

Searching for Absolute Happiness in Dinsman's play *It Is Not a Suicide*

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ABSTRACT

In the advent of becoming a modern nation, it is typical that achievement will be measured through power rankings and material fulfilment. One of the most important elements that most people forget is that the true meaning of happiness will define a strong soul in confronting greater challenges in life. Happiness is an area that is mostly subjective. However, that is the major centre of discussion in Dinsman's play, *It Is Not A Suicide*. In this play, the main character is going through a traumatic experience whereby Adam is trying to redefine the meaning of happiness using his own interpretations. This paper focuses on Dinsman's absurd theatre style which is prominent in this play. His experiments had successfully highlighted a situation that portrays the weaknesses of humans when the concept of happiness had been misperceived. The confusions become the central thrust of the entire play, where meaning of life is questioned. The painful situation portrayed in the play reflects that humans live in a superficial, empty and meaningless life. The issues raised by the playwright had called for a special attention that the Malay Muslim perception of the concept of happiness should be realigned according to the Islamic teachings specifically. Hence, it becomes an important aspect that should be discussed at the fundamental level. For the purpose of this paper, the discussion will be carried out through the lens of Naquib Al-Attas' *Concept of Happiness*. It is hoped that this paper will highlight some solutions that would help to guide many in understanding the importance of finding the true meaning of happiness in order to gain a well-balanced life in this present world and the hereafter.

Keywords: Absurd theatre techniques, confusions, happiness, modern nation, Malay Muslims, material fulfilment, misperception, Naquib al-Attas's *The Concept of Happiness*

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INTRODUCTION

We are constantly busy in preparing ourselves to face the challenges of modernisation. It is a tough world and we are expected to compete or we shall be left behind. In keeping up with the challenges, we don't realise that we are far from being a well-balanced society. We tend to overlook that in the process of becoming a modern nation, a sole emphasis on economics alone is insufficient since higher economic growth may not guarantee equal opportunities to all individuals (Al-Roubaie, 2010, p. 321). The interpretations of progress in a modern world could easily be related to the material fulfilment that is believed to bring prosperity and happiness to all mankind. However, the spiritual element that is equally important in the concept of human development tends to be ignored. This materialistic approach without reference to spiritual requirements certainly contradicts with the teachings of Islam. This is simply because, Islam defines the concept of development to include the material and spiritual elements to ensure balance in the present life and the hereafter.

Many Muslims are not aware that their understanding of the concept of development is actually influenced by the secular western school of thoughts. As explained by Mas Rynna Wati (2013) westernization in various forms is still influential in the present context of globalisation. Hence, much of the contemporary knowledge is manipulated by the West as a result of hundreds of years of colonisation. These have created confusions since the act of westernisation has affected the worldviews of the modern Malay

Muslims especially in the way they think and perceive life. In this context, according to the western school of thoughts, happiness is an ultimate accomplishment in life and choices are meant to be an individual goal. The secular concept of happiness stresses on the material achievement rather than the fulfilment of the spiritual aspects. This is in line with Aristotle's view that happiness is derivative of worldly actions. This is in contrast to the Islamic point of view which al-Roubaie (2010) emphasised: "development must create balance between [humans'] material needs and [their] spiritual requirements" (pp. 327-328). In other words, progress becomes a means for increasing human satisfaction and happiness in this life and the Hereafter. It is expected that with a proper understanding of the concept of happiness, humans will become more positive and thus will become more resourceful. This was pointed out by Professor al-Attas that, 'Islam regards [human] as not merely an object but also as an object of knowledge' (al-Roubaie, 2010). With a proper knowledge of Islam, clear minds and sincere hearts, humans will be obligated in carrying out the trust that are put onto them and fulfilling their duties as a vicegerent of God. This would definitely fit with the ideals of a nation that will be respected and productive at the same time.

