UNVEILING THE CONCEPT OF MAN AND UNIVERSE IN THE CLASSICAL MALAY ISLAMIC TEXTS USING IZUTSU’S APPROACH

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Unveiling the Concept of Man and Universe in the Classical Malay Islamic Texts Using Izutsu's Approach

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Abstract

What was the true concept of man and universe according to the Malay Muslims and as depicted by their classical texts? Oftentimes, the Hindu concept of devaraja or rajaship was claimed to be the most appropriate concept to explain the Malay concept of Man. While the Hindu concept of mount Mahaveru was used to explain the concept of universe in the Malay Islamic tradition. Unfortunately, this could only explain the ancient Hindu perspective which is only a minor part of it and neglecting the major part of the Malay tradition based on the Islamic perspective. How then to explain the Malay Islamic perspective on the concept of man and universe? The researcher has very fortunate to have Izutsu’s approach and model to answer this question. Using Izutsu’s model, the researcher has finally arrived at the conclusion that the concept of man in Malay Islamic texts is not the concept of the devaraja or “rajaship”, rather it was strongly based on the concept of duties and responsibilities inspired by the religious consciousness of the people. Similarly, the concept of universe in Malay Islamic tradition is not the concept of mount Mahaveru. It was rather the concept of al-dunya wal akhirah. This finding will not be possible if not because of Izutsu’s God and Man in the Qur’an. Undoubtedly, this book has offered “once and for all” solution for the researcher to unveil the true perspective of some great works of the Malay Islamic tradition. The purpose of this paper is to discuss further some tremendous discoveries of the concept of man and universe embedded in three great books of Malay Islamic texts of history namely Sejarah Melayu, Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai and Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa using Izutsu’s approach and model contain in his monumental work God and Man in the Qur’an.

Introduction

There are some misconceptions in looking through at the issue of special treatment on the king, royal family, dignitaries and the kingdom in the classical Malay historical texts with regard to the concept of man and universe in the Malay history. Firstly, people tend to draw a simple conclusion that each Malay king is so eager to record their history in a glorious manner so that they will be commemorated as a great man of the universe by their descendants and the people to come. If this is the case, there must be at least one great historical book for each of the Malay king and which is not really the case. In actual fact is that their history was indeed recorded posthumously, i.e. only after their death and their reigns were concluded, the history was then compiled under the instruction of their descendants, and most often it was happened after some hundred years after their times. Even then, the description of their greatness and the kingdom itself was not explicitly and constantly exposed. Another important point was that if the king really wanted his lifetime to be recorded in a glorious manner, he should do it instantly and we might

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during this present time discover that every historical remain will prove the king’s intention. As such Massignon (1959: 109) wrote, “It is true that some religions allude to ‘great souls’. Hindus call them mahatmas, Arabians abdal, and Christians saints, but they are usually ignored during their lifetime.”

Secondly, often people are inclined to see the story of the kings in the classical Malay historical texts as purely based on the concept of the kingship or raja. Not many of them tend to look at a Malay king as a man, the fact is that each of them is a man and therefore they should be treated as a man. As a man, he should carry on his shoulder certain duties and responsibilities according to his religion. The concept of man should be viewed from the perspective of his relation to his God and the universe. It is through this perspective that a definition of man could clearly be seen. From Islamic perspective for instance, a man seen from the perspective of his relation to God and universe is a vicegerent or khalifah in this universe. As a vicegerent he is dutiful to obey the command of Allah and to carry out his responsibilities on the universe (Schimmel, 1962: 20-21). It was true that the history of the Malay kingship is among the major characteristics of the Malay historical texts. But, we must not then focus the concept of man in Malay history based on the concept of Malay kingship. Rather, we must direct our attention to the concept of duties and responsibilities (Milner, 1985: 25).

