

**ASPECTS OF APPLYING THE PURPOSES OF SHARIA IN
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM: PRESERVING RELIGION AND
MIND (INTELLECT) AS A MODEL**

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to highlight the aspects of the application of the objectives of Shariah in Brunei through realistic practical applications for the preservation of religion and the spirit (intellect) as well as the link between this and the policies of the state for the realisation of the religious and secular interests of the citizens under the motto “The State of Dhikr”. The Sultanate of Brunei strives to use the objectives of Shariah in interaction with reality and to free itself from the estrangement between the rules of Shariah and reality by transforming the objectives of Shariah from an instrument of Ijtihad confined to the pages of books into a social behaviour that shapes the behaviour of all members of society, with the aim of strengthening man’s connection with his Lord through collective participation in building the succession entrusted to man by Allah (s.w.a.). To achieve these objectives, the study is based on a descriptive analytical approach to religious issues and health care in Brunei Darussalam. It is divided into two sections: The first section: aspects of the application of Sharia objectives in the preservation of religion. The second section: Aspects of the application of Shariah objectives in the preservation of the spirit. The study concluded that the preservation of religion is a top priority for the Sultan of Brunei, Hassanal Bolkiah. This is evident from the following data: his designation of the Sultanate as the “State of Dhikr” and the adoption of the reading of the Quran and morning and evening prayers and their use on all official religious and other occasions as a good and followed tradition. This priority is also reflected in a number of state slogans, such as the national slogan: (Malay Islam Beraja) and (Always in service with God’s guidance), and the emblem of the Sultan's palace or the Sultan's personal emblem: which includes the name of Allah at the top of the slogan, and the Quranic verse: (Blessed be He in Whose hand is dominion). Al-Malik, 29. 1. The study also concluded that health care is one of the top priorities of the Sultanate, especially mental health care, which has recently become a topic of official royal speeches (TITA) praising the need

for its care, as the mind is the basis of responsibility, so its neglect or disability is considered an obstacle to the whole system of life.

Keywords: Purposes of Sharia, Preservation of Religion, Preservation of Mind (Intellect), Negara Dhizkr, Brunei Darussalam.

1. Introduction

The preservation of the spirit and religion is a top priority for the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam and this interest is evident in all actions of the state as well as in religious, official and customary occasions, as adherence to the objectives of Shariah in the preservation of religion and spirit has become a state policy and its basic principles are expressed in the various slogans: (Melayu Islam Beraja); Ad-dā'imūna al-muḥsinūna bi-l-hudā (Always in service with God's guidance); ('Allah', Tabāraka al-ladhī bi-yadihi al-mulku); the Dzikir Nation (Negara Dzikir). The state is interested in implementing the objectives of Sharia under the motto of the Dzikir Nation (Negara Dzikir) and has transformed the literature on the objectives into social behaviour and a widespread custom in Brunei society by reviving all religious, social and political occasions by gathering in mosques, reading the Holy Qur'an and supplicating Allah in relation to the occasion and the protection of the land and its people through this collective participation in the caliphate structure.

This is in line with what is mentioned in the Holy Hadith: "My servant continues to approach Me with voluntary acts of worship until I love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he grasps, and his foot with which he walks. If he asks Me, I will surely give him, and if he seeks refuge in Me, I will surely grant him refuge." (Al-Bukhārī: 2001). And the saying of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him: "There is no group of people who gather in one of the houses of Allah to recite the Book of Allah and study it among themselves, unless tranquillity descends upon them, mercy covers them, angels surround them, and Allah calls them to those who are with Him." (Abū Dāwūd: 2009). This religious interest has made the Sultanate of Brunei the safest and most stable country in the world.

It is the only country where ordinary citizens can stand next to the Sultan in public and be photographed with him without the need for guards to intervene. There is no doubt that this security has been achieved through an abundance of dhikr (supplications) and prayers for forgiveness, as well as managing the affairs of the country and its people according to the guidance of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah and their objectives, realising the interests of society and protecting its material and moral rights. Among the most conspicuous manifestations of the state's concern for religion are its interest in mosques, the construction and revitalisation of their various functions, its interest in memorising the Holy Qur'ān for the sons and daughters of the Sultanate with constant encouragement through financial rewards, and its concern for printing the Holy Qur'ān and disseminating it within and outside the country through all institutions of higher learning in the Sultanate. The state's interest in the preservation of the mind has been demonstrated in recent years after Covid 19 by the

increased interest in mental and psychological health, which the Sultan has expressed several times in his official speeches (TITA), as well as by the provision of centres and medical teams specialising in mental health.

