



Validity Of The Use Of The Name

'ALLAH'
ONLY for MUSLIMS

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INTRODUCTION

After the court's judgment that Herald Catholic newspapers could use the word 'Allah', it has caused dissatisfactions among Muslims, Islam NGOs and communities whether they are *umara's* or *ulama's*. They expressed their disappointments in the court's decision in unison, which led to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Prime Minister's Department forwarding an appeal to settle the crisis that has hit our country.

This issue has continued to be hotly debated and the Prime Minister has had an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and the community too has proposed to the Council of Rulers to issue statement on its stand to solve this issue. HH the Sultan of Selangor in his address expressed that Muslims should not view the issue on the word 'Allah' lightly. Rather, His Highness emphasized that the use of the word 'Allah' is exclusively for Muslims.

The writing in this book is to complement the book co-written by Ustaz Rashidy Jamil al-Rashid entitled "*Isu Kalimah Allah (Hukum Penggunaannya Bagi Umat Islam)*".

The content is divided into three sections:

First: Reaction of prominent Religious Figures, Intellectuals, *Ulama's*, and *Umara's*.

Second: Arguments on Validity that the use of the name 'Allah' is only for Muslims

Third: Conclusion

Hopefully this writing could add to the arguments, evidences and proofs in supporting the government's effort in handling this issue and simultaneously help to give a clear understanding to the Muslim community in our country. The writer ends the discussion in the conclusion by forwarding some suggestions that could be taken as examples and lessons in facing this name of 'Allah' issue.

Reactions of Prominent Religious Figures, Intellectuals and *Ulama's*

Issue on the use of the word 'Allah' has become heated when it has involved the country's legal institutions. Besides debates from legal aspects, it is also discussed and debated from academic perspective.

Actually there are views of some ulama's like Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaili, Syeikh al-Azhar, Syeikh Fauzi al-Zafzaf, former Deputy Rector of al-Azhar and a number of local religious figures who permit its use. Their reason is based on the generality of an absolute nas, whether from al-Quran or based on observation following the development of language without seeing the local realities in Malaysia. Besides, there are ulama's who totally do not permit the use of the word 'Allah' as had been pointed out by the writer in his earlier book on the issue.

Reactions of Prominent Religious Figures, Intellectuals and Ulama's in Malaysia

- **Tan Sri Harussani Zakaria (Mufti of Perak):** *"How could we equate the Oneness of Allah the Most Supreme with the practices of other religions which accept God as three elements?"*
- **Datuk Syeikh Abdul Halim Abdul Kadir (President of Association of Ulama's Malaysia):** *"This is a tragedy and a most useless present to Muslims on the new year. Use of the word 'Allah' cannot be fooled around with, especially if it is used by followers of other religions because of the sensitivity to Muslims not only in Malaysia but also worldwide. We have to accept the court's decision with a heavy heart but we consider it a tragedy. The word 'Allah' is part of divine verses of al-Quran and forever it cannot be compromised and shared by anybody except Muslims."*

- **Dato' Seri Mohd Tamyas Abd Wahid (Mufti of Selangor):** *“They (Herald Catholic) should have understood that the word ‘Allah’ should not be used as the word is specifically for Islam and it refers only to the One God. Christianity itself does not use ‘Allah’ in their holy book - instead words like Ilah, God, Lord and so on are used to refer to their god. Forbiddance from using the word ‘Allah’ by religions other than Islam had been decided by National Fatwa Council since the past few years.”*

- **Prof. Datuk Dr. Mahmood Zuhdi Abdul Majid (Deputy Dean of International Institute of Islamic Thought & Civilization)** *said: “This problem began from the very attitude of Muslims in this country which initiated followers of other religions to openly and boldly take advantage of the weakness. Use the provisions in our Legislative and Executive rights to clear this tense situation.”*

- **Dato' Dr. Maamor Osman, General Secretary of Islam Consumers' Association Malaysia** *said: “The decision could ignite troubles in the country because of the religious sentiments of Muslims who are very sensitive of things that touch their religious beliefs. If this happens, no one will benefit should religious riots erupt.”*

Views of Foreign Ulama's

Some views of foreign ulama's that forbid the use of the name 'Allah' by followers of religions other than Islam:

- **Islamic Constitutional Movement Kuwait, Sheikh Abdul Hamid al-Ballali:** *“The decision of the government is very significant in order to protect the true essence of the word ‘Allah’. A community that fails to protect its religious terms is a community that is lax.”*

- **Legal Adviser, Ministry of Justice, Saudi Arabia, Syeikh Abdul Muhsin al-'Abikan:** *“In order to prevent the misuse of the name ‘Allah’ except when referring to God the Creator, as there are other religions that also use the name ‘Allah’ in*

their religions while they themselves worship idols, the name 'Allah' should not be used when referring to God other than Him."

