CHAPTER THREE

Malay Religion and Family

The southern part of the Southeast Asian Archipelago, extending from Sumatra to the Philippine Islands, is home to one of the most populated group of Muslims in the world. The history of Islam in this region is new compared to the rest of the Islamic world.

The aim of this chapter is to focus on the contemporary history of Islam and the traditional beliefs of Malay society and its relation to the structure and values of Malay family. For this purpose, the chapter examines the traditional structure of Malay society, factors of changes in its recent history, the structure of new society, and Islamic movements in Malaysia. The chapter concludes with a look at the traditional structure of Malay family, its values, and beliefs.

3.1 Islam Versus Old Tradition

When the process of Islamisation began in the region, in the thirteenth century[1], there was a combination of religious practices and beliefs based on Hinduism and animism. By the second

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[1] The contact between Arabs and Persians traders with the people of Southeast Asia goes back as far as early centuries AD which had settlements in some of the southern ports of China prior to the rise of Islam (Majul, 1973:37; Sandhu, 1973:15-40). Toward the end of the ninth century, a few Muslim settlements began to appear in the region. The Muslim merchants and sailors had begun to dominate South East Asian trade, a monopoly that was never challenged until the arrival of the Portuguese in the closing years of the fifteenth century (Majul, 1964:342).

half of the thirteenth century, Islam had obviously begun to gain political power. Islam was introduced through conversion in the peninsula, when the first ruler of Malacca was supposed to have married a Muslim Pasai princess in 1414 (Moorhead, I, 1959:123). Islam was expanded in the region in a peaceful trend and had no intention to abolish the old way of life and in many cases a compromise was achieved with existing customs (Ryan, 1971:43). However, the impact of Islamic ideology had been felt in the royal courts as well as in the villages (Mohammad Taib, 1988:272).

The foundation of Malacca was closely connected with the Islamisation of Malaya[2] . The expansion of Malacca was made by Muslim traders. The rise of Malacca caused dramatic acceleration in the Islamisation of the Malay Peninsula and beyond it, as far as the Philippine Islands. Since Malacca inherited the customs and beliefs of *Srivijaya* and *Majapahit* kingdoms, Islamisation was accompanied by cultural influences of the Malacca Sultanate[3] . In Endicott's (1970:4) words: "Many of the religious influences on the Malay states have been filtered through a single place, namely Malacca."

3.2 Islamic Practice in the Early Period

The teaching of Islam, unlike Hinduism and Buddhism, conflicted with animism which was practised by most of the

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[2]The founder of this kingdom, named Parameshwara (or Parameswara) who was of Palembang origin, developed Malacca from a small fishing village of the fourteenth century into a great cosmopolitan trading centre at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

[3]Prior to the rise of Malacca, the historical evidence such as stones found in Phan-rang, Patane, Terengganu and Pahang convinced some scholars to assume that a process of Islamisation had already commenced in the Malayan eastern coast as early as the thirteenth century if not before, that appeared contemporaneously with or even before the process which started from the northern part of Sumatra (Majul, 1973:43; Fatemi, 1963:66-67).

population[4] . The egalitarian status of all men before God endowed the religion with democratic qualities that made it particularly attractive to the masses (Williams, 1976:46). According to Turnbull (1989:19), the relation between man and God is different, Islam stressed self-reliance rather than propitiation of spirits by rituals and ceremonies that were designed to preserve human beings through the crises of birth, puberty, marriage and death[5] .

The peaceful process of Islamisation and the survival of animism and Hindu ceremonial practice suggest that the early efforts by Muslims to convert natives were not stern and strict and were tolerant of old traditions. The ruler, like before, continued to hold the symbols of power of the India god-kings (Williams, 1976:46). Common people, after conversion, continued to practice many pre-Islamic customary laws (*adat*). Yiag-Yai Sheng Lan, a Chinese historian who visited Malacca in its early history, noted that "The King and the people are Mohamedans and they carefully observe the tenets of this religion". (Groeneveldt, 1964:123)[6] .

About one hundred years later, before Malacca fell under the Portuguese, another Chinese historian, Hai-yu visited Malacca and described the inhabitants' religious practice as follows:

> "It is not their custom to worship spirits, but the men get up when the cock crows, and turning their face towards Heaven [Mecca], they mutter the name Allah, which is the

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[4] Islamic conception of cosmos, allegiance to one God, as well as being an individualistic and rational religion was different from the concept of a multitude of spirits and gods of the people (Williams, 1976:46).

[5] In addition Wilkinson (1906:9) sees Islam as a great quasi-political force, a militant brotherhood, a definite type of civilisation with which inferior races delight to associate themselves.

[6] According to the same source, however, it seemed that there were at least some people who did not observe the prohibition of alcoholic beverage, for they used to make wine from a kind of tropical fruit (Groeneveldt, 1964:125).

general denomination of the father and the mother of the universe" (Groeneveldt, 1964:126).

Hai-yu indicates that people did not eat pork, they were true to their word and in business they did not make any written contract "but they bound themselves by pointing towards Heaven, and this engagement they dared not break". However, robbery was common among poor people (Groeneveldt, 1964: 127).

Hai-yu and other Chinese historians who visited Malacca and other parts of southern Peninsula in the early sixteenth century, pointed out that burning of the dead was still common (Groeneveldt, 1964:120-137). In the early fifteenth century this pre-Islamic practice still dominated in Pahang. Hsing-ch Sheng Lan said these people made human images of fragrant wood and sacrificed people to ward off evil and for luck. They made wine by fermenting rice gruel. Generally, the Chinese historian noted people were very superstitious towards demons and spirits.

Looking at the strong influence of pre-Islamic practices in the everyday life of people, it is hard to say whether Islamic belief and practices gained deep influence among Malay Muslims in the peninsula during the fifteen century.

3.3 Traditional Malay Society

Since the Islamisation of the peninsula until the turn of the present century, Malay society had been always a guardian of the traditional lifestyle and this remains unchanged. The main characteristics of Malay social life is reflected in the *kampung*. It has always been the place of the typical social unit, commanding their prime loyalty (Moorhead, II, 1963,:218). Prior to

the colonial intervention, kampungs used to have a traditional socio-political structure and physical feature of appearance[7] .

There were many different kinds of Malay village communities, ranging between less than five houses to fifty houses[8] . The majority of the Malay population lived in the smaller villages, which were essentially agricultural communities (Gullick, 1989:98).

In pre-colonised Malay society, each State was generally composed of a ruling and a subject class (*rakyat*). The ruling class included a royal line of succession and a lesser nobility of diverse ranks and titles[9] . Among the subject class there was also a relatively small element of debt-bondsmen and slaves of foreign origin (Yegar, 1979:55). There was a strict social distance between the two main groups. For a commoner, it was extremely difficult to attain noble rank. However, for marriages, a noble man was permitted to marry beneath his social status, but a woman of nobility was not. The ruler, called *sultan*[10] , was supposed to have supernatural powers of divinity which gave him, theoretically, absolute authority (*daulat*) in civil, military and

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[7] The word '*kampung*', according to Winstedt, has come to bear two meanings": a collection of houses or a single house and enclosure (1925:1). Each *kampung* was ruled by a headman (*penghulu*) who was chosen by his fellow villagers because of his wisdom, ability, courage and above all, because "he was the best guardian of the ancient ways and customs of the people". It was his responsibility to keep law and order in his village" (Moorhead, I, 1959:25; Gullick, 1989:76-77).

[8] There was a significant difference in socio-economic structure between a large settlement, or the three or four large villages along a certain river, and outlying, smaller villages. In the larger villages, there was likely to be the household of a chief, his armed followers and domestic staff, besides traders, shopkeepers and artisans.

[9] Khoo (1972:15) argues that it is too much of an over simplification to look upon the typical Malay society as being composed of two main divisions, for within the ruling class itself, an elaborate system of gradation existed. Thus, according to Khoo, there was a horizontal distinction made between the highest chief and *kampung*'s headman.

[10] Before the coming of Islam, the ruler was called *raja* or *yang di pertuan*. Then, in Islamic period, the title of '*Sultan*' was added.

religious affairs[11]. The Sultan's subjects had to serve with complete, unquestioning loyalty (Muzaffar, 1979:6). The *sultan* was considered to be sacrosanct, shadow of God upon earth, the symbol of Muslim unity and in some sultanates, as caliph to deliver *Khutbah* (sermon) during Friday prayers. Therefore, in spite of the fact that the rulers were Muslims, the old idea of divinity surrounded by rituals and ceremonies of Hindu origin was retained and perpetuated in various ways[12] (Muzaffar, 1979: 29; Yegar, 1979:56).

The structure of the ruling class of the Malacca sultanate was generally followed by other states, but each state maintained its own adaptation (Yegar, 1979:58). In the political order of the Malacca sultanate, there were four highest chiefs known as the *orang besar empat* or *orang empat di-balai*, one of them secretary of state (*mentri*). The second rank to the *mentri* was held by eight chiefs and among this body of eight was the *imam paduka tuan*, a religious dignitary who had more significant power.

3.4 Factors of Change on Malay Socio-religious Institutions

Although Islam became the religion of the Malays since its expansion over the Malay Peninsula from the fifteenth century, by the late nineteenth century the traces of animism, Hindu and Buddhist elements significantly still survived among the Malays. The British intervention in the Malay states of the peninsula in the last quarter of the nineteenth century may be regarded as an important turning point in Malay social, political and religious

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[11] The sultan was assisted by a hierarchy of advisers and official members of royal line and territorial chiefs of the district.