There were however difficulties facing by many researchers who want to uncover a proper perspective of Malay Islamic concept of man and universe as contain in most of the classical Malay Islamic texts. This is due to certain factors related to the establishment of a modern western perspective founded by colonial scholars. Since the early 15th century and onward they had actively participate in the study of Malay Islamic literature and their commentaries were then becoming among the most authoritative references in the field. This fact led to the decline of the proper local perspective on the concept of man and universe. It was not very easy to find a work that representing the proper local perspective on the Malay Islamic concept of man and universe. Fortunately, after going through some difficult times to find such of this work, I have come face to face with Izutsu’s God and Man in the Qur’an. Indeed, this book has offered “once and for all” solution for my study on the Malay Islamic concept of man and universe. Together with other traditional scholars works I managed to uncover a proper Malay Islamic concept of man and universe as contain in the Malay Islamic texts.

Izutsu’s Contribution Towards Understanding the Malay Islamic Concept of Man

There was a great distinction in comparison between Islamic and Hindu perspectives. Hinduism explains the relationship between the man and God in a vaguely manner. There was no concept of submission to God in Hindu perspective especially with regard to the concept the Absolute Unity of God. In most of the instances, God seemed to be seen in a passive manner and man is the ultimate force that decided everything. Coomaraswamy (1942: 65, 68) said, “the king, in other words, is directly responsible for the fertility of the land; the fall of rain in due season depends upon his righteousness or default.” Thus, “We can understand better now the traditional and world-view doctrine that the very life and fertility of the realm depend upon the

2 Winstedt (1961: 130) argued that the story of Hang Tuah being concealed by Bendahara originated from the story of Ramayana, in which it told the story of Laksamana being concealed by Hanoman until Rama came to his senses.
King, to whom accordingly it is said: "For our bread (ūrjē) art thou, for rain unto us art thou, for our paternity of offspring (prajānām... adhipatyāya; patti here as in ‘Prajapati’), ... for all this hæve we aspersed (abhyaśicāmahi) thee”. For unless the King fulfils his primary function as Patron of the Sacrifice (yajamāna) the circulation of the “Shower of Wealth (vāsor dhāra), the limitless, inexhaustible food of the God” that falls from the Sky as Rain and is returned from the Earth to the Sky in the smoke of the burnt-offering will be interrupted."

The concept of the king as all pervading and sole power in this universe comparable to the homocentric worldview of Arab Jahiliyyah in which according to Izutsu (2000: 77), "Man was the sole conceptual pole to which no other basic pole stood in fundamental opposition.” In Islamic perspective, the Malay king is not granted with the Divine power to do such thing as making sure the falling of the rain and to be in command of other natural phenomenal. In this, the Quranic concept of man which explained the principle of the opposition between man and God should be observed carefully. This principle is well described by **Diagram 1**.

![Diagram 1](image)

**Diagram 1**: The Concept of Man as the Servant of God as Understood From the Classical Malay Historical Texts. Adapted from Izutsu (2000: 77)

The oval circle with two principal points of reference upon it, opposed to each other, one from above, the other from below. In this circle, the position of Malay kings are equal to the other Malay people and they are basically al-īnsān or al-nās who stand opposite to God. According to Izutsu (2000: 77-78), there are at least four distinguished characters of the concept of man in Islamic perspective in relation to God. First, ontological relation: between God as the ultimate source of human existence and man as the representative of the world of being which owes its very existence to God. In more theological terms, the Creator-creature relation between God and man. Second, communicative relation: here, God and man are brought into close relation with each other – God, of course, taking the initiative through mutual communication and from God side, the Revelation or wahy and the signs (āyāt). While from human side, the du’a or prayer and other ritual and worship activities. Third, Lord-servant relation: God is the
Lord (Rabb) who has a majesty, sovereignty and absolute power, and man is His servant (‘abd) a whole set of concepts humbleness, modesty, absolute obedience, and other properties that demanded of a servant. Fourth, Ethical relation: In God there are the infinite goodness, mercy, forgiveness and benevolence on one hand, and on the other are the wrath, severe, strict and unrelenting justice. On human side, the basic contrast between thankfulness (shukr) on the one hand, and the God fearing attitude (taqwa), on the other. All these four characteristics of the relation between God and man are obviously lacking in the Hindu perspective since their concept of the Absolute Unity of God is hindered and ambiguous. In the meantime, there was another ontological conception of man contained in the classical Malay historical texts understood from the Sufi’s perspective.3 This ontological perspective was a progression from Izutsu’s explanation above. Through this perspective, man was seen as an image of God in this universe. He is like a bubble, the universe is the wave and God is the ocean. Fansuri said (quoted by Al-Attas, 1970:319), “God created Adam in the Image of the Merciful, for the Merciful is like the ocean and Adam a bubble (in its waves).” This understanding of the concept of man was in line with the title of zillu’llāhi fil ‘alam or “the shadow of Allah in this universe” carried by the Malay kings.4 Fansuri explained this concept of the shadow of Allah, “Although outwardly it exists it is nothing but Appearance and not reality; like the image (reflected) in the mirror, though possessing form, does not possess real being.”