2. Literature Review

Much has been written about the state of dhikr and mental and psychological health in Brunei, but to our knowledge there is no study that links these aspects to the preservation of the purpose of Shariah. The study by Lilly Suzanna Shamsu and Nurul Atiqah binti Haji Abd Latif (2022) serves as one illustration. Islamic Lifelong Learning and Development at Brunei Darussalam's Mosque for Muslims. A Norashibah Hj Besar, and others. (2018). Workers at Ugama Brunei Darussalam's Ministry of Religious Affairs have a sense of Negara Dzikir, or "Nation devoted to God." Another study was presented by Lopes, et al. (2021). The expression of cultural identity in mosque architecture in Brunei Darussalam. These studies consistently refer to the spiritual, educational and cultural role of mosques but do not address the link to Shariah objectives or the preservation of religion and spirit. The studies on mental health include the study "Mental healthcare in Brunei Darussalam: recent developments in mental health services and mental health law", which was presented by Hilda Ho (2014). A study on mental health was presented by Rokiah Mahmud (2024): His Majesty Demands Immediate Intervention to Address Increasing Mental Health Issues. Additionally, Sabri, R. & Khan, A. (2008) Psychiatry in Brunei Darussalam presented a study that concentrated on the psychological component. These studies focused on the identification of mental and psychological health problems, the concern that mental illness is increasing in Brunei, and the state's strategy to curb this increase through specialised health centres and teams, but none of these studies addressed the linkage of this interest to the purpose of Shariah to preserve the mind.

The aim of the study is to show the manifestations of the application of Shariah in Brunei through realistic practical applications for the preservation of religion and spirit and the connection with the policies of the state in realising the religious and secular interests of the citizens under the slogan "the Dzikir Nation (Negara Dzikir)", which means: the state that glorifies the law of Allah Almighty and controls it in all aspects of life. With this slogan, the Sultanate of Brunei is trying to deploy the purpose of Shariah in interaction with reality and free itself from the alienation between Shariah rules and reality, and turn the purpose of Shariah from an interpretative tool confined to the pages of books to a social behaviour that strengthens the bond of Bruneian society with their Lord and their Sultan. And among other state slogans that show that Brunei is a religious state. And the preservation of the spirit through specialised medical centres and teams in the field of health, mental and psychological health, reinforced by the Sultan's official speeches (TITA).

3. Methodology

This study follows a descriptive-analytical approach that focuses on collecting, analysing and critically discussing data in order to achieve its objectives. The descriptive-analytical

approach enables a comprehensive examination of the manifestations of the state welfare state, the religious state and the rational state and their compliance with the objectives of Sharia. By examining the manifestations of the application of the objectives of Sharia, its mechanisms and its ethical implications, this methodological design enables a detailed understanding of its practical applications in an Islamic context. Thus, this design clearly contributes to utilising the potential of these manifestations to effectively answer the research questions.

Data collection involves gathering information from various sources such as classical Islamic texts on Maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, internet resources, e-platforms, mosque administration and mental health and psychology centres in Brunei. These sources provide theoretical and practical insights into the integration of religious and health care with Maqāṣid al-sharīʿah. The data is systematically organised based on the research framework to ensure relevance and completeness. For example, platforms that demonstrate solutions for religious and health care are critically examined to highlight their contribution to societal well-being.

The data in this study is analysed by classifying and critically evaluating the collected data. In the analysis, the information is classified according to the research plan and subjected to critical discussion in order to draw meaningful conclusions. By applying comparative and evaluative methods, the study determines the compatibility between the state policy for the care of religion and mental health and the principles of Maqāṣid al-sharīʿah.

Ethical considerations are an integral part of this research to ensure the reliability and integrity of the results. The study adheres to the principles of academic integrity, avoids plagiarism and correctly cites all sources. It also ensures that the applications discussed in the study are evaluated in the context of the application of Sharia law, taking into account Islamic ethical principles. By maintaining transparency and adhering to ethical standards, the study contributes to a balanced and responsible discourse on the aspects of realising the purpose of Shariah.

4. Results and Findings

Findings 1 the preservation of religion is the most important slogan of the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam.

Findings 2 the preservation of religion in Brunei Darussalam is most evident in the large number of mosques and the introduction of the dhikr as a state symbol and spiritual nourishment for Bruneian society in everyday life and on official occasions.