[12] Religion and magic were prevalent in traditional politics. The Sultan and his royal regalia were sacred and inviolable. His representation in official places enjoyed the authority that flowered from their association with him (Yegar, 1979:57).

arenas. The most important aspect of British colonialism reflected on the authority of the Sultans and state administration. Although colonial government in may ways undermine the feudal structure, outside the area of conflict, there was an area of mutual co-operation and a balancing of interests between the traditional elite and colonial capitalism (Shaharuddin, 1988:150). The policy of the British towards the religion and customs of the Malays resulted in changes in religious institutions. As a consequence of British policy and other internal and external factors, a group of reformists emerged in Malay society.

3.4.1 British Policy towards Islam

The British colonial policy, at least in the early approach to attain dominant support, was careful in matters regarding Malay religion and customs[13]. During the process of British colonial power over the Malay states, there was but minor isolated religious resistance. This was because the British colonial power first made it clear that they were not interested in interfering with Malay religion and customs. It was the obligation of the British which was cited in the Pangkor Engagement. Later, it became clear that the understanding of religion for the British was different from that of the Malays who believed that all affairs should rely upon Islam and *adat* (customary law)[14].

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[13] This policy was different from that of another colonist, the Spaniards, who in the southern Philippine Islands, were also engaging with Muslims. The Spaniards carried out political, and economic aims along with religious aim (Gomez, 1977:4). They faced strong resistance in Islands where there were already well-established Muslim communities. The main cause of resistance for Muslims of the Philippine Islands was the fact that their religion was confronted with a serious threat.

[14] This dual understanding resulted in tension which was mounted in Perak. The Sultan of Perak, Sultan Abdullah and the majority of the chiefs were determined to resist British control. After the assassination of a British Resident, the British Government took over the situation, the Sultan and some of the chief were exiled, and others hanged.

With the creation of the Federal Council of Rulers, all matters including religion were drafted by British personnel, and passages in the Council were little more than a formality (Yegar, 1979:40-41; Hussin Mutalib, 1990:14). Thus although the Malay Sultans were members of the Federal Council, but since they could not speak English, the language in which the meetings were conducted, they could not express their views (Moorhead, II, 1963:182). The matters which were discussed in these meetings were "questions connected with the Mohammedan Religion, Mosques, political pensions, native chiefs and *penghulus*, and any other questions which in the High Commissioner's view affect the rights and prerogatives of any rulers or which for some other reason he considers should properly be dealt with only by the state council" (Yegar, 1979:43).

The establishment of a legislative body and British bureaucratic administration led to many changes in Malay society. Three important issues were related to the Malay culture and Islam (Hussin Mutalib, 1990:15-16): the first is related to the introduction of a plural society into Malaya and the lack of integration efforts to bring the different ethnic communities together, the second issue is the treatment of Malay and Islamic education, and the third issue was the administration of Islamic law[15] . The British rule did, in some way, assist the development of Islam and the Malays. Such assistance was in the collection of *zakat* and *wakaf*, the Islamic court system, pilgrimage procedures, and above all the *Majlis Agama*.

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[15] This is a policy that British schools and secularist policies, in general, not only contributed to the relative passivity of the Islamic factor in the life of Malays, but also added a new unsettling dimension to Malay education in the country and created a cultural schism among the Malays.

Despite their official policy of not interfering with Malay religion and customs, the British colonial government were directly and indirectly involved in such matters during the colonial period. In fact, through Council and other measures, the unquestioning loyalty to the Sultans benefited primarily the British while the Malay masses remained poor and neglected (Muzaffar, 1979:114). The main problems facing the administration of the British government dealing with Malay beliefs were basic religious practice, Islamic values, Islamic customs, religious movement and missionary activities.

3.4.2. The Reformists

The closing years of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century marked a significant intellectual change in Malaya, a transformation which continued throughout the British colonial period. A stratum of Malay elite, who were literate, were acquainted with the Qur'an, to some extent the Shari'a and modern education. They had a feeling of responsibility towards their society and for those changes which were occurring around them. They were later known as reformists.

The reformists were not only influenced by Western advancements, but also by leading Middle Eastern Islamic reformist figures such as Jamaluddin Al-Afghani[16], Muhammad Abduh (d.1905), and Rashid Ridhu (d.1935). The message of these reformists reached Malaya mainly through Indo-Malaysian students in Cairo. In Malaya, the leadership of the Arab community and the *Jawi*

[16] Sayyid Jamaluddin (Jamalad-Din) Al-Afghani, 1838/9-1897, although he called himself Al-Afghani, was born in Asadabad near the old city of Hamadan in the west part of Iran. Until the age of ten, he was in Asadabad, then he went to Ghazvin and Tehran to take Islamic theology in the Shi'ite School of Thought. He furthered his studies in the Holy City of Najaf in Iraq, then under the Othmanid ruling (see Keddic, 1968: Chapter one).

Peranakan carried out significant changes (Roff, 1967:54). The Malaya reformists used the *madrasah* schools, journals, newspapers and other literature publications as their medium of communication. The most notable of these contributions came from *Al-Imam* (the Leader), a monthly publication founded by a primer reformist in Malaya, Sheikh Mohammad Salim Al-Kalah. It was published in the Malay language in Singapore[17] .

Al-Imam asserted the importance of education and modernisation for the Malays and the need for them to get rid of un-Islamic practices in their daily lives[18] . For this purpose *Al-Imam* called for a return to the true principles of Islam based on the Qur'an and Sunnah as the only solution to Malay backwardness (Hussin Mutalib, 1990:20). The editorial board of *Al-Imam* was regarded as radical both in intellectual stature and intensity of purpose[19] . This was the beginning of a golden era of Malay journalism which was from 1906 to 1930s (Roff, 1967:60; Hussin Mutalib, 1990:21). By the turn of the century, the reformists' attempt to encourage the religious schools to be more ambitious and elaborate had hitherto existed[20] , and so had the formulation

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[17] Its first appearance was in July 1906 (it published thirty one issues). The aims of this periodical, as expressed in its introductory editorial, were "to remind those who are forgetful, arouse those who sleep, guide those who stray, and give a voice to those who speak with wisdom...(Roff, 1970:56).

[18] *Al-Imam*'s main concerns were the backwardness of the Malays, their domination by alien races, their laziness, their complacency, their bickering among themselves, and their inability to co-operate for the common good (Roff, 1967:57).

[19] They included Shaykh Mohd Tahir b. Jalaluddin Al-Azhari, Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi, Haji Abbas b. Mohd Taha, Shaykh Mohd Salim Al-Kalai, as the most notable reformists in Malaya.

[20] For this purpose, *Al-Imam* itself assisted in the establishment of the *Madrasah* al-Ikbal al-Islamiyyah in Singapore in 1908, which borrowed much of its ideas and principles of education from Egypt and the west. This school became the forerunner of many others organised on similar lines throughout the peninsula during the next few years.

of a system of education of a purified Islam and modern secular knowledge (Roff, 1967:66-67).

***Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua*:** The reformists in general and the teachers who introduced new knowledge to the *madrasah* in particular were known as *Kaum muda* (the young generation) in the 1920's and 1930's (Khoo, 1991:204; Nagata, 1984:xix). This group was in conflict with other groups in the Malay society - the official religious hierarchy, the traditional Malay elite, and the rural ulama, collectively known as *Kaum Tua* or the old generation (Roff, 1967:67).

The Muslim community in Singapore comprising Arabs, Indians, and Malays, were pioneers of many changes in the peninsula. Newspapers and journals of the 1920's and 1930's reflected their ideas and activities[21] . In an article titled 'Adoption of Western Customs,' The Malaya Tribune (28, December, 1928) discussed the past events of Turkey's Westernisation which had a profound impact on the Islamic World's decision as to whether or not Muslims should adopt Westernisation[22] .

One of the major attacks of *Kaum muda* was against certain Malay customs and practices[23] which were foreign in origin and

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[21] For example, The Straits Times on December 2, 1925, reported a performance which was given by a group of actors in aid of the Muslim Student's Aid Fund. Many Muslims, according to the newspapers, who otherwise would have kept away, on religious scruples, and from theatrical performances, were present to help towards the cause.

[22] The Malaya Tribune quoted from Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah's article in *Islamic Review* (December, 1928) entitled "Has Turkey Divorced Islam?" The article blamed the ulamas and considered the events in Turkey "a reaction against that unspeakable intrigue of the 'ulamas' that would have deprived Turkey even of the merest semblance of national existence if it were allowed to remain in the land."

[23] The Malaya Tribune (8, March, 1928) pointed out a few of them: The '*Ronggeng*' performance which was held at many Muslim and non-Muslim social gatherings as part of the entertainment had been copied from the Portuguese, the custom of '*belanja*' a payment of certain sum of money by a man who desired to marry, funerals also included a lot of obligations on the family of the deceased...

un-Islamic; and, were practised at marriages, funerals and other social functions. In fact, the root of the conflict between *Kaum muda* and *Kaum Tua* was the reformists' contention that man must use his reason (*akal*) to determine the truth about religion just like about everything else and abjure blind acceptance of intermediary authority (Roff, 1967:77).