Man in Islamic concept carried a potential of deficiencies, the potential that exhibited in his very own name “insān”, forgetfulness as mentioned by Al-Attas (1990:2-3) “But man is also “composed of forgetfulness (nisyān) – and he is called insān basically precisely because, having testified to himself the truth of the covenant he sealed with God, which entails obedience of His commands and prohibitions, he forgot (nasiya) to fulfill his duty and his purpose.” As a human being, a Sultān was also subjected to this deficiencies and there was a time when they fallen into the misdeeds. The classical Malay historical texts evidently described these aspects of the deficiencies of the Sultāns, the descriptions however not only took into account their misdeeds but also their repentance. Hikayat Raja Pasai narrated the story of Sultan Malikul Mahmud, who breached the wasiat of his grandfather by harming his brother Sultan Malikul Mansur and his Chief Minister. Realizing his misdeed and repented he said (Jones, 1999:32), “Wah terialu sekali ahmak budiku! Karna perempuan seorang, saudaraku kuturunkan dari atas kerajaannya dan menterinya pun kubumuh. Maka baginda pun menyessallah, lalu ia menangis - Alas, what a fool I have been, all because of a woman I drove my brother from his kingdom, and his chief minister I put to death. Conscience-stricken he burst into tears.” Sejarah Melayu recorded the misdeeds of Sultan Mahmud Syah who wrongfully put the Bendahara Seri Maharaja and his family members to death. Soon he realized his

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3 In this regard, A.H. Johns strongly believed that Sufism has left clear evidence in Malay Indonesian letters between the 13th and 18th century. Based on our surveys conducted on Sejarah Melayu, Hikayat Raja Pasai and Hikayat Merong Maharwansa, it was evidently proved that the cosmological and ontological ideas in these works are mostly Sufi’s in nature. See further A.H. Johns, “Sufism as A Category in Indonesian Literature and History,” Journal of Southeast Asian History, vol. 2, (1961): 13-17.

4 Merah Silu or Sultan Malikul Salleh, the first Muslim ruler of Pasai is claimed to be the first Malayan ruler to use this title. The title was then found to be used by other Malay rulers as recorded in hikayats including Hikayat Patani and Sejarah Melayu. See further A.C. Milner, “Islam and Malay Kingship,” in Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia, compiled by Ahmad Ibrahim (et.al), 27.
fault and said (Winstedt, 1938: 187), “Maka dilihat oleh Sultan Mahmud Shah saperti berita orang itu tiada sunggoh; maka baginda pun terlalu mashghul dan menyelal oleh membunoh Bendahara Seri Maharaja tiada dengan pereksa - He was prostrated with grief and repented bitterly that he had put Bendahara Sri Maharaja to death without due inquiry.” His grief and repentance was not only momentarily but proved through his action in which he abdicated himself from the throne and took up his abode at Kayu Ara (Winstedt, 1938: 189).

