Allah's ﷻ beauty and creativity. The diversity in men, women, lands and all living or non-living things testify the Power and Ability of Allah ﷻ.

وَلَا تَجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا آمَنَّا
بِالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأَنْزَلَ إِلَيْنَا وَالْهَذَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ.

{سورة العنكبوت: ٤٦}

*“And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in the best manner possible, except those who do wrong among them. And say, “We believe in what was revealed to us, and in what was revealed to you; and our God and your God is One; and to Him we are submissive”.*³³

Ibn Kathir describes in his Tafsir ibn Kathir that the people of the book are not liars on a whole they have fabricated some of the commandments in scriptures sent to them by Allah ﷻ through his Prophets.³⁴ In Tadabbur e Quran, Amin Ahsan Islahi writes that Allah ﷻ says in this Ayah that Muslims should not argue with the people of the scriptures and if argumentation is needed they should adopt better and good ways that do not create conflict. The ignorant among the disbelievers shouldn't be addressed nor talked to. The books followed by them are testified by the Holy Quran and we all have the same god, Allah ﷻ Almighty. There is no difference among the Muslims who believe in Quran and the people of the scripture except in their manipulated beliefs and creating partners to Allah.³⁵

In Tafhim ul Quran, Maulanaa Maududi writes that all nations are created by Allah ﷻ Almighty and all have one God, Allah. ³⁶ In Tafsir Jalalain by Imam Jalal ul Din al Suyuti and Imam Jalal ul Din al Mahalli wrote that the Muslims should not believe the wrongdoers. Remember that Allah ﷻ is the only God. Be obedient to Him and all mankind is His creation.³⁷ The above ayah ordains the believers to show good behavior to others, the ones who are not from your religion Islam but are the believers of previously revealed scriptures. All the scriptures are revealed by Allah ﷻ so all are valuable and if the scripture is unchanged the Muslim has to believe in it and follow it.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ
نِسَاءٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ
الِاسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ.

{سورة الحجرات: ١١}

“O you who believe! No people shall ridicule other people, for they may be better than they. Nor shall any women ridicule other women, for they may be better

than they. Nor shall you slander one another, nor shall you insult one another with names. Evil is the return to wickedness after having attained faith. Whoever does not repent—these are the wrongdoers”.³⁸

Ibn Kathir writes in Tafsir ibn Kathir that Allah ﷻ forbade to humiliate others or belittling others because may be the injured party is dearer and more honorable to Him.³⁹ In Tadabbur e Quran, Amin Ahsan Islahi says that in this ayah Allah ﷻ orders to abstain from mocking and ridiculing others. The piety of man in the eyes of Allah ﷻ is faith and righteousness in practice. So, none should be humiliated or called by names. The judgment of piety will be done on the day of resurrection. The discrimination of a person on the basis of his nation, race or caste is condemned. No one is superior or inferior. The outer beauty is not a feature to be proud of rather the belief and faith in Allah ﷻ is the feature that enlightens one's body and soul. This is the trap of Satan that he deviates one's heart towards a superiority complex about lineage, family, tribe, or nation and considers others inferior on the same criterion. Allah ﷻ guides the Muslims to be united as one nation and do not categorize among yourselves. All Muslims are joint together in the bond of brotherhood. They are equal in the eyes of Allah ﷻ Almighty. Superiority is not based on caste, race, color, creed or cultural background.⁴⁰

In Taffhim ul Quran, Maulana Maududi writes that fighting with one another is forbidden in Islam. Islam promotes to respect other Muslims and not to judge them on the worldly criteria of wealth, lineage or race.⁴¹ In Tafsir Jalalain by Imam Jalal ul Din al Suyuti and Imam Jalal ul Din al Mahalli wrote that deriding other Muslims who are financially weak and disdaining the lesser people is not allowed by Allah. Man's power of judgement is limited to the world and cannot know the importance of the other in the sight of Allah ﷻ Almighty.⁴² In the following ayah, Allah ﷻ forbids the Muslims to mock or ridicule each other or the people of other faiths. If one would disrespect others faith his own will be disrespected by others.

وَأَنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ.