The misconception of the concept of happiness is vividly portrayed in *It Is Not A Suicide*, a play written by Dinsman during the period of Malay experimental theatre. The struggle in coping with the inevitable vortex of change was depicted through

the playwright's creative experimentation of the absurd theatre style. This style was once popular as an alternative mode of expression among local young playwrights in the 1970s. The young playwrights had to find a new style in presenting their creative insights, as the typical realistic style was perceived to be outmoded (Nur Nina Zuhrah, 1992, p. 142). The play is a depiction of had happened during the period of political and national policies changes which in turn had contributed to the rise of absurd theatre 'ala' Malaysia in the 1970s (Solehah, 1990). The play is heavy with the trappings of philosophical views of total happiness in life which depicts the conflict of an individual in coping with the challenges of modernisation. Dinsman had successfully transformed a typical absurd play that is atheistic in nature to be an absurd play that is distinctively his own through his method of appropriation. With the appropriated mode of style, Dinsman had created a play that somehow became very religiously oriented. For the sole purpose of this study, the paper intends to highlight the techniques that were experimented by the playwright, from a theatre style that is inevitably rejected by many local theatre scholars into a play that is able to portray the meaninglessness of human search for happiness in a modern world. The search that is presented in the play portrays the confusion of two differing worldviews of the western thoughts and the Islamic concept of happiness that further highlights the needs to realign our understanding of the concept of happiness according to the *sha'riah* in

confronting the challenges of living in a modern world today.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In achieving a modern society, the issue of happiness is often ignored since happiness has become a subject of a personal attainment. It can also be mentioned here that such discourse is not only rare to be highlighted in Malay plays, but also the subject itself is indeed very philosophical. In realising this, the playwright had experimented with the absurd theatre style to depict the situations that realistic theatre style seemed to have failed to deliver. However, the relevance of appropriating the absurd theatre style was deemed to be unsuitable due to its origins and epistemology (Siti Jasmina, 2005, p. 31). The theatre of the absurd is also seen as unsuitable for Malaysian viewers who are perceived to generally uphold their religious beliefs, as the absurd theatre is seen as negating Islamic principles. Many theatre critics and scholars feel that the absurd theatre is flawed by western atheistic existentialism. As a result, not many scholarly researches have been carried out especially to highlight the importance or the significance of these works to the development of the Modern Malay Theatre (Mas Rynna Wati, 2013, pp. 225-226). Regardless of the philosophies that underpinned the style of the absurd theatre, Dinsman had appropriated the typical western absurd style for a style that had become distinctively his own. The portrayal of an unhappy man who intends to seek happiness in his own interpretations needs

special attention, so that the playwright's insights would be properly highlighted and thus, appreciated further.

REVIEW THEATRE OF THE ABSURD IN THE HISTORY OF MODERN MALAY THEATRE

The advent of the absurd movement has resulted in the growth of many young and talented playwrights who celebrated the fame of this new movement which promises an alternative mode of expressionism to arts and society. Absurd theatre has never been successfully accepted by many theatre activists and the local audience. Since the absurd plays originated from the theory of existentialist, society has by and large refused to accept its influence in the local productions. The audience rejected the emergence of Theatre of the Absurd mainly because it contradicted with the socio-cultural background of its society since society still basically upholds its religious beliefs and traditions. As a result, Theatre of the Absurd had a short span of popularity in the local theatre scene (Nur Nina Zuhrah, 1992, p. 154).

Absurd theatre has created ongoing doubts and criticisms as this style is perceived to be vague and difficult to be comprehended by many. This has resulted in confusion among the audience as they fail to appreciate these works. Thus, to many theatre critics, absurd plays are unable to relate its significance to the audience. It is through Mohd. Amin who stated that, 'any forms of literary works which includes drama, should communicate well with

society as literature works function as a medium to disseminate good values for the people at large' (1987, pp. 105-115). With this perception, absurd works are believed to have no values for the benefit of society. Furthermore, society is not familiar with the idea of pessimism of future as presented by this form of theatre. The audience prefer to be in their own comfort zone to watch plays that they can really associate with. Society's mentality is basically bound by ethnicity, religion and cultural beliefs. Hence, theatre of the absurd is not feasible to be promoted as a creative presentation for the audience.

