

ISLAMIC POPULAR CULTURE : EMERGING OF *NASYID* GROUPS IN MALAYSIA

Zulkiple bin Abd. Ghani'

Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the emerging of nasyid's groups and their contributions in nurturing Islamic popular culture in Malaysia. In the light of the proliferation of da'wah, some nasyid groups have gradually emerged and grown, saying that they will uphold Islamic identity and propagate Islamic messages through the medium. Their songs fulfil a small amount of segment of radio and television time and regarded by some observers as alternative entertainments to the non-Islamic culture. The groups objectives, visions and selected lyrics of their songs will be analysed in order to present how they develop Islamic popular culture in facing globalism. This paper also argues that the major neglect of nourishing Islamic popular culture results in a vacuum which is inevitably filled by non-Islamic culture. Therefore, as Malaysia is moving towards fulfilling Vision 2020 as a developed country which emphasises on a fully moral and ethical society, artists, like other groups in society, have to have a model to build a good image. This role is being played by artists in nasyid groups.

INTRODUCTION

“Just as philosophical and religious writings are a verbal expression of the ideology of a people, just as social and economic institutions are determined by that basic ideology, so also music and the sound arts are “translations’ of the deepest convictions of a people. They fit into the cultural whole as pieces of a giant mosaic, each tessera reflecting the world view of that people and corresponding to the other expression of that spirit. Fulfilling this role in the culture, the arts of sound become an important, even crucial, bulwark of a people’s heritage”.²

The above argument by Lois L. al-Faruqi provides an illuminating insight into the question of how music and sound arts have had serious consequences on the life of Muslims around the world. She argues that music, or more specifically in her preferred term's *handasah al-sawt*, is a cultural phenomenon which can play an important role in the life of Muslims. It is also regarded as a crucial ingredient as far as the process of Islamization of the *ummah* is concerned. Though music, or in more general term ‘entertainment’, is acknowledged as an important part of

Muslim life, it should be noted that there is a common belief among them that music is a “forbidden” pleasure which they can only participate in and enjoy with some measure of guilt. The centuries-old controversy among Muslim scholars on ‘*halal*’ (legitimate) or ‘*haram*’ (illegitimate) music in Islam has contributed to the present state of confusing among Muslim masses. Further, lack of interest in nurturing Islamic popular culture adds to the vacuum has been filled by unIslamic aesthetic products . This paper will discuss and analyse the attitudes of Muslim towards ‘entertainment’, the emerging of nasyid groups in Malaysia in providing an alternative entertainment, and the imperative needs of nurturing Islamic popular culture in more constructive manners .

MUSLIM ATTITUDES TO POPULAR CULTURE

In the discussion on the subject of ‘popular culture’, James W. Carey and A. L. Kreiling noted that the subject was never well defined. “A major debate”, they wrote, “broke out concerning on the nature of popular culture ... [when] radicals who had turned from politics in the inhospitable fifties, outraged conservatives who saw popular culture as the penultimate threat to traditions”. With regard to that discussion, they seemed to be agreed that the term ‘popular’ may refer to certain objects and practices consumed or used by all strata of the population, while ‘culture’ refer to the expressive artifacts like words, images and objects that bore meanings. The center of the debate was said to focus on the popular entertainment – songs, films and stories.³ Prof. Siddiqui, in another perspective, uses the term “popular culture in the Muslim world” in his review of three books written and edited by Boaz Shoshan, Edmund Burk, and Akhbar Ahmed respectively. He gives an example of the Prophet’s birthday celebrations as discussed by Akhbar Ahmed as an activity of popular culture which is considered as part of nonelitist mode of life.⁴ The discussions of popular culture seem entirely to focus on mass culture, i.e. art of market place – appealing and aiming at mass consumption and the great bulk of it is carried by mass media such as newspaper, magazines, radio, television, films and on VCD. Therefore, the term ‘popular culture’ uses in this paper will consider all types of aesthetic pleasures which are widely consumed by the masses including music, singing and dancing.