Findings 3 mental health care has become one of the top priorities of the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam, especially during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Findings 4 one of the clearest signs of the Sultanate of Brunei's interest in mental health is the development of a Mental Health Action Plan 2022-2025 and the establishment of a multi-sectoral health team dedicated to the care and monitoring of mental health in Brunei.

Findings 5 the Sultanate of Brunei offers its citizens free treatments, especially for mental and psychological health.

Discussion 1

Aspect of Protection of Religion in Brunei Darussalam

The Sultanate of Brunei is considered one of the Islamic countries in Southeast Asia that upholds Islamic principles at the governmental level and is one of the Islamic countries where daily dhikr is most officially practised, so much so that Sultan Haj Hassanil Bolkiah nicknamed the Sultanate: (The State of Dhikr). In addition to the three pillars of the state, which are abbreviated as (MIB), meaning: Malay Language, Culture, Customs and Traditions. Islam is the state religion and monarchy is a system of government. Based on this, the manifestations of the application of the objectives of Shariah in the preservation of religion in Brunei are presented through a group of manifestations of attention to religious issues, which are as follows:

Sub-Discussion 1

Construction and Maintenance of Mosques

By 2019, the government of Brunei had constructed over 102 mosques (<https://deps.mofe.gov.bn>). These mosques serve not only as places for prayer but also as venues for community and religious activities, including Quran recitations, religious talks, and shukr dinners. All mosques in Brunei are managed by the Mosque Affairs Department under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (<https://www.information.gov.bn>).

National Mosques, Main Mosques, and Village Mosques are the three categories into which Brunei's mosques fall. The two national mosques are the Jame' Asr Hassanil Bolkiah Mosque (JAHB Mosque) and the Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque (SOAS Mosque). Setia Ali Mosque in Serasa and the Mohammad Jamalul Alam Mosque in Kuala Belait are two examples of main mosques, also known as mukim mosques. Both serve as important religious centers in their respective districts and have space for up to 2,000 people. Village mosques, like the Sultan Sharif Ali Mosque in Sengkuring and the Mohamed Bolkiah Mosque in Serusop, are smaller, located in rural areas, and may hold about 1,000 worshippers (Nurul Atiqah et al. 2022).

The architecture of Brunei's mosques blends Malay cultural identity with Islamic principles, serving both religious and cultural functions. Lower-ranking mosques in towns and villages draw inspiration from traditional Malay architecture, whereas Malay iconography is combined with South Asian and Arab themes in national and important mosques. Higher-ranking mosques are associated with the state, while lower-ranking mosque reflect local contexts. This architectural hierarchy reflects the status of the mosques. Despite being formally established later, the Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB) architecture concept has its roots in Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III's designs and continues to influence modern buildings. Adat Istiadat Diraja (royal customs), Sharia (Islamic law), and Adat Istiadat Melayu (Malay

customs) interact to form Malay architectural styles in Brunei, with Islamic law superseding the others. Mosques are essential to the integration of Islamic principles, Malay culture, and royal emblems within the country's legal and cultural frameworks (Lopes et al. 2021).

Annual Statistics 2024 (July-December 2024) Department of Mosque Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs

Mosques, Suraus and Halls of Worship

Infrastructure and Human Resources

2 Brunei Darussalam has a total of 103 mosques, 5 suraus and 11 places of worship

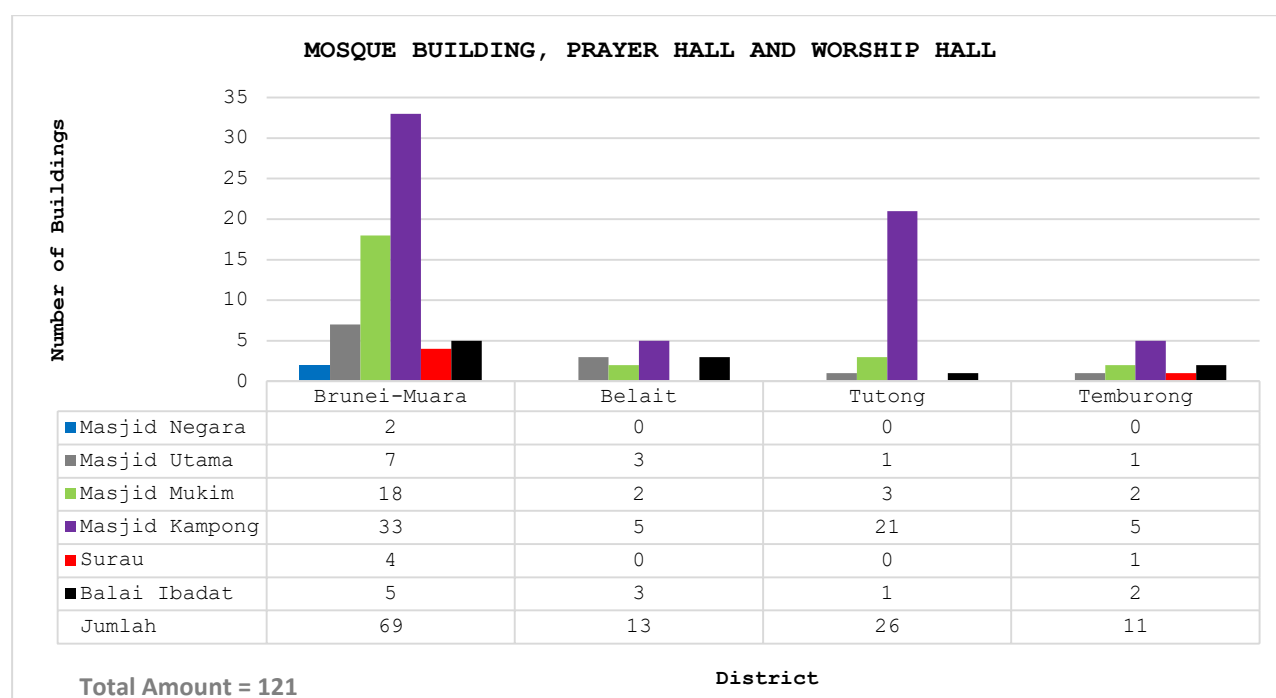


Figure 1. Mosque, Surau and Worship Center Buildings by District and Category

A total of 385 officials and employees work in mosques throughout the country. 255 people work in the Brunei and Muara districts, 30 people in the Belait district, 67 people in the Tutong district and 33 people in the Temburong district.

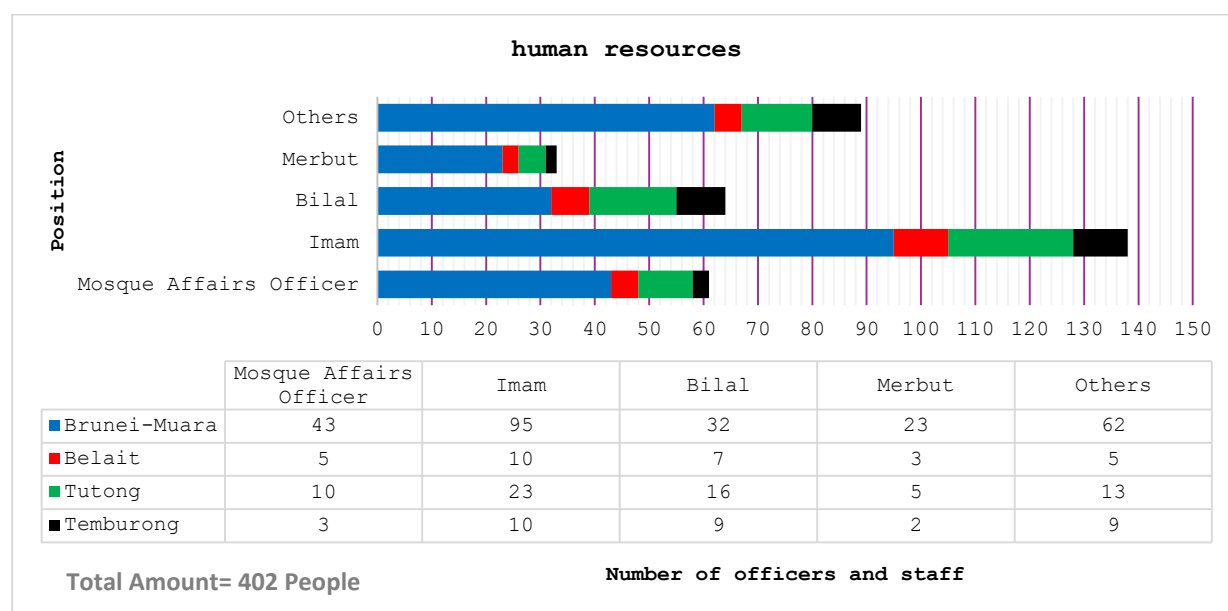


Figure 2. Number of officers and staff working in mosques, suraus and places of worship by position and district