Theatre of the absurd is also not suitable for Malaysian viewers who are perceived to generally uphold their religious beliefs as absurd theatre is seen negating Islamic principles. Many theatre critics and scholars are of the view that the absurd theatre is flawed due to the western atheistic and existentialist tendencies; hence, not many scholarly articles or research have been pursued especially to highlight the importance or the significance of these works to the development of the Modern Malay Theatre. Kalam (2003) also felt that absurd plays in Malaysia were not having a clear direction since the philosophies that influence the styles had been found unstable and thus, inappropriate (p. 135). It is a philosophy that believes humans should not be bound by any religious principles and values since these will limit their actions and the way they think. It (the philosophy) also completely accepts the meaningless of life as solely based on human struggles to achieve an authentic human existence.

Apparently, these basic principles of the epistemology of the absurd theatre have absolutely contradicted the basic principles of Islam, which is the official religion of this country. Even though the Malaysian society is now living in the threshold of modernisation, many still adhere to religious and social values. The surge in Islamic consciousness resulted in many comments and critics of the contemporary practitioners who are of the opinion that the proponents of the theatre of the absurd were ignorant because being Muslims themselves, they are unaware of the origins and the philosophy which underpinned this type of theatre (Siti Jasmina, 2005, p. 31). The criticisms showed that absurd theatre does not receive good feedback neither from the audience nor from the critics. These criticisms have created a gap that distance the plays from the audience, since these plays are labelled as not suitable for Malaysian viewers according to many experts and scholars of Malay theatre.

On the contrary, experimental dramatists viewed the Western form of absurd theatre as no longer appropriate in the period of intensified efforts to promote Malay culture and language (Nur Nina Zuhrah, 1992, p. 154). Although Malay absurd styles do have some aspects similar to the western contemporary theatre, many new dramatists tend to create their own platform in order for new ideas and styles to flourish. As a result, experimental dramatists give priority to sources of inspiration from their own background and imagination thus leading the modern theatre to a distinctly Malaysian identity. In the article 'Trends In Modern

Malay Theatre', Solehah (1990) argued that "the absurd dramatic form further illustrates the absurdity that these young, highly educated Malay playwrights feel at their own inability and helplessness to make known of the shortcomings dominant in their society" (p. 163). She also added that the absurd plays that are written by local playwrights are far more objective than the typical absurd plays that originated from the West. It must be stressed here that the "absurd" plays in Malaysia are called as such because they are not realistic plays and most of their works are difficult to understand as the writing is not based on solid, philosophical or cultural tradition. "Malaysian theatre scholars, rooted in the Western tradition are aware that Malaysian absurd plays are in a class of their own and have no connection to the western absurd plays. In fact, these theatre scholars have resorted to using the term 'absurd ala Malaysia' or abstract plays" (Solehah, 1990, p. 170). Her statement shed some light that cleared many doubts and confusions on the unique adaptation of Malay absurd plays.

In addition, a closer look at the plays that were produced during the period of experimental theatre showed that most absurd works are not as absurd as it was once labelled. The plays are indeed philosophical. Mohd. Ramli (1991) mentioned that in accordance with some sociological issues raised by the playwrights, the characters displayed in the absurd plays are actually searching for human dignity in the essence of life (pp. 21-23). Therefore, it will be deemed inappropriate to classify all plays with elements of absurd theatre as being

atheistic and pessimistic. The concept of Malay absurd theatre is still unclear. There is a call for another approach to read through these plays, thus revealing the quality of these works. Apparently, approaches in existentialism or even absurd theatre techniques are to be found inadequate and misleading especially in the works by Dinsman during the period of experimental theatre. This is simply because Dinsman's plays mainly sought solace through religion, in this context, Islam. *It Is Not A Suicide* is a perfect resemblance of a metaphysical quest in search of divine power to fulfil the insatiable need for absolute happiness.

