

## **Museums and Its Endeavour To Combat Religious Extremism-Iconoclasm: An Analysis**

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Received Date: 11 July 2021

Accepted Date: 21 September 2021

Published Date: 1 October 2021

**Abstract.** Religious extremism is an issue that threatens global peace especially the congruous image of Islam. This is further exacerbated by the philosophy of iconoclasm which is strongly held by the Wahhabis and Daesh have destroyed all the artifacts and historical monuments that exist in the Islamic world. Therefore, this study concentrates on museums and its endeavour to combat religious Extremism-Iconoclasm. Based on qualitative methods, the data is analyzed about the role of museums in addressing the philosophy of extreme iconoclasm involving Muslims. The findings found that the museum as an institution for the preservation and education of historical heritage is seen to be able to correct the negative image of Islam that has been tarnished by religious extremism. Therefore, this study has elaborated at length on how museums can be used to combat this iconoclasm philosophy. It considers what museums are working on in general in particular museums in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Religious extremism, museum, Iconoclasm, muslim world.

### **1 Introduction**

History is crucial for universal human life. This importance refers to the institutions, approaches and figures involved in historical education. Museums as specialized institutions involved in the field of history can be used for the purpose of elevating Islam to the international level. It includes efforts to decontaminate Islam from the syndrome of Islamophobia and extremism. As a result, this study will comment on the role of museums in addressing the philosophy of extreme iconoclasm involving Muslims.

## 2 Iconoclasm and Wahhabism-Salafi Jihadism

According to experts, Islamic extremism is an extreme ideology adopted by Muslims based on Salafi jihadism. The Salafi movement is in fact divided into three types: Salafi da'wa, politics and Salafi jihad. The two early Salafi (da'wa and politics) called on the community to adhere to the practices of the salaf generation but rejected acts of extremism. Salafi jihad, on the other hand, used the terrorism-revolution approach to achieve their purpose. On that basis, Salafi jihad is considered a new form of neo-Khawarij ideology that arose after the death of Syed Qutb (Wiktorowicz, 2005). They fought for the establishment of an Islamic state that enforced Islamic Law through revolution. They do not tolerate any deviant elements such as heresy that occur in society and will try to eliminate it by force (Ali, 2012).

Religious extremism involves two extreme philosophies of iconoclasm, namely iconophobia (Chari, 2012) and iconoclasm (May, 2012). It is indeed held firmly by Muslims, Christians, and Jews. For Muslims, the Wahhabi sect is the earliest to adopt this iconoclasm philosophy (Isakhan, 2018). Iconoclasm refers to action; firstly, destroying all historical objects, icons, images, and monuments whether in places of worship, graves, educational centers, and public places. Secondly, banning works of art that attempts to draw or imitate living objects in the form of animals or humans. More importantly, it also forbids any attempt to paint elements of metaphysical nature such as Allah, heaven, hell, the Prophet etc. All these acts are forbidden in Islam because it will draw a person near to shirk. More specifically, it includes the belief or deification of non-Muslim political beliefs and eventually, rejection of the sovereignty of God's law.

The main argument of the iconoclasm adopted by the Wahhabis and Daesh is to avoid the occurrence of extreme deification of historical figures who have perished. For them, this act of deification will lead to efforts of reviving new idols which will embed the practice of shirk indirectly in society (Elaskary, 2017).

History has witnessed the tragedy of destruction of artifacts and historical monuments carried out by the Wahhabi-Salafi jihad movement. Chronologically, this was initiated by the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia at the al-Baqi' cemetery between 1802 and 1925. In 1802, the Wahhabi army destroyed the Well of Zamzam, the martyrdom of the martyrs in Battle of Uhud, the mosque and the tomb of Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib and Fatima al-Zahra.

Daesh as the successor of the Wahhabi-Salafi jihadism later included some new ideas. Which consists of (Armendariz, 2017; Razak, 2018);

1. Application of a broader concept of takfir by declaring infidelity and regarding their opposition's blood as halal. They associate opposition to Salafi jihadism with modern Western ideology including democracy, nationalism, socialism etc. Explained by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in his speech declaring himself as a caliph in the mosque of Mosul in June 2014.

The Muslims today have a loud, thundering statement and possess heavy boots. They have a statement to make that will cause the world to hear and understand the

meaning of terrorism and boots that will trample the idol of nationalism, destroy the idol of democracy and uncover its deviant nature (Dabiq, 2014)

2. Hostile towards historical monuments and artifacts belonging to Muslims and non-Muslims- including non-Muslims' places of worship.