{سورة المؤمنون: ٥٢}

“This nation of yours is one nation, and I am your Lord, so fear Me”.⁴³

Ibn Kathir writes in his Tafsir ibn Kathir that the religion of all nation is *Tawheed*, acceptance of monotheism of Allah ﷻ Almighty.⁴⁴ In Tadabbur e Quran, Amin Ahsan Islahi writes that the divine message was the same for all nations that was conveyed by all prophets of Allah. God for all is Allah ﷻ Almighty alone. The Prophets were sent to deliver the message of *Tawheed* same was the message of the last

prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The previous nations altered the message of Allah, so the last Prophet of Allah was sent by Allah ﷻ to correct mankind and spread the religion Islam.⁴⁵

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ.

{سورة الأنبياء: ١٠٧}

“We did not send you except as mercy to mankind”.⁴⁶

In Tafhīm ul Quran, Maulana Maududi writes that all Prophets of Allah ﷻ were sent with the message of *Tawheed* i.e. the oneness of Allah. So all nations are one connected to the string of Islam. Nations were separated in the world because of the natural factor of complexes of superiority and inferiority.⁴⁷ In Tafsir Jalalain by Imam Jalal ul Din al Suyuti and Imam Jalal ul Din al Mahalli wrote that the Muslims are one community. The religion of all is Islam and adherence to Islam as one state and community is necessary.⁴⁸ In the above ayah Allah ﷻ says that Muslim Ummah is one nation. The oneness of the Muslims is emphasized and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came to join everyone with his mercy.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ.

{سورة الحجرات: ١٣}

“O people! We created you from a male and a female, and made you races and tribes, that you may know one another. The best among you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. Allah is All-Knowing, Well-Experienced”.⁴⁹

In Tafsir ibn Kathir, Ibn Kathir writes that all mankind is the offspring of Adam (AS) and Hawwa (AS). They are divided into nations, tribes, sub tribes and clans. The difference is the religion among the nation. All are equal according to the rules of humanity.⁵⁰ In *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Abu Huraira said, "The Messenger of Allah, ﷺ, was asked, "Which people are the most generous?" He replied, "The most generous of them in the sight of Allah ﷻ are those with the most *Taqwa*." They said, "That is not what we are asking about." He ﷺ said, "The most generous of people was Yusuf, the Prophet of Allah, son of the Prophet of Allah, who was the son of the Intimate Friend of Allah ﷻ (Ibrahim)." They said, "That is not what we are asking about." He said, "Are you asking about those of Arab origin?" "Yes," they replied. He ﷺ said, "The best of you in the *Jahiliyya* is the best of you in Islam when you have understanding from Allah."⁵¹

Honor is earned by *Taqwa* and not through physical appearance or the outer image. In *Tadabbur e Quran*, Amin Ahsan Islahi writes that man shouldn't be proud on his Lineage and family background because all

men are created by Allah. Men and women all are the children of Adam (AS) and *Hawwa* (AS). The names and titles of nations are just for specifying their identity and are not a definition of superiority of inferiority. Honor and respect is based only upon piety.⁵²

In *Tafhim ul Quran*, Maulana Maududi writes that there are many nations in the world but no one is superior for Allah ﷻ as all are created equally by Allah. Man belonging to any nation could be superior or loftier.⁵³ In *Tafsir Jalalain* by Imam Jalal ul Din al Suyuti and Imam Jalal ul Din al Mahalli wrote that mankind is created from Adam and Eve. Allah ﷻ made mankind from the broadest category of lineage and then divided into smaller nations, tribes and clans. This was the worldly division and in Allah's eyes there is no pride or nobility except in the extent to which one fears God (the higher degree of *Taqwa*).⁵⁴ Allah ﷻ says in the ayah discussed above that He created different nations to differentiate them and see how everyone will live with togetherness despite being different. It was in Allah's ﷻ hand to create the same people with same minds but He created different nation races and tribes. Allah ﷻ does not judge on the basis of race rather He sees the righteousness of intention.

5. The Demonstration of Culture in the Early Muslim Era

The early Muslims were settled in the land of Arabia. They practiced the traditions and customs that were according to its geographical location and the facilities that were available. Some practices of the era before the advent of Islam continued and was accepted by Islam as they did not hinder in the way of Islam or its spread and the beliefs. The culture of Arab before Islam was mainly build on the language. The prominent features of the Arab culture were; language, poetry, trade and tribal system.⁵⁵ They had a pride on their language. The Arabs were not a cultured nation. The people were attached and associated only to their tribes. They had no specific customary practices and no rule of law. After the advent of Islam, the Islamic Culture was introduced by the messenger of Allah ﷻ Almighty. Islam emerged with the concept of *Ummah* (nation).⁵⁶ The laws and rules were made according to *Shariah*.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ.
{سورة آل عمران: ١١٠}

"You are the best community that ever emerged for humanity: you advocate what is moral, and forbid what is immoral, and believe in Allah. Had the People of the Scripture believed, it would have been better for them."

