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# ISLAMIC DISCOURSE ON HULA-BANGSA-AGAMA: THE TAUSUG CONCEPT OF STATE

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Of all the principles connected to our daily life as well as to our sacred struggle, the most important one which lives through our consciousness, is the *aliyan* or slogan of *hula-bangsa-agama*. This is the *aliyan* of the time. This was the *aliyan* of our forebears during their times, crossing waves upon waves of colonial disaster besetting the collective life of the Tausug as a nation. Resounding across generations the love for *hula-bangsa-agama* is actually the hallmark of the Tausug national consciousness, which continues to awaken and to nurture the psyche of some Tausug up to this day. These holy words are not just a mere slogan. *Hula-bangsa-agama* is a *padduman* or political doctrine visualizing the Tausug concept of state. It is a vision, an ideology, a principle, and a shield against disunity. Unfortunately, the exact discourse of this *hula-bangsa-agama* did not survive to the present. Treatise dealing with this *hula-bangsa-agama* got destroyed during the 1635 battle against the colonial invaders, then again in 1876 when the Spaniards finally occupied our city until 1899.

The elders of the current MNLF revolution who are the heirs to the sacred struggle in our time, have not managed to reconstruct the scattered ideas behind such noble political doctrine. We find no materials dealing with these important principles in which our *kamaasan* or ancestors are deserved commendation for contributing a political doctrine vital to the rediscovery of our lost heritage, our lost statehood which sunk layers upon layers of time.

The study of our *padduman* is the only ideological link to our great past. This is the way to enable the young generation to connect the past to the present as well as the future. Tausug scholars need to revisit and understand deeply our *padduman* so that they can educate the young generation. Is not this a challenge of our times? It is a challenge before the academic institutions, before the educators of our society. The youths of today are mostly detached from the history of the past. They have insufficient knowledge about history – a factor that loosens their upholding the cause of *hula-bangsa-agama*. The introduction of colonial education in our homeland and the subsequent relegation of the sultanate to political shadow in our contemporary time has created historical gap in which the young generation is cut from its historical root.

This discourse anchors on the framework that upholding the cause of *hula-bangsa-agama* is itself the key to address the country's problems and is the potential force to move the nation towards attaining national goals. We must also believe that by nature, *agama* as a system has its own method of establishing a society and method of resolving problems. If we tread other paths, surely, we shall meet a dead end. The Qur'an says, "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the hereafter, he will be one of the losers." (Qur'an, 3:85)

This discourse also aims to enhance the discussion and understanding of the concept of *hula-bangsa-agama* and to rectify wrong perceptions. Everyone must come to believe that the cause of *hula-bangsa-agama* is the unifying force for the whole Filipino

people particularly the Muslim ethnic groups in the Sulu archipelago in their struggle to make this nation a great again.

## II. FACING SQUARELY VITAL CONCERNS

Let us address first the vital concerns and clear the misconceptions surrounding them because they block the growth of the Tausug society. The vital concerns are the following:

- Disease of the Bangsasug society
- Status of the performance of our social institutions
- Revisiting our history
- *Jihad fi sabilillah*
- Failure of social reforms

### First Concern:

**Disease of the Bangsasug Society.** It is part of my teachings asking college students enrolled under my subjects – what is *iman* or Islamic faith? How do you understand and uphold *iman*? These are the questions which I used to raise to about seven thousand students within the span of 30 years of teaching at the Mindanao State University-Sulu. Of these number of students, none had able to answer the correct and complete one. The usual responses of the students are either *iman* means fear, patience, and belief in Allah. These are the three words whom the students randomly used in their answers. Only insignificant number could respond with complete answer, but seldom of them can freely answer in order and in a flowing manner – the six pillars of Islam, as follows: belief in the oneness of Allah, belief in all angels of Allah, belief in the divine books of Allah, belief in the messengers of Allah, belief in the day of judgment, and belief in *qadar* or destiny as ordained by Allah.

This survey has three implications. First, the fundamental teachings of Islam are not integrated or emphasized in the values education which is among the three basic thrusts of the university or any academic institution anywhere in the world. Teaching values is ultimately the teachings of *iman*, *taqwa*, *ihsan*, *khusu*, *ikhlas*, *sabar*, and *ibadat*. The survey tells us that important values as mentioned are not properly transmitted to the students. Second, the Muslim faculty members from elementary, to secondary up to the university are undoubtedly secularized, and follow secular philosophy in their teachings thus, the learning of the students is also secularized. Third, the parents of the students are either ignorant or negligent of their duties to bring up their children in accordance with Islamic education. The Qur'an says: "O ye who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe who flinch not (from executing) the commands they receive from Allah. But do (precisely) what they are commanded." (Qur'an, 66:6) Similarly, at the larger society many Bangsasug today are living unaware of their Islamic heritage. This situation is the outcome of how the Bangsasug society suffers under the impact of external control and influence.

Loss of *iman* is the source of disease that plagued the Bangsasug society today. How did this happen? We lose our *iman* because we fail to make *iman* the foundation

of knowledge as we transmit knowledge to the young people. In fact, 95% of the young people do not know the six articles of *iman*. This is a serious situation. What we neglected is the essence of knowledge that is supposed to hold the moral fiber of our people. The loss of *iman* makes our people passive over the teachings of Islam particularly the observance of its five pillars.

Upholding the six articles of *iman* and the five pillars of Islam are the two basic commands upon the Muslims. If these commands are neglected, our society may tear itself from its very root, and makes our people prone to regular spiritual death. Look now at our youth and even our professionals and leaders; they are no longer morally grounded, far from idealism of Islam and Tausug nationalism. They have weak religious foundation and have distorted understanding of values and history. They are confused of their national identity, trapped under the debris of colonial mentality which makes them susceptible to the external influences, specifically the forces of acculturation, assimilation, and integration. They are not aware of the propaganda carried daily by media including classroom instruction. How many of the youth are assimilated to foreign culture every day, every week, and every year? If our youths start to imitate western dress, start to learn western values, start to appreciate the taste of western food and drink, if they start to value fraternity over Muslim brotherhood, this perpetuates the assimilation process.

Eventually, once a person or a people are assimilated, they shall become acculturated, meaning they will hate their own culture, or become alienated and even renounce their own cultural identity, and embrace or submit fully to the influence of other culture. Indeed, our present state has reached the dangerous level. Because, there are many of our people today are either assimilated or acculturated. If these two processes become completed, our people shall be heading towards integration to foreign culture, may Allah forbid!!! Integration is the last stage of colonial conquest. The Bangsasug and the Muslims in general should realize all these conspiracies, more so not to forget any emerging threat that will destroy their solidarity and determination to reach their national goal.

Therefore, what is this disease that saps the inner part of our culture? In general, according to Ismail Raji al-Faruqi a Palestinian scholar, this malaise stems from the fact that the colonialists succeeded in de-Islamizing the top layer of Muslim society and demoralizing the rest. In other words, the ideological orientation of our leaders is no longer Islamic. They were the first to become assimilated and acculturated. Today, the elite of our society are now used as instrument to perpetuate the colonial apparatus within our homeland.