3. Disposed of manuscripts and old archives that have the essence of teachings that are contrary to Daesh.

4. Strive to eradicate all the remnants of religious history which was a symbol of historical excellence before the existence of Daesh. They are aware that the historical artifacts have become the historical identity of non-Muslims. It blatantly shows that Daesh is deliberately trying to challenge and hurt their enemies by damaging historical relics that are the evidence and their pride for historical identity. They want to eliminate all historical symbols before the existence of Daesh. In return, will create a new Islamic history under Daesh which is more nuanced of the true Islamic spirit. This is explained in Dabiq magazine;

*“The kuffar (disbeliever) had unearthed these statues and ruins in recent generations and attempted to portray them as part of a cultural heritage and identity that the Muslims of Iraq should embrace and be proud of. Yet this opposes the guidance of Allah and His Messenger and only serves a nationalist agenda.”* (Dabiq, 2015).

5. Make profit by looting and selling historical artifacts in the international market (Blannin, 2017).

### **3 Daesh and the Destruction of Artifacts and Historical Monuments**

Daesh is very hostile towards the Shiites and Sufis. For that reason, the mosques and graves of Shiites and Sufis were targeted for destruction in areas controlled by Daesh. For them, the two holy areas belonging to the Shiites, namely Karbala and Najaf, must be destroyed. In fact, it is a sacred agenda set by Daesh (Al-Adnani 2014). Apart from that, Daesh was also involved in destroying various Shiite and Sufi graves in Syria and Iraq. It involves some;

1. The tomb of Sukaina binti Ali, shrine in Dariyya, south of Damascus (March 2013).

2. The grave of Hirj ibn Adi al-Kindi, a companion of the Prophet in western Damascus (May 2013).

3. The tomb of Ammar bin Yassir and Oweis al-Qarni were two companions of the Prophet (March 2014).

4. The grave of Sayyida Zaynab, the granddaughter of the Prophet (February 2016).

5. Mosque and tomb of Imam Jafar Sadiq in Mahlabiyha (2016).

6. Tomb of Ahmed Ar-Rifa'i, founder of the Rifa'iyyah sect (2016).

All these destructive efforts have been described at length in Daesh-owned Dabiq magazine. They claim that what was done coincided with the sirah of Prophet Ibrahim, Rasulullah and his companions (Razak, 2018), as described in Dabiq;

*“The actions of the mujahidin (holy warriors) had not only emulated Ibrahim’s...destruction of the idols of his people and Prophet Muhammad’s...destruction of the idols present around the Ka’bah when he conquered Makkah but had also served to enrage the kuffar, a deed that in itself is beloved to Allah.”* (Dabiq, 2015).

For example, in the second edition of Dabiq there is a picture of a bulldozer destroying the mosques and graves of Imam Jafar Sadiq and Ahmed Ar-Rifa'i. Among the arguments why Daesh acted in this way is explained in the third edition of Dabiq Magazine. Given Quranic arguments and letters from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi to Osama bin Laden, who stated that;

*“The Rāfidah (a derogatory word for the Shia meaning 'rejecter of the truth') are the insurmountable obstacle, the lurking snake, the scorpion of deception and malice, the prowling enemy, the deadly poison... Shiism contains everything from blatant shirk, to grave worship, to circumambulating tombs, to takfīr of the Sahābah, to cursing the Mothers of the Believers and the best of this Ummah, to claiming distortion of the Qur'ān... as well as other forms of kufr and manifestations... they should be targeted and struck in their religious, political and military core.”* (Dabiq, 2016).

Assuming Wahhabi and Salafi jihadism's argument on iconoclasm, there are some key points;

1. They are guided by the confused concept of Islam. It involves the issue of takfir, Wala wa baraah, Tauhid Hakimiyah, toghut, jihad, Dar Harb and Dar Islam. They are determined in forcing others to accept all their views wholly and without compromise.
2. Insisting that Islamic texts must be understood literally. This is very unfortunate because Islam also contains philosophical elements or has other meanings behind the external text.
3. They do not acknowledge the ability of creative minds in interpreting Islamic texts. Not necessarily when there are historical artifacts belonging to pre-Islamic civilization, it will cause shirk. It is also impossible and highly unlikely for Muslims to be idolaters against all these historical artifacts.
4. They do not accredit the ability of the human mind to understand the teaching of history from past historical artifacts. For example, the companions of the Prophet did

not destroy the heritage of historical artifacts belonging to pre-Islamic civilization, because they knew it could be used as a tool to study the history of the past.