It should be admitted that the legality of music, singing, and dancing is an issue which is hotly debated among individuals and scholars in Muslim society. With regard to that discussion, Muslim scholars are divided into two groups, the first group regards these aesthetic pleasures *halal*. On the other hand, the second group believe that they are discouraged or prohibited (*makruh* or *haram*) in Islam. In fact, there is no Qur’anic passage that condemns the practice of these aesthetic pleasures directly, but antagonists have cited certain verses to support their contention, especially verse 60 of *surat al-Najm*, verse 64 of *surat al-Isra*, and verse 6

of *surat Luqman*, which they argue as evidences that these aesthetic pleasures are forbidden in Islam. On the other hand, protagonists have sought to read into other passages that support for their arguments. On the whole, however, both sides look to find another authority, *hadith*, which they believe supports their position. As the Prophet was reported to condemn a practice on one occasion and to condone the same practice on another, both sides have sought it to substantiate their stance, and this lets the issues remain prolonged.⁵

As a result, some observers have found that Muslim commentary on the popular culture is a rhetorical extravaganza, full of sound and fury.⁶ Their attitude is understandable due to the state that popular culture is largely dominated by Western culture while Islamic popular culture is virtually non-existence, except on a small scale.⁷ Moral decadence portrayed by artists as major players of that culture, particularly on television through films, series, drama or variety shows, is a sphere strongly attacked by Islamists. A variety of metaphors such as "disease", "evil" and "satan's instruments" are sometimes used to describe the role and behaviour of artists. The personality, dress, glamorous style of living, and negative behaviour of artists also contribute to shaping this perception.⁸ There are many questions raised by critics such as "Can artists be involved in the diffusion of *da'wah*", a sceptical question is posed in *Dakwah*, a monthly journal published by the Malaysian Islamic Dakwah Foundation (YADIM).⁹ Further, addressing the topic of the relationship between artists (especially singers and dramatists) and their responsibility for the well-being of religion and society, Dato' Dr. Ismail Ibrahim of *Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia* (Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia – IKIM) acknowledges the significance of the negative influences of artists on young Muslims. He suggests that artists should build up their *maruah* (manliness), and avoid being manipulated by any company whose aim is solely profit.¹⁰

The speed of media explosion has increased cultural contacts and caused a massive socio-cultural change in society. Therefore, in order to contribute positively in providing an alternative entertainment, particularly to serve Muslim audiences, some efforts have been done by concerned Islamists through the establishment of nasyid groups. Their emergence and contribution will be discussed below.

NASYID GROUPS: POPULARITY AND CONTRIBUTION

"What we wish for is to make nasyid superior and hopefully God will bless us with what we are doing now. Our intention is to disseminate the message of *da'wah*

through this mean as we think this is the best way to approach those who are reluctant to go to mosque to hear a speech (*ceramah*) or read the Qur’an. We think that music is a ‘universal language’, easy to be conveyed and understood by many people”, says Zarie Ahmad, leader of Raihan.¹¹ Raihan was established on October 1996 under the auspices of Warner Music (M) Sdn. Bhd., consists of five talented young men. Raihan’s first album entitles *Puji-pujian* (the Highest Praise) shocked the Malaysian music when they won four awards of the Malaysian Music Industry Awards (MMIS) in 1998. Their first album has been sold for more than 600,000 units, surpassed all popular Western-style music to top the charts in Malaysia. The emergence and the succesfull of Raihan in promoting nasyid songs have encouraged more groups to be formed such as Rabbani, Hijjaz, Brothers, Saujana, Jauhari, Diwani, In-Team, Nowseeheart, The Zikr, Suara Firdaus, Usrah al-Soff, Al-Anwar Group, Solehah and Qatrunnada.