The *Kaum Muda*'s attempts to reform ranged from economic, cultural to religious aspects. According to Roff (1967:78), they "fought a long-drawn-out battle for the acceptance of savings bank and co-operative society interest as non-usurious". They also advocated greater freedom for women to receive education and participation in social affairs.

As a result of the reformists' attempts, ethnic and Islamic awareness, in more broad and institutionalised terms, appeared among *Kaum Muda*[24]. They included: first, Muslim political parties[25] and other associations and clubs which were dealing more with education, and second, welfare in society[26].

Between 1934 and 1941, according to Roff (1967:211), three attempts were made by the Malays to create large-scale pan-Malayan organisations capable of equipping the Malays as a whole, to operate their own affairs in the modern world. Each of the organisations was associated with one or another, 'contending' new elite groups: the 'Arabic' educated religious reformists, the

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[24]Roff (1967:79) noted "*Kaum Muda's* criticisms of *adat*, though confined to what were thought to be its ill effects upon the practice of Islam, and their insistence upon the equality of all men before God (and upon more individualistic ethic), could be seen to have implications subversive of the existing social and political as well as religious order".

[25]Such as *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* (Singapore Malay Association) and Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Malay Youths Association).

[26]Such as the United Islamic Association in Singapore, the Penang Malay Association, and *Kesatuan Melayu* (Malay Union) in Singapore.

largely Malay educated radical intelligentsia and the English-educated administrators recruited mainly from the traditional ruling class. Out of these, as Roff concludes, only the last was in the process of gaining a true mass following.

3.5 A New Nation: Malaysia

After World War Two, in many colonised countries, including Malaysia, there was a widespread growth of nationalism and anti-colonialism. The Japanese occupation during the war resulted in drastic social and political changes[27] in many aspects of Malay beliefs and perceptions. The myth of the white (British) superiority or military was destroyed overnight.

The growth of nationalism and leftist groups in Malaya led to British government attempts to bring in a new form of civilian rule that triggered off anti-colonial feelings[28] . In addition, the British intended to allow non-Malays to become citizens of the Malayan Union on easy terms[29] .

In February 1948, the Malayan Union was replaced by the Federation of Malaya with a centralised administration. The reflection of events resulting in the Chinese Revolution in 1949, and Indian nationalism had spread to the Chinese and Indians in Malaya. Although many Malayan Chinese did not agree with the

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[27]The Japanese propaganda for a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere gave important official posts to members of the non-traditional Malay elite. Because of the Japanese's contradictory behaviour, the Malays underwent a series of shocking experiences which had a profound impact on their world view and self-perception (Haji Abdullah, 1981:131-132).

[28]The Malayan Union was drafted by the British, under which each state was to lose its identity and each sultan was to surrender his sovereignty to the English crown(Ross-Larson, 1977:4-5). The Malayan Union which was instituted in April 1946, lasted less than two years because of a remarkable popular outburst of political dissatisfaction.

[29]By this time, there was no citizenship law on a pan-Malayan basis. But a Malay who was born in any of nine Malay states would become the subject of the ruler of that state (Zainal, 1990:11).

tenets of communism and felt cut off from their homeland, these events caused suspicion in the minds of Malays about the loyalty of non-Malays, especially Chinese in Malaya[30] (Ross-Larson, 1977:6). The formation of an alliance in 1952 between the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) was a significant improvement between the relationship of the Malays and the Chinese and signified a concerted effort towards the independence of Malaya. Later in 1955, an Indian political group, the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) joined the alliance. Questions regarding citizenship of non-Malays, the special rights of Malays, and national language and religion drew debate, though not strongly, by this time[31] .

The declaration of Independence (*Merdeka*) on 31st August 1957 was a satisfactory solution for all parties who were involved. The Chinese and Indians were granted citizenship; the Malays gained special rights over other races and Britain was still the closest ally of the new independent Malaya.

3.5.1. Plural Society

Since independence, Malaysia has been known as a polyethnic society which pervades in all spheres of life. All Malaysians, as Nagata (1974:333) distinguishes, are, first and foremost, members of one of the three major groups: Malays, Chinese, or Indian, and are only secondarily "Malaysian". In spite of the

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[30]The fact that most members of the communist party in communist insurgency during early birth of Federation were Chinese.

[31]The nationalistic feelings of the Malays for their ethnic affiliation, according to Lee (1990b:486) was not limited to the Malays only, but the Chinese and the Indians as well. There was no common ground between Malay and Chinese nationalism because the latter was not a nationalism of local interests but of foreign concerns. The MCA which was founded in 1949 was a Kuomintang supporters of China. Similarly, Indian nationalism in the Peninsula was linked to political activities in the Indian subcontinent (especially Indian National Congress, and Dravidian nationalism of South India), they formed MIC. Thus, Chinese and Indian nationalism were not convergent with the goals of Malay nationalism.

government's constant efforts to create a unified national identity, Nagata's notion still is relevant. Official records and census, and most political activities are carried out according to ethnic lines[32].

The Chinese and the Malays are in different categories. The Chinese are predominantly urban controllers of the Malaysian economy while the Malays control the political system of the government. There is a social distance between them. They do not know each other's values, despite living side by side for so long. They tend to have misconceptions, taking the form of stereotypes of one another (Husin Ali, 1981:119-120; Nagata, 1974:335, 347).

Husin Ali (1981:122) believes that "the Malay peasants not only see themselves as being poor, but when comparing their sad condition with others, they see that the rich, especially those around them in the towns, are mostly Chinese". Although certain articles in the constitution provide special privileges for Malays, the post-Merdeka period proved that no structural transformation was envisaged[33] (Muzaffar, 1979:92).

3.5.2. Ethnic Nationalism in Malaysia

Ethnic nationalism and ethnic competition in Malaysia are related to the previous discussion on "plural society". The relation between Malay ethnic nationalism and religious awareness is also somehow related to the nature of a pluralised society of Malaysia. Ethnic nationalism on the Malay Peninsula, Lee (1990b:482) identifies, is essentially a twentieth century

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[32] In Malaysia, the term 'race' often is used for 'ethnic group' to refer more to socio-cultural than physical characteristics (Nagata, 1974:347).

[33] In a society with a competitive market economy, Malays lacked capital while government's policy encouraged the growth of an economy based upon capital (Muzaffar, 1979:92).

phenomenon, resulting partly from the policies of British colonialism and partly from the different political visions of the indigenous and immigrant populations.

Three contending elite groups in Malay society refused to accept in its entirety the colonial-traditional status quo, and held to notions, in varying degrees radical, of more rapid social and political change. They were the Arabic-educated religious reform movement, the Malay-educated autochthonous intelligentsia, and the English-educated bureaucracy according to Roff (1967:254).

The main form of theme in Malay nationalism was that they claimed indigenous status due to historical background and lengthy sojourn in the Malay Peninsula. According to Lee (1990:286), British colonialism supported Malay nationalism before independence, which resulted in instituting Malay dominant status over non-Malays. The Malay dominance later received constitutional endorsement and the approval of MCA and MIC. This is partly true and partly not because of the contradictory approach by the British to enforce new constitution which included granting citizenship to immigrant Chinese and Indians[34]. The British intervention and the presence of huge numbers of immigrants in their homeland, pushed them more towards their own culture to maintain their identity.

Hussin Mutalib (1990:31) says that the relationship between Islam and Malay ethnicity is dialectical by nature. At times, the Malays may lean closer towards Islam, while at other times the ethnic pull becomes too strong for them to contain. Similarly, at

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[34] The fact is that the root of Malay socio-political consciousness is traced back to the fall of Malacca and the control of foreign power over Malay historical maritime life, compelled the Malays to become more in-group people.

times these two forces act as integrative mechanisms for Malay unity, while at other times, they divide the community. On balance, he believes the evidence is that the ethnic force is more powerful. However, Islam not only has continued to be closely identified with Malay culture, but also lays down a common bond of unity among Malays in general.

3.6. *Da'wah* Movement in Malaysia

The religious movement in the peninsula, as earlier mentioned, initially began with the *Kaum Muda* group in the first half of the twentieth century. The new era of religious consciousness began after World War Two, by Islamic parties and religious groups aimed towards the revival of Islam in the country. Prior to the 1960s, according to Jamil (1988:120), this term was little known or used in Malaysia[35] .

3.6.1 The Context of Rising *Da'wah* Movements

3.6.1.1. Political Need: The main source of the new movement came from educational institutions. The first *da'wah* activities were done by freelance missionaries who were mostly products of local *madrasahs* and *pondoks* all over the Peninsula[36] (Jamil, 1988:122). MIAGUS (Maahad Il-Ehya Assyariff Gunung Semanggul) [37] was prominently a

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[35] In 1950, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) proposed to form an Islamic missionary committee for the propagation of Islam among the aborigines which was called Jam'iyyat ad-Da'wat al-Islamiyyah (Safie, 1981:12).

[36] The activities included *kuliah subuh* (lectures after dawn prayers) and *kuliah maghrib* (lectures after the early night prayers) and weekend classes. Among these preachers were people from Islamic organisations like *al-Rahmaniyah*, and Jama'at Tabligh (Jamil, 1988:122-123).