5. They suffer from an intellectual syndrome which occurs because of rejection of the philosophical approach in the study of knowledge (Rahman, 1979). They are defective in producing normal and hearty thinking that are fundamental in evaluating all matters including the question of Malay culture formalistic legal approach (black and white), without taking into account the question of philosophy and history contained in them. This arose because of the attitude of the Wahabism movement which was hostile to philosophy which is said to have originated from the non-Muslim, or specifically from the Greek influence. As pointed out by Fazlur Rahman, the hostile attitude of this philosophy has invited the weakness of Muslim thought:

*“Philosophy is however a perennial intellectual need and has to be allowed to flourish both for its own sake and for the sake of other disciplines, since it inculcates a much-needed analytical-critical spirit and generate new ideas that become important intellectual tools for other sciences not least for religion and theology. Therefore, a people that deprives itself of philosophy necessarily itself to starvation in terms of fresh ideas- in fact it commits intellectual suicide.”* (Rahman, 1982).

#### **4 Museums and its Efforts to Fight Extreme Iconoclasm Philosophy**

##### Definition of Museum

Since the establishment of ICOM in 1946, it has played a key role in the field of international museums. According to the ICOM Statute adopted by the 22nd General Assembly in Vienna, Austria, on 24 August 2007:

*“A museum is a non-profit institution, it remains to serve the community and its development, and it is open to the public; it acquires, preserves, researches, communicates and exhibits significant and intangible human heritage in its environment for the purpose of education, learning and for the enjoyment of all.”*

After Malaysia achieved independence, the museum institution along with its spirit and methodology were maintained. It can be considered very profitable because it has a very dynamic intellectual philosophy. This can be seen from several main angles.

Firstly, is the existence of ICOM (International Council of Museums) which oversees all museums around the world, whether in developed, developing and backward countries. ICOM acts as the parent body that introduces various museum improvement programs as it should. It considers the aspirations of all member countries.

Secondly, ICOM has brought a new museum philosophy that is seen to be able to correct errors in the concept of past museums that are more oriented towards colonial interests (Hooper-Greenhill 2000).

Over the past few decades, museums have changed radically. This institution is clearly more concerned with current needs and no longer reflects on what is defined by ICOM previously. Therefore, ICOM invites the relevant parties to propose a new, and more accurate definition. At the 139th session in Paris, on 21-22 July 2019, the Standing Committee on Museum Definition, Prospects and Potential, ICOM Executive Board had reached a collective decision to select the statement below as a new alternative definition to be voted on and included in the ICOM Statute at the General Assembly Extraordinary (EGA) on September 7, 2019, at the Kyoto International Conference Center (ICC Kyoto) in Kyoto, Japan:

*“Museums are a democracy, inclusive and polyphonic space for critical dialogue about the past and the future. Recognizing and overcoming current conflicts and challenges, the museum complies with the trust of the community to store and preserve priceless artifacts and specimens. The museum preserves various memories and histories for future generations and guarantees equal rights and access to all.”*

*“Museums are non-profitable. Be that as it may, museum is a participatory and transparent institution. The museum serves and actively cooperates with the community and various parties to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance world understanding. All these efforts aim to contribute to the preservation of human dignity, social justice, global equality and common well-being.”*

Museums are recognized as the most important institutions that play the role of collecting, caring for, treating, displaying the tangible and intangible heritage of a nation's history. It is very useful for the purpose of knowing and educating members of society about the importance of the historical heritage of a nation. On that basis, the Association of Museums worldwide has made the development and education agenda of the community the most important goal (Kechot, 2012).

The existence of the museum is one of the efforts towards preserving the historical and cultural heritage of our nation. These valuable collections are evidence of past events or history that has taken place in our country. Museums play a very important role as a reference and research center. Various studies and writings are documented for the purpose of disseminating knowledge to the community to know and know the identity of the nation.

In the field of museums, the Malaysian government has fully adopted the philosophy and mechanism of the British colonial heritage museum. The model of the British Museum system emphasizes on the historiography of the colonial society was used as a basis to be imitated after Malaysia became independent. It covers the question of storing valuable artifacts, arranging, and classifying them in accordance to the specific year and interpreting historical artifacts (Paulette, 1999).