They acknowledge that their participation in conveying Islamic messages through nasyid songs is to fulfill an obligation laid by Islam upon its followers. This is because the Qur’an teaches Muslims that they should present Islamic messages either to Muslims or non-Muslims with wisdom. Hijjaz, the group who declared that their first album *Cahaya Ilahi* (Light of Allah) has been sold for more than 90,000, for example, argues that nasyid songs are among the best medium in educating young Muslims today as they can affect the soul, stir the emotion and excite the fear and hope of people. In an interview with *Muslimah*, they conveyed that the name “Hijjaz” was opted for the group because Hijjaz (means Mecca and Medina) was the center for Islamic culture and civilisation. For Hijjaz, the obligation of presenting dakwah, coupled with the capability of media of reaching multitudes of people, indicated why nasyid songs have become an urgent necessity. Therefore, they emphasize that their group should be managed as commercial entity in order to compete and survive.¹² They formed a company known as “Hijjaz Music Entertainment” to organise shows, hire audio-visual equipments, distribute their albums, and provide consultations for nasyid’s artists. Through their efforts, new group In-Team emerged in 1998 with their first album entitles *Kasih-Kekasih* (Love-Lovers). In-Team consists of four members from International Islamic University Malaysia who have a background of religious studies. For In-Team, what they want is to be a role-model for young Malaysian generations who will become excellent in their studies as well as in the fields of entertainment industry.¹³ Likewise, Rabbani, the group who won three awards of the MMIS 2001, established their own company known as Rabbani Productions.

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Table 3.1 below presents selected nasyid groups, number of members, number of albums produced, formation dates and a brief background of members education.

Table 3.1 Nasyid Groups and Their Contribution

Group's name	No. of Members	No. of Albums/Titles	Form Date	Members Education Background
Raihan	5	3 (Puji-Pujian, Syukur, Senyum)	October 1996	Religious school
Rabbani	11	6 (Rabbani, Arah, Muhammad Ya Habibi, Pergi Tak Kembali, Iqar 1421, Intifada)	March 1997	Religious school
Brothers	5	2	1997	Local University
Hijjaz	4	4 (Cahaya Ilahi, Keizinanmu, Pelita Hidup, Rindu)	1997	Religious and national education
In-Team	4	1 (Kasih-Kekasih)	June 1998	International Islamic University Malaysia Students
Saujana	5	3 (Saujana, Saujana 1, Kembara Cinta)	1998	Local University
Nowseeheart	6	1 (Wahyu Pertama)	1996	Local University

Before Raihan and other groups come into sight, it should be noted that Islam has some influences in the traditional Malay music. Mohd. Ghouse Nasuruddin, Director of the Centre of Arts at University of Science Malaysia, notes that Islam introduces the *zapin* dance and various forms of groups singing praising Allah, prophet Muhammad and Islamic warriors. These types of entertainments today are known as *hadrah*, *rodah*, *dabus*, *dikir* and *rebana*.¹⁵ In the traditional Malay community, there were many types of musical expressions associated with religious observances such as the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, commemoration of the ascension of the Prophet (*israk* and *mikraj*), *id* festivals, the ceremony of cutting the first lock of the child's hair and the circumcision of child. In such occasions, verses of the Qur'an or verses in the Arabic language which have religious connotations were chanted. It is suffice to say that the tradition of chanting religious verses to the rhythm of the drum or *kompang* (i.e. a drum with the face made of cattle or goat skin over a circular rim which is usually made out of a piece of wood), is widespread throughout the Malay community. However, such performing arts are limited to a particular occasion. Nowadays, with the continuation of the aboved discussed groups' activities and their new approaches in managing Islamic popular culture, it can be said that there has been a recent revival of interest in nasyid songs in the form which are packaged and marketed as a popular music form.