Among them are the believers, but most of them are sinners”.⁵⁷

Ibn Kathir describes in his Tafsir ibn Kathir the concept of the best nation i.e. the Muslim nation. The nation consists of people from different racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds that enter the circle of Islam. The captives of war who embrace Islam are from the other groups who are the enemies of Islam but once a person enters Islam he is part of it and accepted without any discrimination.⁵⁸ Amin Ahsan Islahi in tafsir Tadabbur e Quran the *Ummah* of Muhammad ﷺ is on the right path and on justice that is why it's the best *Ummah*. The basis of being the best is not because of their identity or racial differences rather the responsibility of promoting good and forbidding evil is the base of superiority. Faith in Allah ﷻ is the root of every good deed and guiding other nations to the right path irrespective of their caste, color, creed, racial or cultural backgrounds. The discernment with Jews and the Christians is on the basis of their reluctance to accept the monotheism of Allah ﷻ Almighty. They altered the commands in the scriptures that were revealed by Allah ﷻ before Islam.⁵⁹

In Tafhim ul Quran, Maulana Maududi writes that the nobility of the Muslim *Ummah* is because of their religion Islam. They are the nation who halts evil and promotes betterment.⁶⁰ In Tafsir Jalalain by Imam Jalal ul Din al Suyuti and Imam Jalal ul Din al Mahalli wrote that the Muslim *Ummah* is the manifested community. Their responsibility given to them by Allah ﷻ is of promoting good and forbade evil.⁶¹ Guiding others to do good and help them is liked by Allah ﷻ. At the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ the first Islamic society was formed in Madinah. It was a diverse society and many Arab tribes were living together as one. The holy Prophet ﷺ promoted the idea of unity, brotherhood, justice, equality and peace among his companions and followers.

6. Cultural Manifestations of the Muslim Countries in the Contemporary Era

The world comprises of more than 45 Muslim countries. These countries follow the Islamic culture with unique variances in their traditions and customs due to the area which they live in, the geographical preferences, climate and their needs. There is no discrimination due to difference in culture. The religion must not be used for judgement rather to signify that Islam is the best of religions. The non-Muslims are free to enter the fold of Islam irrespective of their nation, community or cultural background. The nation (*Ummah*) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is noble because of being Muslims and believers of Islamic monotheism. In today's world Muslims are influenced by the cultural practices of the west. The trend of Multi-cultural countries and societies is developing and trending. But the

Muslim world is a bit inflexible in accepting the diversity and change. This change in beliefs and Islamic practices is non-acceptable but if a custom does not affect the basic tenants of Islam it should be accepted.⁶²

Malaysia is a renowned, culturally rich and diverse Islamic country. It's a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual society. Diverse culture is shared by its people in Malaysia that belong to different ethnic groups. They live there with harmony. Religion, language and cultural heritage combine to form a society and its culture. The Malays follow the Sunni Sect of Islam. They also strictly follow all the beliefs of religion. A person is said to be Malay if all his actions are similar to the people of Malay. These actions may be the language he speaks and the customs he practices.⁶³ It is located in Asia and it geographically divided between the east and the west. The temperatures are usually high in Malaysia all-round the year. Malaysia is humid and has heavy amounts of rainfall in most of its parts. The largest city of Kuala Lumpur is the heart of Malaysia. Malaysia has thirteen states and three federal territories.