[37] MIAGUS was established in 1934 by Ustaz Abu Bakar Al-Bakir. After the war there were four courses in its curriculum which became instrumental to arouse social and political consciousness, namely history, speech-making, *asuhan semangat* (the nurturing of spirit or consciousness), and *tafsir dan hadith* (exegesis of the Quran and tradition of the Prophet). It was dissolved in August 1948 (Haji Abdullah, 1985:45).

religious education centre, but during the first few years of the war, played an important role both in religious and political arenas (Haji Abdullah, 1985:9-10). During these years, and by the time of national agitation for independence from British colonial rule, Haji Abdullah (1985:30) has pointed out that Islam in Malaya emerged as a direct source of political ideology.

Several other religious and reformist organisations and parties were formed during this period[38]. These organisations, besides the Malay Nationalist Party (Parti Kebangsaan Melayu - PKM), and later, the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP)[39] better known as PAS, gained much popular support among the Malays[40] (Haji Abdullah, 1985:37; Zainah Anwar, 1987:3).

During this period, two of these groups were responsible for igniting religious revivalism in the Peninsula, namely the Muslim Party and the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party[41]. Both had roots from two nationalist political parties. The Muslim Party organised in March 1948, and was led by Ustadz Abu Bakar Al-Bagir (Safie, 1981:4). Although it was dissolved and its leaders were arrested four months later, the formation of the Muslim Party signified a turning point in Malay politics. Through this party, Haji Abdullah

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[38] Such as: the All-Malaya Supreme Religious Council (Majlis Agama Tertinggi Se-Malaya, or MATA), Muslim Party (Hizbul Muslimin), and Annual General Conference of Religion and Economics which was later called People's Congress - Kongres Rakyat - (Haji Abdullah, 1985:39-46).

[39] Parti Islam Se-Malaysia.

[40] Both parties desired immediate independence (*merdeka*), while other major Malay political party, UMNO, chose to co-operate with British. The conservative and aristocratically based leadership of UMNO was fighting for the return to the pre-war status quo of Malay politics within the framework of a British-protected policy (Haji Abdullah, 1985:44).

[41] The Muslim Party is the first Islamic Party which was a satellite political organisation of the PKM, which the latter formed in 1945. The Muslim Party came into being from MATA and from the Muslim Party, PAS was born (Hussin Mutalib, 1990:107 ;Haji Abdullah, 1985:47).

(1985:46) believes the role of Islam in Malaya came to be viewed as a means as well as an end.

The second Islamic political party also came out from a religious wing of another post-war nationalist party, UMNO, which was formed in 1946[42] . The religious group of UMNO was known under the name of Pan-Malayan Ulama Union (Persatuan Ulama Se-Malaya) (Jamil, 1988:87). The name of `union' then changed to 'party'[43] .

3.6.1.2. Cultural Touch: The post independence period in Malaysia as Muzaffar (1987:16-26) describes, provided a growth in urbanisation, economic development and modernisation; as well as contributing to the emergence of a new elite group. In this process, ethnic and social dichotomy expanded, the social distance between rural and urban settlers widened, the Malays who were mainly rural people remained poor, and the Chinese who dominated urban areas benefited both from economic and urban welfare. The policy to support *Bumiputera* (indigenous people), without actual economic improvement for them, accelerated ethnic dichotomy by distinguishing identity symbols like language and religion. The Malay elite alienated themselves from the mainstream of Malay society because of their lifestyles and not caring for religious attitude as the term is conventionally understood.

In the 1960's the Chinese continued dominating the economy, enjoyed living in the cities with better facilities, education and opportunities. The Malays, on the other hand, who were illiterate peasants, lived in *kampungs* (villages). In addition,

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[42] In 1951, more than 200 delegates gathered in the UMNO headquarters in Butterworth to approve the new union, the Pan-Malayan Islamic Union (Persatuan Islam Se-Malaya - PAS) (Safie, 1981:26).

[43] Parti Islam Se Malay(si)a.

the Chinese felt discriminated against because of the special privileges granted to the Malays such as land reservation, the awarding of scholarships, and the issuance of preferential quotas for Malays in the employment of Government servants[44] . The Malays, in turn, felt neglected by the government, and are threatened politically, economically and socially by the Chinese[45] . Most Malays felt that they were second-class citizens in their own country (Mount, 1969:187-188).

The differences in the values of the Malays and the Chinese, owing to their different religious and cultural backgrounds, resulted in several communal clashes in various places after the second world war[46] .

In such circumstances the May 13 1969 incident stroked the Malays and many of them, especially the youth, turned to religion to gain more strength and purity. Many writers marked the May 13 incident as a turning point for the emergence or reinforcement of the Islamic movement in Malaysia[47] . Malays by nature are tolerant but when driven against a wall they hit back (Muhammad Yusoff, 1983:406). This was precisely what happened on 13 May 1969.

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[44] The concept of protecting the Malay economic position is a feeling that without opportunities and quotas the Malays will not be able to compete with the Chinese (Muzaffar, 1979:93).

[45] There was no social harmony among the Chinese. They organised themselves in social systems in which leadership went to rich men and status depended directly on economic power. Chinese in Malaya, used to be too loosely linked, economically and ideologically. They were too diversified to allow a single hierarchy of power to form among them, but yet in time they became closer to unity than even before (Friedman, 1960:163-166).

[46] Such as in Batu Pahat (1945/6), Batu Malim, Raub (1946), Batu Kikir (1946), Penang (January 1958), Pangkor (May 1959), Bukit Mertajam (1967) and the biggest in Kuala Lumpur (May 1969) (Husin Ali, 1981:119).

[47] Politically, in the general election in May 1969, where the Alliance lost its two-thirds majority, UMNO felt as if it had been beaten. The MCA clearly had lost the confidence of the majority of the Chinese while the Gerakan Party, Democratic Action Party (DAP) and the People's Progressive Party (PPP), all of whom were basically Chinese, declared 'victory', and held 'victory' marches in Kuala Lumpur on May 13.

Hundreds of people died mostly Chinese, as well as a few Indians and some Malays. One of the important consequence of May 13 was to facilitate the rise of Malay power aspirants aimed at the removal of the old leadership and the channelling of their economy into competitive markets (Lee, 1990:292). The other important consequence, is reflected on religious revivalism in the peninsula which it pushed forward. The May 13 episode however, is not the cause of the emergence of religious revivalism but it is an important accelerator[48] .

3.6.2 The Causes of Success

The success of the *da'wah* movement since the 1970s attracted many writers, locals and foreigners to comment about it. Many tried to find the reasons for the success of the *da'wah* groups, especially among youth and university students. Some, like Milner (1986:51), argue the need to take account of cultural factors in an assessment of peasant political behaviour. These kinds of views neglect the fact that the recent *da'wah* movement is more characterised by urban, educated and middle class people rather than peasants. Ameer Ali (1984:299) remarks that there are three events of great significance that fuel Islamic revivalism in Malaysia: the partial victory of Egypt in the 1973 war with Israel, the formation of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), with its Arab members forming a subgroup (OAPEC) and the success of the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Mannig Nash (1984:74) also asserts that the oil boom and the Iranian

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[48] In the case of the *da'wah* movement, as Milner (1986:51) notes, one should be made to understand that it is - at least in part - the product of a process which had long been underway within the Malay community.

Revolution, especially the leader of the revolution, Ayatullah Khomeini, sparked renewed Islamic political activity in Malaysia.

However, although events accelerated the religious movement in Malaysia, the root of Islamic consciousness is based on trends which Muslims face in their everyday life. Nash (1984:78) acknowledges that "what becomes of this movement depends not on religious or Islamic innovation, but on the complex interaction of the members of this movement with pressures from the nation-state, the continuing Westernisation and modernisation, and the social status of the Malay community in the communally multiple society. Lee (1990b:496) steps forward to say that it "is the Malay religious response to the secularisation of Malay nationalism after the war". However it is too simplistic to point to certain causes, for there are other key factors like global Islamic consciousness, and potential motivation of Islamic thought.

For about half a century, since World War II, Malaysia has experienced different groups and organisations which somehow are related to Islamic belief and the *da'wah* movement. These phenomena are different in aim and operation[49] .

3.6.3 *Da'wah* Movements

Da'wah movements have tried maintaining their commitment to Islam and carry out missionary activities to spread the knowledge of the Shari'a and the Qur'an among the Muslims. In terms of the regional political interactions, Von der Mehden (1988:255-7) distinguishes four elements of the Islamic revivalism movement[50] :

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[49] The extremist cults are not included in the present study.

[50] Von der Mehden (1988:251-253) also has grouped *da'wah* movements into three functional types: (1)the large-scale organisations primarily committed to reinforcing Islamic identity among the faithful, increasing their knowledge of their religion, and providing a bridge between the modern world and fundamental Islamic values such as ABIM. (2) The more⇨

radicals, fundamentalists, revivalists, and traditionalists[51] .

Strategically, the religious movements, according to Ameer Ali (1984:299-300), are developed into two contrasting types, the imam-centred, and the ummah-centred movements. The ideal of an iman-centred movement is simply the self-purification of the Muslims both spiritually and temporarily. For this group the summation of all purified souls will lead to a purified society. The followers are non-political in character, living simple lives and chiefly engaged in *tabligh* among Muslims and less interested in bringing new converts to Islam.

The ideal of an ummah-centred movement,, Ameer Ali asserts, is not only self-purification of Muslims as individuals but also the purification of the society as an organised unit and of its supreme organ, the state. Their activities are political in nature, not necessarily in a peaceful manner. To them the end justifies the means.