The second framework that can explain this social disease is the analysis of Dr. Naquib al-Attas of Malaysia. He said that our present general dilemma is caused by the confusion and error in knowledge, which creates the condition for the loss of *adab* (morality) within the community. The condition arising out of disease one and two leads to the rise of false leaders in our institutions today.

## Second Concern:

**Status of our Social Institutions.** Survival of any society rests on the effectiveness of its institutions of which the most important one is the school including *madrasa*, and the *masjid*. These institutions are the primary agencies responsible for educating the people, providing knowledge, values, and skills necessary for national development. But, take a look at the condition of our school, *madrasa* and the *masjid*.

It is public knowledge our school system is built on secular philosophy. It is the locus where our children are brainwashed with secular values and education throughout their school life. Our school officials speak about quality education but in terms of secular standard. Most parents often complained if not shock of the product of our school system in which after 14 years spending in school, their children are behaving far from the standard of Islam. Instead of educating them, our children become miseducated because of their distorted knowledge and values they learn from the school. Their distorted knowledge is reflected in their colonial perception, un-Islamic manner of dressing, un-Islamic manner of greetings, and un-Islamic manner of courtship among young people. The way of life of most young people is no longer in accordance with Islam.

Our *madaris* (plural of *madrasa*) are not fully institutionalized owing to poor management and facilities, weak curriculum, under-trained *mudarris*, and lack of support from the elites and the masses. For the last 50 years, *madaris* in Sulu have been situated in squatter areas. Only the past five years, some *madaris* improved in terms of physical growth but the level of teachings still confines largely to elementary. However, in other parts of the BARMM such as Basilan, Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur, *madaris* are quietly organized. These provinces have already established *qulliyah* or college program on Islamic education. Back to Sulu, if the condition of *madaris* is not good, the same condition is also happening to our *masajid*. In fact, *masajid* in the rural villages are not properly sustained. The role of *masajid* in the community as center of development growth has not actually happened in Sulu.

Generally, our social institutions are under led and poorly managed. They are not capable to provide quality education, quality *da'wah*, and quality service upon our impoverished people. They have no capacity to formulate planning, to implement, and even to evaluate. Our educators and the *ulama* should spend time for reflection about this condition. They must think for solution. They must consult and discuss each other in order to come up a target goal to address the problems. Of course, our educators should revisit the school curriculum, and come up with effective strategy to make the curriculum relevant to the needs of our people.

Muslim educators should be innovative, assertive in keeping the school curriculum along the path of Islam, Muslim history, and responsive to the current and future needs of the Bangsasug people. Education should be made as a tool to promote quality of life, and Islamic way of life. This is now the time the regional legislative assembly must act on the mandate of the BARMM's Organic Act calling for a regional educational framework.

### Third Concern:

**Revisiting our History.** The first step in revisiting our history is to reexamine the paradigm of nation-state from the historical lens of the Tausug because this paradigm had its beginning dated back to the Sultanate of Sulu when it was the ruling power of this country for 400 years. Founded on the Tausug concept of state known as *hula-bangsa-agama*, the Sultanate of Sulu was the first to build a single nation under single state and became also known as the Sulu Empire which brought all territories of Mindanao, Visayas and Luzon under its sphere of influence. The ruling power at that time looked at the whole archipelago from North Borneo to Luzon as Lupa Sug and its diverse people as one nation, the Tausug. Regardless of their ethnic affiliations, early inhabitants saw themselves as *hangkabangsa* (one nation), submitted to the sultanate and accepted Tausug as their national identity. The idea of *duwa bangsa* or two nations came only after the Spaniards established the Filipino nation and spread quickly after the GOMBURZA execution in 1872.

It is a fact that the governance of rajah and the governance of *datu* anywhere in Mindanao, Visayas and Luzon were established by the sultanate. All heads of the governmental units paid tributes annually to the sultanate. Along the trade route, the sultanate put up military outposts such as in Panay, Mindoro, Cebu up to Ilocos in order to ensure free flow of trade and economic enterprises. Sulu sea was completely controlled by the Sultanate of Sulu and emerged as maritime power in Southeast Asia. When former President Ferdinand E. Marcos asserted that this nation can be great again, he was undoubtedly referring to Lupa Sug, the ancient name of the present Philippines.

There are three paradigms to Philippine history. These are the 1. The Zaide paradigm or the western perspective, 2. The Agoncillo-Corpus paradigm or the native perspective and 3. The Saleeby-Majul paradigm or the Muslim view of history.

In quest for strong Philippine nation-state, the present ruling elites of this country must continue to sustain peace building in the South and address the roots of the political conflict including to rename this country reflective of its history and culture.

*Lupa Sug* was the ancient name of these southern islands and later the name was applied to the whole archipelago with the northern expansion of the sphere of influence of the *Sultaniyyah sin Lupa Sug*. *Lupa Sug* means the land of the current. It is a name based on geographical setting and its people are called Tausug, meaning people of the current.

The concept of single nation under single state was the cornerstone of the political system of the *Sultaniyyah sin Lupa Sug*. The development of *bangsa* started in the old *Lupa Sug* and spread later to the whole archipelago of what is known today as the Philippines. Small tribes were absorbed one by one by the ruling nation until the Tausug became the national identity of the entire inhabitants of *Lupa Sug*. The idea of one nation broke up as soon as the Spanish colonizers succeeded in colonizing the northern areas. Dr. Abraham P. Sakili described the present political landscape as *masa duwa bangsa*, the period of two nations.

It was due to the archipelagic nature of the country, the *Sultaniyyah sin Lupa Sug* became a sea power in Southeast Asia and exercised substantial control of trade and commerce in the area. The extent of the *sultaniyyah's* sea power encompassed the *Dagat*

*Lupa Sug* or the Sulu Sea which borders with the South China Sea and the Sulawesi Sea. Sulawesi is an Indonesian nomenclature for Sulu East Sea. Both the British and the French forces stationed in Hong Kong and Vietnam seek peace treaty with the *Sultaniyyah sin Lupa Sug* for a free pass across the *Dagat Lupa Sug*. From the perspective of the ruling elites in *Daira Sug*, they looked at the whole archipelago as the territory of *Lupa Sug*. Regardless of their ethnic origins, the inhabitants of the whole archipelago were called Tausug or *Bangsasug*. The sultan issued a decree requiring all communications and the delivery of *khutba* to be in *Bahasa Sug* as part of the policy to strengthen national unity. It was due to the wider interaction among the Tausug that the *Bahasa Sug* was enriched by different terminologies used by the different ethnic groups under the *sultaniyyah* and finally the *Bahasa Sug* evolved into the *lingua franca* of the whole *Lupa Sug*.