Sub-Discussion 2

Memorisation of the Holy Qur'an and Rewarding the Memorisers

During the Nuzul al-Qur'an occasion, Yang Di-Pertuan and His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam gave a special titah, announcing the introduction of various initiatives to foster a "generation of al-Qur'an readers." These initiatives include monthly financial incentives for individuals who have memorised the Qur'an and received recognition from the Tasmi'e Authority across different categories, as well as cash rewards for Qaris and Qariahs who secured top positions in the International Qur'an Reading Competition in Kuala Lumpur. Additionally, His Majesty approved a lifetime scholarship of \$2,000 per month for winners of the Kuala Lumpur International Qur'an Reading Competition, acknowledging their national contributions. In his titah, His Majesty expressed satisfaction with the progress of Qur'an memorisation efforts, particularly at the Tahfiz al-Qur'an Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute, and encouraged broader participation in memorising the Qur'an. He highlighted the Qur'an as a foundation of knowledge and inspiration, urging exploration of natural phenomena such as the cycle of day and night, the richness of resources, water, air, fire, and the mysteries of life and death. His Majesty expressed hope that these incentive programmes would inspire more individuals to engage in Qur'an recitation, ultimately cultivating a society deeply rooted in al-Qur'an readership. He also stressed the role of families in nurturing Qur'an education among younger generations (<http://www.sultanate.com>).

This is done through the Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute for the Memorisation of the Holy Qur'an. The Institute trains dozens of memorisers every year and supervises their memorisation in two periods per year. From January to March. From July to September each year by a dedicated committee of teachers from the Institute and university professors in

Brunei. Each supervisor receives a monthly reward of 1,000 Brunei dollars. Those who memorise twenty parts will receive 400 Brunei dollars per month. Those who memorise ten parts will receive 200 Brunei dollars per month (Heikal, 2019). This is for the sake of actions that serve and preserve the religion. According to the saying of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace: "The best of you is the one who learns and teaches the Qur'ān."

Sub-Discussion 3

Printing and Distribution of the Holy Qur'an inside and outside the Country

His Highness the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam presented the Brunei Al-Qur'an publication Mushaf Brunei Darussalam dan Terjemahanya, which is a historic success for the Sultanate, he said. The publication is the result of cooperation between Bruneians and scholars and graduates of Al Azhar University. Speaking at the Nuzul Al-Qur'an celebrations, on the theme of Al-Qur'an Suluh Umat Cemlang (Al-Qur'an Beacon of the Islamic World), His Highness said that Brunei should be grateful that it now has its own Al-Qur'an, translated and interpreted. In the (TITA), His Majesty said he hoped that the completed edition would become a source of reference for Brunei's Muslims. I also hope that translation and interpretation will follow, though it will take some time to complete, the monarch said (<https://islaminindonesia.com>).

Sub-Discussion 4

Negara Dzikir (Nation Devoted to God)

The Negara Dzikir Aiming to establish a connection based on the people's recollection and observation of God's blessing in matters of Islamic administration (siasah), economy, social well-being, defense, etc., the idea of "Nation of God" aims to make Brunei Darussalam a developed nation. Put differently, Negara Dzikir is an economic growth strategy founded on the idea of the Islamic State as it was envisioned by His Royal Highness Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei. Some of the papers that were discussed in the Knowledge Council in 2008 touched on the following definition of Negara Dzikir (Norashibah et al.). (as of 2018):

Government Mufti of Negara Brunei Darussalam Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz Bin Juned described Negara Dzikir as "a nation where many people perform devotional acts (berDzikir); a nation that is always alive and rich in acts of devotion (dzikir); a nation that is developed and governed by acts of devotion (dzikir); a nation that is defended and nourished by acts of devotion." (dzikir) (Norashibah et al. 2018).

"Negara Dzikir is a nation centred and centred on devotional acts (Dzikir): its governance is based on devotional acts (Dzikir), its economy is based on devotional acts (Dzikir), its social elements are based on devotional acts (Dzikir), and its defence is based on devotional acts (Dzikir)" And according to Pengiran Dato Seri Setia Dr Haji Mohammad bin Pengiran Haji Abd Rahman, Deputy Minister of Education of Brunei Darussalam, "negara Dzikir is a nation with a God, a nation whose people and citizens always remember God. This God is

Allah subhanahu wataala, not God as understood by other religions. Having said this, negara Dzikir refers to an Islamic nation that adheres to the teachings of Islam and practises and values it in terms of faith (akidah), syariah and morality” (Norashibah et al. 2018).