7. Cultural Elements of Malaysia

The diverse and unique cultures blossom among the nation. The Malays are very generous people. They love giving gifts to each other and meet others with love and humbleness. Following are the elements of the Malaysian cultures:

7.1 Language and Symbols

Malaysia is a multi-lingual country and many languages are spoken in Malaysia. The national language of Malaysia is Malay. People from 30 native tribes live in Malaysia and Tamil, English, Chinese and other languages are also spoken.⁶⁴ The use of different languages depends on many factors for example; The Educational Background: The language one speaks is majorly effected by the language of his educational institution. The Political Scenario: Language distinguishes between two groups and their ethnicity. The use of a specific language is also effected by the political power in a state. The National language is by mainly used by the Malays along with their mother-tongue.⁶⁵

7.2 Arts and Architecture: The Cultural Heritage and Craftsmanship

Malaysia is commonly known for modern arts, music, dance, drama literature and visual arts. Contemporary and traditional architectures are present in Malaysia. There are many amazingly constructed buildings. The great mosques in Malaysia are magnificent and of beautiful designs and styles. There are seven styles of mosque architecture. They are the Traditional Vernacular, the Sino-Eclectic, the Colonial, the North Indian, the Modern Vernacular, the

Modernistic Expressionism and the Post-Modern Revivalism.⁶⁶ In different states of Malaysia there are many art galleries and museums also. Malaysian ringgit is the currency used in Malaysia. The country's greater population is in the job market. Trade is also preferred. The Malays are nationalists. Agriculture is also a source of income. Women in Malaysia weave baskets and hats to earn a living for their families.⁶⁷

7.3 Food: The Malaysian Cuisine

The Malays love food. The occasions are celebrated by food. Malaysian food varies in taste, color, flavors and textures. It is spicy and aromatic. It is full of healthy and rich herbs that are commonly found in Southeast Asia.⁶⁸ Malaysia's ethnic diversity makes its cuisine matchless. Its unique and flavorful cuisine attracts tourists from all around the world to visit and enjoy the amazing food. The food is a mix of different ethnic tribes. People from different background and religion have their own food prohibitions, such as the Muslims who do not eat pork, while the Hindus do not consume the meat of cows.⁶⁹

8. Traditional Elements of Malaysia

Malaysia's traditions and customs are very famous. Its traditions and celebrations are very loud and vibrant. Malays make their traditional dwellings in their villages; they also practice their traditional style of weddings today, keeping in view the limitations, norms and ethics prescribed by the Islamic *Shariah*.⁷⁰ The following are the traditional elements of Malaysia:

8.1 Family Life and Marriages

The people of Malaysia are known for their generosity and they have the prominent quality of sharing. Nuclear family system is predominant in Malaysia. Elders who are financially stable prefer to live alone while the poor ones live with their children. They emphasize on family life and self-respect. It is necessary for the young ones to respect the elders in the Malay society. Multiple ethnic groups reside in Malaysia so all have different traditions regarding the ceremonies of marriage.⁷¹ Malays are traditionalist in the matter of marriage and relationship.

8.2 Dressing Style and Ornaments

The dress code in some parts of Malaysia is liberal but in post parts it is restricted to a proper dress that covers up both for men and women. Specifically, The Malay women wear the *baju kurung* and Malay men wear the *baju melayu* which is their national dress. Most of the men and women cover their head. The Muslim women of Malaysia do not think that wearing less clothes and unveiling as modern. They veil with head scarfs and also wear loose clothing to follow the Islamic dress code strictly.⁷²

8.3 Malaysian Sports & Festivals

Festivals are celebrated all around the world in all countries and places. People enjoy and socialize through these festivals and celebrations.⁷³ The independence day of Malaysia is celebrated on 31st August. The Malays are very hospitable people. They gather around their loved ones to celebrate their religious and national holidays. They always serve food to the relatives or neighbors that visit their houses. A tradition is commonly practice to serve food and the guest eats or drinks it to thank the host. The Malays also enjoy sports and music. The Malaysian musical styles and instruments originate from artistic portrayal of history, love, religion and beliefs. Different instruments are used to play music in Malaysia, such as, Kompang, Gamelan, Gendang Nobat, Seruling and Serunai. The national sport of Malaysia is Sepak Takraw. It is a sport similar to volleyball in which players cannot use their hands to hit the ball.⁷⁴ Many Chinese live in Malaysia so the lion dance has become a popular in Malaysia. Chinese language education is also provided in Malaysia at all levels.⁷⁵