Museums in this global era, took the example of British Museums. They have introduced the concept of *Universal Civilization* collection from the collections that they own. It reveals useful information in the form of artifacts and manuscripts for the

study of history for all nations in the world. By Jelani Harun, British Museum has a collection of ancient Malay manuscripts that are already extinct and cannot be earned on his own in Malaysia. Therefore, if British made no effort to preserve Malay manuscripts, Malay community would be deprived of understanding the history of their own nation (Harun, 2008).

According to Othman Yatim, institutional museum acts as a repository for historical artifacts in the community. It was kept in the palace of the Malay rulers. However, this institution failed to function properly. Many of these historic artifacts have been destroyed and lost, due to the negligence of their guardians (Yatim, 2005). Referring specifically to Islamic manuscripts, indeed many Islamic manuscripts have been damaged without proper care. An example can be seen in the collection of manuscripts in Land Abe, Aceh which were destroyed and severely damaged due to the environment and the weather. The humid hot climate caused a process of decay, in addition to the presence of termites that ruin this manuscript.

## **5 The Role of Museums in Fighting Extreme Iconoclasm Philosophy**

### Museums as a Field to Show the Contribution of Islam to World Civilization

Museums can educate the public about the contribution of Islam to world civilization and reject extremism, including the philosophy of extreme iconoclasm. After all, in recent developments, after the events of 9/11 there have been some positive efforts made by international museum activists to reject the nature of Islamophobia associated with Islam (Forstrom, 2017). They have used Islamic art galleries for this purpose. In this light, they have used Islamic artwork in the form and language that is free from political influence which is generally anti-Islamic (Ryan, 2015).

In understanding that Islamic art is man-made that expresses beauty in two forms. Firstly, to express the intuition and imagination of Islamic artists. Both reflect a more holistic worldview of Islam. This was stated by Will Durant: *“Islamic art overrode all limits of place and time, laughed at distinctions of race and blood, developed a unique and yet varied character, and expressed the human spirit with a profuse delicacy never surpassed”* (Durant, 1950).

In other words, the process of creating Islamic art itself is part of the process of devotion or worship to Allah; in every process of creation of Islamic art contains elements of glorification (takbīr), praise (tahmīd), and purification (tasybīh) to Allah and respect (salawāt) for the Prophet as well as the spread of peace (salām) for all His creatures (Santoso, 2018). In other words, in the process of its creation, Islamic art contains the value (tazkiyah) of a spiritual cleansing effort, which is the essence of worship itself (Mahzar, 1993).

According to the curator of the modern museum, every piece of information for an Islamic gallery on display should be accompanied by a description of who, for what, from where and most importantly the philosophy it is produced (Ryan, 2015). In each

of these galleries, among others, they managed to highlight the nature of true Islamic teachings in the form of mercy, wasatiyyah, tawhid and maslahah. Which is based on historical evidence in tangible and intangible form. Among these evidences are classical manuscript texts, works of art and scientific artifacts that prove the contribution of Islam to world civilization (Jalal, 2019).

According to Melissa Mary Forstrom, among the exhibitions and galleries of Islamic art are;

1. Temporary Islamic Art Exhibitions involving the Metropolitan Museum of Art New York:

- 1001 Inventions: Discover the Muslim Heritage in Our World, New York Hall of Science (traveling exhibition) (7 December 2010-24 April 2011)
- Three Faiths at the New York Public Library (22 October 2010-27 February 2011)
- Change: Architecture and Engineering in the Middle East 2000- present, Center for Architecture (22 February-23 June 2012)
- Crossing Borders: Manuscripts from the Bodleian Libraries, The Jewish Museum, New York, NY (September 14, 2012-3 February 2013)
- Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape and Islamic Art, Museum of Art and Design, New York, NY (7 September 2012-6 January 2013)
- Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY (14 March-8 July 2012)
- Treasures of Islamic Manuscript Painting from the Morgan, The Morgan Library and Museum (21 October 2011-29 January 2012)
- Iran Modern, Asia Society, New York, NY (6 September 2013-5 January 2014)
- America to Zanzibar, The Children's Museum of Manhattan, NY, NY (13 February 2016-present)