3.7. *Da'wah* Groups

In the 1970s, several *da'wah* groups began to call the people to the Faith; the most active of them were ABIM, Darul Arqam and

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⇨proselytising one such as PERKIM. (3)There are a variety of smaller non-governmental organisations catering to particular groups or making interpretations of Islam. They have grown in number and prominence over the past decade such as Darul Arqam.

[51]Radicals are relatively small groups intent upon immediate and fundamental change in the direction of an Islamic state and the purification of the society. Fundamentalits are religiously conservative and look toward strengthening traditional Islamic values and ultimately establishing an Islamic state. An example of this group is PAS. Revivalists are religiously conservative and look toward strengthening traditional Islamic values and ultimately establishing an Islamic state. An example of this group is PAS. This group is interested in expanding the role of Islam in society, but achieving this within a modern context. ABIM is considered as a revivalist group. The great majority of Muslims in Malaysia who are not politically and socially active but who want to protect Islam, are considered traditionalists. They have become more religious-conscious.

Jama'at Tabligh. The religious activity of PAS can also be considered as *da'wah* missionary[52] .

3.7.1. ABIM

The Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia - ABIM) originated from a student organisation in the University of Malaya. In 1969 a group of Muslim students launched an organisation called the Association of Muslim Students of Malaysia. Three years later ABIM was officially set up and soon gained increasing support from the students.

The primary aim of ABIM is to transmit a proper understanding of Islam, therefore, it aimed squarely at Muslims in the form of spiritual rehabilitation (Nagata, 1984:92; Muzaffar, 1987:48). ABIM criticises certain Western practices, secularism and other Western ideologies as antithetical to its ideal of an Islamic state in which Islamic laws replace the Western-based laws (Muzaffar, 1987:48; Hussin Mutalib, 1990:82). ABIM stresses the primacy of worship (*ibadah*), faith (*iman*), and commitment (*iltizam*). It is not concerned with distinct dress codes or exaggerated ascetic forms. However, as Ahmad Hussein (1988:213) notes, its religious rituals are no more than the standard orthodox ones. Therefore, for ABIM religion and politics are not separate entities, and Islamic brotherhood goes beyond boundaries[53] . All Muslims in the world are "part and parcel of one single community" (Hussin Mutalib, 1990:79). ABIM more than

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[52] PAS has been active since the late 1950's

[53] The ABIM's leaders are the least chauvinistic among the *da'wah* groups(Nagata, 1984:95). This is because ABIM and its leaders are more familiar with prominent Muslim scholars of the world, than the other groups. The Muslim thinkers of ABIM's interest includes Syed Naguib al-Attas, Delim Noer, Ismail al-Faruqi, Ali Shari'ati, Iqbal, Syed Qutb, Abul Qadir Audah, and Al-Maudoodi (Sharifah, 1993:7).

other *da'wah* groups are willing to accept positive and necessary aspects of modernisation while maintaining Islamic values.

ABIM's approach to the people is through talks, discussions, seminars and conferences. It publishes a monthly magazine and has produced numerous pamphlets, cassette tapes and video cassettes. Because ABIM's main interest is in socio-economic and political reforms, it is involved actively in an alternative form of education in the schools in a few urban centres in the Peninsula which combines a religious and secular education pattern. It is also involved in social programmes and in many issues of political and international affairs. ABIM's strategy, as Ahmad Hussein (1988:215) saw it, is to bring about public consciousness of the need for total Islam as well as to press for public policy changes.

The prominent leader of ABIM was Anwar Ibrahim who was its president from 1974 to 1982, the year he joined UMNO[54] . In fact, ABIM's support for Islamic movements in other countries and their vocalism in criticising irresponsible Muslim leaders and governments has been changed to adapt to government foreign policy[55] .

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[54] Anwar's decision in 1982 to join the government created a big debate within ABIM and outside. It brought to bear the issue of ABIM's independence and identity and led to some confusion concerning ABIM's actual position regarding Islam (Hussin Mutalib, 1990:85). Anwar's career played an important impact on ABIM both before he joined the government and after that. ABIM's organisational structure is composed of a President, his two deputies, a secretary-general, and executive members. *Majlis Shura*, a consultancy body, operates for decision-making.

[55] For example ABIM is not interested in events concerning the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Islamic movements in Algeria and Egypt and other form of Islamic revivalism in Turkey and the Arab countries. However, in accordance with government policy ABIM is active in fund raising for Muslims in Bosnia, Chechnya and interested in events in the newly the independent Muslim countries of central Asia.

opportunities to find a professional occupation, have chosen to return to modest unrevealing attire - half-*purdah* - (Nagata, 1984:99).

Although ABIM was formed to carry out *da'wah* activities among Muslims, in 1986 an agency from ABIM was formed with the objective of taking *da'wah* to non-Muslims in Malaysia. The new body, Islamic Outreach, besides educating new Muslims and non-Muslims about Islam through weekly programmes in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Pulau Pinang, Perak and Kelantan, also carried out other projects[56].

3.7.2. Darul Arqam[57]

The Jema'ah Darul Arqam or Al-Arqam came into being in 1968 in Kampung Datuk Keramat, Kuala Lumpur through the efforts of a religious teacher named Ashaari Muhammad. In 1971, he set up a residential commune in Sungai Pencala (Penchala), on the fringe of Kuala Lumpur[58].

Unlike other *da'wah* groups, Al-Arqam invited its members to settle down together in communes or *kampung*s which were referred to as *markaz* (headquarters) for Al-Arqam (Sharifah, 1993:5). Markaz Al-Arqam was not only a place of abode, but it was a community housing the movement's schools, members' residences, a mosque, a clinic, and factories. In the commune, the rules of

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[56] Other programmes include: work with the Indian community in Banting, Selangor, work with Vietnamese refugees at the camp in Sg. Besi, Selangor, and Orang Asli projects in Selangor and Kelantan (Reaching Out, 1990:1). ABIM Islamic Outreach proselytising activities has been limited to 403 converts during a period of six years (1989-1994), which is not significant compared with Christian missionary activities in Malaysia.

[57] The survey among the respondents was conducted in April, May and June 1994, before Al-Arqam was banned by Pusat Islam.

[58] In 1974, Al-Arqam moved to this new village, which became its headquarters.

Darul Arqam were strictly observed in dress, manners of greeting, and segregation of the sexes (Hussin Mutalib, 1990:87).

Al-Arqam grew rapidly in terms of religious doctrine, and economical and social activities during the 1970s and 1980s[59]. In the early 1990s the movement expanded more in size and popularity[60], it became vocal, unlike before, and criticised 'bad ulama' for being overly concerned with their personal interest (Sharifah, 1993:6).

The National Fatwa Committee on August 1994 described the Al-Arqam movement as being illegal and considered it the biggest threat to the country since the communist insurgency[61]. The leader, Ashaari Muhammad, was keen to follow the Tarigat Aurad Muhammadiyah.

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[59] The structure of Al-Arqam organisation before being banned was included Ashaari Muhammad as leader (*Sheikhul Arkam*) and 28 members of *Majlis Shura* (*Majlis Shuyukh*). Ashaari was the ultimate co-ordinator and source of decisions or appeals of Al-Arqam. The *da'wah* organisation used to run through a series of committees (*syura*) in mutual consultation. Each committee was subdivided into special departments (Nagata, 1984:105, 110-111). Ashaari actually was a charismatic leader for his group and also was regarded as a mystic and a poet. In Al-Arqam, disloyalty to the leader was a cardinal sin, by this accusation, some key members of Al-Arqam were dismissed from the organisation (Hussin Ahmad, 1988:223).

[60] In 1991, there were 153 *markas Arqam* of various sizes in Malaysia. In addition there were also other *markases* in the region (like in Indonesia and Thailand) and one in Africa, six in North America, three in Australia, and one in New Zealand (The New Straite Times, 1991:25, October 2).

[61] Among the nine reasons for the banning of the Al-Arqam movement were: the belief that the *Aurad Muhammadiah*, Sheikh As-Suhaimi is not dead and will be resurrected as Imam Mahdi, adding false information to the *lafaz shahadah* (utterance of Faith) that Suhaimi was Imam Mahdi, The claim that Ashaari Muhammad met Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions in person, that Ashaari has supernatural power as a saint and the divine power of 'Kun-Fayakun' (be and shall be), and Al-Arqam failed to observe the State Islamic religious laws. The leader, Ashaari by that time was in Thailand, and a few weeks later he was delivered to the Malaysian authorities. In October, at a three-hour dialogue organised by the police and Pusat Islam at Masjid Negara, Ashaari Muhammad and seven other leaders have confessed that they had deviated from the true teachings of Islam. The members of the banned movement repented their actions. Ashaari renounced all claims of miracles and mysticism for him and his movement.

Al-Arqam was solely concerned with cultivating personal morality[62] . Ashaari believed in a majority in piety instead of majority in votes. Salvation for Muslims, according to this group, lies in individual piety (Muzaffar, 1987:45; Sharifah, 1993:6)[63] . It envisages the evolution of Islam in the sense of a movement towards a life of perfection through progressive discovery and improvement of the self, society and mankind (Sharifah, 1993:6).

Al-Arqam followers practised polygamy and display grief and penitence when saying prayers relying on Muslim saints - *wali Allah* - (Sharifah, 1993:5). The men are usually robed in white, blue-black, green or grey and turban (*songkok* or *fez*) Arab-Othmanic attire. The women are almost always veiled completely in loose black *baju kurung* with head veil (*telekung*).