- **Delegate from al-Azhar (Deputy Syeikh of al-Azhar) and Head of Inter Religious Linjah Dialogue al-Azhar, Fadhilah al-Syeikh Abdul Fatah 'Allam:** *"Decision of the government was accurate. Allah cannot be synonymous with gods. It is not sensible to wrong the concept of essence of Allah in al-Quran."*

Views of Christian Intellectuals and Prominent Christian Figures

- Izzat Andrews, a Coptic Christian in Egypt in his article written in Arabic titled *"Allah is not God in Christianity and Judaism"* stated: *"The word 'Allah' only originated from usage by people during the period of ignorance before Islam (Jahiliah) who referred to Moon God. It never appeared in the holy books of the Jews and Nazarene. God for Christians is Elohim."*
- Christians too differed in this issue. In August 2007, Tiny Muskens appealed Christians to use the word 'Allah'. However the call was opposed by Christians both Protestants as well as Catholics. President of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights opposed the call with the statement: *"Bishop Martinus Tiny Muskens can pray to Allah all he wants, but only addlepatated Catholics will follow his lead. It is not a good sign when members of the Catholic hierarchy indulge in fawning exchange with Muslims, or those of any other religion."*

Arguments on Validity that the use of the name ‘Allah’ is only for Muslims

Actually there are many arguments showing that ‘Allah’ SWT possesses a name that befits Him and it cannot be allied with any other. Further arguments are as stated below:

Argument from al-Quran

Many verses in al-Quran show that the name ‘Allah’ refers to only Him the One God without being allied with others. Among the verses are:

Allah SWT’s decree:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ﴿٣﴾
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾

“Say (O Muhammad): He is Allah, (the) One; Allah the Self-Sufficient Lord, Whom all creatures ask for all their needs; He begets none, nor is He begotten; And none is equal to Him.”

(al-Ikhlās: 1-4)

Ibn Kathir in his Translation (4/3121) said: *“That He is One in essence and His Oneness has no comparison, no assistant, no alliance, no equal and no likeness. This word is not expressed loosely to anyone else except to Allah Azza wa Jalla when testifying to His existence, because Allah is the Most Perfect in all His qualities and attributes and actions.”*

Syed Qutub stated in *Fi Zilal al-Quran*: *“That is the truth of the existence of Allah SWT. There is no concept other than the essence of Allah SWT, no absolute existence other than the eternal existence of Allah SWT. All other existence is derived from the eternal existence*

of Allah and their essence from the attributes of Allah SWT. Features that differentiate the concept of religious devotion to Allah in Islamic faith are the features that have assimilated in the overall living established on fundamentals. It has become a base for all deeds and practices in life. The effects of these can be clearly seen in the legal field just as they are seen in the beliefs. First effect from religious faith is that Allah SWT's decrees are the sole procedures that govern all managements of life. When the effects do not exist it means that the faith in the Oneness of Allah is not yet firm except when all the implications are realized in every field of life.”

Allah SWT's decree:

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ
هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ

Translation of meaning: “Allah is Almighty and All-Knowing because He is the Only True God, so that all that men invoke besides Him is sheer falsehood. And (remember) Allah is He, Most High, the Most Great (in might).”

(al-Hajj: 62)

Al- Mawardi in *al-Nukat wa- al-Uyun* said: “What is required by right here is whether the name is from the name ‘Allah’. This is the view of Yahya bin Salam, or it means one who says the truth like Ibn Isa. Al-Siddiq is of the opinion that it means Godly devotion to only Him.

There are two opinions on falsehood. First, idols according to al-Hasan and second, devils, according to the view of al-Qatadah,

Allah SWT's decree:

... أَن لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“...There is no God (to help me) but You (O Allah)! Limitless are You in Your glory! Indeed I have wronged my own soul.”

(al-Anbiya': 87)

Al-Razi said: “The condition for anyone wanting protection from Allah SWT is that he must start by testifying to the Oneness of Allah, after that to chant divine verses in praise of Him. Further, he must repent and admit his sins.”

Allah SWT’s decree:

﴿ قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ ... ﴾

“Their Messengers asked: ‘Should there be any doubt regarding the existence of Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth?...’”

(Ibrahim: 10)

Ibn Kathir in his Interpretation of Meaning said: “Allah informs that what revolves between infidels and prophets concerns debates. This is because they cause doubts that the only devotion is to Allah SWT and no other alliances.” Because of that the prophets asked : “Are there doubts with Allah?” Here there are two hypotheses:

- Is there in the existence of God a doubt caused by religious inclination concerning His existence blending with declaration according to peaceful religious beliefs? If doubt comes in part of it, it is most important to study the evidence to prove His existence.
- Is there in the Divinity of Allah and His Oneness that compels those who perform divine religious devotion to Him having doubt whereas He is Most Exalted, Creator of all that exists and devotion is only to Him without allies and polytheism.