2. The exhibition involving the British Museum, British library and Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

- Sacred, The British Library, London, UK (April-September 2007)
- Arabick Roots, The Royal Society, London, UK (9 June-11 November 2011)
- Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam at the British Museum, London, UK (26 January-15 April 2012)
- The Horse from Arabia to Royal Ascot, British Museum, London, UK (24 May-30 September 2012)
- Light from the Middle East, V&A, London, UK (13 November 2012-7 April 2013)
- Mughal India, The British Library, London, UK (9 November-2 April 2013)
- Pearls, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK (21 September 2013-19 January 2014)

- Jameel Prize 3, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK (biennial) (2014, 2012, 2010)

For the current Malaysian context, we can refer to the Islamic gallery experience at the Sultan Abdullah Mosque Museum, Pekan, Pahang (Jalal, 2019). This museum was established on 21 October 2016, as a major component in the Pahang State Museum Corporation. In addition to maintaining the existing structure and function of the mosque, the Sultan Abdullah Mosque Museum also exhibits collections of Islamic contributions in building civilization, including manuscripts, valuable such as the variety types of al-Quran, Islamic religious study books and Hukum Kanun Pahang.

Pahang State Museum also keeps 178 manuscripts in genres as diverse as Hikayat Pahang, Association Stories of History, letters from the King and Malay chiefs, the text of the royal address, Sir Frank Swettenham's notes, Hugh Clifford's diary and notice by the British government written in Jawi script. The Mosque Museum also serves as a center for gathering information and is an important access to the community especially for non-Muslims. As to know more closely and comprehensively about Islam.

To fulfill its new function as a Mosque-Museum, it has been divided into two spaces. Namely, exhibition space and prayer room (Iqbal, 2015). No major changes were made except to change the floor finishing to white marble to replace the severely damaged existing floor. To fulfill its function as a museum, the mosque has been installed with limestone ceilings on its entire interior and glass panels to cover all open spaces for the purpose of air conditioning. This is important for safety and to avoid damage to the artifacts on display especially artifacts that are susceptible to temperature changes such as textiles and manuscripts.

The museum has three main themes/galleries. Firstly, is about Islam in Pahang. Secondly, is concerning the role of the Palace or the Malay rulers in the spread of Islam and Islamic collections of Pahang Royals. And lastly, is the contribution of Islam to human civilization (Jalal, 2019).

As for the gallery of Islamic contributions to human civilization, there is a display that explains after the death of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W, Muslims have advanced from the Arabian Peninsula to the North, East and West. In that short period of time, they have succeeded in expanding Islam from Spain in the West, to the Chinese state in the East. The largest empire in the history of the world was established by Muslims through the actions of da'wah, military and efficient government.

In Islamic territories there are competent intellectuals in the fields of administration, development, agriculture, industry, engineering, defense, science and arithmetic, astronomy and navigation, medicine, and many other sciences. This is an evidence that Islam covers more specifications other than Islamic law and its interpretations. Institutions of higher learning are scattered from Spain to Central Asia, complete with poles and laboratories. Old sciences from obsolete civilizations such as Greek and Rome were studied, supplemented, and recorded regularly. People from the Turkish tribes in West and Central Asia have embraced Islam and developed until they are

able to expand the territory of Islam to Eastern Europe. The area under their administration developed rapidly, complete with roads, waterways, buildings, walls and towers, shopping malls, boarding houses and various other facilities that signified a high civilization.

Islam has succeeded in producing many scientists and great scholars in the past. Figures such as Abu Al-Qasim Az-Zahrawi; Father of Modern Surgery (936-1013M), Abu Ali Hasan Ibn Al-Haitham; Father of Modern Optics (965-1040M), Ibn Sina; Islamic Medical Figures (meningitis) 980-1037M), Jabir Ibn Haiyan; Father of Modern Chemistry (died 803M), Mohammad Bin Musa Al-Khawarizmi; Founder of Algebra (died 840M), Yaaqub Ibn Ishaq Al-Kindi; Dosage setting in drug use (800-873M), Abu Abdullah Al-Battani; Mathematician and Astronomer (868-929M), and Mohammad Ibn Zakariya Ar-Razi; Chemist and Medical figure (864-930M). These are among the figures who are the catalyst for modernization and progress enjoyed today. The figures mentioned above are great Quranic researchers and analysts. Their thoughts, studies and discoveries precede their times. They view the Qur'an as an important reference in developing human technology. Without Islam and the Qur'an as the basis of reference and progress, the *Renaissance* Reformation and the *Enlightenment* Awareness Age would certainly have not happened in the West.