An Islamic state that is exemplary should be supported by individuals and society that values Islam with absolute honesty. The Fardu Ain and Fardu Kifayah co-studies (Nasir Omar et al. 2018; Fauziah et al. 2017 and Zidni Nuran et al. 2017) highlight the greatness of Islam as a way of life and should be used to apply it. Negara dzikir is a notion that promotes and enables Brunei's Islamic community's ability to manage life in the present and the future, rather than aiming to create a society that is purely Uzbek.

Sub-Discussion 5

Various Symbols of Brunei Darussalam

Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB); Ad-dā'imūna al-muḥsinūna bi-l-hudā (Always in service with God's guidance); ('Allah', Tabāraka al-ladhī bi-yadihi al-mulku); the Dzikir Nation (Negara Dzikir).

i. Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB) (Malay Islamic Monarchy)

The Melayu Islam Beraja (Malay Islamic Monarchy) has had a national philosophy since the year 100 AD. It is thought that Brunei's Malay dynasty was founded at the beginning of the fifth century. Known as the Shah of the Malay Peninsula (Sultan Muhammad Shah), the first Sultan of Brunei, Sang Aji Awang Alak Betatar, brought Islam to the Malay Archipelago in the sixth century and made it an official religion in the fourteenth (<http://www.gov.bn/government>).

The MIB's philosophy was formally announced by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah on January 1, 1984, the day Brunei Darussalam gained independence and sovereignty. It is now an official tenet of the Brunei Darussalam people's culture and way of life. It is a blend of Islamic law and morals, Malay language, culture, and customs, as well as a monarchical system that everyone must adhere to. The MIB doctrine cannot be viewed as a force that is repressing other religions because Islam is inclusive of all faiths. Rather, it is a means to allow other religions to practice their religious practices and rituals as they would otherwise, with the respect and peace that they deserve (<http://www.gov.bn/government>).

Brunei Darussalam, as an Islamic state, honors everything that is moderate Islam. It commemorates special dates in the Islamic calendar, such as Hari Raya Al-Fitri and Hari Raya Puja, as well as important events in Islamic history, such as the birth of the prophet Muhammad, the Hijrah, the Nuzul al-Qur'an (The Revelation of the Qur'an), and the Isra' al-Mikraj. The Government of Brunei also pays tribute during the month of Ramadan, when all government officials and employees work only six hours a day (compared to the seven-and-a-half hours of normal working time during Ramadan). The Doa, which is a very important link with God's blessing, will be incorporated into all functions and projects of the government.

His Majesty also encourages that we recite the Holy Qur'an each morning before we go to work, in order to receive God's blessing and guidance (<http://www.gov.bn/government/mib.htm>).

The nation hopes that the purity of Islam, the purity of the Malay race, and the institution of the monarchy will be preserved as a lasting heritage for generations to come, if the philosophy of the MIB is truly embraced and implemented (see: [mib.gov.bn](http://www.gov.bn/government/mib.htm), [mb.htm](http://www.gov.bn/government/mib.htm)) (<http://www.gov.bn/government/mib.htm>).

ii. الدائمون المحسنون بالهدى; Ad-dā'imūna al-muḥsinūna bi-l-hudā (Always in service with God's guidance)

The flag of Brunei shows the flag in the centre of a yellow field with black and white corner stripes (parallelograms in the corners). The yellow field symbolizes Brunei's Sultan. The red coat of arms depicts a crescent moon rising in the sky and an umbrella with hands on the sides. The Brunei national emblem is a well known national emblem which is clearly visible on the Brunei flag. It was adopted in 1940, and was signed by the national emblem consists of five main elements: the flag, the royal umbrella (the ceremonial umbrella), the wings, the hands and the crescent moon. Below the crescent moon is a tape (on a scroll); both are inscribed in yellow Arabic letters: Under the crescent moon, Brunei's national motto: الداعمون المحسنون بالهدى; Ad-dā'imūna al-muḥsinūna bi-l-hudā, which means "Always in service with God's guidance". On the ribbon (scroll), the name of the state: بروني دار السلام; Brunei Darussalam, literally "Brunei, abode of peace" (<https://www.adat-stiadat.gov.bn>).

iii. ("الله" تبارك الذي بيده الملك) ("God" - Blessed is He in whose hand is the kingdom)

This is the personal slogan of the Sultan or Sultan's Palace in Brunei, and it is an explicit slogan that property in Brunei is based on the preservation of religion represented by the belief that the kingdom is in the hands of Almighty God. (<https://www.hubert-herald.nl/Brunei.htm>)

