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MAHATHIR-ISLAM
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, AUG 7 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY URGED INTELLECTUALS TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND IN FATHOMING THE REASONS FOR THE BACKWARDNESS OF MUSLIMS.

HE BELIEVED THE FACTORS WHICH MADE MUSLIMS PROGRESSIVE AND LED TO THE SPREAD OF THE RELIGION TO SPAIN IN THE WEST AND CHINA IN THE EAST DURING THE HEIGHT OF ITS GLORY IN THE FIRST AND SECOND CENTURY HIJRAH COULD BE PINPOINTED.

OPENING A SEMINAR ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM AT THE ISLAMIC CENTRE HERE, HE SAID THE QURAN AND THE SUNNAH COULD NOT BE BLAMED FOR THE BACKWARDNESS OF THE MUSLIMS, AS IT WAS MORE LIKELY CAUSED BY MAN'S MISINTERPRETATION.

+IF WE STUDY THE HISTORY OF ISLAM, THE MUSLIMS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL AS PROMISED IN THE QURAN BUT NOW WE CANNOT CHEAT OURSELVES BY SAYING WE ARE SUCCESSFUL,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO FELT THAT CULTURALLY AND IN TERMS OF CIVILISATION, MUSLIMS WERE BETTER OFF THAN OTHER GROUPS. -- MORE
1210MST 07 08 86

U E851 AAE
MAHATHIR-ISLAM 2 KUALA LUMPUR

+THE FACT IS THAT WE HAVE TO SEEK THE ASSISTANCE OF OTHERS WHEN FACED WITH PROBLEMS AND ARE DEPENDENT ON OTHERS IN A LOT OF MATTERS+, HE SAID.

+EVEN THE ISLAMIC ATTIRE WE WEAR IS MADE BY NON-MUSLIMS, AS THE MUSLIMS HAVE LOST THE ABILITY TO MANUFACTURE TEXTILES. THERE IS NO POINT IN SAYING WE ARE SUCCESSFUL JUST TO PLEASE OURSELVES+, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID 200 YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF THE PROPHET THERE FOLLOWED A DECLINE IN THE PROGRESS AMONG MUSLIMS IN SOME PLACES, ADDING THAT THIS FACET OF HISTORY NEEDED TO BE STUDIED BY ISLAMIC INTELLECTUALS SO THAT PAST MISTAKES WERE NOT REPEATED.

THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRUE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM, HE SAID, COULD NOT BE DONE BY MERELY READING THE QURAN AND THE SUNNAH BUT REQUIRED INTERPRETATION BY THE INTELLECTUALS.

+HOWEVER, WE SHOULD REMEMBER THE INTERPRETERS ARE NOT FREE FROM FAULTS AS THEY ARE ALSO HUMAN BEINGS, AND AS SUCH THERE HAVE BEEN DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AMONG THEMSELVES+, HE SAID. -- MORE
1248MST 07 08 86

U E854 AAE
MAHATHIR-ISLAM 3 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE TASK NOW WAS TO DETERMINE WHICH INTERPRETATION WAS ACCURATE AND THIS HAD TO BE DONE BY PEOPLE WHO GENUINELY LOVED ISLAM.

HE ADDED THAT IF ISLAM WAS CORRECTLY INTERPRETED AS IT WAS DURING ITS GLORY THE MUSLIMS NOW WOULD CERTAINLY BE SUCCESSFUL.

+WE MUST OPEN OUR MINDS IN FACING THIS PROBLEM AND CANNOT REGARD AN INDIVIDUAL AS NOT SUBJECT TO QUESTIONING AS HE IS ALSO AN ORDINARY HUMAN BEING+, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE ISLAM THAT WAS PRACTISED TODAY STRESSED MORE ON FORM INTRODUCED BY MAN HIMSELF WHILE VALUES THAT COULD BRING SUCCESS IN ISLAM WERE NOT EMPHASISED.

HE SAID AS SUCH APPRECIATION OF ISLAM WAS CURRENTLY +LOPSIDED+ WHEREAS TRUE ADHERENCE TO ISLAM WOULD LEAD TO SUCCESS IN THE PRESENT WORLD AND THE HEREAFTER. -- MORE
1316MST 07 08 86

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U E883 AAE
MAHATHIR-ISLAM 4 KUALA LUMPUR (REPEATING WITH ADDITIONAL INFO)

HE SAID THE TASK OF INTERPRETING ISLAMIC TEACHINGS SHOULD BE PROMPTED BY SINCERITY AND NOBILITY AND NOT FOR OTHER INTERESTS EXCEPT RELIGION.

MAKING INTREPRETATIONS FOR INTERESTS OTHER THAN ISLAM HAD TAKEN PLACE NOT ONLY IN THE PAST BUT WAS ALSO OCCURRING IN THE COUNTRY NOW, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID ISLAM WAS BEING USED BY NON-MUSLIMS FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS.

AS SUCH, HE SAID, WHAT WAS IMPORTANT WAS NOT TO BLAME OTHERS BUT FOR EVERY MUSLIM TO ASK THEMSELVES HOW THEY COULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND THE RELIGION.

THE ONE-DAY SEMINAR, ORGANISED JOINTLY BY MALAYSIAN MUSLIM STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA AND THE EDUCATION MINISTRY TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM, WAS ATTENDED BY ABOUT 500 LOCAL AND OVERSEAS STUDENTS WHO ARE HOME ON VACATION. -- BERNAMA
1542MST 07 08 86