The Curator of Sultan Abdullah Museum in Pekan, Pahang chose the theme of *Islamic Contribution to World Civilization* for several reasons. Firstly, it is a way of answering the negative and simplistic views of Islam that are highlighted in the colonial museum. Which are;

1. Malays are not welcoming towards Islamic orthodox (original form of Islam) that is full of syncretism. Islam acts as the outer skin while the inner content still consist of pre-Islamic belief.
2. Malays as the primitive race because of the oriental despotic factor (basic draconian made by the Malay rulers). This tyranny gained confirmation from Islam as if wherever Islam flourished there must have been the nature of the king's rule that oppressed his people.
3. Malay artifacts have been adapted to the theory of evolution that shows the primitive race of Malays that requires the help of British colonialist to civilize them. For that reason, the artifacts used showed poor physical features of the Malays as shirtless, dirty, dark-skinned with fierce facial features and savage.
4. To highlight the ethnography of the natives which are considered simple, honest, and exotic. They are considered the original inhabitants of the Malay land, which are oppressed after the arrival of Islam.

Secondly, the need to emphasize the foundations of modern western scientific civilization originated from Islamic scientific civilization. The West has taken credit of this foundation of scientific civilization which is augmented by secular philosophy.

Thirdly, is the need to highlight Islam as a religion of mercy which benefitted all human beings. It is imperative to reject the negative image of Islam. This is due to the emergence of religious extremism ideology brought by the *Islamic Congregation* and

*Daesh*. Accordingly, this negative image causes the true nature of Islam to be vaguely perceived by the non-Muslims. Thus, fabricating a sense of fear towards the non-Muslims whenever Islam is widely discussed.

## **6 Museum As a Means to Educate People About the Importance of Islamic History**

Islamic scholars state that much of the Quranic content involves the teaching of history involving the ummah of the previous prophets (Quran 42:13). Henceforth, Muslims should be obligated to learn the lessons portrayed to design a better-planned future (Abdullah, 2001). In contrary to the philosophy of extreme iconoclasm, all historical heritage should not be destroyed. Instead it should be maintained to be studied for the purpose of learning history. In this regard, museums can act as a semi-educational institution that are able to apply historical awareness to society (Hodjat, 1995). It should not be separated from the philosophy of Islamic history. Instead, it should be looked at extensively if there is an involvement of philosophical elements contributed by the institution involved. In like manner, it should be able to generate historical thinking for each of its visitors.

Modern Islamic education will be more effective when applied through museum mechanisms. Modern researchers have acknowledged it to the point that they emphasize the importance of applying museum-based educational pedagogy. This effectiveness stems from the advantages of museum-based education that allows visitors to understand a fact through the proof of objects and artifacts rather than theoretically as learned in school (Isa, 2017).

Most importantly, every museum gallery must apply historical thought to its visitors. In general, these historical thinking skills refer to the process of analytical, critical, and creative thinking. Aimed at understanding events that took place in the past, which is connected to the present and the future.

There are five categories of historical thinking recognized by the Ministry of Education Malaysia;

1. *Understanding chronology*: Discerning the chronology of the past, present and future historical journeys in occurrence of the historical events. It is the skill of understanding the concept of time according to the progress of a civilization, recognizing the events without stating the year.
2. *Exploring evidence*: It is the ability to explore historical evidence or sources according to its hierarchy, make comparisons between sources and obtain information from them. A history teacher has the role of guiding students to explore the evidence through the study of pictures, historical documents, and newspapers to make judgments using common sense to confirm a statement or a cause of a historical event.
3. *Make an interpretation*: It is the skill of analyzing a historical event to fathom the relationship between historical facts and historical interpretation. The skill of making

this interpretation also means that the past is understood through systematic observation and interpretation to help individuals live better lives in the future.

4. *Creating imagination*: It is the skill of appreciating the visuals and empathized a certain situation in the historical events. It can create imagination in the form of appreciating historical events, expressing feelings, playing the role of characters, and imagining oneself in the historical events.

5. *Make rationalization*: It is the use of common sense in making reasonable judgments to solve a problem. It involves the process of collecting data, making hypotheses, determining the significance of evidence, and making inferences from the data collected. Making rationalization means making appropriate judgments in solving problems, explaining the causes of a historical event and its effects, the consequences after finding evidence, making imagination, and interpreting a historical event. All in all, one can learn to make better judgements for the future after learning history.