METHODOLOGY

This play focuses on a play, *It Is Not A Suicide*, written by Dinsman using the approach adopted in the *Concept of Happiness* by al-Attas (2001). The method of discussion is through a text-based analysis and an interview session with the playwright himself to further strengthen the discussion of this paper.

Absurd theatre has generated ongoing criticisms and the playwright's attempt in creating his own version of absurd work 'ala' Malaysia did not gain much appreciation. Therefore, this paper intends to highlight Dinsman's creative appropriations of the typical western absurd theatre style in revealing his concerns of the influence of fast paced modern lifestyle on the personal development of an individual. Although the western style of absurd theatre is flawed by the philosophy which underpins the origins of this theatre, the playwright had

transformed the style that was known to be unsuitable for the local audience into a play that is socially- oriented (Rahmah & Nur Nina Zuhrah, 1988).

It Is Not A Suicide is heavy with the trappings of existential dilemma of confused individual in the vortex of urbanisation. The modern lifestyle has led humans to focus on the material achievement alone and placed little emphasis on the spiritual aspects. This is what happens to Adam who feels that he is so lonely and his life seems empty. He cannot find the answers that can fulfil his inquisitive mind. The pile of books that surrounds him shows that he is literate and widely read. He starts to feel that all his academic achievements have indeed reached a point of saturation. The knowledge that he gains fails to answer his existential quests. Hence, this play requires an appropriate theoretical approach to bring about a discussion on the lack of spiritual fulfilment highlighted by the playwright.

The author analyses the play through the lens of Syed Naquib al-Attas' *Concept of Happiness*. Examining the play through al-Attas concept of happiness will shed some light on the central theme of in the play. Thus, the paper hopes to bring the concept of modernisation into a new dimension without having to neglect the social, cultural and spiritual dimensions.

AL-ATTAS AND THE CONCEPT OF HAPPINESS

In his book, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*, al-Attas (2001) explains that happiness is a concept that links humans to

God. This bond allows humans to achieve a perfection of the mind, body and soul. Happiness is described as having blessed lives which become the ultimate goal for humans, as servants of God. Therefore, this material world is a passport for individuals to achieve eternal lives in the Hereafter.

Happiness, according to al-Attas, is *Saadah* which is linked to two dimensions of existence. The opposite of *Saadah* is *shaqawah* which means misfortune and misery in general. The first dimension of the concept of happiness is *dunyawiyah* which is the happiness in the present world and the second is *ukhrawiyah* which is the happiness in the world hereafter. In respect to the world hereafter, *Saadah* refers to the ultimate happiness, which is the more everlasting felicity and bliss in one's life. This is the highest being in the vision of God, promised to those who in worldly life have lived in willing submission, conscious and knowing obedience of God's commands and prohibition. Hence, in Islam, it is important to balance both dimensions of happiness as a proper life in the present world will lead to a promised happiness in the world hereafter (p. 91).

The term *Saadah* is related to the hereafter world which is closely connected to the present world, with respect to three things. The first one is self or *nafsiyyah* that pertains to knowledge and good characters, the second to the body (*badaniyah*) such as good health and security and the third one to the external entities to the self and the body (*kharijiyyah*) such as wealth and other causes that promote the well-being of the

self, the body, and the external things and circumstances in relation to them. al-Attas emphasises that happiness in the present world can not only be found in secular and modern life, but also with living life as interpreted and guided by religion whose source is Revelation.