Man in his nature composed a quality of forgetful and because of that he is prone to fall into sinful and misdeed. On the other hand, man was also composed of the quality of repentance and therefore once realized his sinful he will sooner or later seek repentance and forgiveness from God. This idea of forgetfulness, sinfulness and repentance was also prevailed in the classical Malay historical texts as seen from the stories of Sultan Malikul Mahmud of Pasai and Sultan Mahmud of Malacca. However, the question arose regarding these stories, what is the conceptual understanding of man embedded in stories? Now and then, the act of repentance in Malay Islamic community is common among the sinful men regardless of their social and economic status. But what is the significance of the acts of repentance recorded in the classical Malay historical texts? This is among the most important aspects that need to be discussed thoroughly in order to get a proper understanding of the Islamic concept of man in Malay history. Understanding the Malay viewpoint on the origin of man, the purpose of his worldly life and his final destination is the most important thing that will guide us to understand the concept of man in Malay history. In this respect the essential concept that should be in the major attention here is the concept of *fitrah* or the spiritual nature of human being. Yasien Mohamed (1998: 6) wrote,

> "Within his spiritual nature lies the deep, universal moral intuition that human beings are creatures of God to be respected. A return to his soul or his spiritual nature will require of him to return to its sources of nourishment. He will then rediscover the origin of his moral intuitions which is his innate spiritual nature or *fitrah*. By so doing he will come to know his Creator, for "he who knows his self, knows his Lord."

Truly, the conceptual understanding of *fitrah* in Islamic perspective is related to the origin of man as a spiritual person who came from Allah and he will then return to Him. Syaikh ‘Abd al-Qādīr al-Jīfānī (1993: 14) said, “Then there is the spiritual being of man, or the spiritual man, who is called the pure man. His goal is total closeness to Allah. The only way to this end is the knowledge of truth (haqīqa).” One important aspect of a spiritual man is called soul or self (*nafs*) which governs his bodily form.5 It is through the improvement of *nafs* that the self of a man could be transformed into “the Self”. The term “Self” Corbin (1969: 95) explained,

> "...as we shall employ it here, implies neither the one nor the other acceptance. It refers neither to the impersonal Self, to the pure act

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5 There is however various terms referred to the spiritual substance of man. When it is involved in intellecction and apprehension it is called "intellect or *aql*”; when it is engaged in receiving intuitive illumination it is called “heart or *qalb*”, when it reverts to its own world of abstract entities it is called “spirit or *rub*” and finally when it governs the body it is called “soul or self or *nafs*”. See further Syed Muhammad Naqib al-Attas, *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1993), 4.
of existing attainable through efforts comparable to the techniques of yoga, nor to the Self of the psychologists. The word will be employed here solely in the sense given it by Ibn 'Arabi and numerous other Sufi theosophists when they repeated the famous sentence: He who knows himself knows his Lord. Knowing one's self, to know one's God; knowing one's Lord, to know one's self.’”

In order to transform one self into “the Self” the nafs should have to go through certain stages of spiritual journey. The nafs of a forgetful man is called al-nafs al-ammārah (the soul which inspires evil). One who controlled and improved his self through certain spiritual exercises will be able to transform his al-nafs al-ammārah into nafs al-lawwāmah (the blaming soul) gaining greater awareness of its own nature (fitrah). Further on he could also be able to improve his nafs into nafs al-mutmainnah (the soul at peace) and finally into the highest transmutation of nafs called nafs al-rādiyah (the satisfied soul) (Nasr, 1993: 18-19). The spiritual exercises practised by a man involve the purification of his heart or al-Qalb the place where the intuitive illumination was received in order to guide his soul or nafs moving upward from al-nafs al-ammārah to the nafs al-rādiyah (Lings, 1975: 45-62). The most important practice of purification is tawbah or repentance as Syaikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (1993: 31) said, “Certain levels and stages in man’s spiritual evolution have been mentioned: let it be known that each of these levels is obtained primarily through repentance...True and total repentance is the first step.” Finally we come to the conclusion regarding the concept of man in Malay history understood from the story of the forgetful, the sinful and the repented man. Sultan Malikul Salih of Pasai, Sultan Mahmud of Malacca and Raja Phra Ong Mahawangs or Sultan Muzalfal Syah of Kedah are among the Malay man who experienced this cycle of life from fitrah to the world of form and then back to the fitrah, from the Self to self and then to the Self again. Rather than physical and bodily men, they were in fact the spiritual men. Thus, the concept of man in Malay history went further beyond any other concept of man in modern history. Whereas the modern concept of man in history viewed man only from the bodily perspective and neglecting the spiritual perspective, the Malay concept of man in history viewed man more from the spiritual perspective.