Allah SWT’s decree:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ ۗ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ ﴾

﴿ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا ﴾

“Surely, Allah will not forgive ascribing divinity to anything besides Him, but He will forgive whom He wills for other lesser sins (according to His divine laws). He who ascribes divinity to anything besides Allah has indeed invented a heinous sin.”

(al-Nisa': 48)

Syed Qutub said: “Such explanation of the verse contains accusations towards Jews that they have committed sins of polytheism and they are urged to have a pure faith, a faith of monotheism. Al-Quran does not mention that their practices were considered polytheistic but clearly tells that Uzair was son of Allah just as the word of Nasara tribe saying that the Messiah was the son of Allah. This, without doubt was the word of polytheism. Al- Quran too tells about their practices and that the Nasara tribe was polytheists.”

Allah SWT's decree:

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي ﴿١٤﴾

“Truly, I am Allah. There is no god but Me, Serve Me, and establish your prayers for My remembrance.”

(Taha: 14)

Dr. Aidh al-Qarni in his book al- Azamah said: “This verse becomes the source of God’s messages and the coming of the prophets into the world. Truly the prophets and the book were descended to announce to mankind the concept about Allah SWT; Allah SWT who reigns His kingdom and all our praise be for Him,”

Allah SWT's decree:

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ ﴿١٩﴾

“Therefore be firm in your knowledge and conviction (O Muhammad) that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah and implore Him to forgive your sins, and to forgive the sins of the believers, men

and women, (Remember) Allah knows well how you move about (in the life of this world) and the situation of your resting-place (in the Hereafter).”

(Muhammad: 19)

Al-Qurtubi said, excerpt from al-Mawardi, if the Prophet knew the concept of Allah, it included three features, namely:

- Know that Allah teaches you about La ilaha illa Allah.
- What you know by way of evidence tell it as credible news.
- Always chant La illaha illa Allah.

Allah SWT’s decree:

..... وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ^ج

“...And speak nothing but the truth about Allah...”

(al-Nisa’: 171)

Syed Qutub said: “It is too extreme, far beyond the limit of the true concept. The exceeding of this limit had pushed People of The Book to come out with words that are not true towards Allah, i.e. they claim that Allah SWT has a son and that the One Allah is three in number.”

Allah SWT’s decree:

قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَىٰ
۞ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَشْرِكُونَ

“Say (O Muhammad): Praise be to Allah, and peace upon His servants (the Prophets) whom He has chosen. Who is more worthy? Allah (the Almighty) or that which they ascribe divinity together with Him?”

(al-Naml: 59)

Syed Qutub said: *“The false gods they allied with were dolls and statues or angels and genies or any of Allah’s creatures. What else is higher than Him? It does not at all cross the hearts of intelligent people to make comparisons like that. Hence the form of questions was pure mockery and defamatory as it was unlikely the questions had been asked in earnest or wanted answers.”*

Allah SWT’s decree:

..... أَئِنَّ لَهُ مَعَهُ اللَّهُج
..... أَئِنَّ لَهُ مَعَهُ اللَّهُج
..... أَئِنَّ لَهُ مَعَهُ اللَّهُج

“...Is there any other god besides Allah?...”

(al-Naml: 63)

Syed Qutub said: *“There is no room which permits anybody to make claims like these and there is no place to escape to other than to profess and submit. Here the position of the Pagan (Musyrikin) community looked very strange and unique when they equalled false gods with Allah and worshipped them like they were worshipping Allah.”*

Arguments from al-Sunnah:

The Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW said:

خير ما قلت أنا والنبيون قبلي يوم عرفة لا إله إلا الله
وحده لا شريك له، له الملك وله الحمد وهو على كل شيء قدير

Meaning: *“The best words expressed by me and other Prophets before me on the day of ‘Arafah are: There is no God but Allah, He is One and there are no allies for Him, He possesses His Kingdom and all praise is for Him, And Allah is the Supreme Commander over everything.”*)

The Holy Prophet SAW said:

من شهد أن لا إله إلا الله ، وأنّ محمداً رسول الله :
حرّم الله عليه النار

Meaning: *“Whoever testifies that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Allah will forbid hell from him.”*
(Documented by Muslim in Chapter: Debates on Faith)

The Holy Prophet SAW said:

من قال أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأنّي رسول الله
لا يلقى الله بهما عبد غير شاك فيهما إلا دخل الجنة

Meaning: *“Whoever utters: ‘I testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am a messenger of Allah.’ When the words are uttered by a slave without any doubt, he would not meet Allah, just that he would enter heaven.”*

