

UE710 DEE

MAHATHIR

BM

184 P
 IPOH, DEC 24 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD WANTS MORE MUSLIMS TO GATHER IN MOSQUES TO FOSTER BROTHERLY TIES AND PROPAGATE ISLAM.

HE SAID TODAY THAT CONGREGATING IN MOSQUES TO WORSHIP WOULD STRENGTHEN UNDERSTANDING, BROTHERHOOD AND RELIGIOUS FAITH,

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID AT THE OPENING OF THE TAMAN KLEDANG JAYAMOSQUE HERE THAT RELIGION DID NOT ENCOURAGE A PERSON TO BE A LONER AND ISOLATE HIMSELF FROM SOCIETY BUT WANTED PEOPLE TO BUILD CONGENIAL TIES AND GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER BETTER THROUGH MOSQUE GATHERINGS.

HE DID NOT WANT THE PEOPLE TO BOYCOTT THE MOSQUE IN THEIR AREAS TO PRAY IN OTHER MOSQUES OR TO BUILD A SEPARATE MOSQUE IN THE SAME AREA.

ALTHOUGH RELIGION ENCOURAGED THE BUILDING OF MOSQUES IN ALL PLACES, IT DID NOT ENCOURAGE TOO MANY MOSQUES IN ONE AREA AS THIS WOULD GIVE TO VARIOUS PROBLEMS, HE ADDED.

AS LONG AS THE EXISTING MOSQUE CAN ACCOMMODATE THE NUMBER OF THE FAITHFUL IN THE AREA, THERE IS NO NEED TO BUILD ANOTHER MOSQUE. EVEN IF THE CONGREGATION GROWS THERE IS STILL NO NEED FOR ANOTHER MOSQUE BECAUSE THE EXISTING MOSQUE CAN ALWAYS BE MADE BIGGER.

THE PEOPLE SHOULD NOT GO LOOKING FOR OTHER MOSQUES TO WORSHIP IN IF ONE ALREADY EXISTED IN THEIR AREA.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REGRETTED THAT SUCH A PROBLEM SHOULD HAVE NOW CROPPED UP IN THE MUSLIM SOCIETY WHEN THERE HAD NEVER BEEN ANY, SUCH SPLIT AMONG THE MUSLIMS IN THE PAST.

CALLING ON THE PEOPLE TO UNITE, HE SAID THE PROBLEM STEMMED FROM MIXING RELIGION WITH OTHER ISSUES.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS, HOWEVER, PROUD TO NOTE THAT MORE AND MORE MUSLIMS WERE GOING TO THE MOSQUE TO PRAY.

HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT IF THE MUSLIMS KEPT THIS UP AND IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING AMONG THEMSELVES THEY WOULD EMERGE AS A COMMUNITY TO BE RECKONED WITH AND WOULD PRESENT A GOOD PICTURE TO THE OTHER COMMUNITIES.

HE ALSO HOPED THAT MOSQUE COMMITTEES ENSURED MOSQUES WERE CLEAN AND BEAUTIFUL SO THAT THE PEOPLE COULD WORSHIP IN COMFORT.

PERAK MENTERIBESAR DATUK SERI RAMLI NGAH TALIB EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SOCIETY WOULD NOT USE MOSQUES FOR PURPOSES THAT COULD DESTROY THE ISLAMIC FAITH.

THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT FORBID DAKWAH ACTIVITIES BUT IT MUST BE WARY OF DEVIATIONIST ACTIVITIES.

IT HAD TO IMPOSE SPECIFIC MEASURES BECAUSE IT DID NOT WANT ISLAMIC TEACHINGS TO BE BLEMISHED BY MATTERS THAT CONFLICTED WITH THE RELIGION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO UMNO PRESIDENT WAS GREETED ON ARRIVAL AT THE IPOH AIRPORT BY 39000 MEMBERS OF BARISAN NASIONAL COMPONENT PARTIES. HE LATER PRAYED AT THE NEWLY-OPENED \$280,000 MOSQUE AND HAD A CLOSED-DOOR MEETING WITH THE KINTA UMNO DIVISION COMMITTEE MEMBERS LED BY DR NAWAWI MAT AWIN. -- BERNAMA

1549MST 24 12 84