The contemporary Malaysian society, as Al-Arqam saw, had deviated considerably from Islamic ideals and prescriptions in form and content, because Muslims have adopted western derived ideas, values and habits (Sharifah, 1993:6). Therefore, for them, all forms of western lifestyle such as furnishings, televisions, radios, fans, and other amenities were rejected. Al-Arqam regarded these facilities as the ills of modern society (Nagata, 1984:105). It is notable that most of Ashaari's closest associates and followers from urban areas were highly educated.

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[62] The main themes of Al-Arqam was reflected through Ashaari's writings and his many talks which are included: the necessity to have abiding faith in God and his prophets, the need to strengthen Islamic brotherhood, the need for Muslims to be economically independent, the short span of life of humans on earth and their accountability to God in the Hereafter, and the belief in the return of the Imam Mahdi (Hussin Mutalib, 1990:86). He was also inspired by the images, lifestyle and attitude of classical Islamic thinkers like al-Ghazali, al-Blagini, Adnan Sha'fii and other Sufi ulama (Sharifah, 1993:5).

[63] Ashaari believed "there will be no Islamic state before an Islamic society. There will be no Islamic society without Islamic family units. There will be no Islamic families before genuine Islamic individuals" (1980:7).

Beside the 'professional' members who lived in private typically Malay-style houses, there was a residential cohort of young, unattached people, principally males, who lived in clusters in other houses of the commune, or in the school dormitory in the old *pondok* spirit[64] .

Al-Arqam activities covered education[65] , information, medical services, welfare, secretariat, trade, agriculture and industry[66] . The most outstanding characteristic of Al-Arqam was economic activities. The main areas of its economic activities were small industries producing foodstuffs and other daily needs such as tooth paste, soap and some medications[67] . What Al-Arqam emphasised in its products was the purity of produces (*bersih, halal*)- a concept which always is open to question by Muslims when the products come from non-Muslim factories. Arqam enterprises expanded to most Malaysian states.

3.7.3. Jama'ah Tabligh

The Jama'ah Tabligh founded by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944/5) has been in existence in Malaysia since the 1950s. It

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[64] When having their meals, they squat on the floor in a circle around a common metal dish (*talam*) taking food with the first three fingers only.

[65] The concept of the religious community as providing an integrated and complete way of life (*al-Din*), where religious and social goals complement one another, was reflected in the "academic" side of the school curriculum which starts from kindergarten (Nagata, 1984:106).

[66] Al-Arqam has practised a tactical separation between religion and politics which caused much debate. Its policy was that instead of waiting for the establishment of an Islamic state, it was preferable to go ahead with one's own autonomous economic ventures, based on strict Islamic principles. It also helps, Al-Arqam believed, to reduce non-Muslim stranglehold upon the national economy (Nagata, 1984:107 ; Muzaffar, 1987:45 ; Hussin Mutalib, 1990:88-89).

[67] *Al-Arqm* was also involved in other economic activities which vary from repair shops and garages to cattle-rearing and agricultural farms as well as the publication section for its publicity. Another distinctive enterprise of *Al-Arqm* was its medical clinics which used both scientific and spiritual therapy. These clinics were especially famous for child delivery and the rehabilitation of drug addicts (Nagata, 1984:107-110).

originated from India[68] . This group became more active after 1969 in Malaysia[69] . Contrary to what is known to many writers, the *Jama'ah Tabligh* is well organised[70] . The Jama'ah is an international *da'wah* organisation and its main head-quarters is in India. The leader of the organisation is called *amir*, who is helped by one consulting body (*shura*) [71] . When a person becomes a member of the *Jama'ah*, he should follow the decision of the amir and the shura.

The Jama'ah emphasises rectifying (*islah*) and strengthening one's belief. They are not interested in politics but in purifying each member. The aim of the Jama'ah is not to establish any one form of Islamic government in any one Muslim country in the world but to form an Islamic World (*ummah*) beyond national boundaries. The major Jama'ah activities are limited to *da'wah* activities for Muslims only and toiling (travelling with the task of *da'wah*)[72] .

The Jama'ah Tabligh has its own system of missionary operation which relies on volunteers, all men, who leave their

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[68] Mualana Ilyas founded this group in 1925 in India. Its headquarters is in a mosque at Nizammudin in New Delhi, where the tomb of its founders is placed. The Amir (leader) of Tabligh International directs its global operations (Ahmad Hussein, 1988:198).

[69] At first it was called the faith movement (*Eslahiah*) then called *da'wah* (*tabligh*). Although it has a longer history (compared to ABIM and Al-Arqam), especially in Penang and Singapore, until the 1970s, it was largely associated with the Indian-Muslim commercial community (Nagata, 1984:116-117; 1986:42; Muzaffar, 1987:44; Sharifah, 1993:4).

[70] To them, unlike other *da'wah* groups, the *Jama'ah Tabligh* is structurally does not operate on an organisational basis.

[71] The last General Amir was Enamul Hasan Kandhalawi who passed away in November 1995. Since his death a group of three have been handling the job of Amir. There is a General *Amir* and a World *Shura*. The World *Shura* consults over issues not necessarily by gathering in India, but through communication. There is one main *markaz* or center in Delhi (Nezamuldin) and one in Pakistan (Lahore). Each country has its own *amir* or *shura* or both to direct and administer the *Jama'ah* activities and deal with issues. The *amir* has no spiritual characteristic and is easily approachable. However, the function of the group is based on hierarchical obedience.

[72] Other activies includes visiting patients, needy poeple, and those who face calamities.

homes to go around the country or overseas to preach Islam[73] . The scope of its activities is not limited by urban-rural dichotomy or boundaries and includes both young and old[74] . The Jama'ah Tabligh, in terms of active members, is the biggest *da'wah* group in the world.

Females are regarded as being more responsible in terms of educating the children and carrying out their home responsibilities than in being active in other aspects of community life.

In Malaysia, there are seven *shuras* in different states. Each *shura* has its own centre (*markaz*) which is a mosque. In each big city, particularly in the capital of each state, there is one *markaz*. There are three *markazs* in Kuala Lumpur and 12 *markazs* in other cities[75] . The *Jama'ah* has no facilities (for example for publication) or properties in Malaysia. There are more than 150,000 active members all over Malaysia.

The Jama'at Tabligh, according to Nagata (1984:121), has greater appeal than ABIM and Al-Arqam in *kampung* areas and it receives fewer negative comments from ulama than the other *Da'wah* groups. The religious rituals increase the personal integrity and trust among its followers.

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[73] Maulana Ilyas, the spiritual leader of the Jama'at Tabligh instructed his followers "To spare time for travelling in groups, from house to house, street to street, village to village, and town to town, exhorting the people to lead their life according to the [Islamic] principle (Ahmad Hussein, 1988:216).

[74] Each member carries out missionary activities at his own expense. Members maintain a relatively constant level of activity throughout their lives. There is no membership fee and the organisation has no income.

[75] In Kuala Lumpur there are about 300 mosques and suraus where members of *Jama'ah* gather for congregational and religious activities.

3.7.4. PAS

By the mid-1950s, it was clear that PAS ideology was different from UMNO, because the former believed in all (not partly) the teachings of Islam and the adaptation of these to its ideology[76] (Safie, 1981:94).

Throughout the 1960s, PAS was the political representative of Islamic dissent in Malaysia[77]. In fact, right from its beginnings, PAS has been calling for the establishment of an Islamic state in which Malays will be made to adopt Islamic principles in the life of the individual[78], the society and the state (Muzaffar, 1987:55; Jamil, 1988:89)[79]. As a consequence of its policy, Kessler (1978:243) asserts that PAS is able to revive radical Islamic nationalism more strongly than ever.

In 1978, there was a major transformation in the nature and composition of the party leadership from one which emphasised Malay dominance to one which championed Islamic identity. The Consultative Council of Religious Scholars (Majlis Shura Ulama) was formed for putting into operation the right of the ulama to

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[76] For the previous background of PAS see page 126.

[77] As a political party, PAS has taken part in every general election since 1955. In the 1959 election, PAS came to power in two states, Kelantan and Terengganu. Although in the next election it lost Terengganu PAS has had strong support in Kelantan. From 1973 to 1978, PAS joined the ruling National Front (*Barisan Nasional*). In the latest election in 1995 in Kelantan, PAS candidates won the election but marginally. It seems that PAS which has been under pressure from the UMNO run goverment since separation from the National Front, is gratually losing ground in Kelantan.

[78] When it comes to individual purification, Kessler (1972:45) remarks, PAS has a lot to say. It mobilises support by more than merely rhetorical appeal of the Islamic themes of commitment, and of the significance of suffering not as punishment but as a trial for the true believers. It calls, in Islamic terms, upon its followers for an energetic and committed stance in the world.

[79] PAS is opposed to capitalism, communism, liberalism and socialism. Nationalism, which PAS describes as *asabiyyah*, is a particularly dangerous force since it is the ideology of the group in power (Muzaffar, 1987:56).

lead the party, and a collective and consultative (*Shura*) form for decision-making of the party (Hussin Mutalib, 1990:111).