(Documented by Muslim)

The Holy Prophet SAW said:

قولوا لا إله إلا الله تفلحوا

Meaning: *“Say ‘La ilaha illa Allah’ so that you would achieve victories.”*
(Hadith in Sirah)

The Holy Prophet SAW said:

الإيمان بضع وستون , او بضع وسبعون شعبة , أفضلها:
لا إله إلا الله

Meaning: *“Faith (Iman) has more than 60 sections or 70 sections and the best is the utterance of La ilaha illa Allah.”*

(Documented by Muslim and Ibn Mandah)

Based on the tradition of the Prophet (hadith) it is clearly shown that among God's essence is His Oneness that cannot be allied with others.

Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaili in his book. *“Usul al-Iman wa al-Islam”* (1/57-598) said: *“Testifying this submission to Allah of the Oneness of Allah includes intent from the heart, recognition by utterance from the tongue and followed by pure deeds of religious devotion.”* The meaning of submission to Allah with لا إله إلا الله includes many matters:

- To confirm the existence of Allah and to reject the absence of His *uluhiyyah*.
- To confirm His Oneness to be free and to distance oneself from polytheism.
- To confirm that Allah does not have qualities of *jauhar* or *aradh* in essence substance to be free and to distance oneself from uttering chants or to equate Allah with any other.
- To confirm that all God's creatures that exist began from non-existence before Allah created them in order to reject and to be free from the belief that says there exists a tie between cause and effect or purely the relationship between the Creator and His creatures is one of the things that give effect.
- To confirm that Allah SWT who governs and administers what He creates can do anything according to what He wills and be free from views of communities that things are based on nature or administered by angels or by stars in the galaxy.

Meaning of لا إله إلا الله According to Views of Ulama's

In order to improve the understanding of the concept of the Oneness of Allah that we utter and testify, ulama's have translated its meaning further as follows:

- **Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali** said: “ لا إله إلا الله is Him that we submit to and do not betray Him because of His supremacy and exaltation; have feeling of love, fear, hope, and surrender to Him; trust in Him and supplicate to Him. None others deserve all these acts of devotion except Allah.”
- **Al-Biqā'ie** said: “ لا إله إلا الله is rejecting totally the acts of religious devotion to other than Allah, the Most Supreme Ruler. Truly this knowledge is the biggest to save us from chaos in the Hereafter”
- **Dr. Said Abdul Azim** in his book *I'tiqad al-Nasara fi al-Masih* (pg 90) said: “Allah has described about Himself and His Oneness that is eternal including Oneness of His essence, His qualities and His actions”

Meaning of لا إله إلا الله According to Language and Linguistic Definition

The word 'Allah' has been discussed at length in the book 'Issue on the word Allah' (*Isu Kalimah Allah*). Hence the mention made here is just an addition to the meaning of the word 'Allah' as viewed by *ulama's*.

The question that needs to be answered is: Did the word 'Allah'

originate from the Arabic language or from the many Semantic languages that had been related to Arabic which also used the word 'Allah' when referring to God like Elaha in Aramaic language and *Elohim* in Hebrew?

To answer this question the writer has excerpted two views on this issue:

First: Al-Balkhi said that it did not originate from the Arabic language but from Hebrew or Siryani which had been absorbed into Arabic to become *Lahan* meaning one who possesses strength. Al-Alusi on the other hand, said that there was no evidence that pointed to it and did not lead to it, just as the usage by the Jews and Christians was not evidence as it could have been just a similarity in words used for divinity.

Second: According to venerated *ulama's*, the word 'Allah' originated from the Arabic language. This was the view of Imam al-Syafi'e, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, Imam Asy'ari and his companions, al-Khattabi, Imam al-Haramain, Imam al-Ghazali, Imam Fakhr al-Razi and most scholars of the Tenets of Islam (*Usul*) and Law of Muslim Theology (Fiqh). Also excerpted was the choice of al-Khalil, Sibawayh, al-Mazini and Ibn Kisan saying that the word 'Allah' originated from the Arabic language and was the original name used for His essence only.

Origin of the Word 'Allah' and Its Meaning

First: Arabic Language

Al-Alusi in *Ruh al-Ma'ani* said, the origin of the word from *I'lali* became *ilah*, as in *al-Sihah* or *al-Ilalah*, as in *al-Kasyaf*. Both have their arguments.