Izutsu’s Contribution Towards Understanding the Malay Islamic Concept of Universe

Thorough observation on the ideas concerning the concept of the universe or cosmos embodied in these classical texts of Malay history revealed that the authors were obviously attempted to expose two distinctive Malay concepts of cosmos. First is the pre-Islamic concept based mainly on Indian (Hinduism-Buddhism) thought and second is the Islamic concept based on the teaching of Islam. The distinction between pre-Islamic and Islamic concepts was clearly seen through two notions. One is the idea of the symbolism of the center, connected to the concept of the sacred place in which each sacred place was associated with sacred person and event and was also considered as the center of the world. Another is seen from the semantic perspective from which the concept of cosmos, both seen and unseen was understood. This later perspective would not be clearly understood if not because of using Izutsu’s model. Our next discussion would certainly proves this contention.
The coming of Islam to the Malay world and the mass conversion of the Malays as mentioned in the selected texts had brought the authors of the classical Malay historical texts to see the world from a clearer perspective since Islamic conversion is not a simplistic phenomena, it is great historical event. James (1936: 224) remarks on the event of conversion, "Conversion is not the putting in a patch of holiness; but with the true convert holiness is woven into all his powers, principles, and practice." Islamic conversion had therefore brought the Malays to perceive and understand clearly the concept of 'ālam ghayb and 'ālam syahādah, the unseen and the visible world according to the true Islamic perspective. Further discussion on the concept of universe and its relation to God, the Supreme Being as frequently discussed in metaphysical and ontological disciplines would certainly broaden our angle of thought regarding these concepts of universe in Islamic perspective (Al-Attas, 1995: 217-25 and Corbin, 1969: 207-227). This concept is following the very concept of man and his relation with Allah. In Islamic perspective, the concept of universe or world is based on the Quranic point of view. The Qur'an divided the present world in which man lives into two halves: "the Domain of the Unseen" ('ālam ghayb) and "the Domain of the Visible" ('ālam syahādah) as can be seen in Diagram 2 (Izutsu, 2000: 83).

![Diagram 2: The Concept of Universe; Our Present World as Understood from the Classical Malay Historical Texts. Adapted from Izutsu (2000: 83)](image)

Next to this understanding of the present world or al-dunyā, Qur'an also maintained that another world is to come, the world of hereafter or al-ākhirah. In al-ākhirah, there are two atmospheres, al-jannah (heaven) and al-jahannam (hell) (see further Diagrams 3 and 4). Al-jannah (heaven) and al-jahannam (hell) are the final destinations of a man. After his death, man will be brought to 'ālamul-baqā' or the immortal realm, the realm which begins with the Day of Judgement (yaum al-hisāb), the Day of Resurrection (yaum al-bu'th) and the similar ones. This realm was expressed through the concept of eschatology. The link between this realm to the al-dunyā and al-
ākhirah can be seen in the Diagram 5. Diagram 6 furthermore described the concept of universe or 'alam according to Islamic perspective. In this concept of universe, the concept of man, his life and destiny gathered together to form a comprehensive concept of the relationship between man and God.