9. Mystic Traditions in Malaysia

The most famous personality of Islamic mysticism in Malaysia is Haji Abdul Malik bin Abdul Karim Amrullah (1908–81). He has written many books on topics like Islamic philosophy, theology, history, jurisprudence, ethics, literature, and culture. His main aim was to inculcate the spirit of Sufism into the Malay world. The reason behind was his thought that in these digital eras it is necessary that man keeps intact with god and spirituality. Malays also enjoy folk-dance and traditional music. Music is an integral part of the Malay weddings and festivals. Malays are superstitious beings. They believe on spiritual and supernatural beings. The fairy tales, myths and old traditional stories are very common in Malaysia.⁷⁶

Malaysia is a wonderful land that accepts the diversity of people living in it that belong to different countries, cultures and ethnic groups. Its laws are tolerant towards all faiths but the main religion followed is Islam. The influence of so many religions and cultures is deviating the Malaysian Muslims away from Islam but their Government is doing extraneous efforts to keep them intact to the faith of Islam. The Muslims are obliged to perform all duties prescribed by Islam and follow the *Shariah* properly.

10. Culture and Traditions of Turkey

The cultural practices of the eminent country of the Muslim world, Turkey are a blend of the Islamic and western culture. It is a multi-cultural and multi-religious country. Turkey is a geographically unique country that lies partly in Asia and partly in Europe. Turkey is a bridge between the two continents. On the west of Turkey is the Aegean Sea,

on the northwest is the Sea of Marmara, Greece, and Bulgaria, on the north is the Black Sea, on the east is Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iran, and in the south is Iraq, Syria and the Mediterranean. The largest city of Turkey is Istanbul and its capital is Ankara. Turkey has seven distinct geographic weather and climatic regions. Winters are much colder and there are significant contrasts between winter and summer temperatures. January is freezing throughout the interior of Turkey. Summers generally are hot. The Black Sea coastlands are the wettest region, with rain throughout the year and a winter maximum but summers are drier than along the Black Sea. The southeast is dry and hot during the summer. Winters are cold, with January means near freezing. The Anatolian interior has a semi continental climate with a large temperature range.⁷⁷ Turkey is divided into 7 regions that are; Black Sea Region, Marmara Region, Aegean Region, Mediterranean Region, Central Anatolia Region, Eastern Anatolia Region and the Southeastern Anatolia Region. Various cultures are practiced in these different regions of Turkey.

11. Cultural Elements of Turkey

Turkey is a culturally rich and diverse country. Following are the elements of its cultures:

11.1 Language and Symbols

The main language of Turkey is Turkish language and the major religion is Islam. Other languages spoken in Turkey are Kurdish and Arabic. The minorities also speak their own languages. English, German and French are the common foreign languages used. The Turkish sign language is used by the deaf community in Turkey. During the Ottoman Empire, Turkish was written using Arabic letters. Later to modernize Turkey, Mustafa Kamal Atatürk replaced the Arabic script with Latin alphabet and it is used till date.⁷⁸

11.2 Arts and Architecture: The Cultural Heritage and Craftsmanship

Turkey is famous for its beautiful attractive art and magnificent buildings. The Masjids in Turkey are glorious and they are constructed marvelously. Traditional arts and crafts have formed a rich mosaic with the cultural heritage of the different civilizations which were coming from the thousand years of history of the Anatolia. Masjids in Turkey: Istanbul is famous for the beautiful masjids in it. *Çamlıca* Mosque is the largest Masjid of Istanbul. The Blue Mosque in Turkey is one of the most beautiful, historic and magnificently designed masjid of the world. Turkish Tile Painting: The art of Turkish tiles and ceramics occupies a place of prominence in the history of art. *Kutahya*, a city in Turkey is an important center of tile and ceramic-making. Artists in Turkey are designing the finest tiles in the World. Henna Tattoo: Henna is an old tradition in Turkish Culture. It is an

important part of the weddings & special ceremonies. *Ebru* (Water Marbling): *Ebru* is a traditional Turkish Paper marbling fine art. Turks also practice the art of Calligraphy and Miniature Paintings. Turkish rugs are also very famous and well-known because of their designs. Business and trade are the primary occupations of the people of Turkey. Agriculture is also notable in Turkey. Almost one-third of Turkey's land is used for agriculture.⁷⁹