Al-'Allamah al-Sa'd said: *"Indeed god or ilah were names worshipped in earnest understood during pre-historic times while Allah is a universal ism for His essence."*

Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaili in *Usul al-Iman wa al-Islam* said: *"Allah means that He is the Most Powerful over all His creations and this does happen unless He wills it. And that He is the Most Supreme and Mighty and cannot be defeated and that He is the Most Powerful and cannot be opposed and overcome and any imposition is invalid unless it is from Him."*

Ulama' Tauhid said: *"Allah is a universal ism (proper noun) to the essence of the Most Perfect, that is Allah SWT, while mankind may have characteristics that are other than Allah SWT's."*

Allah is a *universal ism* which shows that the essence of all the names of 'Allah' are compounded to Allah. Allah is His name which is the Most Supreme.

Al- Khazin in his Interpretation of Meaning said: *"'Allah' is a proper noun for Allah who is One, has no double nor has alliance with anyone."*

In *Tafsir Hadaiq al-Rauh al-Raihan*, it is stated that: *"Allah has the right to be worshipped and none other."*

Second: Malay Language

Prof. Syed Mohd Naquib al-Attas said: *“Language visualizes the reality of existence. Absorbing key understandings from foreign to another language involves not only pure translation of words that give much deeper effects, it also involves the translation of symbol images of a bigger system and bigger world views which do not fit with the views of the world described by the language into which such understanding is absorbed.”*

Malay language is synonymous to the Malay race. The Malay race is synonymous with Islam. Based on historical evidence and artefacts, it clearly shows that Malaya had accepted Islam since the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries. This is evidenced by archaeological finds of inscribed stone in Kampung Buluh, Kuala Berang, Hulu Terengganu dated 22nd February 1303.

Islamic government started in Malaya with the beginning of Malacca Malay Sultanate in 1414 which made Islam the national religion. Similarly, as was widely known based on history, the Law followed in Malaya during the pre-colonial period was based on Islam, such as the Malacca Legal System/Canon Law and Procedures 99.

Islamic influence in Malaya also brought Arabic words into the Malay language. Arabic terminology was used widely in the Malay language, such as names of days and so on. Jawi writing was also a strong symbol of Islamic influence to the Malays.

The Malay language too rooted from the womb of Islam. The Constitution, article 160 (2) specifies that the Malays must be Muslims. Hence the word ‘Allah’ which has been absorbed into the Malay language must be understood according to the context of the Malay race whose base is Islam. Thus if it opens up rooms to other religions to use the word ‘Allah’, it will change the meaning of the word according to its meaning in the context of the Malay language.

Therefore, if Christians are permitted to use the word ‘Allah’, the meaning of the word ‘Allah’ in the Dewan Bahasa Dictionary (‘the

One God') must be changed to God Jesus/ God Idol/ God Father/ Three Gods United (Trinity). Is it not going to cause confusion to the Malay language and the Islam religion?

From the 'Uruf Aspect

'Uruf from Fiqh definition is:

عادة جمهور قوم في قول أو عمل

Meaning: *"Practices or the spoken language of a community that becomes its norm."*

From this definition it can be understood that 'uruf does not exist except when it actually takes place among people in certain places or usually happens when the majority practises this 'uruf and conforms to it. For example, it is customary for people in Syria that *mahar* mentioned in the solemnization of marriage for woman is two-thirds of the total *mahar* to be given immediately while the remaining one-third is to be given after death or divorce. It is therefore imperative to have common ways between and among the majority of the members of the community in the formation of 'uruf and this will not happen unless it is done continuously or repeatedly. Otherwise it appears as personal actions which is not 'uruf.

Evidence from Syara' on Adopting 'Uruf

Ulama' provides evidence on the situation of 'uruf in the formation of Fiqh rules based on *athar* documented by Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal as narrated by Abdullah bin Mas'ud: *"What are good viewed by Muslim communities are good, they are good by Allah. What are bad viewed by Muslim communities as bad, they are bad by Allah."*

Jurists (*Fuqaha*'s) in general and ulama's of Hanafi denomination specifically put a lot of weight on 'uruf as the biggest criterion to confirm the rights and denials of the communities covering many angles from *muamalat* to methods of management (*tasharruf*). They even consider 'uruf and customs as a very important basis and a broad resource.

Fiqhiyyah Method mentioned it as العدة المحكمة which is “Customs as Rules”. In *Syarah al Qawaid al-Fiqhiyyah* (pg 219) by Syeikh Ahmad al-Zarqa’ mentioned: “*Customs which are general or specific become law to involve syari’e law without authoritative text from al-Quran (nas).*” If there is no nas that says it is wrong at the beginning, or if there is, but general in nature, the custom can be accepted according to its explanation. The origin of this method was a speech by Ibn Mas’ud: “What Muslims see as goodness, it is considered good by Allah and what they see as badness, it is bad by Allah.”

Here it is stated that ‘*uruf* balad (localised or in a specific country) can also be considered legal and should be accepted.