The history of *Lupa Sug* is a national history at par with the Malay and Indonesian history. While the latter was colonized by the British and the Dutch respectively, *Lupa Sug* survived the Spanish and US colonization. Advancing new political paradigm to erase the spirit of *duwa bangsa*, the Tausug concept of “*hula-bangsa-agama*” is very relevant and this can be best understood in the context of the root of our history and give value to many ancient political and cultural principles, which appear meaningless to the present generation. Includes in our political paradigm is to look the country’s history direct to the Islamic era and the sultanate era in Southeast Asia, the need to decolonize the Filipino mentality, promotion of the *balik* Islam movement, promotion of the slogan of *isang bansa isang diwa*, the promotion and adoption of the ancient name of the country, and deep study of the historical root of our people. It is now the time to undergo paradigm shift in historical thinking from the present *masa duwa bangsa* to *hambuuk bangsa* by transforming the mindset of the Filipino people to accept gradually the historical reality that this country was a single nation ruled by the *Sultaniyyah sin Lupa Sug*. Had not the Spanish colonization come in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the whole country would have remained entirely the *Lupa Sug*. We formulate here five questions to support the paradigm shift:

1. What was the first nation to rise in this country before the Spanish colonization? The answer is clear – It was the Bangsasug. The term Bangsasug is not based on ethnic affiliation; it is based on geographic setting of the country. It is applicable and honorable to all ethnic groups to adopt it as their national identity.
2. What is the uniting factor to transform the *duwa bangsa* into *hangkabangsa*? The answer is clear – We must go back to our historical reality that we were once a single nation or *hangkabangsa*.
3. What is the best political arrangement for the present Philippines? The answer is clear – The country must shift from unitary to federalism, from presidential to parliamentary system of government.
4. Why we need to adopt a new name for our country? The answer is clear – We want to remove any vestige of colonial influence and move the nation forward with respect and dignity.
5. Why we need to strengthen national integration? The answer is clear – We want the history of *Lupa Sug* to become the foundation of nation-building and state building. We want all people regardless of their ethnic affiliation to have equal access and serve the government without discrimination. These are the questions that true nationalists must ask.

Truly, a person devoid of sense of nationalism never asks these questions. He is a type of person or people who are described by the *kamaasan* as *agad lusay* or the kind of persons who do not uphold principles. They do not care or not even dare to see what

is around the society. They do not bother to understand the root cause of the present political suffering and the present struggle for right to self-determination within their homeland. Some of these people are influenced by the writings of the non-Muslims which portrayed our own history in distorted manner and regarded *jihad* against the western colonialism as piratical act.

Even within the rank of the *kaguruhan*, there is confusion about their understanding of the Bangsasug history. They do not know the historical upheaval after the fall of the three great sultanates in Mindanao and Sulu that took place during the American occupation from 1899 to 1946. They are not acquainted with the *adat* and the external forces destructive to its existence. This is perhaps the reason why some *kaguruhan* are confining their discourse only on purely trivial religious issues. Their *da'wah* and Islamic discourse cannot go beyond the level of *takhara*, *salat* and issue on *mazahib*. Very few of the *kaguruhan* engaged boldly in the articulation of national issues such as right to self-determination, good governance, economic problems, and institutional issues facing the Bangsasug people.

Dr. Al-Anwar J. Anzar a lecturer in public administration at the MSU-Sulu Graduate School classified the types of persons into three: First type of a person always involves himself in social issues. He always asks and understands, then helps to inform others. Second type of a person may only involve himself in social issues if he is asked or invited and informed about of what is going on. The third type of a person has neither involved himself in the social issues nor dared to ask or to know the issues. This type of person is not good for the society.

It is therefore an urgent call to revisit our national history so that we can look into the social factors facilitating the formation of our nationhood, the rise of the Sulu sultanate, the development of our culture, and the *jihad* against western colonialism. Surely, we can gain insights from our great past that can help us to understand the present.

The best commentary on importance of history is the work of Abd al-Mun'im Majid when he said that "history is the feeling of the nation and its memory. Each nation senses its being and forms its personality through its history. The unity of history produces closeness in feeling and attitudes and similarity in customs and traditions, in the memory of former glory, of hopes, of suffering, and in the similarity of a desire for a renaissance in the present and hopes for the future. Historical memories bring the spirit of the members of the society closer and constitute among them a kind of closeness of essence. History in all its contents of events, heroes, victories and memories gives life to the spirits of the sons of the nation ..."

#### **Fourth Concern:**

***Jihad fi Sabilillah.*** *Jihad* is the most important principle of Islam but its meaning and philosophy are misunderstood by the contemporary Muslims in Mindanao and Sulu. It was the most hated tradition in the eyes of the British colonialists in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The British had to the extent sponsored an Indian *alim*, Ahmad Ghulam Mirza who spearheaded the call for rejection of *jihad* in the modern time. In their black propaganda for instance, *jihad* is figured out as violence, a radical action, and outdated approach



which the Muslims are encouraged to do it away. This line of thought still survives to the present time. Even some literate persons in our midst support this perception. Their mindset is dominated with the view that if *jihad* will lead to *fitna*, then it is therefore irrelevant to the growth of the Muslim community. This type of argument is not sensible. Because, in the first place, *jihad* as envisioned by Islam is not war offensive rather it is both for spiritual development and defensive struggle if the Muslim community is facing *fitna*, if religious practice is threatened, if the call for Islam is stopped or the *Kuffar* launch war offensive against the Muslims. If this condition exists, then *jihad* must take place.

*Jihad* in the context of Muslims in the Philippines today is no longer applicable as it was used before because of the existing peace agreements. The military component of *jihad* is neutralized by the peace agreements. Said Agreements prohibit the Muslims to take up arms against the government except if the latter will abandon the Agreement.

The conditions for *jihad* can be illustrated with the experience of the Muslims during the days of Nabi Muhammad (S.A.S.). Those who followed the Prophet were persecuted, barred from practicing their belief, and expelled from their homes. From the very beginning, the Prophet ordered only the Muslims to remain patient, and not to take up arms. This situation lasted until the Qur'an enjoined the Muslims to go for *jihad*. The argument of the Qur'an is very simple: "Fighting is prescribed upon you, and you dislike it. But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knows and you know not." (Qur'an, 2:216).

Today, Muslim intellectuals should correct this wrong perception about *jihad* circulating among the people. We have to remember that *jihad* is both individual and collective duty required upon the Muslims. *Jihad* is for cleaning the society from polytheism, and injustice. *Jihad* is to free the people from spiritual oppression, physical oppression, and intellectual oppression. Islam will be destroyed without Muslims carrying out the *jihad fi sabillillah*.

#### **Fifth Concern:**

**Social Reform.** Muslims should understand that our society cannot be reformed on the basis of colonial structure and secular framework. Time and again, the bureaucracy existing throughout the Bangsasug homeland has become a tool for oppression in the hands of the secularist Tausug or Bangsasug. The bureaucracy we have cannot be used as a tool for social reform unless officials running this machinery become enlightened with the teachings of Islam. Common people are kept on saying, why government institutions in our society do not perform well despite the people handling it are all Muslims from regional level down to local level? The answer is that our Muslim leaders do not follow Islamic leadership, do not adhere to the ideology of Islam as the living force of the society. These people have neither mastery of the secular education nor understand well the philosophy of Islam.

### **III. HULA-BANGSA-AGAMA AS A POLITICAL CONCEPT**

The ideological basis of the concept of *hula-bangsa-agama* is the doctrine of Islamic *Ummah*, whose purpose is to establish a single global Muslim brotherhood.