PAS was concerned with social issues, Muzaffar (1987:60-64) points out to some of them. For example, PAS has been concerned largely with the abolition of interest rates and replacement of the Western tax system with *zakat* laws. Science and technology for PAS are important, but at the same time, members remain deeply suspicious of Western science and technology. It has no clear picture about what Islamic education should mean and how it should be formulated and implemented. PAS criticised UMNO for its co-operation with non-Muslims and for the issue of the socio-economic development of Malaysia which it believed should be carried out in conformity with the teaching of Islam[80]. Lottery funds, liquor sales, and Friday as a weekly holiday were among their issues (Jamil, 1988:90). The latest issues brought up by PAS which have caused much debate, are the implementation of the *Sharia'h* law and the segregation of men and women in cinemas and in payment queues in department stores.

3.8. Malay Family: Structure, Socialisation and Values

Malay norms and values are taught primarily in the family. The family, as a social institution, plays an important role in the process of socialisation. Therefore, to examine the orientation of the Malay family in terms of values and beliefs it is important to know the structure and function of traditional Malay families as they have been perceived through

[80] PAS in ruling Kelantan, has faced many problems, especially in economic development and this state is regarded as one of the poorest in Malaysia.

generations, the processes of socialisation in the Malay family, and features of the present urban Malay families.

3.8.1. Traditional Malay Family

Malay families traditionally were grouped in extended families[81]. In traditional Malay families two main strata of society developed with different family-types, namely, the ruling class and the ruled class (Husin Ali, 1981:62-3). There was a wide social gap between both groups. The social distance between the ruling and ruled classes of the community was based on certain values, customs and behaviour which were reflected on the institution of the family. Ruling family members married within the same status and maintained strong ties between themselves. They had the opportunity to practice polygyny and lived in better settlements. The second, third, or fourth wives of men from this group could be from the lower class. Meanwhile, the male of the lower class could not marry the female of the upper class. Among the ruled class, who lived in huts in *kampung*, existed mutual assistance (*gotong royong*). This custom tied rural families together not only in marriage and family problems, but also in various forms of co-operation in the economic field[82].

As in pre-Islamic tradition, the Malay family also associated with two traditions, namely, the *adat temenggong* and

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[81] In the earlier history of Malay inhabitants in the Peninsula, the families were smaller in number, but became larger by forming feudalistic-type communities near the rivers and coasts (Husin Ali, 1981:60-61).

[82] One of the most significant differences between these two groups was the position of the women. Unlike the wife of the ruler, the wife of the ruled played a key role in family economic activities, besides household activities and child rearing.

the *adat perpateh*[83]. *Adat temenggong* was carried out in the coastal and riverine regions, whereas the *adat* perpateh was practised among inhabitants of the hills and valleys inland from the coast (Tham, 1979:89). *Adat perpateh*, as Ryan (1971:44) points out, described a legal outlook suitable for an agricultural community. It is an extremely mild system of law.

The elements of both traditions influenced the values and precepts of Malay family life. The organisational form of family in *adat perpateh* areas was more distinctly matrilineal[84]. Among adherents of the *adat temenggong*, although they were more inclined to patrineal, matrilocal residence was also preferred (Tham, 1979:89). The most important role of these traditions involved matters pertaining to inheritance. For this purpose, the *adat temenggong* gave priority to the male children and the *adat perpateh* traditionally gave priority to females (Tham, 1979:89). According to Tham Seong Chee (1979:89-90), there are more similarities than differences between families of these two traditions. This is true especially in the rites of passage observed; in prohibitions pertaining to food, dress and social behaviour; in ideals and beliefs relating to the socialisation of children and various forms of sanctions used in correcting and moulding behaviour.

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[83] *Adat* is a customary law among Muslims of Southeast Asia. Its bases are largely the customs, rituals and myth of the communities. The *adats* encapsulate the quantities of the wisdom, character, correctness and procedure. The ultimate embodiment of legitimacy, and the apex of the whole social system is based on the *adat* (Marasinghe, 1986:25; Tham, 1983:3).

[84] For instance, upon marriage, the bridegroom leaves his tribe to settle in the tribe of his wife.

The important feature of Malay family which is still practised, and as Tham notes (1979:93-94)it stresses that elders be honoured and persons of the same generation be equally regarded, and those who are younger loved.

The Islamic concept of *ummah* (Islamic religious community) also existed in the Malay traditional society that upheld social solidarity and social control among the members of the society. Abdullah and Mohamed believe (1982:109) that the role of traditional Malay family was to sustain religious duties within the family. This tradition, they add, rested on the *adat resam* (social customs) which included the institution of mutual assistance (*gotong royong*) and the concepts of ummah and *malu* (self respect).

3.8.2. Structure of the Malay family

Types of family, kinship and role expectation in the study of Malay family are related to the present study.

3.8.2.1. Types of the Malay Family: There is disagreement between scholars as to whether the Malay family is defined as a nuclear or extended family. The gap of this typology becomes wider when they refer to urban Malay families. Therefore, the proportions of urban nuclear Malay families range between 22 per cent (Maulud Yusof, 1976:176) to 98 per cent (Yaacob Harun, 1987:279). Scholars like Khadijah Hj Muhammed (1969:114), Yaacob Harun (1987:279;1992:6), and Tey Nai Peng (1992:17) believe that the urban Malay family is characterised by a preponderance of nuclear features. Some scholars like Maulud Yusof and Tham Seong

Chee (1979:92) label the urban Malay family as an extended family. For scholars like Rokiah Talib (1969), Provencher (1971), and Azizah Kassim (1985), there are more nuclear family than the extended family among the Malay families. To them there exist a significant percentage of extended family, therefore, it is hard to define the urban Malay family as a nuclear family. Newly married couples, however, prefer to live independently and set up their own new family (*kelamin*). The new *kelamin* still have strong emotional and economic ties with the *adat*. They are more likely 'quasi-nuclear' families than the nuclear type[85]. Generally, the extended family system seen more frequently among rural households has progressively been displaced by the nuclear type (Chiam Hen Keng, 1992:4).

3.8.2.2. Kinship: Kinship (*saudara*) includes relatives on both sides of the parents. Therefore it is bilateral. Saudara also comprises relatives acquired as a result of marriage contracted by the children of the family. The Malays distinguish between close (*saudara dekat*) and distant (*saudara jauh*) relatives[86].

Although *adat* temenggong is mostly practised by Malay families, Tham noted (1982:93) that there is a tendency for the female members on the wife's side to co-operate more closely with each other, particularly when family conflicts occur. He concludes that there is no paternal or maternal dominance in an

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[85] Couillard (1986:92-93) also disagrees with terms 'nuclear family' or 'stem family' for the Malay conjugal pair, and calls these labels 'highly misleading' because it says very little about the nature of the social relations existing between the people concerned.

[86] Banks (1983:6) notes that among the closeness relation, such as siblings, there is a rationalist-voluntarist behaviour with wide range of motives, some positively and other negatively evaluated by society at-large. The saudara relationship, according to Banks (1983:169), has spiritual bases of social relationships that go beyond consanguinity and human needs.

absolute sense in the Malay family. However, with regard to the Malay family traditions (*adat temenggong* and *adat perpateh*), the urban Malay family is not perfectly bilateral either.

Beside the *adat* tradition, Islam plays an important role in the everyday life of the Malay kinship system. Banks (1983:170) observes that Islam provides general guidelines for the ordering of society with the goal of maximising kinship sentiments.

3.8.2.3. Role Expectation: Marriage among Malays, as in Islam, is a contract between two autonomous persons. They come together under an agreement of reciprocal delegation[87] . The failure in mutual obligation may reach to the extent to use the right of the spouse to ask for divorce. However, the position of the wife in many areas is not equal with the husband.

Women are generally looked upon as being the weaker sex, particularly in terms of endurance of pain and suffering (Haji Mohtar, 1979:25). A Malay woman is responsible for the subsistence and everyday maintenance of her husband and children. To Marie-Andree Couillard (1986:91), while a modern housewife's toil is not recognised as labour and not remunerated as such, a Malay woman's housework is recognised and compensated.

In the cities, the opportunity for the married wives to work, impose more responsibility on the wives. However, while

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[87] Non-Muslim scholars such as Djamour (1965), Swift (1963),Wilder (1976), and Couillard (1986) who study the Malay families are deficient to recognise that marriage in Islam fall under contracts (*oghod*). They regard marriage among Malays as 'not a sacred tie', 'a joint enterprise', 'a voluntary act', 'the relation between spouses is rather one of equals in a business partnership'...

some wives of the working class and middle class are involved in the labour market, many of them work solely as housewives. Many middle class working wives have helpers or maids to assist them (Husin Ali, 1981:66-67; Yaacob Harun, 1992:16). On the other hand, the husband spends most of his time away from home effectively excluding him from active regular participation in housework[88] (Yaacob Harun, 1992:14).

The Malay husband, as head of the family, is responsible for the well-being of the family. He surrenders his goods and income to the wife, in exchange for her food and labour (Tham, 1979:97; Couillard, 1986:90).

Children of a Malay family are strictly bounded by '*adat* resam' to look upon the father and mother of the family as leaders and benefactors. Thus in daily acts and behaviour there must be shown obedience and loyalty to parents (Alwi, 1962:3).

Generally, Tham (1979:94,100) summarises, in the Malay family context the mother should be loved, the father should be obeyed, and relatives should be respected. Moreover, parents and elders are regarded as the most appropriate models of imitation and emulation.