Studies from the Bible

In the Bible, Christianity does not use the word ‘Allah’; on the other hand, it uses the words God, Jesus and Lord. However, if we refer to al-Quran the word ‘Allah’ is used on every page. In the context of Malaysian society the atmosphere and local scenario ought to be considered in the interest of the communities in order to preserve the harmony for the multiple communities and religions. Every Malaysian citizen should preserve this atmosphere and situation.

Even though some argue that the word ‘Allah’ is in the Bible which is translated into Arabic, still it cannot be used as an argument and support in order to permit the use of the divine word among Christians. This is because the word ‘Allah’ itself is never found in the original language in the writing of the Bible. On the contrary, the word used to refer to god in Hebrew is El.

Even al-Kitab al-Muqaddas, which is the Bible written in Arabic further proves that the word El in Hebrew is Ilah in Arabic. This can be viewed from the evidence in the Bible that many languages continue to retain the word El. For example:

The Bible in Malay Language:

Al-Kitab Good News, the New Testament, Mark 27:46 states: "At about three o'clock Jesus cried out loudly "Eli, Eli lama sabakhtani?" meaning : "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

The Bible in English:

The Holy Bible, The Gideons International, Mathew 27:46 states: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying "Eli, Eli, lama sabakhtani?" That is "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

The Bible in Arabic:

Al-Kitab al—Muqaddas, A'hd al-Jadid, Injil Matta 27:46 states"

ونحو الساعة التاسعة صرخ يسوع بصوت عظيم قائلاً:
إلي إلي لما شبقتني ؟ أي إلهي إلهي لماذا تركتني ؟

Based on the evidence stated above, it is clear that the word 'Allah' has never been used in the original Bible language and it is totally improper and is against 'uruf and waqi' in Malaysia.

The writer further excerpted part of the views and exertion of Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah written in his book "Hidayah al-Hayari Ajwibah al-Yahud al-Nasara" on Allah's attributes in Islam as compared to Christianity, to clarify further the difference in the purpose of the utterance of the word 'Allah' between the two religions.

- Truly there is one Allah SWT, He has no allies in His Kingdom, no comparison, no equal to Him, no controller, no adviser, no assistant, and no giver of intercession except with His consent.
- He has no father, off-springs, descendants and wife and He does not have similarities with others.

- He is Most Wealthy in His attributes, He does not eat, does not drink and does not need what His subjects need.
- His attributes do not unite with His subjects and no subjects unite in His attributes.
- He forever exists, never disappears and He never lets the administration of His Kingdom to anyone other than Him.
- He is Most Perfect and only He possesses perfection.

From Logic of Intelligence

The use of the name 'Allah' by other religions cannot be allowed completely as it can cause confusions among Muslims, even though from the aspect of law it is allowed for "*samawi*" religions like Christianity and Judaism to use the word but it is feared that it might be misused by certain parties.

It is also feared that it would cause mispronunciation (*lahn*). Dr. Bakar bin Abdullah Abu Zid in his book "Mu'jam al-Manahi al-Lafziyyah" (pg 51) said: "Among the mistakes is to lengthen the Alif to the name of 'Allah' and this is *lahn* to the Arabs." Abu al-Fath Abdul Wahid bin al-Husain al-Maghribi said: "Addition to *mad* and *lin* letters exceeding its limit is considered an error and a mistake."

The use of the word 'Allah' is allowed but it is feared that it would be misused. Therefore, it is better that we stopped allowing other religions from using the word 'Allah'.

The word 'Allah' in Islam and Christianity is clearly different. Hence the word cannot be allowed to be used among Christians. This can be seen from evidence relating to the use of the word 'Allah' in their Bible, such as:

- "You are Messiah, the living son of Allah." (Matius 16:16)
- "Because he said: I am the son of Allah." (Matius 27:43)

- Love is bestowed upon you and peace and prosperity from Allah, our Father and from God Jesus Christ.” (Galatia 1:3)
- Jesus said to him: “Do not hold me (back), because I have not gone to Father, but go to My kins and say to them that now I am going to My Father and your Father, My Allah and your Allah.” (Yohanes 20:17)

The word ‘Allah’ which is to be used carries the concept of Trinity which is vastly different from the Oneness believed by Muslims. And as is stated in history, the concept of Trinity was actually only tabled in the fourth century in Council in Nice which was attended by bishops, renowned theologians and these church scholars agreed to accept the concept of Trinity.

According to Syeikh Muhammad Mutawalli Sya’rawi, these words were expressed by Christians three hundred years after the death of Jesus.

The word ‘Allah’ used in the concept of Trinity is a humiliation to Muslims. The writers have excerpted admissions by Christians themselves rejecting this idea:

D Salm Hill, a Christian said: “The story of my becoming a Muslim. I have been asked by several non-Muslims why, if I believe in the existence of Jesus Christ, and that also preached God’s message, why then did I turn from Christianity to Islam? My one answer is that I could not believe in the Trinity, I could not believe in the Resurrection, I could not feel sure that Christ died on the cross for the sins of humanity.”