Happiness from the Islamic perspective is closely related to the self which pertains to knowledge and character. Islam teaches that the "seat of knowledge in [humans] are spiritual substance variously referred to in the Quran as [their] hearts (*qalb*), or [their] souls or [selves] (*nafs*), or his intellect (*aql*) or [their spirits] (*ruh*)" (p. 92). The self is involved in dual aspects of body and soul. The first one is described as the animal soul (*al-nafs al-hayawaniyyah*); and the other one as the rational soul (*al-nafs al-natiqah*). The destiny of achieving happiness in life and ultimate happiness in the hereafter are very much dependent upon which aspect it chooses to align itself in a preponderant way.

Virtue (*fadilah*) is classified generally as an excellence of mind or discernment and good characters. Al-Attas defines characters as a stable state of soul. However, characters can be called as good characters only if it causes actions commended by the intellect and by religion. Good character can be achieved by learning good habituation and in some cases, it may come as a divine gift. The goal of good character is happiness, both in this world and in the hereafter. In order to achieve this, the animal soul and its bodily faculties must be subordinated to the practical soul. This will enable the rational soul to direct individual actions after

a deliberation in accord with what parallels with the theoretical faculty of what is good and what is bad. Only when this has been accomplished can it realise wisdom.

Al-Attas's emphasis on the concept of happiness under the limelight of Islamic perspectives has been found to be in contrast to the concept that is well-known to many Muslims nowadays. Many Muslims are not aware that the concept that they have in mind is secular in nature and influenced by the western school of thoughts. This is simply because in the Islamic concept of happiness, happiness is not attained in the present world only, but it is also sought and achieved in the present world which would lead to happiness hereafter. In contrast to the Western school of thought, happiness is an ultimate accomplishment in life and choices are meant to be an individual goal to what is best in one's life. This confusion of contrasting concepts of happiness can be dated back to the history of two different traditions, the West and the Islamic concept of happiness. In the traditions of Western thought, there are two conceptions of happiness: one which goes back to Aristotle (in the Middle Ages it goes back to Muslim philosophers and theologians chiefly Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali) and the modern which gradually emerged in Western history as a result of secularisation. This philosophic and scientific process according to al-Attas involves the diverting of spiritual meaning from the world of nature, the desacralisation of politics from human affairs and the deconsecrating of values from the human mind and conduct.

Secularisation is an initial movement in the experience and consciousness of Western man in the philosophical foundations laid down by Aristotle. The modern conception of happiness that is prevalent in the West today has undergone changes, bringing with it not only moral decadence and crisis, but political dissension and conflict as well. Islamic perspectives do not agree on the basic premises of the Aristotelian position that virtue and happiness relate to this present world only. Consequently, happiness that has become a permanent condition experienced consciously in the course of our worldly life is unattainable.

ANALYSIS

al-Attas discusses happiness from the Islamic perspectives. He suggests that in achieving happiness, man must seek from different dimensions, namely the happiness in the present world and happiness in the world hereafter. It is important to note that man must be able to strike a balance from both dimensions of happiness, as a proper life in the present world will promise an ultimate happiness in the world hereafter. When a man is unable to understand and fail to follow God's commands and prohibitions, the happiness that is sought after will only be superficial. This is what happens in the play where the main character is lost in search for happiness. He is looking for happiness in the present world. Hence, the happiness in the present world is empty and confused since done is not emotionally fulfilled.

In *It Is Not A Suicide*, living life is perceived as difficult; we cannot escape

from making decisions. Decisions have to be made either it turns out to be good or bad. In life, we are confronted with these challenges as part of achieving a meaningful life. However, it will be tough when we find ourselves unable to make choices as choices being made sometimes would clash with the principles of religion or even values that had once shaped who we are now. This is evident in Adam, a character who is experiencing conflicts, as he tries to question God and about existence in general. He decides to commit suicide in order to meet God to answer his burning questions. Unfortunately, his preoccupations with existence confuses Adam and he becomes lost. He loses his sense of judgment when he suddenly decides to end his life in order to meet God. By having such intentions, Adam feels he can find the meaning of life that he has been seeking and achieve absolute happiness.