In relationships between siblings, authority rests with the elder but the older sibling is expected to be indulgent towards the younger brother or sister. The elders are always respected and listened to, even when children become adults (Abdullah and Mohamed, 1982:112). However, in the Malay family, the child grows up emotionally secure but also dependent (Tham, 1979:94).

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[88] The situations become more complicated when both husband and wife work and meet at home only for brief periods.

3.8.3. Marriage

Traditionally, marriages used to be arranged by parents of the bride and groom. The impact of urbanisation has a direct implication on the choice of marriage partners in which parents no longer play an important role in choosing spouses (Yaacob Harun, 1992:6).

Marriage ceremonies among Malays often are initiated with betrothal to settle the date of the marriage and the precise amounts for *mas-kahwin*[89] and presents. Usually the first move is made by the family of the bridegroom (Ahmad Ibrahim, 1965:3).

Marriage custom (*adat resam kahwin*) is best liked and most adhered to by the majority of both urban and rural Malays (Alwi, 1962:22). The marriage ceremony requires quite a good deal of money to go through all the stages in accordance with the *adat*[90].

3.8.4. Socialisation of Child

The processes of socialisation of a child in Malay families pass through a gradual habituation to behavioural forms that is in conformity with *adat* and Islam. Through these predominate processes of socialisation the children learn the existence of certain social requirements and religious rituals by rote (Tham, 1979:94). Most social requirements are also

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[89] Mas-kahwin or *mahr* means the obligatory marriage payment due under Muslim law to the wife at the time of marriage is solemnised, whether paid in cash or in kind or payable as a debt with or without security(Ahmad Ibrahim, 1965 :19).

[90] To hold the marriage ceremony, they are ready to go to any length, even to the extent of selling their property or borrowing money.

supported by religious values. Both processes are practised together by Malay families with variations emphasising one or the other[91] .

The period of socialisation , according to Tham (1979:99-100), as conceived by Malay parents consists of two broad levels. The first level refers to the period of dependency of the child on the parents, that is the pre-school and schooling years. The dominating concerns at this period are religious upbringing and the fostering of family ties. The second level refers to children who have attained maturity. The socialisation process, at this stage, is centred on work, marriage, and morality mainly according to *adat*.

3.8.4.1. *Adat* Values: *Adat* in Malay culture is custom in the widest sense which beside customary law, includes norms, conventions and oral tradition(Roff, 1967; Hussin Mutalib, 1990). The key concerns in the Malay family and social lives are good manners, courtesy, good breeding and sympathetic tact[92] . Thus the male children are encouraged or induced to be diligent and to avoid behaviour or actions which are harmful to themselves or society. Female children are taught to be pious, unobtrusive, modest, good-natured, and responsible (Tham, 1979:98).

The Malay children are strictly disciplined in school. Students are reluctant to question the teacher. In fact many

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[91] The discussion of socialisation here is a concise view of the function of the family and does not cover other factors such as mass media and formal education (school).

[92] These characteristics of the individual's social standing are labeled under the concept of *budi* (Abu Hassan and Wan, 1990:5). Budi stresses not social ascent or material plenty but rather nobility of social character of the individual obtained through conscious acting attainable irrespective of his/her social status or economic position in the community.

teachers do not encourage students to ask. The religious schools are more strict than the secular ones. Most traditional Malay parents evade certain types of questions put forward by their children, especially those dealing with religion and sex.

In a Malay family the child is trained especially to be obedient. A child who loves his parents (*chinta-kasih*), especially the mother, should be co-operative, obedient, and conforming to the wishes of the parents. Disobedience of a child would strictly be disciplined by parents and elders (Abdullah and Mohamed, 1982:112; Tham, 1979:95).

3.8.4.2. Religious Values: Islam plays an important role in the process of socialisation of a Malay child. Tham (1979:94-95) points out the various sentiments and religious observances that are inculcated during the early years of socialisation of a Malay child. The modes of prayers and the ritual requirements pertaining to prayers are taught assiduously. For instance before commencing a task, beginning a journey, or taking a responsibility, the child learns to say '*bismillah*' which means in the name of God. In the same way he is taught of the doctrine and concepts of the unity of God (*tauhid*), religiously obligatory (*wajib, fardhu*), recommended (*dipuji*), disapproved (*makruh*), and forbidden (*haram*).

Through religious teaching, the child acquires a sense of the all powerful God and becomes conscious of the need to be religiously submissive (*khushu*). In addition, the child trains to be good, helpful, benevolent, and sincere, all of which are

included under the concept of *ihsan*. This religious concept also implies the attainment of merit or reward for good works performed.

3.8.4.3. Influence of Urbanisation: The change in lifestyle due to urbanisation and development has gradually changed family structure and behaviour of family members. The new urban family faces a variety of basic material needs as well as the need for education of children. In the competitive lifestyle, this leads to stress affecting family harmony and setting[93] .

Malaysian scholars such as Fatimah Arshad and Hashami Bohari (1992), and Mohd. Kamal Hassan (1993) warn about the consequence of influence of modernisation on family function and harmony which create the problem of inadequate rest, continuous financial constraints, and interval conflict within the family[94] . Abu Hassan and Wan Rafaei (1990:17), in their study among Malay students, found there is evidence to show the Malay family is losing its ties as a result of modernisation.

3.8.5. Islamic Teaching for Families

There are various organisations, centres, publications and groups which try to access families, especially Malay families,

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[93] In an urbanised society, there is less time for the family to be together, and the religious values of parents tend to be seriously eroded by the values of sensate culture encouraged by a consumerist economy and popularised by both the electronic and the print media. The stress is testified by noise and traffic congestion and pollution (Fatimah and Hashami, 1992:2-3; Mohd. Kamal, 1993:27-28).

[94] The urban young Malays, who are migrated from rural areas, are away from the protection of the village community or the extended family. As the result, some of them are exposed to deviance behavior. These ranges from violence, spouse and child abuse, drug addiction, and children running away from homes, to pop culture, indulgence in pornographic movies and videos, and *bo-sia* (Mohd. Kamal, 1993:28,3o; Fatimah and Hashami, 1992:3). *Bo-sia* is the latest deviance among Malaysian girls, which involves looking for free sex.

to teach them about Islamic values and lifestyle in Malaysia. The *da'wah* organisations used to approach families in their own ways using or emphasising different methods.

The government backs Islamic centres involved in setting up courses on Islamic *da'wah* and distributing booklets on 'the basis of forming happy family' and 'leadership in the home and the family'. These activities are carried out in a framework to elaborate a project called 'my home is my paradise' (*rumahku syurgaku*)[95]. In Kuala Lumpur , the department of (Islamic) Religious Affairs has been conducting courses on Islamic marriages since 1976[96].

There are several printed materials especially in the form of magazines which are concerned over the Islamic perspective of family and women such as *Ummi, Muslimah, Cahaya, Dakwah, Al-Islam and* to lesser degree *Keluarga, Jelita* and *Wanita*[97].

3.8.6. Facts and Problems

Urban Malay families are in the process of gradual change as a consequence of economic growth and industrialisation. These changes occur in many aspects of lifestyle of the family as well as in husband-wife relationship.

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[95] This project was launched in July 1992.

[96] The course includes the responsibilities of the father, the mother and the children in a family set up. There are other Muslim voluntary and non-governmental organisations involve in development of Islamic family in Malaysia (Mohd. Kamal, 1993:39-40).

[97] In addition there are other publications on the family and Islam mainly by *da'wah* groups and Islamic organisations such as *Risalah* (ABIM), *Perspektif* (JIM), *Harakah* (PAS), *Dunia Islam, Pengasuh* (*Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*), *Majalah Dian, Al-Islam, Peristiwa* and *Al - Nahdah* (RISEAP).

The age of marriage has risen for both males and females (Tey Nai Peng, 1992:17). Marriage has negative impacts on work participation among women in Malaysia. Child care responsibility, not interested to work, the husband's objections and housework were some of the reasons given according to the report of the Malaysian Family Life Survey (MFLS)(Rohani, 1992:76-78).

Fertility among the Malays is higher than that of the Chinese and Indians[98] . The same report (Philomena, 1992:25-26) discloses that the mean completed family size for Chinese is 4.6, which is one child fewer than the completed family size for the Malays. In addition, more than half of urban Malays use the contraceptive. This rate, however, is lower than that of the Chinese and Indians.

Although the Malays show positive response to education of their children, at every level of education, Chinese parents spend about twice the amount spent by Malay parents on their children's education. Indian parents on average spend more than Malay parents but less than Chinese parents (Abdul Manan, 1992:117).

Malay women have a greater proportion of 'ever married' (married, divorcee and widow) compared to the Chinese and Indians; but according to the 1984-85 Malaysian Population and Family Survey (Hamid Arshat, 1988:27-29), in urban areas about one in six Malay women had experienced a break up of their first

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[98] The survey carried out in 1988 shows that 54.5 per cent of Malays pairs use contraceptives. The percentages for the Chinese and Indians are 72.4 and 62,5 respectably (Tey Nai Peng, 1992:37). Another report (Hamid Arshat, 1988:86) indicates that 26 per cent of currently married urban 'exposed' Malay women are using efficient contraceptives. It is almost half of proportion of the Chinese (55 per cent),and much lower than the Indians (45 per cent).

marriage compared to about one in twenty Chinese women. However, the survey disclosed that rural Malays experience a higher marital dissolution rate than their counterparts in the cities (17.2 percent compared to 13.5 percent).