Discussion 2

Aspect of Protection of Intellect in Brunei Darussalam

Mental and psychological health is considered an important element in society, as it has a decisive influence on intellectual performance and social and economic development, and is also linked to the legitimate costs of mental and psychological health. In our time, technological development has a negative impact on children, especially through dependence on the use of the Internet. The main negative effects on mental and psychological health include: Anxiety, depression, mental stress...etc. In order to protect the mind from these negative effects, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah showed his great interest in mental and psychological health in his official speeches and provided the available therapeutic and preventive means to ensure the mental and psychological health of all citizens, especially children and adolescents. The aspects of mental health preservation in Brunei are presented and analysed below:

Sub-Discussion 1

Mental Health

i. Sultan's Speeches (Titah) emphasizing the necessity of paying attention to mental health

In his New Year address, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei stressed the importance of mental health and associated it with the National Day, which is celebrated annually. In his speech, the monarch stressed that the nation's mental health was a priority. According to Brunei's Radio Television Brunei, the Sultan's message is about greater recognition of mental health issues and is in line with the theme of mental health care at this year's Hajj celebrations. This focus reflects the multilateral approach of the Sultanate, which covers both mental and physical aspects of health (<https://www.bruneinewsgazette.com>).

The 2024 Knowledge Congress on Mental Health Symptoms, under the title Mental Health Symptoms, highlighted the growing prevalence of mental health problems at both national and global level. In Brunei Darussalam, 13,246 people were treated for mental health problems in 2014, up from 11,231 the previous year (Rokiah, 2024).

During his introductory remarks, His Highness Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Mu'hum, expressed his profound concern about the rising number of mental health issues impacting not only the populace but also the civil service and students. His Majesty has called on all stakeholders around the nation to act decisively in order to address this issue. His Majesty noted that individuals with mental health issues frequently have emotional and cognitive issues, which can impact their everyday functioning and social relationships. His Majesty has emphasized the value of mental health, stating that people can control their emotions and live satisfying lives when their minds are in good condition. However, mental illness can impair a person's capacity to handle life's obstacles. His Majesty reminded the country that, in line with Islamic teachings, both mental and physical healing are gifts from Allah Almighty, and that safeguarding these abilities is in line with the goals of the Maqaddid al-Shariah (Rocha, 2024).

His Majesty has recognised the ongoing efforts of the Government to address mental health issues, noting the increase in the number of mental health counsellors and the extension of Talian Harapan 145, the counseling center for mental health, to a 24-hour establishment. To help individuals in need even more, these actions are crucial. His Majesty also thanked the efforts of several parties, including governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, and expressed his hope for ongoing collaboration between the religious and health authorities. The Mental Health in the Workplace Roadshow is one such program that seeks to inform departments and ministries about mental health from both an Islamic and a scientific perspective. Regarding ongoing efforts, His Majesty noted that a basic mental health education program for community leaders—specifically, imams, ustaz, and dai'e—is one of the main projects of the National Action Plan for Mental Health for the years 2022–2025.

This program, which is a partnership between religious and health authorities, blends spiritual counseling with scientific treatment. However, His Majesty noted that in order to attain the optimal outcomes in terms of mental health, the efficacy of these programs needs to be continuously assessed and, if need, modified. His Majesty urged the family and society at large to assume accountability and actively assist those with mental health issues on their journey toward recovery in his parting words (Rokiah, 2024).

ii. Mental Health Centres

Psychiatric care in Brunei began with one ward in an old general hospital in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan. In 1984, the hospital was replaced by a larger one, Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleh (Hospital of Residence and Residence). Medical care is provided at this and three other district hospitals, which have extensive outpatient clinics. A growing network of primary health centres is in place. Health care is virtually free for citizens and permanent residents. Unlike in many other countries, there is no large-scale mental-health institutions. There is also no large-scale organisations or groups of people with mental health problems. Traditional and cultural beliefs trump scientific understanding of mental illness. Stigmatisation and prejudice are a challenge (Hilda Ho, 2014).

Mental health services are managed exclusively by the Government and are mainly provided at the Psychiatric Department of RIPAS Hospital and the Suri Seri Begawan Hospital in Kuala Belait. This journal published a country report on mental health in Brunei Darussalam (Sabri & Khan, 2008).

Since then, developments have taken place. There are 32 designated psychiatric beds (20 in RIPAS and 12 in SSB) but the RIPAS ward is overcrowded on a regular basis. There are no specialised inpatient wards, so all patients requiring inpatient care are placed in the same general wards (Hilda Ho, 2014).