*Ummah* refers to the people who adhere to Islam and follow the *Sunnah* and (leadership) of Nabi Muhammad (S.A.S). The early members of the *ummah* were the *Muhajirin* or the Quraysh of Makkah and later joined by the *Ansars* or the people from Madina who accepted Islam and invited the Prophet and his followers to migrate to Madina. The Prophet (S.A.S) accepted the offer. With the migration of the early members of the *ummah* to Madina, thus began the rise of the Muslim *Ummah* at Madina which became the citadel of the Islamic empire afterward. From then on, the Muslims realized that any Muslim *Ummah* requires to occupy and control a territory and may have the *Shari'ah* to govern it. This means the concept of *ummah* may embrace the believing people, territory, government, and *din* or divine ideology. In the later time the believing people emerged into a national group and found Islam as the rallying point of solidarity and brotherhood. The interplay between nation, territory and Islam turned into a political notion, which ended in the development of the concept of *hula-bangsa-agama*. Early Muslims in Sulu understood clearly that the survival of the Muslim community depends on their strong adherence of what is now called the Tausug concept of state composed of only three elements: *hula-bangsa-agama*.

Under western concept, state has four elements: territory, nation, government and sovereignty. The Tausug concept of state consists of only three elements because government and sovereignty are rolled into one under the concept of *agama*. The *fuqaha* said: “*Al-Islam ad-din wa ad-dawla*.” Islam is both religion and state (which emphasizes that sovereignty belongs to Allah alone).

### **The Three Principles**

First Principle: *Hula* or country is a basic requirement for any people to exist. It is one of the fundamental elements of state. But, without the control of *hula* or territory, national life is impossible. The principal source of national life of any nation is derived from its own *hula*, physical resources, ideological system that provides cohesiveness among the people, and the free exercise of its national sovereignty. Therefore, the defense of *hula* is indispensable. That losing control over *hula* shall make national existence of any nation difficult. Without effective control of *hula*, the practice of *agama* becomes also difficult.

Second Principle: *Bangsa* is the guardian of *hula*, and the pillars of *agama*. *Hula* is meaningless without *bangsa*, and neither *agama* nor *bangsa* can exist without effective control of *hula*. However, *hula* and *agama* are only passive agent. It is the *bangsa* who will organize society, establish leadership, and government; exploit and develop the resources of *hula*, and implement the command of *agama*. But any *bangsa* whose nationalism is weak, shall end in ruin. Nabi Muhammad (S.A.S.) said: “I bid you to do five things: to remain attached to the *jama'ah* or main body (of Muslims), listen to your ruler and obey him, and migrate (to other land when the need arises), and fight in the way of Allah. And he who detaches himself from the main body of the Muslims to the extent of one span of hand, he in fact, throws of the yoke of Islam from his neck, and he who calls with the call of ignorance, he is one from the denizens of Hell beyond doubt, even if he observes fast and says prayers and considers himself as a Muslim.”

Third Principle: *Agama* was the basis of unity of the whole ethnic groups in the Sulu archipelago into a distinct *bangsa*. Only *agama* can provide strongest bond among the ethnic groups within the Bangsasug homeland. The most reliable bond is expressed in the call of Islam: “*Wa’tasimu bihablillah jami’an wa latafarraku.*” Hold fast, all of you together to the rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves. (Qur’an, 3:103) Abul ‘Ala Mawdudi considered this *ayat* as the basis of Islamic state. Like a rope, Islamic state is an encircling wall that protects its citizens. Anyone who turns back from the rope shall suffer misguidance and divine wrath.

Our *agama* is the only ideological system which projects global brotherhood for all Muslims throughout the world. Only *agama* can provide truth and divine guidance. Ibn Khaldun said: “Religious coloring does away with mutual jealousy and envy among people who share in a group feeling and causes concentration upon the truth. Then people with religious coloring come to have the right insight into their affairs, nothing can withstand them because their outlook is one and their object one of common accord. They are willing to die for their objectives.”

“But, when hearts succumb to false desires and are inclined toward the world, mutual jealousy and widespread differences arise. But, when they are turned toward the truth and reject the world and whatever is false, and advance toward God, they become one in their outlook. Jealousy disappears. There are few differences. Mutual cooperation and support flourish. As a result, the extent of state widens, and the society grows.” (Khaldun, 1975: 320).

*Agama* is the foundation of *hula* and *bangsa*’s leadership. It is said that if *agama* is left upon the leaders, *agama* will become the foundation, and the guardian are the *bangsa* together with their leaders. Anything which has no foundation is destroyed. Anything which has no guardian is also destroyed. In reality, *agama* is the real foundation of the society, and the leaders are the real guardian.

*Hula-bangsa-agama* is the triangular basis of unity of the Bangsasug as a nation. With this, they can create political will to press their demand for right to self-determination. The spirit of *hula-bangsa-agama* should become a means of political shield from the forces of acculturation, assimilation, and integration to other nationalism and ideologies other than Islam.

*Hula-bangsa-agama* is the common cause of every individual Muslim person who inhabits Mindanao and Sulu. The idea of common cause is the desire to establish a society based on justice and guidance of *agama*. It is therefore imperative the strong participation of the *ulama* and intellectual in the formation of effective governance and economy of the *hula*. It is also imperative that every *ra’ayat* should push for unity of the *bangsa*. The entire *ra’ayat* should unite behind national cause – the cause of *hula-bangsa-agama*. Every *ra’ayat* should support, sympathize, and identify with the national cause – the liberation of *hula* and *bangsa* from all forms of oppression such as spiritual oppression, intellectual oppression, and physical oppression.

The concept of *bangsa* should be utilized only as instrument for national unity of the diverse peoples in the Sulu archipelago. It must not be used as an ideology to replace Islam as the ideological force of the Bangsasug society. There is no such national

ideology in the eyes of Islam. Nationalism is only a means to bring Islam as an ideological force. This means our national cause is not espoused in the way – “right or wrong, my country.” It is not loyalty to one’s nation with hatred to other nations. Our national cause is the cause of Islam.

Bangsasug nationalism has to be guided by Islam. It must not exist as a threat to other nations. It has to be promoted and strengthened so that the Bangsasug will gain the respect of the community of nations, particularly within the Muslim *Ummah*. With their national unity, the Bangsasug can press their claim and defend themselves effectively from the menace of big nations. Big nations have always the tendency to dominate weak nations. Even big nations within the Muslim *Ummah* do the same. The situation of the Kurdish and the Bangsasug is a good illustration. Turkey, Iraq and even Iran are not happy to see a rising and strong Kurdish. The same story of Malaysia and the Philippines where these countries are not happy to see a rising and strong Bangsasug. Everywhere oppressed nations have the reasons to strengthen their national unity to effectively protect their own interests. The Bangsasug in particular should not abandon their past history because their heroic resistance against colonialism was an exemplary achievement in the history of *jihad*. Understanding history is a potential source of inspiration for the present quest for freedom and peace.