Evidently in all five categories, the Malay Islamic museum gallery can project anti-extremism approach practiced by the Malay community (Daud, 2010). Several things can be proved by;

1. Islamization of the Malay did not happen by conquest as what had happened in the Middle East and Europe, but it is done in the form of evolution that emphasized on the missionary-educational approach. The Malays understand that the process cannot be converted to Islam by force, but voluntarily and in keeping with the logic makes sense (Ramli, 2016).

2. Early missionaries have approved of an approach which was friendly to the nature of Malay culture. More specifically, this da'wah program emphasizes the philosophy of peace and wasatiyyah. It is to reject the claim that Islam that advanced outside of the Middle East, especially other than Mecca is full of superstitious elements that are contrary to the principle of monotheism. Islam in the Malay world stresses the principle of faith, moderation, culture, science, rationalism, societal and world affirmative. This is evidenced by the emergence of many scientific works of the Malay Muslims in the form of Jawi alphabet (Jalal, 2018).

3. In responding to the issue of religion, an approach that exceeds limit will not be accepted by the community. This can be seen from the rejection of the Aceh Muslim community towards the extreme approach introduced by Nurudin Raniri in the face of ideology. Nurudin Raniri's successor, Mufti Abdul Rauf Singkel has rejected Nurudin Raniri's approach. On the other hand, he prefers the attitude of being open-minded when dealing with such groups.

4. The nature of the Malay Muslims who are described as anti-Islamic extremism was championed by Nahdlatul Ulama which has several key features such as, *tawassuth* (moderate) which is an attitude that is not influenced with extremism. In this state of attitude, one can perceive the good from various groups. The ability to appreciate the goodness and truth from various groups allows the NU congregation to remain in moderation. In addition, *Tawazun* (balanced) is an attitude that is willing to attend to various point of view and then take a balanced position. Lastly is, *Tasamuh* (toler-

ance). Through tolerance, NU implements an attitude of community that values diversity. Diversity of life demands an attitude that is willing to accept differences of opinion and face it sympathetically. Permanent tolerance is offset by firmness of attitude and stance.

## **7 Malay Museum Reveals Declines Against the Elements Iconoclasm**

Islamic-based museum needs to put forward the fact that in the Malay community, grave worship is not normalized as feared by the Salafi Jihadism. Relatively, even if there are cases of worship that may lead to shirk, it is not dominant and occurs only in a few isolated cases that are not accepted by the Malay community.

This is due to the success of early missionaries in implementing true faith in the Malay community. Malays understood that every human being must go through different realms, which are the worldly life, the realm of barzakh and the Hereafter. The information and procedures of all lives in these three realms must depend on the source of the authoritative revelation. Without this authentic information, human life would fall into error. Ever since the beginning, the Malays understand the concept of heresy and superstition that must be avoided, for example the mortuary cult practices (Malik, 2018).

According to the Malays, graves are regarded as a warning sign that every human being will go through the realm of barzakh (death). The importance of commemorating the moment of death is evident when it is used as the main medium of Malay rulers to advise their substitute. Logically, anything that is made at one's deathbed will be valued by his audience. Based on the writings in Sulalat al-Salatin, a conference is prioritized as it will deliver important messages to the heir of the throne as symbolized in the will of Sultan Alauddin Shah to his son Sultan Mahmud Shah:

*“O my son, know that nothing truly matters in this world ... except faith ... As my death took a toll on me, my son you should humbly worship God, do not take away the rights of another human being, because the fate of all the servants of God are up to you, .... Syahadan you must cooperate with all the prime ministers and all the officials, because the kings, no matter how wise and intelligent they are, if they do not agree with all the officials, there will be trial, and fairness will be hard to obtain. The people are like roots, the king is like a tree; if there are no roots, no king will be able to stand. As for the Malays, even if their sins should mount up to the skies, you should not merely kill them, unless it should be the law of God, ... if you kill him with no sin committed, your government truly perish” (Salleh, 1997).*

For Shiites and Sufis, the grave is a tool to commemorate the services of a figure and the realm of barzakh that Muslims will go through. It is a proof of the immortality

of worldly life. For them, any attempt to deify the grave is not a true Islamic practice that must be completely opposed (Ferg, 2008).

