

# Dr M on Islamic laws and issues to be considered

NSF - 9 OCT 1984

PHILADELPHIA, Mon. — Before introducing Islamic laws, a country must take into consideration its particular environment.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this today in answer to a question raised after his address to a group of faculty members and students of the Department of Religion, Temple University.

The question that must be asked, he said: Will the imposition of Islamic law work in a particular society?

"If the end result is chaos and ultimate defeat of Muslims, it is not any good."

The Prophet did not impose Islam on everyone. He started with his family and close friends. Even Jews were allowed to live under Jewish laws, not Islamic laws. There was a lot of flexibility, based on pragmatism, Dr Mahathir, re-

From MUNIR MAJID

called.

"We are asked to think. We must not do things which our minds tell us are wrong. We must take into consideration the environment. We should do what we can do at a given time.

"In the time given, the Muslims should strengthen themselves to show that Islam is a positive, progressive factor."

He warned against giving in to feelings. The Muslim must think.

To another question about education in line with the teachings of Islam, Dr Mahathir called upon Muslims to study all knowledge as part of Islam. What was important was the philosophy behind that study. Muslims should acquire all kinds of knowledge for the good of Islam.

The effort in Malaysia was to make clear the relevance of knowledge to life as a good Muslim.

Asked for his assess-

ment of what has been happening in the Muslim world in terms of inter-governmental co-operation, Dr Mahathir suggested that leaders should perhaps try to become better Muslims for a start.

"We are not a disciplined people now. Under the Caliphs the Muslims were organised and Muslims everywhere should seek knowledge to understand the workings of the world."

Muslims were weak in terms of knowledge, organisation and military capability. Even, the oil wealth found in Muslim countries had not been very well managed, being often squandered for physical glorification.

Having no control over the world economy, that wealth would only be transient, Dr Mahathir warned.

"The oil money, in the banking system of others, is not really money in Muslim possession."

Muslims sent by their country for study abroad should understand the purpose of education. They must contribute to the country that has given them that opportunity.

To become great, to stand tall among others, this is the mission of every Muslim, not the responsibility of Muslim Governments alone.

"He (the Muslim individual) should also work for his country and his faith so that Islam which was once a great civilising force in the world would one day become a great civilising force again."

His remarks, which also touched upon the cause of disunity among Muslims — the different interpretations of Islam and the emergence after the time of the Prophet of different sects, imams and cults — were well received by the audience which comprised students and faculty members of many Islamic nationalities.