The *hula* which we claim as our homeland, is a gift of Allah to us. With our acceptance, the land automatically becomes a trust upon our nation, but with the condition we have to make use of the land a better place to live. Now, mischief is widespread in our land. “Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression and injustice). That (Allah) may give them a taste of some of their deeds in order that they may repent (for their sins and ask Allah for His forgiveness). (Qur’an, 30:41). This mischief or *fasad* as the Qur’an describes is the handiwork of both the Muslims and non-Muslims. Following the *tafsir* of the *ulama*, *fasad* is the main tool used by the enemy to destroy the Muslims. *Fasad* takes in many forms including *riba*-oriented institutions like banks, cooperatives and pawnshop; promotion of sex slavery and prostitution, spreading violence and *fitna*, establishing political system other than Islam, business curtail, direct invasion of Muslim land. Thus, the Qur’an calls all the Muslims to eradicate *fasad* from the face of the earth. The oppressed Muslims can only survive in the midst of *fasad* except to rise up. The Qur’an has promised: “And We wished to be gracious to those who were being depressed in the land to make them leaders and make them heirs.” (Qur’an, 28:5) In this case, we need to prove ourselves before Allah that we are worth for the trust. We are only required to do true worship of Allah and to do righteousness. An ancient saying says: “righteousness exalts a nation.”

**Concept of Hula.** *Hula* has three political meanings: a motherland, a homeland, and a state. In this discourse, the term *hula* here is referred to state. The Tausug concept of *hula* (state) is composed of only three elements as reflected in their political slogan – “*hula-bangsa-agama*.” These three noble concepts are inseparable. They form the spiritual block from which the national power of the Bangsasug people comes from. These three elements of *hula* are equally important. *Hula* is the pre-requisite to the survival of *bangsa* and *agama*. *Hula* is the source of livelihood and material resources necessary for the sustenance of *bangsa*. However, if the people have no access to resources, or is not of full control over their motherland, the interest of *bangsa* and *agama*

is jeopardized. This is the reason why all nations of the world emphasize the importance of defense of *hula* because this is tantamount to defense of *bangsa* and *agama*.

A good example is the birth of Islamic state in Madina in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The dramatic growth of the Muslim *Ummah* and the expansion of Islam to the world came afterward only when the Muslims under the leadership of Nabi Muhammad (S.A.S) were able to control Madina and built an Islamic state. The Muslim *Ummah* prospered within its secured territory, which was later transformed into an Islamic state. The Madina Islamic state became the rallying point of both the *Muhajirin* and the Ansar who formed the core group of the early Muslim *Ummah* – a community based on global Islamic brotherhood. Later, this Islamic state became also the uniting factor of the whole Arab tribes inhabiting the Arabian Peninsula. For thousand years, the Arabs were disunited. Their outlook could not transcend above tribalism. This perception only changed with the introduction of Islam. Through Islam, the Arabs became united and raised the banner of Islam far and wide. Through Islam, the Arabs conquered the two largest empires of Rome and Persia in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

*Hula-bangsa-agama* had been the basis of *jihad* throughout the colonization period from 16<sup>th</sup> century down to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This noble slogan keeps the wheel of *jihad* moving. The same principle is applicable to the present. If this noble slogan is properly understood and used, it is the right spirit that can reawaken our consciousness from deep slumber of negligence and heedlessness. Upholding the spirit of *hula-bangsa-agama* is the key to sustain the Bangsasug current aspiration for freedom, justice and development.

*Hula-bangsa-agama* is the social bond that sustains the national struggle across centuries. We should not allow any group both within and outside our homeland to dismantle the spirit of unity of *hula*, *bangsa*, and *agama*. We should not even allow anyone to invert the order of this *hula*, *bangsa*, *agama*. *Hula* must come first, and followed by *bangsa*, and *agama* in the third order. This order can be likened to a ship and its journey towards final destination. We cannot cross the horizon and reach the end unless our people have built first strong ship to carry them forward. This ship is actually our *hula*, our motherland. *Bangsa* are the passengers, the crew, and captain of the ship. *Agama* represents the map, the compass, and the engine to make the ship running, and crossing the ocean of struggle. National freedom represents our final destination.

Certainly, the captain should have the knowledge of geography, skill in map reading, and skill in weather forecast in order to make the journey smooth sailing. Certainly, our journey to final destination is impossible to take off unless we are secured firmly with our own political ship. Certainly, the captain should announce clearly to those who aboard the ship about the final destination of the holy journey. From time to time, the captain should inform the passengers about the condition of the ship, and the possible obstacles that may arise. The captain should ensure the safety and welfare of those who aboard. If the ship encounters rough seas, the captain should alert the people to be ready with their life vest, meaning to be armed with *iman*, *salah* and *sabar* when the society falls into political disaster. This is the wisdom why our forebears arranged the element of state into *hula-bangsa-agama*. If we disturb this order, then forever we cannot reach our final destination.

At any rate, our *hula* which we call political ship, is still intact. Either the passengers, the crew or the captain must fulfill their respective responsibilities over the safety of the ship. None from them should be allowed to do something that can destroy the ship. The least that anyone can do is to abide by the rules and help to sustain the safety of the ship until reaching its final destination. Meaning, the entire Bangsasug should unite for one common goal, that is to reach the final destination. In this journey towards freedom, the crucial role falls on the responsibility of the captain. The control of the ship's direction is in the hands of the captain. He must have therefore the complete control over the people and the crew who board the ship, and at the same time display mastery of the contour of the routes so that the ship will arrive on schedule, and dock safely at the port of political destination.

**National Slogan.** *Hula-bangsa-agama* is our national slogan. It is our highest expression of political belief and determination that must reflect in the national life of our people. The function of this slogan is to remind us from time to time, from generation to generation that our action and struggle should be for the sake of our *hula*, our *bangsa*, and our *agama*. We have to internalize this spirit and make it always prevails at all times, anywhere, throughout our life. Before we sleep, we must think about our *hula*, our *bangsa*, and our *agama*, and so when we rise in the morning. All our plan must be in support to the glory of *hula-bangsa-agama*. Our commitment to serve the cause of *hula-bangsa-agama* should become part of our political creed.

#### IV. THE SACRED POLITICAL CAUSE

The *ulama* described government system as extension of the function of prophethood. Corrupt government is better than none at all, the Prophet said. Organizing a government is therefore a sacred political cause. Political reformers should integrate symbolism, sacred flag, and sacred cause in socializing the masses into the ideology of the state.

**Symbolism.** *Hula-bangsa-agama* is the object of political cause and the symbol of *martabat*. They are a worthy and noble political cause which everyone must cherish and ready for sacrifice. What a national life is, if it is deprived of its *martabat*. What an individual life is, if he has no *hula* to live with, no *bangsa* to count on, and no *agama* to depend on. The idea of *hula-bangsa-agama* as political cause is putting their interest above personal interest. The Qur'an says: "never sell your religion for a miserable price..." Here, the Muslim or every citizen of the Philippines is not allowed to betray his *agama*, his own *bangsa*, and his own *hula*. Betrayal of any of these pillars of the state is tantamount to betrayal of the whole Bangsasug or the Philippine statehood. In any society, the act of betrayal is a grave sin against the state.

We must always remember that our *kamaasan* fought hardly against foreign invaders in defense of *hula*, *bangsa*, *agama*. Our *kamaasan* had built up strong edifice of the three great sultanates in Mindanao and Sulu in order to defend and to fight the political cause of *hula-bangsa-agama*. It is defending for this political cause that gives

us the authority, the power and hope. If we cease to advocate this political cause, we shall become easily crushed, oppressed, and powerless. There is no better and higher value worth dying for than the political cause of *hula-bangsa-agama*. *Agama* is the precious garden of *hula*. *Hula* is nothing without its own garden and the *Bangsasug* are its guards and defenders.

