

# PM: ADOPT MODERATE APPROACH TO ISLAM

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By MARIA SAMAD

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that a balanced and moderate approach to Islam are the prerequisites for the revival of the civilisation.

"For Muslim civilisation to achieve its destiny and experience a second upturn, a balanced approach to Islam and a certain amount of self-criticism is a prerequisite," the Prime Minister said.

"We must learn to be honest with ourselves. We need a balanced approach. We must seek good both in this world and the next," he said when opening the Third Seminar on Islamic Thought at the Asia-Pacific Development Centre here.

"We should reorganise our political, social and economic life in a way that would fully incorporate the injunctions of Islam to ensure that a socially healthy, politically coherent and economically efficient vigorous ummah would emerge, able to face all challenges," he said.

Islamic injunctions, he said, must be given practical content and its implications explained in concrete terms before it could become operational in the economic organisation of Muslim countries.

Muslims, Dr Mahathir added, would require much more effort and strength for a better future. "For God does not change the fate of a Society unless they make an effort to change it themselves."

"History offers no support for the idea that simply by the passage of time Muslims will suddenly undergo a miraculous revival.

"We Muslims must make a conscious decision whether to remain in a constant state of tension, between living in the past and only superficially coming to terms with the contemporary world, or whether to opt for an Islamic future, and redirecting themselves to the original path of Islam," he added.

Criticising Muslims who took pride in their ignorance, he reminded them that the Muslims were in acute social, economic and political agony.

"Yet many Muslims," he said, "have adopted a strangely false sense of se-

curity: that reading the Quran will bring them *thawab* or blessings even if they do not understand or practise it, going out on *tabligh* or propagation and propaganda sheets will win support for Islam.

Describing this preoccupation with gaining merit for self as too narrow, Dr Mahathir said that they should instead work towards establishing "a thriving and dynamic society as there could only be a hereafter for us if we survive as Muslims.

"For when Muslims have been wiped out or forcibly separated from their faith, there can be no hereafter," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that to establish Islam and ensure that it was responsive to the immediate re-

quirements and concerns of modern man, Muslims must look for leading issues.

"We must look for leading issues of our time and let people know what rights Allah has given them that they must fight for, what security Allah offers them that they must look for and what promise Allah has for them that they must work for."

He added that the two great challenges facing Muslims were the re-creation of a living Islamic civilisation and making positive contributions to the predicament facing mankind.

However, he said, Muslims must plan what sort of future they envisaged for themselves because current trends showed that Muslim society was heading towards an aimless future.

"Unless something is done now this trend is likely

to continue, putting the Muslims in grave danger of being separated from their faith," he said.

He stressed that if Muslims really wanted an Islamic order they must examine every aspect of modern life from the perspective of Islam and make necessary corrections.

Dr Mahathir suggested that a blueprint for the implementation of the Islamic system be worked out, taking into account the practical realities of today's world.

However, he said, planning in the Muslim countries must be more than a projection into the future of today's dominant trend, otherwise it would not achieve its objective.

"Possible greatness in the years ahead will depend on the greatness of our vision of the future."

"While we may fall short of our goals, we must not allow any deficiency in the clarity and articulation of our vision," he said.

Dr Mahathir also spoke of the need to develop tradition of Muslim scholarship with those of modern methods of study and research in developing a fresh understanding of Islam.

"We need to analyse what changes are desirable in Muslim society."

"We must aim to develop an awareness of the future and an Islamic perception which can relate the teachings of Islam to current problems and meet the coming challenges of the future."

"Once we have become sensitised to this perception, we are equipped to analyse modern problems in the light of the Quran and the *Sunnah*."