In this play, Adam is not happy as he fails to get what he yearns for. He searches endlessly for answers from many sources such as through his readings and attending lessons offered by respectable teachers. He tries to find the answers from his father, and yet he still fails to find what he is looking for. He wants answers to the meaning of life. Adam feels that there is no other way except to seek answer from God himself:

(He climbs the pile of books while reflecting on the noose). Today, today I will no longer wait for you. Today, (holds the noose) today I

will go to you. I will not commit suicide. This is my last attempt to meet you. There is only this left for me to do. (Suddenly) Heh, don't, don't bother me. This is my affair.

(Dinsman, 1979/1988, p. 53)

These lines indicate how Adam really wants to pursue the meaning of happiness. To Adam, life at the moment is perceived to be a burden. He is not happy, as he fails to achieve what he wants. He finally decides that he will no longer wait and therefore, he feels he has no other choice left. Adam and his suicidal plan have become the main discussion in this section as his action to end his life is thought to be permissible. On the contrary, suicide is not allowed in Islam. Muslims are highly encouraged to seek *ikhtiyar* (choice) to achieve their desires but they have to work hard to gain good things in their life. In this case, one can understand how Adam thinks. He believes he owns *ikhtiyar* and that will shape his decision to take his own life. This he perceives as the only way to work out what he wants.

Al-Attas mentions that *ikhtiyar* or choice has to be made based on good judgment for better options in life. However, it is important to highlight that when aligned to the philosophical question of freedom, any choice on what is bad is to be disregarded. Looking at this context, Adam's attempt to meet God by ending his life cannot be regarded as a choice or *ikhtiyar*. Clearly, Adam's confusion has clouded his thinking and judgment. Being

humans, we have to affirm that freedom is to act as our real and true nature demands. Ending his life to meet God is not acting according to the demands of true nature. It is an act of pure desperation of tainted heart (*qalb*) when he thinks he has found his way of fulfilling his quest and his soul (*nafs*). He fails to wait further and pray to seek guidance from God, instead he goes to the quickest way in getting what he wanted. His intellect (*aql*) becomes confused with what he reads and what he actually learns. Therefore, he decides that he has the choice of what is good for him to satisfy his thirst to seek answers:

*Nothing is meaningful anymore,
Father. Father, I ask you, please
don't bother me anymore. I have
chosen my own path, which I think
is good for me. And, Father, you
already have your own lifestyle,
which I believe is good for you.*

(Dinsman, 1979/1988, p. 157)

Adam has decided, and unfortunately his decision is not deemed to be based on his ignorance. His action reflects the instigation of the soul that inclines towards the blameworthy aspects of the animal powers. He is playing with his blind instinct. This would reflect his mind which is unable to think straight as he is desperate and impatient in getting things done his way.

The play reflects that Adam reads well. This can be seen through the depiction of the setting of the play in which Adam is

standing on the top of a pile of books. What he is looking for is to make sense of what he had learnt in his entire lifetime. Adam is a thinker and he likes to think. This further illustrates that he wants to learn more about the nature of his existence and everyone experiences this call at some point in their lives. When he mentions, "I don't blame those religious people, Father. In fact, I respect them. And if I could I'd want to be like them" (Dinsman, 1979/1988, p. 155) tells us that he actually wants to learn from religious teachers in pursuing his quests. Al-Attas mentions that, proper knowledge in religion is highly required as it will be applied in daily life which will bring one to the worldly happiness and happiness in the hereafter. Therefore, Adam cannot be regarded as a learned person as he has knowledge without a proper foundation. Any man has to learn from a teacher who has great knowledge as learning without a teacher is like learning in the darkness without knowing which correct path to follow. However, in this case, Adam has learned from the teachers and he learns from the books that he reads, and eventually he fails. Knowledge of God and meaning of existence cannot be found by only reading through books and learning from great teachers. It has to come through revelation that only God is able to shed light on. Without it, man will be seeking meaning endlessly and therefore he will feel the emptiness as there is no soul fulfilment that leads towards a meaningful existence. This is parallel with al-Attas's notion that happiness in the present world is not only

to be found in secular life, but also with life as interpreted and guided by religion whose source is revelation. Adam has to wait and pray hard to God to seek his guidance to the right path. Revelation in a form of wisdom and enlightenment always come from within. Happiness and the search for life's meaning, though pertinent to ensure a blissful life, should absolutely not contradict with the faith of Islam.