Secondly, grave and headstone is not considered as a sacred artifact that should be revered, but as a sign of the beginning date of the arrival of Islam in the Malay world. It also shows the elements of unity among the people of the Malay world, where Aceh tombstones shows the influence of Islamic art that have been held by the Malay community (Yatim, 1985). Even from a wider scope, it arises as a result of two main factors undertaken by the Islamic government of Aceh;

1. Political Strategies. It is practiced by the government of Aceh in forming a family based on the spirit of Islamic brotherhood. This tactic tries to marry off Aceh king and the royal family of Pahang, Kedah and Perak; as a means to enhance relations on the basis of Islamic brotherhood with the royal family of the Malay states. Not only the relationship is established, but this tactic will also gain sympathy and support from the public who are dependent on the royal family involved. In the Malay world, Islam is spread through the institution of marriage. It is more natural because marriage will create and unite two different families for a larger purpose, thus elevating the religion of Islam (Madjid, 2012).

2. Aceh links Muslims in the Malay peninsula. It is like providing a site conducive to the development of Islam. Aceh's efforts in fighting Portuguese colonial powers and unite the ties between the Malay states have created a bond of Malay-Islamic brotherhood (*the Allied Malay Nationalism*) based on the relationship between the government of Aceh, Minangkabau, Malaya, and Banjul. Although all these locations are distant but efforts towards creating this unity are always done (Madjid, 2012).

Aceh's efforts are considered like a fence to keep the Islamic nation from the invasion of the infidels. It is also supported using the Malay language as the *lingua franca* between Malay governments. More importantly it has become the most important tool for the development of scientific and intellectual Islam in the 17th century (Hadi, 2004).

The Malay community is famous to produce various works of Islamic art. Colonial scholars such as Raffles and Snouck Hugronje stressed that the Malay Muslims did not have a *sense of art* that contribute to the beauty of Islamic Malay culture. More precisely, they underestimate the role of Islam in the Malay world. In which, they accuse Islam as leading to the collapse of the art and civilization of Hindus that existed before the arrival of Islam in the Malay world (Rahim, 2017). Apparently, these colonial masters openly seek to degrade the quality of the Malay-Muslim civilization which in turn justify their occupation in Malaya.

Despite Salafi groups' concerns with artwork in the form of an iconoclasm, this was not the case in the Malay community. Practically all of Malay Muslims' art concept are Sharia-compliant. Malay artists understand conceptually that a work of art must shun every element of iconoclasm.

According to Mohd Anuar Ramli (2018), Malay-Muslims artists acknowledge that something is acknowledge as art if; 1. *There is no element of shirk that duplicates*

*Allah SWT in the form of worship. 2. Has no element of immorality that may leads to lust. 3. Do not neglect the barrier that men and women need to implement. 4. There is no element of tasyabbuh with other religions. 5. There is no element of tyranny towards fellow human beings. 6. Does not tarnish the image and value of Shari'ah. 7. Does not undermine the value of humanity (maintaining the manners of association). 8. There is no element of gambling (betting). 9. Has no wastage element. 10. Do not incorporate with anything that are illegal.*

Be that as it may, Malay-Muslims artists rejected the western realism philosophy in the its portrayal of humans, nature, animals, and inanimate objects rigidly. It is of high quality if this is done successfully (Stremmel, 2004). It is not available in all Malay Islamic art which includes calligraphy, ornamentation (decorative art), art space (architecture) and so on (Rahman, 2012).

## **8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is proven that religious extremism associated with Islam has damaged the image of Islam internationally. This is further exacerbated by the philosophy of iconoclasm which is strongly held by the Wahhabis and Daesh. Guided by the extreme philosophy of iconoclasm, these two movements have destroyed all the artifacts and historical monuments that exist in the Islamic world. Faced with this philosophy of extremism, this study has elaborated at length on how museums can be used to combat this iconoclasm philosophy. It considers what museums are working on in general in particular, museums in Malaysia. The museum as an institution for the preservation and education of historical heritage is seen to be able to correct the negative image of Islam that has been tarnished by religious extremism.

## **Acknowledgement**

These findings are part of the FRGS/1/2019/SSI03/UM/02/6 research grant entitled "Module Development on the Deradicalisation of Religious Terrorism Based on the Local Malay-Muslim Approach" awarded by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia (MOE). Acknowledgment is addressed to MOE on the award of the grant so that the study will continue to achieve the objectives outlined.

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## Museums And Its Endeavour To Combat Religious Extremism-Iconoclasm: An Analysis

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