11.3 Food: The Turkish Cuisine

Turkey is a lively country. The Turkish people opt for healthy foods mostly. A variety of foods is available in Turkey and is eaten by the locals as well as the travelers and tourists. Foods that are healthy and rich such as; Kebabs: Kebab "roast meat," is a signature traditional Turkish dish. Salads & Olive Oil Dishes: Turkish Cuisine is very rich with its fresh salads and a great variety of vegetarian olive oil dishes.⁸⁰ Other veggie salads are also eaten in Turkey. The Turkish breakfast is also a variety of healthy fruits and vegetables. Desserts and Pastries: The desserts with Turkish Tea and Coffee are a must. Fresh cooked pastries with various fillings such as cheese, spinach, potato and variety of herbs. The Turkish delight or *Baklava* is one famous Turkish desert eaten worldwide. Manti is the most traditional and exotic dish of Turkish Cuisine.⁸¹

12. Traditional Elements of Turkey

Turkey is a beautiful country. It has many rich traditions and they are followed by the inhabitants of turkey. They follow their traditional values and celebrate them with passion and enthusiasm. The following are the traditional elements of Turkey:

12.1 Family Life and Marriages

The families in Turkey are alienated into several types according to the social and economic conditions i.e. the traditional extended and nuclear families. After modernization of Turkish social life today is mostly living as nuclear families. The Turkish are friendly, polite and hospitable people. In the traditional family, marriage is still a family affair rather than a personal affair. Marriages are not conducted by the imam. They are conducted before the republic and by law they have to be civil. The diversity of marriage ceremonies and customs reflect the regional, urban, rural, ethnic, and socioeconomic differences within the country. Polygamy is very rare in Turkey except some villages.⁸²

12.2 Dressing Style and Ornaments

Women dress in baggy trousers (Turkish *şalvar*) or a long skirt in the eastern side and on the west women usually dress in a shirt and a jacket with a wide belt or piece of cloth worn as a belt. A headscarf is also used by the women in Turkey. The men in Turkey wear Turkish *şalvar* paired with a traditional loose coat, called a *jubba*. The western side

men dress in western attire i.e. a three-piece suit or t-shirt with a pair of jeans. Turkish jewelry and ornaments are eye-catching and beautiful. They are mostly hand-made, with stones and seashells.⁸³

12.3 Turkish Sports & Festivals

Many unique and colorful festivals are practiced such as; Camel Wrestling Festival and Oil Wrestling Festival. Festivals of folk dance and competitions are also executed. The national sport of turkey is oil wrestling which is also called grease wrestling. Turkey also has other unique traditional sports e.g. traditional camel wrestling, *Kafkasor* bullfighting and the game of *jereed*. The long coastline along the sea Turkey offers swimming, boating, water rafting, yachting, hiking, biking, and hot air ballooning. Football is the favorite sport of Turks.⁸⁴

12.4 Mystic Traditions in Turkey

Turkish believes in Islamic mysticism and spirituality. The whirling dervishes trend is followed in most parts of Turkey. Turks believe in many interesting myths of the historic structures and natural phenomenon, such as The Myth of *Sarikiz*. The Turkic mythology is based on social, religious and cultural subjects. For example, the wolf symbolized as honor.⁸⁵ Turkey is a beautiful country. Turkey's main feature and attraction for Muslims all around the world are the Mosques constructed during the Ottoman Era such as the Blue mosque, *Çamlıca* Mosque, etc. Its diverse culture attracts tourists to come and enjoy the blend of western and eastern cultures. Along with appealing traditions and customs, people come to enjoy their delicious cultural food. Despite the western influence Islam is practiced in Turkey. The west influence is leading the Muslims of Turkey away from the basic teachings of Islam especially regarding veil. Muslim majority in Turkey are Sunni Muslims and Sufism is also practiced widely.

Islam's long-standing influence on Turkish and Malaysian communities has been vital in forming their inclusive principles, social peace, and cultural landscapes. Islamic teachings have promoted conditions where all races and traditions can coexist peacefully because they are based on the values of compassion, respect, and coexistence. Islam has inspired a distinctive fusion of tradition and modernity that supports tolerance and secularism in Turkey, while it has contributed to a multicultural framework in Malaysia that promotes unity in variety. Notwithstanding their disparate political and historical backgrounds, both countries demonstrate how Islamic principles may be the cornerstone of harmonious cohabitation and cross-cultural understanding. These civilizations are still guided by the Islamic ethos of tolerance, which fosters communication, understanding, and respect for one another in a globe growing more interconnected by the day.



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