Community mental health teams have been scaled up. These teams are responsible for each of the four geographical areas and are made up of between two and four psychiatric nurses and on-call physicians. The visits focus on medication, mental health monitoring and the involvement of patients and their families. It is common for several generations to live in the same household. There is a community psychiatric team for children and adolescents, composed of three nurses and headed by a psychiatrist specialising in children and adolescents. In each district there are day-care centres with nurses, which are often supervised together with a community team. In Bandar Seri Begawan, a community rehabilitation centre is well established (Hilda Ho, 2014).

Referrals are accepted from general practitioners or other healthcare professionals. The public may apply for a meeting but are advised to see their primary care doctor first. Each of the four district hospitals has a well-staffed general psychiatry clinic. In addition, in order to improve access to mental health care and reduce the overload of hospital wards, mental health clinics have been set up in some primary health centres (Hilda Ho, 2014).

The police, courts and the criminal justice system are the bodies which carry out the referrals for psychiatric evaluation. Mental health legislation for mental offenders is less well developed than in other modern jurisdictions. The Criminal Procedure Act 1951 deals with mentally ill persons but does not define them. Offenders with mental illness who require psychiatric evaluation and treatment in hospital are placed in general wards under police escort. Patients considered too dangerous to be placed in the wards are treated in prisons without wards. However, forensic psychiatric clinics and an inpatient drug rehabilitation centre were established in two national prisons (Hilda Ho, 2014).

Sub-Discussion 2

Giving Importance to Education

Government programmes should not only focus on boosting the economy, but also consider the investment aspect of knowledge and education, His Highness the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam said in his opening address to the third session of the ICC (sultanate.com).

The Bruneian government provides or regulates education through the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Hal Ehwal Uagama) and the Ministry of Education (Kementerian Pendidikan) (<https://www.studycountry.com/>). The former oversees the majority of the nation's public and state schools, while the latter is specifically in charge of state schools that offer religious teaching in Ugandan or Islamic languages. (<https://education.stateuniversity.com>).

Formal education includes primary, secondary and tertiary education. There are two types of compulsory education: general education, which lasts 12 years and includes pre-primary, primary and secondary education (<https://education.stateuniversity.com>), Includes seven years of Islamic religious elementary education, which is required of all Muslim pupils in Brunei. While religious instruction is offered in private or state-run religious schools, general education can be acquired at public or state schools.

Post-secondary education can comprise upper secondary education, which extends secondary education and provides direct access to higher education, and technical and vocational training offered by public and private universities. Four state universities offer higher education at the level of bachelor's degree. Compulsory education is fully subsidized by the Government of Brunei for its citizens and is generally extended to secondary and tertiary education (<https://www.studycountry.com>).

Despite Brunei's official language being Malay, English is taught at most primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities. However, for primary education in the religion and for subjects pertaining to Brunei and Malay, Malay is the language of teaching. In the latter, the Jawi alphabet, a Persian-Arabic script, also takes the role of the Roman alphabet. Islamic colleges and religious schools with Arabic as their primary language use Arabic. In Chinese private schools, the Chinese language can be taught as a subject or teaching technique.

Twelve technical and vocational schools, seven universities, and other higher education establishments were under the management or supervision of the Ministry of Education in 2019, along with 232 pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools. Of the 10,942 instructors they employed, 72.9% were female. 49.9% of the 107166 students who were enrolled were female. The Ministry of Religious Affairs oversaw 158 Islamic schools that year, employing 2,205 teachers and 36,926 students (<https://deps.mofe.gov.bn>).

5. Conclusion

This study has attempted to demonstrate the application of Sharia in Brunei Darussalam through the preservation of religion and reason. After tracing and extrapolating the reality of religion and reason in Brunei, the study arrived at a number of facts that demonstrate the efforts of the Sultanate of Brunei to preserve religion and reason, namely the great interest in building mosques and revitalising their role, the interest in memorising the Holy Qur'ān and continuously honouring those who memorise it, the interest in printing and publishing the Holy Qur'ān, the interest in dhikr and adopting it as a fixed description of the state, the abundance of various religious slogans for the state, such as. B.: Malay Islam Beraja, Always in Service with God's Guidance, etc. This is the aspect of preserving the religion. As for the Sultanate's interest in the preservation of the mind, the royal speeches (TITAH) emphasise the need to take care of mental health by establishing mental and psychological health centres, and to attach great importance to education and scientific research by implementing the Education for All programme, which attracts distinguished professors from all over the world and promotes scientific research by allocating funds for this purpose in all universities in Brunei Darussalam.

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