**DIAGRAM 3:** The concept of universe; the relationship between the present world or *al-dunyā* and the world of hereafter or *al-ākhirah* as understood from the classical Malay historical texts. Adapted from Izutsu (2000: 89)

**DIAGRAM 4:** The concept of universe; the world of hereafter or *al-ākhirah* as understood from the classical Malay historical texts. Adapted from Izutsu (2000:89)
**Diagram 5**: The concept of universe; the concept of Judgement Day (Eschatology) in relation with the present world *al-dunya* and the world of hereafter or *al-akhirah* as understood from the classical Malay historical texts. Adapted from Izutsu (2000: 91)

**Diagram 6**: The concept of universe; its relationship with the concept of man and God in the whole as seen from the classical Malay historical texts. Adapted from Izutsu (2000: 96)
The above aspects of the concept of universe are exhibited by the authors of the classical Malay historical texts in their writings. The description of the death of a sultan is a clear indication how the author of Sejarah Melayu expressed his Islamic concept of the universe. Describing the death of the first Malaccan king who converted to Islam the text mentioned (Brown, 1952: 61 and Winstedt, 1938: 90), “Setelah genap-lah limapuluh tuoh tahun umor baginda di-atas kerajaan, datanglah peridaran dunia, maka Sultan Muhammad Shah pun berpindah-lah dari negeri yang fana ka-negeri yang baqa: qalū innāl-lāhī wa innā ilayhi rājī ‘ūn” (Lit: “...and after that, when Sultan Muhammad Shah had reigned for fifty-seven years, then in the process of time he left this perishable world to go to one that abideth: as it is written To God we belong and to Him we return”). This expression is clearly representing the Islamic concept of universe understood by the author. The description of the death of other Muslim kings including the earlier figures who converted into the Abrahamic religion of Islam such as Raja Kida Hindi and his grandchild Raja Aristun Shah also indicated a clear Islamic concept of universe according to the author The death of Sultan Abu Shahid as mentioned in Sejarah Melayu (Winstedt, 1938: 46 and 92), “Maka baginda pun mati shahidlah...” was classified as a martyrdom (mati shahid), an Islamic concept of death connected to the aspect of shari‘ah or Islamic Law in which it granted a person straight path to the Heaven. The idea of “mati shahid” could also be understood from the perspective of Islamic Sufism in which it meant “the perishable of the physical world or ‘ālam syahidah.” In this context, it meant that the physical world of Sultan Abu Shahid was perish and he then migrated to the imperishable world or ‘ālam ghayb. In reality, he was not considered as dead, instead spiritually alive. The Qur’an (Surah Ali Imran, 3: 16) described the fate of a shahid or a martyr (meaning), “Think not of those who are slain in Allah's Way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the Presence of their Lord.” Obviously, this is a clear understanding of the author of Sejarah Melayu upon the concept of ‘ālam ghayb and ‘ālam syahidah. More obvious is the narration of

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6 In Islamic perspective this worldly life will finally perish or annihilate (fana‘) and man who departed from it will at last inhabit the realm of subsistence (baga‘) in God. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Sufi Essays, 49-50, The Need for a Sacred Science, 19. For further elaboration on the concept of fana‘ and bāga‘ from the perspective of Islamic Sufism see Henry Corbin, Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi, 202-203, Martin Lings, What is Sufism?, 87-88, A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century, (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 122 and S.H. Nasr, Three Muslim Sages, (New York: Caravan Books, 1964), 114-116. Although the theory and doctrine of fana‘ as understood by Islamic Sufism was often claimed to be a form of nirvāṇa in Buddhism. This claim however is inaccurate since there are fundamental differences between fana‘ and nirvana as Saeed Sheikh remarks, “The Buddhist moralises himself; the Sufi becomes moral only through knowing and loving God. Further, it would be wrong to identify fana‘ with nirvāṇa; both terms imply the passing away of identity, but while nirvāṇa is purely negative, fana‘ is to be accomplished by bāga‘, i.e. everlasting life with God.” See M. Saeed Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, (London: The Octagon Press, 1982), 25-26.