Da'wah through the nasyid medium has to face several challenges. Generally, many Muslims are still in the opinion that music, singing and dancing are religiously "unworthy" pleasures. Because of that situation, the nasyid groups seem very careful in selecting musical instruments, lyrics, melodies and also when performing at stage shows. Raihan, for example, has been criticised because of their association with female singer on one of the stage shows and performing slow stepping dance. They defend themselves by arguing that the accusations are untrue because they always take into considerations the unlawful practices and they will always adhere to the teachings of Islam. Further, they argue that slow stepping dance like the movement of the body from left to the right is allowable as Muslims have always practiced during the *zikr* (remembrance of God).¹⁶ Likewise, in order to avoid controversy on nasyid songs, Hijjaz emphasises that musical instruments used in their songs consist of percussion instruments like *kompang*, gongs, *rebana* (single-headed drum) and drums, and they stay away from string and *serunai* instruments such as flutes, trumpets, saxaphones, guitars and violins.¹⁷ In fact, some Muslim scholars in Malaysia have provided general views that *kesenian* (art) is *halal*, but subject to several conditions such as the objectives and performances must not be directed towards the achievement of "art for the art's sake", but to produce a well-rounded individual who is intellectually, morally, and spiritually developed; no free mixing between unmarried men and women may be allowed in terms of performance or audience; the lyrics of songs must be pure and innocent, and must keep within the moral bounds set by Islamic teachings (such as no erotic or licentious lyrics); artists or performers must be 'properly' clothes; and no temptation is allowed in whatever circumstances.¹⁸ The discourses of adhering to these conditions are remained prolonged.

As far as the lyrics of the nasyid songs are concerned, they strive to adhere to the lyrics which heighten spritual consciousness and encouraging for the pious practices as can be seen from the titles of the nasyid albums such as Raihan's *Puji-Pujian* (The Highest Praise), *Syukur* (Thankful), and *Senyum* (Smile). Part of the lyrics of Raihan's song *Rayuan Rindu* as follows:

My heart is loving You* My heart is just for You* Knowing you
Allah* I will try to get close to You* Let us find the way to know
our God* Feel the tortures of hellfire* Think of pleasures of
paradise* Find the way to get Allah's love

Similarly, the following is the lyrics of song entitles "Thank You Allah":

The sky is clear* The air is clean *The land is green * Thank you
Allah * The path we walk * The lines we talk *The things we see
* Thank you Allah * Thank you Allah * Say thank you Allah *

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Thank you Allah *When I sleep * When I eat * When I breath *
Thank you Allah * Thank you Allah * Say thank you Allah *
Thank you Allah * In the night or in the day * Every morning
after prayer * I'll never forget to say thank you * There are times
when I'm alone * Feel alright or not so strong * I'll pray to you
and say * Thank you Allah *Thank you Allah * So friends every
time remember * Allah the most Merciful * Say thank you Allah *
Thank you Allah

In short, the lyrics of nasyid songs represent a reflection of what some called it “edutainment”, i.e. education and entertainment in conveying Islamic messages.

NURTURING ISLAMIC POPULAR CULTURE

Since the hightening of Islamic consciuosness in the early 1970s, several efforts have been made to introduce Islamic popular culture as an alternative for the non-Islamic culture. However, it is said that the most difficult task in facing that challenges is the lack of interest among Muslims, individuals or organisations, in nurturing Islamic popular culture. The domination of non-Islamic culture creates a situation of uncertainty among Muslims as to what extent they are permitted to participate in or enjoy themselves with popular culture activities in their contemporary life. Lois L. al-Faruqi observes this state of affairs as follows:

“Some Muslims have attempted therefore to erect an “iron curtain” around themselves, to isolate their families and children from those forms of sound arts that might be instruments of de-Islamization. With the prevalence of modern communication technology in every town and village, such attempted isolation is rarely if ever successful. Others meet the challenge by trying to prohibit all the sound arts, regardless of their characteristics. In such cases, the resulting artistic vacuum is inevitably filled by non-Islamic forms of music, which invade the minds of the less thoroughly Islamized members of community – its youth.”¹⁹

As noted earlier, Muslim jurists generally hold the view that entertainment has a place in Islam. It is necessary in order to relax the body and refresh the mind. As a practical religion, Islam does not float in the stratosphere of imaginary ideals but remains with the human being on the ground of realities and day-to-day concerns. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a leading Muslim jurist argues,

“Islam does not require of Muslims that their speech should consist entirely of pious utterances, that their silence should be a meditation, that they should listen to nothing except the

recitation of the *Qur'an*, nor that they should spend all their leisure time in the mosque. Rather, it recognises that Allah has created human beings with needs and desires, so that, as they need to eat and drink, they also need to relax, and enjoy themselves".²⁰