Yes!! The dignity of *hula* will depend on the kinds of garden growing on it. *Bangsa* will surely abandon *hula* if there is no garden on it. *Hula* becomes precious and beholden to its inhabitants because of the garden. *Agama* is actually the garden of *hula* that nourishes its inhabitants. But, *agama* like a garden needs to be fenced, protected and secured. And this fence is referred to *parinta*. In Islam, the purpose of *parinta* is to protect *agama* and to implement its laws. *Agama* and *parinta* are rolled into one. Neither of it is divorced from each other. The role of *agama* is to provide guidance to the operation of *parinta*. The common saying goes this way: “*In Islam amuna parinta, amuna agama*.” This is the very basis why *Bangsasug* seek a kind of government that can guarantee the survival of its garden and the people around it.

But, what kind of government that is most suited to us? The answer can be found in the experience of the past. Within the land of *darul Islam*, there were only two political systems which evolved in accordance with the *Shari’ah*. These are the *khilafa* and the *sultaniyyah*. These are the systems which are relevant to the political life of the Muslims anywhere in the world today. These are the only systems which recognize Allah as the Sovereign power. The rest of the political systems are man-made. They are not designed to implement *Shari’ah* and raise the banner of Islam.

Now, the relevance of *hula-bangsa-agama* to our political cause is very clear. It is the dynamic interplay of these three pillars of state that will produce and sustain strong *Bangsasug* or Philippine society in general. This can be illustrated with the early experience of the sultanate throughout the *Bangsasug* homeland from 15<sup>th</sup> century until colonial times came. If we examine our material culture in the past, the level of social cohesiveness, leadership, trade, craftsmanship, farming, and adherence to Islam, could speak how strong our society before. The fortitude of our society to withstand the 400 years colonial aggression is unparalleled among the Muslims in Southeast Asia. Our colonial resistance during the Spanish time was the factor that saved the Malayan world from the Spanish colonization.

The social cohesiveness of our *kamaasan* was very strong because they were guided with what the Qur’an says: “*ta’āwanu ala al-birri wa at-taqwa wala ta’āwanu ala al-ismi wa al-udwan*.” (Qur’an, 5:3) Their unity can be seen in our popular social norms such as the concept of *pagdangin* and the concept of *pagsabi*. The sultan had developed strong political will that he could even enforce unity of action from farming to observance of the two annual festivals. What made the sultan enforced his political will? It is because the sultan possessed *martabat* before his *ra’ayat*. His *martabat* was drawn from his strong adherence of the spirit of *hula-bangsa-agama*. The sultan succeeded in planting the spirit of *hula-bangsa-agama* as the political cause among his *ra’ayat*. Championing this political cause is the secret towards strengthening our own society.

**Sacred Flag.** All nations look for their history as the source of national inspiration. Therefore, their struggle for freedom, their national aspiration, their living culture are always held as sacred as symbolizes by the flag of the nation. Today, every Bangsasug *ra'ayat* should look himself as the standard bearer of the sacred flag of *hula-bangsa-agama*. Whatever status we have in our life, anywhere we are, and whatever circumstances that may come in our way, we should always raise high the dignity of our sacred flag bearing the emblem of *hula-bangsa-agama*. We must do something in our capacity to contribute to the shining glory of our sacred flag. We must not allow anyone to keep its light out of reach of the masses. This sacred flag should be there standing as source of our inspiration in our struggle for freedom and peace. It must be planted right in the bottom of our hearts.

Nabi Muhammad said: "... *wa'lamu anna al-Jannata tahta dhilali as-suyuf.*" Be known to you that Paradise is under the shades of swords." This is to be understood as a call upon the Muslims to defend their *agama*.

**Sacred Cause.** The defense of *hula-bangsa-agama* is a sacred cause. It is the cause of Allah. To serve it is a great privilege, and a great pride before Allah and humanity. The defense of sacred cause is the tradition of all *nabiyyin* of Allah, the *siddiqin*, the *shuhada* and the *salihin*. This is the great highway towards *siratul mustaqim*. *Mujaddid* of today should facilitate the call upon the masses to come to this great highway. The four major roads linking to this great highway are the roads which were trodden by the *nabiyyin*, the *siddiqin*, the *shuhada*, and the *salihin*.

This sacred cause also requires sacred means. But the means must come from divine injunction, tested at all times, and applied by the lovers of truth who came before us. Ultimately, this means is referred to *jihad fi sabilillah*. *Jihad* was the way of the Prophets and those who followed them. The *ulama* described *jihad* as the lofty fortress of Islam and its residents will attain high grade in this world as well as in the hereafter. The Qur'an says: "How many of the Prophets fought (in Allah's way) and with them (fought) large bands of godly men? But they never lost heart. If they met with disaster in Allah's way, nor did they weaken (in will) nor give in. Allah loves those who are firm and steadfast. (Qur'an, 2:146) "All that they said was: "Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and anything we may have done that transgressed our duty. Establish our feet firmly and help us against those that resist faith." (Qur'an, 2:147) "And Allah gave them a reward in this world, and the excellent reward of the Hereafter for Allah loves those who do good." (Qur'an, 2:148)

In our times, the art of war has changed from the practice of the past. The enemy of Islam has possessed the technology of war from missiles, aircraft carriers to drone including weapons of mass destruction. They have the capability to wage star war against Muslim nations or direct invasion such as what happened in Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali. In fact, today most wars taking place in the Muslim nations are brought in by the enemy of Islam. Hence, the warning of the Qur'an upon the Muslims: "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power including steeds of war, to strike terror into the enemies of Allah and your enemies, and others besides whom you may not know but whom Allah does know. Whatever you shall spend in the cause of Allah shall be repaid unto you, and you shall not be treated unjustly." (Qur'an, 8:60)



“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you. But do not transgress limits for Allah loves not transgressors.” (Qur’an, 2:190)

“And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah. But if they cease let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression.” (Qur’an, 2:193)

“Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought in the path of Allah – they have the hope of the mercy of Allah. And Allah is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Qur’an, 2:218)

Now, let us come to the meaning and essence of the command of the time, the ever command of Allah enjoining the Muslims to undertake *jihad fi sabilillah*.

According to Fadlullah bin Ruzbihan Isfahani in his book, *Suluk al-Muluk*, jihad has four classes:

1. *Jihadun Nafs*
2. *Jihadus Shaytan*
3. *Jihadul Kuffar*
4. *Jihadul Munafiqin*

***Jihadun Nafs***. This is the basic command and considered as *fardhu ‘ayn* upon every Muslim, male and female. One day the *sahaba* had just returned to Madina after waging a major war against the *Kuffar*. Nabi Muhammad (S.A.S.) said: “Now, we have just gone through from a minor battle to a major battle. The *sahaba* said: *Ya Rasulallah!* What do you mean a major battle? *Rasulullah* (S.A.S.) replied: “It is *jihadun nafs*.” Isfahani presented four steps in the performance of *jihadun nafs*: 1. To search for Islamic knowledge, 2. To live in accordance with the teachings of Islam, 3. To invite other people to Islam, and 4. To exercise *sabar* in whatever circumstances that may arise while in the course of propagating the message of Islam.