CONCLUSION

Dinsman had created a play that is heavy with the discussions of human existential issues. Hence, it is deemed impossible to depict the issues raised through typical realistic style in which realistic style had its limitations. Absurd theatre style was perceived to represent human psychological dilemmas and an interesting visual representation for further reflections and discussions by the audience at large. Even though his appropriations on absurd theatre style had created plenty of misleading criticisms, *It Is Not A Suicide* is a creative depiction of the playwright's insights. It is important to highlight the playwright's closing lines at the end of the play. Typical of the absurd style, there is no conclusion to the matter raised. The play ends well with a closure that signifies that there is hope to Adam's sufferings. Going back to the path of religion will be the only way to save Adam from being unhappy and feeling worthless. This is the part that represents Dinsman's mode of appropriation from a typical pessimistic ending to a play with a closure

which resembles hope for the betterment of the newly structured society.

Through this play, Dinsman had emphasised the need to realign the concept of modernization so that the confusions of two differing worldviews will be avoided. This discussion has further revealed that being a Muslims, we had gone far from the proposed religious teachings. The repercussion of modernisation on the Muslim society had called for a serious readjustment to our understanding of happiness which should not be solely achieved through material gain. We certainly would like to avoid what has happened in the West, as they are grappling now with the lack of spiritual aspects after achieving modernisation for decades. Al-Attas views that: "development, change and progress as a means will enable Muslim society to move towards a genuine Islam" (al-Roubaie, 2010, p. 342). He proposes that development must not only strengthen the nation's ability to become materially prosperous, but also promote Islamic fundamentals by overcoming some of the challenges facing Muslims. The development of a modern nation simply based on material gain alone will result in a nation that is spiritually fragile. As al-Attas suggests, we can infer that people need to have a balance in their lives. When religion becomes secondary, a person will not find the correct path that leads to living life happily. Dinsman attempts to explore this in his play that humans are responsible in seeking the meaning of their existence (Mohd. Ramli, 1991). This would fit with

the purpose of humans to find harmony in their lives for the ultimate purpose of the current world *dunyawiyah* and the world hereafter, *ukhrawiyyah*. The play, *If Is Not A Suicide*, reflects that the Malay Muslims in this country are not immune to the globalisation of modernity. Humans need to find a well-balanced life to gain a blessed life from God the Almighty. When humans are clear with their purpose, they will work sincerely for the sake of blessings from God. The positive energy will flourish and soon the modern nation can be achieved without which the spiritual needs of the society have to be neglected. Therefore, there is a strong need to realign our concept of development, progress or even modernisation into an Islamic worldview in achieving a balanced nation.

With the arrival of modernisation and globalisation of today's world, it would be prudent to equip ourselves with knowledge and skills to better prepare us. However, preparing ourselves with knowledge and skills alone will never guarantee us to be strong in confronting the great challenges. In developing a nation to become productive and well respected by the entire world, we must agree that the spiritual requirements have to be set correctly since it will be a foundation to manage globalisation. Without the strong fundamentals in the spiritual aspect, humans will become confused and whatever they achieve will only be superficial. When material gains have become the only source of motivation, humans will end up feeling empty. This kind of motivation can easily fade away

and when it does, humans will start to search for something substantial. The search will turn into a major distraction and the modernisation will become a source of spiritual destruction to mankind.

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