Though pleasurable activities are permitted, Muslim authorities remind us that the pursuit of pleasure should not become the only goal of Muslim life. It is assumed that some Muslims, because of over-addiction to aesthetic pleasures, may overlook religious obligations. Further, with regard to the present entertainment in the Malaysian milieu, many question its compatibility with Islamic beliefs, morals, and manners. For instance, the government has declared a war on an alleged occult group and other deviant sects who purportedly preach anti-God messages through what they called it 'black metal' music.²¹ Similarly, about a decade ago, a former YADIM chairman stresses that, "There is no value in entertainment if its performers have no morals; if their dress is near to nudity; and if all they do on stage and on television screen is to hug one another".²² Furthermore, Datuk Abu Hassan Din, one of Malaysia's respected *ulama*, make the criticism that virtually all songs performed on television are love songs which lay much stress on unrequited passion and on lovers; despair and wailing; and some even contain unacceptable lyrics such as "*Tidak ku pinta lahir ke dunia*" (I did not ask to be born on this earth) as this contrasts with the beliefs (*‘aqidah*) of Muslims.²³

Looking at a broader perspective of aesthetic products, the experience of Iran in nurturing Islamic popular culture may provide an example. In an article entitled "The Islamisation of Iranian Television", Hamid Mowlana notes that the major role of Iranian television today is the *tabligh*, or propagation of Islamic culture. As a result of this policy, the Islamisation of popular culture and communication is said to be obvious in the Iranian television system. News, information, and documentaries which are prepared within a framework of Islamic interest get a large segment of television time. Meanwhile, entertainment and information are recognised as social items and not as neutral manufactured commodities. All programme contents are also checked for compatibility with Islamic tenets.²⁴ Despite all of this emphasis, unintended consequences arise, particularly given a continuous dependency on imported programmes, not from Western sources but from Eastern, particularly Japanese. Imported programmes, such as a serial called "Oshin", though from the policy standpoint in line with Islamic principles, depict an alien culture and create social problems.²⁵ Why do such instances happen when one of the objectives of television, to present Islamic ideas via the arts, is clearly determined? Beside the limited technical and financial capacity for producing programmes in Iran, it can be argued that Islamic popular

culture has not been properly nurtured. Even in the early period of the revolution, one observer notes, "The most crucial problem was that no one knew how Islamic precepts were going to be applied to entertainment and the arts".²⁶ Nonetheless, gradually, due to ceaseless efforts, a new image of popular culture, different from the one existing during the preceding regime, emerges. For instance, with regard to the new image of the cinema, one commentator notes,

"... a new cinema is emerging in Iran with its own special industrial and financial structure, and unique ideological, thematic, and production values. This cinema is not a propagandistic cinema in support of a ruling ideology. It is not monolithic. In fact, two cinemas seem to be developing side by side. The populist cinema inscribes (sic) postrevolutionary values more fully at the level of plot, theme, characterization, human relationships, portrayal of women, and *mise-en-scène*. The quality cinema, on the other hand, engages with those values and tends to critique (sic) the social conditions under the Islamic government".²⁷

Placed under the control of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance, Iranian films made a leap in both quantity and quality, producing 450 film features between 1983 and 1992.²⁸ These films fill many of its television programme schedules.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that two famous international films which deal with Islamic subjects, "The Message" and "Lion of the Desert", which were produced by Mustafa 'Aqqad, an Arab film producer in Hollywood, are greatly admired by Muslims, especially those involved in Islamic movements.²⁹ The former, however, was strongly opposed when it was first released because of the issue of portraying the image of the Prophet.³⁰ In actual fact, the "image" of the Prophet was brought about by using camera techniques, without casting an actor as the Prophet. To produce "The Message", Mustafa 'Aqqad took two years to come up with a script acceptable to leading Islamic scholars and a further two to raise funds to start shooting. Though facing several constraints, the film was then released and was full of cinematic excitements. This type of film however is very rare. Production houses for Islamic television programmes at the international level are limited, among other things due to the inability of Muslims to understand the importance of films or television as medium for the diffusion of *darwab*, and consequently this field has not been properly nurtured in accordance with Islamic tenets. Syed Arabi Idid and Rahmah Hashim suggest that:

"Efforts by organisations such as the Islamic Centre of South California in producing IIS (Islamic Information Service);

RISEAP that helped Malaysian director Shahrom Md. Dom produce 'The Signs' (an internationally acclaimed video documentary on Islam); and Western film companies that produce films such as 'The Message', 'Lion of the Desert' and many others should be emulated".³¹

CONCLUSION

To produce 'entertainment' products like nashid as we have discussed with wider appeal, a high degree of professionalism is required. This aspect should be given a paramount consideration if the domination of Islamic popular culture is to be realised. The challenge facing contemporary Islamists is not only that of disparaging "corruptive entertainments", but also of ensuring that Islamic alternative entertainments are available particularly to broadcasting stations in Muslim countries. The establishment of *nashid* songs and other Islamic aesthetic products, whether at national or international level, is therefore imperative.

END NOTES

- ¹ Zulkiple Abd. Ghani is an Associate Professor at the Department of Dakwah and Leadership Studies, Faculty of Islamic Studies, National University of Malaysia. He Obtained Ph.D degree in communication and Islamic broadcasting from Edinburgh University in 1996. A draft of this paper was presented at the Association of Muslim Social Scientists Annual Meeting on 26-28 October 2001 in the University of Michigan-Dearbon.
- ² Lois Lamy al-Faruqi, Islamization Through the Sound Arts, *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 3, 2, , 1986, p. 171.
- ³ James W. Carey and Albert L. Kreiling, Popular Culture and Uses and Gratifications: Notes Toward an Accomodation, in Jay G Blumler and Elihu Katz (eds.), *The Uses of Mass Communications Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research*, (London: Sage Publications 1974), pp. 225-226
- ⁴ Dilnawaz A. Siddiqui, Popular Culture in the Muslim World : Past and Present, *AJISS*, 13:1, pp. 100-108
- ⁵ See for further discussion al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, vol. 2, pp. 342-390; Henry George Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music*, (London: Lucz and Co.1929); and Abu Bilal Mustafa al-Kanadi, *The Islamic*

Ruling on Music and Singing (Saudi Arabia: Abul-Qasim Bookstore, 1991)

- ⁶ See for example Merryl Wyn Davies, *Serving the Public: Muslim Presence on the Airwaves*, in *Beyond Frontiers: Islam and Contemporary Needs*. (London: Mansell), 1989.
- ⁷ The spirit of *da'wah* has had a considerable impact on literature, but in visual and sound arts its impact is insignificant. See Ungku Maimunah Mohd. Tahir, "Sastera Islam: Malaysia's literary Phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s", *The Muslim World*, vol. LXXXX, 1989, pp. 232-248; and Khatijah Sanusi, "Islamisation of the Arts, Case Study: School of Art and Design, I.T.M. Malaysia", *Muslim Education Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1989, pp. 11-24
- ⁸ For example, it was reported in a newspaper that some Muslim artists eat in public during the day in the month of Ramadhan and even drink alcohol publicly. This disapproved behaviour diminishes their image in the eyes of the public. See for example Samsor Junet, "Majlis Hari Raya Tercemar", *Utusan Malaysia*, April 10, 1993, p. 21.
- ⁹ Nor Azuwan Yaakob and Mohd. Sukri Abdul Ghani, "Bolehkah Artis Berdakwah...?", *Dakwah*, May 1991, p. 6.
- ¹⁰ Dato' Dr. Ismail Hj. Ibrahim, "Di Antara Tugas Seni dan Tanggungjawab Social dan Agama", a paper presented at the *Seminar Kesenian dan Media Elektronik Dalam Pembangunan Ummah*, Pusat Islam, October 27, 1993, p. 8; Cf. also Noritah Sulaiman, "Antara Seni dan Tanggungjawab Agama", *al-Islam*, November 1993, pp. 6-8; "Artis Malaysia Terlalu Kebaratan", *Majalah RTM*, June 1993, p. 22.
- ¹¹ Jamilah Aini Mohd. Rafiei, *Hiburan Islam Positifkan Mentaliti*, *Muslimah*, May 1998 pp. 21-24
- ¹² "Sebutan Nama Allah Pendidikannya Jangka Panjang", *Muslimah*, May 1998, pp. 29-32
- ¹³ Zaila Muhammad Ali, "In-Team Jadilah Intan di Celah Kaca", *Anis*, May 2001, pp. 6-7.
- ¹⁴ Norzehan Ngadiron, *Dari Qari Kepada Penasyid*, *Anis*, June 2001, pp. 6-7.
- ¹⁵ Mohd. Ghaouse Nasuruddin, *The Malay Traditional Music*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1992), p. 3
- ¹⁶ Jamilah Moh. Aini, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
- ¹⁷ Sebutan Nama Allah, *op. cit.*, p.30.
- ¹⁸ See Md Hashim Hj. Yahya, *Kesenian dari Sudut Syariah*, a paper presented at the *Seminar Nasyid peringkat Kebangsaan ke -2*, Pusat Islam, November 1-2, 1992; Wan Salim Bin Wan Mohd. Nor, *Seni Lagu sebagai Media Dakwah*, a paper presented at the same seminar; and