Similarly, Dr. Ali Selmen Benoit rejected the dogma of Trinity. In a book “Why I embraced Islam” he affirmed the following: “As a doctor of medicine, and descendant of a French Catholic family, the very choice of my profession has given me a solid scientific culture which had prepared me very little for mystic life. Not that I did not believe in God, but that dogmas and rites of Christianity in general and of Catholicism in particular never permitted me to feel His presence,

thus my unitary sentiment for God forbade me accepting the dogma of Trinity, and consequently of Divinity of Jesus Christ.”

A nun named Karen Armstrong in her book, “A History of God“ (pg 18 – 19) stated her disagreement with the dogma of Trinity. She said “Is the new treaty really the Trinity doctrine which is difficult and contradictive, or like other aspects of faith, is the works of theologians centuries after the death of Jesus in Jerusalem?”

Based on the logic stated, it is clear that the word ‘Allah’ should be preserved of its sanctity from any form of misuse which can lead to confusion and threat to harmony between religions particularly in this country.

Legal Issues and Rights of Responsibility

The legal rights are divided into three factors namely:

First: Malayan Constitution

There are a number of acts and enactments that provide sanctions against the use of the word 'Allah'. Among them are:

- In the schedule to Control And Restriction Of The Propagation Of Non-Islamic Religions Enactment 1989 (Enakmen Kawalan dan Sekatan Pengembangan Agama Bukan Islam kepada Orang Islam) except Sabah, Sarawak, Penang and Federal Territories which are in the process of legislating this enactment.
- Article 3.1 Item 3: Religion of the Federation. Islam is the religion of the Federation but other religions can be practised in peace and harmony anywhere in the Federation.
- Article 3.2 Item 3: Religion of the Federation. In every state other than states that do not have Rulers, the position of the Ruler as Head of Islam in his state according to the provisions and limited to what is recognised and fixed by the constitution of that state, and subject to the said constitution, all rights, privileges, prerogatives and the power enjoyed by him as Head of Islam, is not touched and affected, but in any actions, practices or ceremonies related to this, the Council of Rulers has agreed that those actions, practices or ceremonies should be extended to the whole Federation, every other Ruler in his capacity as Head of Islam gives consent to Yang di-Pertuan Agong to represent him.
- Article 3.5 Item 3: Religion of the Federation. Irrespective of whatever is in this Constitution, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong should be the Head of Islam in the Federal Territories of

Kuala Lumpur, Labuan and Putrajaya, and for this purpose Parliament can through legal means make provisions to oversee the Islamic affairs and to form a Council to advise the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on matters relating to Islamic religion.

- Item 37 (1): Appointment Oath for the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong must, before performing his duties, take and sign the appointment oath in Section 1 Fourth Schedule in front of the Council of Rulers and in the presence of the Lord Chief Justice of the Malaysian Federal Courts (or in his absence, the most senior Federal Court Judge present); and the oath must be certified by two people specifically appointed by the Council of Rulers.

Tuan Hj. Mahamad Naser bin Disa, from the Attorney-General's Department when presenting his Working Paper *"The Use of The Name 'Allah' From The Legal Aspect"* commented on the oath of Yang di-Pertuan Agong which uses the words **والله, وبالله, وتالله** which shows clearly the use of the word 'Allah' in official and historical functions during oath-taking.

Second: Islamic Law

In the book *"Ahkam al-Zimmiyyin wa al-Musta'minin fi Dar al-Islam"* written by Dr. Abdul Karim Zaidan (pg 171) states: *"Among their responsibilities is that they have to stop from igniting anger and dissatisfaction towards Muslims and belittling or degrading their religion, like the of chanting Allah, His Book, His Prophet and His religion with bad intents. This is because these actions will lead to humiliation of Muslims, their faith and despicable to Islam on which the Islamic integrity is based."*

In the book *"Ahlu al-Zimmah wa al-Wilayah 'Ammah fi al-Fiqh al-Islami"* by Namir Muhammad al-Khalil al-Namir (pg 124) it is stated about the responsibility of *ahlu zimmah* with conditions that are mandatory and conditions that are

commendable. Then, he excerpted the view of al-Mawardi who divided conditions that are mandatory and conditions that are commendable. Among them, *“Stop them from sounding their bells or their naqus, recitation of their book and their sermons on Uzair and the Messiah.”* This condition is known as *Syurut Umariah* denoted to Saydina Umar who implemented the said conditions.