***Jihadus Shaytan***. The Qur’an has said: “O you who believe! Follow not the footsteps of *Shaytan*. And whosoever follows the footsteps of *Shaytan*, then, verily he commands *al-fahshai* (i.e. to commit indecency), *al-munkar* (disbelief and polytheism) ...” (Qur’an, 24:21) All Muslims should always remember that “*Shaytan* is the open enemy of mankind.” (Qur’an, 17:53) Their leader is called Iblis (may the curse of Allah be upon him). Iblis works day and night to mislead people from the path of Islam. His best weapons are the sowing of *fitna*, false promise, music, poetry, women, liquor, astrology, and inculcating niggardliness so that mankind will fall into heedlessness and major sins.

The first fight against *Shaytan* is to firmly believe in Allah and remove all doubts and suspicions from our mind. The second fight is to remove excitement regarding lower desires and lusts. The Muslims should remain patient and avoid the trap of the *Shaytan*.

**Jihadul Kuffar.** Verily, the disbelievers are ever unto you open enemies. (Qur'an, 4:101) Ever since these people are opposed to the teachings of Islam. They see Islam as obstacles to their monkey business such as *riba*, wickedness, polytheism, and spread of *fasad*. Their aim everywhere is to spread *fasad* or mischief on earth. Thus, the Muslims have to battle them using their 1. mental capacity, 2. oral, 3. financial, and finally 4. actual fight against them.

**Jihadul Munafiqin.** *Munafiqin* are the worst enemy of Islam. These are the people who pretend to be Muslims but in reality, they are against the truth of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. They are known with three major signs: "When they speak, they speak falsehood, when they are entrusted, they withhold it, when they promise, they break it." The mode of fighting them is the same with the *Kuffar*.

## V. OUR SACRED GOAL

In all society, the role of the intellectuals is to identify the cause of backwardness of the society, provide solutions and direction, and eventually set the political goal for their people. Village leaders, administrators, teachers, *kaguruhan*, *duat*, the *khatib* should be there to teach, to motivate, to inspire, to call people to unite for the sacred goal.

The question is who will identify and decide our sacred goal? In this discourse, sacred goal refers to the political goal. This is not an easy task. We can only identify our political goal if we can remove first the jungle of doubt and confusion in the minds of the people. Some of our people are captive mind. They can neither see historical reality nor see solution to our present political suffering. Young people who are the hope of the motherland, are not properly socialized and exposed to the culture and ideology of the Bangsasug society. Because, the instruments to political socialization such as the family institution, schools, the *madaris*, and *masajid* are not properly designed or oriented towards the task.

We are now in the situation where most of our people are isolated from their own culture and Islam. The immediate task is to transform their perceptions by re-educating them with the teachings of Islam and the historical lessons from our great past. There is a need to refresh the minds of the young people about historical facts. Fact number one is that the great Sulu sultanate was a symbol of Bangsasug statehood. This statehood was once an independent and sovereign state. Fact number two: the united alliances of the diverse inhabitants under the Sulu sultanate in the face of colonial aggression from 16<sup>th</sup> century up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century provided the climate for the emergence of the Bangsasug nationalism, which intentionally done in order to serve as the sustaining core of the Bangsasug statehood. Fact number three: Bangsasug nationalism was the first line of historical development of what is now the Philippines. The Filipino line of historical

development was the creation of the Spanish colonialists. Filipino nationalism came formally only after the GUMBURZA execution in 1872. Bangsasug people are the first nation. The Filipino belong to second nation. This is what we mean, the Philippines today is in the state of *duwa bangsa* (state of two nation).

These historical facts should be the basis for the Bangsasug people to set up their political goal. Any decision outside the parameter of historical experience is misleading. It is an act of injustice.

Taking historical reality, historical experience, and historical facts as basis in setting our political goal, we can conclude that our political goal is simply to revive and restore the Bangsasug statehood either federal state or separate state. The first effort is to rebuild the political structure of the Sultanate of Sulu such as the *kawazilan*, the *ruma bissara*, and the *paghuhukuman*. At the bottom, the *lungan* or the traditional village used to be administered by the *maharajah* and the *panglima* should be also restored. The second effort is to completely bureaucratized the BARMM and strengthen its operation. The third effort is also to reform the two national fronts: the MNLF and the MILF. The purpose of strengthening these political machineries is to capacitate and empower our people for nation-building.

These three leading political efforts are a long and arduous process. This will take us a decade to bring everything in place. Having a parallel movement with the three social movements is the best option and effective legal way to attain our political goal. If we can prove to Allah, the Almighty that we are capable to govern ourselves, to be the real *khalifa* in the Bangsasug homeland then surely, Allah will set us free. But, if we continue to be corrupt, negligence of our religious duties and kept on relying on secular philosophy, there shall be no divine help for us. From generation to generation, our people will continue to live under the impact of oppression and injustice. Forever, the Bangsasug shall be deprived of its national *martabat* and *kalimayahan*.

The point here is that if we will succeed in re-organizing our political machineries in such a way, they will become functional and responsive to the plight of our people the last stage of our political effort is just to ask for political recognition of our national aspiration – the right to national self-determination defined in terms of re-establishing the Bangsasug statehood either federal or separate. This was the path of other nations such as Pakistan, Singapore, the six Muslims states in central Asia such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan. These nations did not use armed force in their final struggle for right to self-determination. Their leaders had just prepared their people to govern, and to chart their own political destiny. They used their power and authority as a tool for nation-building. Then, at length, when the British empire collapsed after 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, it was forced to release all her colonies, which includes the recognition of Pakistan as new independent state in 1947. The same fate happening to the former Union of Soviet Socialist Russia or USSR which disintegrated after its long war in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1990. From the ruin of the USSR, the six Muslim nations in central Asia found easily to restore their respective statehoods.

The Bangsasug war is over with the signing of the 1996 peace agreement between the MNLF and the Manila government. This is the period of rebuilding our shattered institutions. We have to take advantage the limited governmental power granted to us to organize our economy, social institutions while awaiting the divine help. The Qur'an

says: “*waman nasru illa min ‘indillah.*” “There is no victory except from Allah.” We should always connect our national hope to the divine decree of Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

It is necessary that all social movements within the Bangsasug homeland should help to nurture and to cherish the said political goal. Our political goal should become our struggle, the struggle of everyone, the struggle of all movements in our land. Our struggle is a struggle for Islam. The Qur’an has challenged us: “And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women, and children whose cry is: “Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors and raise for us from You one who will protect and raise for us from You one who will help.” (Qur’an, 4:75)

## VI. HULA AS FATHERLAND

*Hula* is the fatherland where one is born and calls as his own and further develops his attachment to it, and if difficult time comes he is ready to fight and to defend it against the oppressors, invaders, colonizers, transgressors, and conspirators. A highly conscious person always expresses his love for fatherland: “I love my country simply this is the land of my birth.” When Allah ordered Nabi Muhammad (S.A.S.) to leave Makkah, he was sad at heart, the Qur’an says: “*Innallaji farada ‘alayka al-Qur’an laradduka ila ma’adin.*” “Verily He who ordained the Qur’an for you, will bring you back to the place of return.” (Qur’an, 28:25) Anas bin Malik narrated: “I went along with the Prophet to Khaybar so as to serve him. (Later on) when the Prophet returned, he on seeing Mt. Uhud, said: “This is the mountain that loves us and is loved by us.” (Then he pointed toward Madina with his hand) and said: “Ya Allah! Make the area which is between Madina’s two mountains a sanctuary as Ibrahim made Makkah a sanctuary. Ya Allah! Bless us in our *sa’* and *mudd.*”<sup>1</sup>

The Qur’an describes the land as “the dwelling place for mankind and means of livelihood for a time.” (Qur’an, 7:24 and 2:36) Land provides diverse yields for sustenance for all living creatures. Without access to land, life is impossible as people cannot endure. Control of land is therefore necessity. Land is the source of wealth. Wealth is the strength of the nation. Strong nation leads to progress and progress brings civilization. But, a true civilization centers on the establishment of correct worship of Allah alone.