- Abd kadir Hassan, Tarian Pada Pandangan Islam, *Masa*, no. 5, 1984, pp. 64-65.
- ¹⁹ Lois L. al-Faruqi, op. cit., pp. 175-176
- ²⁰ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, translated by Kamal el-Helbawy et. al. (Washington: American Trust Publication, n.d.), p. 290.
- ²¹ See for example "Counsel Those Involved in Cult, School Told", *The Star*, July 27, 2001, p. 10; Puja Syaitan, Seks Bebas Tarikan Black Metal, *Berita Harian*, 24 Julai 2001, p. 24.
- ²² Zaini Hassan and Wan Dayang, "Haramkah Hiburan Dalam Islam?", *Sasaran*, July-December 1988, p. 45.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- ²⁴ Hamid Mowlana, "The Islamisation of Iranian Television", *Intermedia*, vol. 17, no. 5, Oct.-Nov. 1989, p. 38.
- ²⁵ For instance because of the popularity of "Oshin", many people name their newborn baby that rather than with the traditional Islamic names. See Majid Tehrani, "Islamic Fundamentalism in Iran and the Discourse of Development" in Martin E. Marty and Scott Appleby (eds.), *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family and Education* (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 360.
- ²⁶ I.F.G Dossier, "Iranian Cinema Now", in Peter Cowie (ed.), *International Film Guide* (London: Andre Duetsch, 1993), p. 27.
- ²⁷ Hamid Naficy, "Cinema Under the Islamic Republic", *Jusur*, 6 (1990), p. 79.
- ²⁸ I.F.G. Dossier, op. cit., p. 29.
- ²⁹ "The Message" deals with the subject of the life of Prophet Muhammad, while "Lion of the Desert" concerns the life and times of the heroic Libyan freedom fighter, who, for years, thwarted the attempts of Mussolini's forces to dominate Cyrenaica. Anthony Quinn and Irene Papas, two Hollywood film names head the cast of both films. See Maureen Abdallah, "Mustafa Akkad: International Film Maker", *Ur*, no.3, 1981, pp. 44-47.
- ³⁰ According to S. Abdullah Schleifer, the Shaykh al-Azhar, Dr. ‘Abd al-Halim Mahmud, rejected the film script on the ground that "We do not portray the Prophet in cinema because his life is more than a life

it is a sacred commentary on the *Qur'an*". "Mass Communication and the Technicalization of Muslim Societies", op. cit., p. 9.

- ³¹ Syed Arabi Iddid and Rahmah Hashim, "Muslim Media: Some Considerations", op. cit., p. 14.

Prof. Madya Dr. Zulkipli Abd. Ghani
Fakulti Pengajian Islam
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
43000 Bangi, Selangor Darul Ehsan
Email : zulkip@pkriscc.ukm.my