7 The idea of “shahadah” as connected to the concept of universe was discussed brilliantly by Frithjof Schuon in his Understanding Islam. For instance he says, “Realizing the first shahadah means first of all becoming fully conscious that the Principle alone is real and that the world, though on its own level it “exists,” “is not”, in one sense it therefore means realizing the universal void.” See further Frithjof Schuon, Understanding Islam, 5-6.

8 It was obvious that the Qur’an does not even testify that the shahid or a martyr is spiritually dead, instead he is spiritually alive finding his sustenance in the Presence of Allah.
the deathbed injunction of the Bendahara Paduka Raja when he said to his children and grandchildren (Winstedt, 1938: 144),

"Think not, my children, to truck your religion for (the attractions of) this world: for this world will not endure, and for those that live there is but one end and that is death... These are my last injunctions. Forget them not, that you may obtain the glory of this world and the world to come."

The death of Islamic figures in Hikayat Raja Pasai such as Sultan Malikul Tahir and Malikul Mansur was expressed in the phrase “kembali ke rahmatullah” (Lit.; “return to the Gracious of Allah). Another phrase “pulang dari negeri yang fana’ ke negeri yang baqa’,” or (Lit.; “return from the perishable world to the imperishable world”) was used on the death of Sultan Malikiul Saleh and Sultan Malikuul Mahmud (Winstedt, 1938: 23-33). These two phrases were also used in Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa to express the death of Sultan Muzalfal Shah, the first Kedah ruler to embrace Islam (Siti Hawa, 1998: 114), “…maka Sultan Muzalfal Shah itu pun datanglah saktinya, langsung sampai hukum Allah taala, kembali ke rahmatullah taala dari negeri yang fana ke negeri yang baqa, qalû innâ İslîl-lâhi wa inan inâ ilayhi râji ‘un.” (Lit.; “…and Sultan Muzalfal Shah felt sick, and the Allah’s Will has come, he returned to the Gracious of Allah, left this perishable world to go to one that abideth, as it is written ‘To Allah we belong and to Him we return’”). These expressions of the death of Muslim figures obviously showed a clear concept of universe as understood by the authors of Hikayat Raja Pasai, Sejarah Melayu and Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa. Since these expressions are distinguished from the expression on the death of pre-Islamic figures, the distinction between Islamic and pre-Islamic concepts of universe as understood by the authors of the classical Malay historical texts was very obvious.

Concluding Comments
Based on the above discussion, we have reached the conclusion that a Malay man is a religious man whose personal and social lives represented by the close relationship between him and God and the duties to all humankind and the universe. Obviously, the Malays began to develop their own perspectives on the concept of man and universe based on religious understanding since the arrival of Hinduism and Buddhism to the Malay world. The understanding about the reality of man and universe was then transformed accordingly. The influence of Hinduism and Buddhism however has its limitation. The exclusiveness of the Indian religious thoughts had brought some people to see the nature of man and universe from the perspective of certain exceptional people and pre-Islamic in nature (Al-Attas, 1969: 16 and Coomaraswamy, 1985: 198). The islamization however has perfected and broadened the framework of the concept of man and universe in the Malay history. The concept of man for instance, was no more based on the concept of the Malay kingship, rather it was based on the concept of the duties and responsibilities. Based on this concept all men are equally responsible for the betterment of this worldly life and his fate in the next life. In another instance, the concept of universe which is developed from an Indian religious perspective was transformed into a comprehensive Islamic perspective. Basically, it was not very easy to come to such of the above conclusion unless we have a proper model to be studied as a point of reference. Model developed by Izutsu in his book God and Man in the Qur’an had ultimately served the discussion in this paper and provided not only the solution for a better understanding
on the concept of man and universe in the Malay Islamic tradition but also a clearer picture from which further studies could be conducted in the future.

References