*Hula* is the temporary abode of mankind as they will proceed one by one to the next stage of life called *Akhirat*. Allah therefore enjoins His servants to live in accordance with His divine guidance so that they will succeed in their present temporary life as well as in the *Akhirat*. Attachment to Allah shall breed attachment to fatherland. Only righteous servants will build legacies for the betterment of the next generation. As times passed, *hula* becomes a legacy for the succeeding people who act as *khalaifa* in order to establish the reign of justice, peace and prosperity so that the correct worship of Allah becomes perpetuated on the face of our fatherland. Thus, the Qur’an says: “And do not do mischief on the earth after it has been set in order, (instead) invoke Him with fear and hope. Surely, Allah’s mercy is ever near unto the good-doers.” (Qur’an, 7:56) This means that the love for *hula* is a manifestation of one’s faith. The righteous servants are always

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<sup>1</sup> Hadith Number 1248

grateful to Allah for the blessings and comfort they enjoyed from the land where they lived.

The righteous servants believed that *hula* is a gift and *amanat* of Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*. The Qur'an reminded them how Allah addressed early nations such as the Bani Ad, the Bani Samud, the Bani Israel as people chosen to settle on a land intended for them. The concept of promised land mentioned in the Qur'an is a good example that a fatherland for each people or nation is an *amanat* for them to care and preserve in accordance with the divine guidance. Allah has warned all nations not to spread mischief on the lands lest divine punishment may descend upon them. (Qur'an, 7:56) "And remember when He made you successors after the Ad people and gave you habitations in the land, you build for yourselves palaces in plains, and carved out homes in the mountains. So, remember the *ni'mat* (bestowed upon you) from Allah, and do not go about making mischief on the earth." (Qur'an, 7:74)

*Fasad* or mischief on the lands covers oppressive leadership, promotion of *riba* economy, advocating false ideology, usurpation of rights of men, spreading *fitna* and spreading *ma'siyat* such as prostitutions, gambling, illegal drug, etc. Just like in the ancient time, all these things are highly institutionalized and backed up by the state. The Qur'an describes *fasad* as appearing on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression, and evil deeds) that (Allah) may give them a taste of some of their deeds in order that they may return (by repenting to Allah and begging His pardon) (Qur'an, 30:41).

During the glorious days of the Sultanate of Sulu from 1450 to 1882 A.D., the territories which the Bangsasug had inhabited and controlled were Zamboanga peninsula, Basilan, *Lupa Sug*, Palawan, North Borneo, and some islands in the Visayas including the Sulu Sea, which borders with South China Sea in the north and Celebes Sea in the south. These territories represented the five autonomous provinces of the Sultanate of Sulu. Each autonomous province was ruled by two or more *panglima* depending on the size of the province. *Lupa Sug* as the seat of power was divided into five *binaybayan* or districts such as Luuk, Lungan Gi'tung, Lati, Pansul and Parang. Each district was further subdivided into *lungan* or *pasisil* ruled by the *maharajah*. The five geographical islands were enshrined in the five stars of the sultanate's flag. Up to the last part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Sulu sultanate still maintained bases in Mindoro, and Panay.

The *lingua franca* used in all these territories is the *Sinug* or the *Bahasa Sug*. *Khutba*, the *tita* or the decree of the sultanate, and official records were all written in *Sinug*.

### Meaning of Agama

*Agama* is the foundation of the *mujtama* or society. The Qur'anic term for *agama* is *din*. The essence of Islam is submission to the will of Allah as *Malik* or Sovereign. All Muslims are ought to believe that the sovereignty of the heavens and earth belongs to Allah alone (Qur'an, 25:2) and that He does not share His command with any person whatsoever (Qur'an, 18:26). Submission to Allah is expressed in the observance of the five pillars of Islam, acceptance of the Qur'an as the living guidance, and following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. Submission to

Allah also means no commission of *shirk* or polytheism. If anyone follows other than Islam or worships other than Allah, falls into *shirk*. The Qur'an says: "*Innas shirka la zulmun azim.*" Verily joining others in worship with Allah is a great *zulm* (wrong or injustice) (Qur'an, 31:130).

Allah is one and His *agama* is one. Today, there are many *agamas* and ideologies existing in the world today. The Qur'an warns us: "If anyone desires a *din* other than Islam, never it will be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost." (Qur'an, 3:85) On the other hand, the Qur'an enjoins the Muslims: "O you who believe! Enter into Islam whole heartedly and follow not the footsteps of the evil one for he is to you an avowed enemy." (Qur'an, 2:208) Finally, Allah in His last revelation sent to the last Prophet, Muhammad (S.A.S.) affirmed Islam as the official name of the *din* of the whole mankind. The Qur'an says: "*Al-yawma akmalu lakum dinakum waatmamtu 'alaykum ni'mati wa radhitu lakumul Islama dina.*" "This day I have perfected your *din* for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your *din*." (Qur'an, 5:3)

## VI. CONCLUSION

Upholding the cause of *hula-bangsa-agama* is the key to address problems and is the potential force to move the nation towards peace and national reconciliation. Struggling for this cause shall liberate us from political disunity. It simply gives us authority and power which eventually become our tool for social reconstruction and transformation of the country from the state of *masa duwa bangsa* into *hambuuk bangsa*. *Hula-bangsa-agama* is the Tausug concept of state. It had been the basis of *jihad* throughout the colonization period from 16<sup>th</sup> century down to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If this noble concept is properly understood and used, it is the right spirit that can reawaken our consciousness from deep slumber of negligence and heedlessness. Embracing the Tausug concept of state of *hula-bangsa-agama* shall bring the whole Philippines into a solid and dynamic nation-state as the Muslim and Christian lines of historical development of the country will merge into one.

*Hula-bangsa-agama* is the social bond that sustains the national struggle across centuries. *Hula* must come first, and followed by *bangsa*, and *agama* in the third order. *Hula-bangsa-agama* can be likened to a ship and its journey towards final destination. We cannot cross the horizon and reach the end unless there is strong ship to carry them forward. This ship is actually our *hula*, our motherland. *Bangsa* are the passengers, the crew, and captain of the ship. *Agama* represents the map, the compass, and the engine to make the ship running and crossing the ocean of struggle. National freedom represents our final destination.

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