Third: Islamic Rules of Law (Fatwas)

In the ninth argument, the Fatwa Council stated: *“The issue on the use of the word ‘Allah’ by non-Islam religions” involves issue of Siyasaḥ Syar’iyyah and the government must guard the sanctity of the religion and the Muslim community.*

In the 82nd discussion dated 5th to 7th May 2008 it was decided that the discretion of the committee in forbidding the use of the word ‘Allah’ by non-Islam religions is not only seen from the aspect of security but the main factor is based on faith and the sanctity of Islamic religion. Thus, it is imperative for Muslims to guard it in the best possible way and if there are elements of humiliating and misusing of the word, it must be prevented according the provisions of law recorded in the Constitution.

Consensus Shared by All Prophets On Allah Jalla Wa'ala

According to Dr. Said Abdul Azim in his book *قل يا أهل الكتاب لستم على شيء* (pg 49-52) it is mentioned that the proposal agreed by all Prophets is as follows:

- i) That Allah is qadim in essence, He is One and without alliance in His government.
- ii) That He has no father. None equals Him and He has no wife and He is not alike any of His subjects.
- iii) That He is Most Endowed in His attributes. He does not eat nor drink and He does not desire mankind.
- iv) That He does not change and He is not affected by ailments and degeneration such as old age, illness, sleepiness. He does not sleep, forget, regret, feel fear, feel sad and so on.
- v) That He does not resemble any of His subjects whether in His attributes, essence and actions.
- vi) That He does not take the place of any of His subjects.
- vii) That He is more supreme than anything, bigger than anything and Most Supreme.
- viii) That He is Most Powerful over everything.
- ix) That He is Most Knowing about anything whether visible or invisible.
- x) That He is Most Seeing and Most Hearing.
- xi) That He witnesses all and nothing escapes Him.
- xii) That He is eternal and forever permanent.
- xiii) That He Decrees directions and forbiddance.
- xiv) That He is Most True in His promises and in what He says.
- xv) That He is Eternal in His essence and all His creations desire Him.
- xvi) That He is Most Holy and Most Glorious, free from disgrace and shortcomings.
- xvii) That He is Most Perfect, with perfection that is eternal.
- xviii) That He is Most Just and is never cruel to His subjects.

Ibni Qayyim said: *“These are matters that are accepted by consensus in all Books and by Prophets and it was a decision which ought not be wronged by Islamic Religious Law (syariat). The Holy Prophet SAW said that it was wrong at the beginning, whereas worshippers of the cross had all left the concept of Trinity but held on to things abetting with doubts (syubhah) from meaning and pronunciation (mujmal) from utterance.”*

Allah’s decree is Truth:

..... وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُوا

كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٧٧﴾

Translation of meaning: *“...Do not yield to the desires of those who have already erred before – who have led many astray and have themselves strayed from the straight path.”*

(al-Ma'idah: 77)

The origin (*usul*) of Trinity, or three in one and their expressions to God Rabb al-Alamin were very clearly and distinctly against all these.

Conclusion

In *al-Fatwa al-Kubra* (pp 444) by Syeikh Muhammad Mutawalli Sya'rawi, it is mentioned that the word 'Allah' has the one meaning to every intelligence even though there are differences in human languages. This is decreed in Allah SWT's message:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ
عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ۖ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ ۗ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ
آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
﴿١٧٣﴾ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

Translation of meaning: "And (remember O Muhammad) when your Lord brought forth descendants from the loins of the children of Adam, and He made them testify against themselves (by saying): 'Am I not your Lord?' They replied: 'Yes indeed, we bear witness (that You are our Lord),' (Of this We remind you) so that on the Day of Resurrection you will not say: 'Truly we were not ((being made) aware of this (reality about the oneness of God),' Or so that you may not say: 'Indeed it was but our forefathers who ascribed partners to Allah before us, while we are their descendants. So will You (O Lord) destroy us on account of what was done by the followers of falsehood?'"

(al-A'raf: 172-173)

This verse has shown clearly that Allah has declared the assurance with Adam's descendants from the beginning regarding His godly attributes, His Oneness, and Might, and forbidding them from saying in the Hereafter: "Indeed we have been careless with Allah's dispositions which we witnessed." It clearly shows here that the name 'Allah' had existed before the creation of human beings and

from here too the intelligence and the heart with the full belief in His dispositions believe in the existence of Allah. This is the submission to Allah the Creator and the Supreme.

Lastly, to conclude let us appreciate together the decree of Allah SWT :

أَتَّخِذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا
وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

Translation of meaning: *“They take their rabbis and monks as Lords besides Allah, and also Al-Masih, son of Maryam, though they were ordered to worship One God only. There is no god (worthy of worship) but Him. Exalted be He above those whom they associate with Him!”*

(al-Taubah: 31)

Translated into English

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