

D703

U E311 AAE
MAHATHIR-INSTRUMENT

86 (Y)
KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 28 (BERNAMA) -- MUSLIMS TODAY ARE OPPRESSED NOT BECAUSE OF ISLAM BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE FOND OF MAKING INTERPRETATIONS AND DEVISING METHODS WHICH OBSTRUCT AND WEAKEN THEM, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

+WE CONCENTRATE ON INSIGNIFICANT MATTERS, ON FORMS AND APPEARANCES WHILE THE TOTAL WELFARE AND WELLBEING OF THE MUSLIMS WHICH ARE ENJOINED UPON US TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE ARE IGNORED,+ HE SAID WHEN OPENING A SEMINAR ON +DEVELOPING A SYSTEM OF ISLAMIC FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS+ HERE.

HE SAID ALLAH DID NOT SEND HIS MESSENGER MUHAMMAD TO TEACH MANKIND THE TRUE FAITH IN ORDER THAT IT WOULD BE A BURDEN AND AN OBSTRUCTION TO THOSE WHO ACCEPT THE FAITH.

+ISLAM IS NOT JUST A SET OF RITUALS REGARDING HOW TO PAY OBEISANCE TO ALLAH ALTHOUGH THESE ARE ALSO A PART OF ISLAM BUT IT IS ALL ENCOMPASSING AND IT GOVERNS EVERY ASPECT OF OUR BEHAVIOUR IN SOCIETY.

+THERE ARE RULES AND INJUNCTIONS CONCERNING EVERY TRANSACTION THAT WE ENTER INTO, FROM BIRTH AND MARRIAGE, TO COMMERCE AND FINANCE AND ON TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, TO WAR AND PEACE,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

1232MST 28 04 86

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MAHATHIR-INSTRUMENT 2 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE EVIDENCE OF HISTORY SHOWED THAT THE EARLY MUSLIMS PROSPERED AFTER THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAM AND WERE ABLE TO SPREAD THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM FAR AND WIDE.

HOWEVER, DESPITE BEING FOLLOWERS OF A RELIGION CONCERNED WITH A WAY OF LIFE, THEY SEEMED TO CARE ONLY FOR DEATH AND RETRIBUTION AND LITTLE FOR THE EFFECT ON LIFE OF MUSLIM SOCIETY WHEN INTERPRETING THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM, HE SAID.

+THE BELIEFS OF THE JAHILIAH PERIOD, WHEN SUFFERINGS ON EARTH WERE SUPPOSED TO CONFER MERIT, INFLUENCE OUR THINKING SO THAT WE SEEM TO WANT TO PUNISH OURSELVES ON EARTH IN ORDER TO ENJOY THE HEREAFTER,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID MANY MUSLIMS STARVED BECAUSE THEY PLACED IMPEDIMENTS IN THE WAY OF THEIR RELIEF WORK AMONG THEM THROUGH THEIR INTERPRETATION.

THUS, DESPITE ISLAMIC INJUNCTIONS AGAINST WASTE AND THAT THEY SHOULD DO CHARITY AND HELP THE POOR, FOR A LONG TIME THE HUGE NUMBER OF ANIMALS SACRIFICED AT MINA DURING THE HAJ HAD JUST BEEN BURIED IN THE DESERT SAND, HE SAID. -- MORE

1321MST 28 04 86

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U E314 AAE
MAHATHIR-INSTRUMENT 3 KUALA LUMPUR

+WE ARE TOLD THAT WE CANNOT DISTRIBUTE THE MEAT IN CASE SOME NON-BELIEVERS GET TO EAT IT, BUT IS THIS IN FACT WHAT ISLAM WANTS OF US AS A WAY OF LIFE?

+DOES ALLAH WANT SO MANY OF THE UMMAH TO SUFFER AND DIE BECAUSE A MORSEL MIGHT GO TO THE UNBELIEVERS?+ HE ASKED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE MUSLIMS ALSO FACED THE SAME SITUATION IN THE FIELD OF FINANCE. THEY DEFINED +RIBA+ (USURY) AS ANY INTEREST, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, AND EVEN SERVICE CHARGE WAS CONSIDERED +RIBA+.

+WHILE PROFIT-SHARING MAY BE A METHOD OF FINANCING, THE FACT IS THAT MUSLIMS HAVE MORE MONEY THAN THERE ARE BUSINESSES TO FINANCE AND SO MUSLIM MONEY TOTALLING BILLIONS (RINGGIT) IS DEPOSITED IN NON-MUSLIM BANKS IN NON-MUSLIM COUNTRIES.

+THE FACT IS THAT MONEY WILL BE LENT OUT BY THOSE BANKS, WITH INTEREST, SOMETIMES TO THE ENEMIES OF ISLAM AND THESE BANKS ENJOY THE INTEREST EARNED BY OUR MONEY WHEN THE INTEREST COULD VERY WELL FINANCE THE WELFARE OF MUSLIMS AND WE ARE DEPRIVED OF THIS HELP BECAUSE IT IS 'RIBA' AS A FORM THAT WE ABHOR, NOT 'RIBA' AS A CAUSE OF MISERY -- THE REASON WHY 'RIBA' IS FORBIDDEN BY ISLAM,+ HE SAID.

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1324MST 28 04 86

U E316 AAE
MAHATHIR-INSTRUMENT 4 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE MISINTERPRETATION OF ISLAM WAS SEEN AGAIN IN COMMERCE, WHERE HE SAID PROFITS OF 1,000 PERCENT WERE MADE AT ONE TIME FROM THE SALE OF PETROLEUM AND THE HIGH PRICE HAD DEPRIVED MANY POOR PEOPLE.

+CLEARLY THE TAKING OF THIS VERY EXCESSIVE PROFIT HAS CAUSED MISERY TO A LOT OF PEOPLE, BUT WE INTERPRET ISLAMIC TEACHINGS AS SAYING THAT THIS EXCESSIVE PROFIT IS NOT A CRIME AS COMPARED TO THE TAKING OF EVEN THE SMALLEST AMOUNT OF INTEREST.

+AND SO WE IGNORE THE MISERY WE CAUSE, AS IF BEING MISERABLE IS A WAY OF LIFE IN ISLAM, BUT IS IT TRUE THAT ISLAM DOES NOT CARE FOR THE PAIN AND OPPRESSION THAT IS CAUSED AS LONG AS ITS INJUNCTIONS ARE OBEYED?+ HE ASKED.

HE ALSO SAID THE MUSLIMS TODAY HAD FRITTERED AWAY THEIR MONEY AND TIME. IF THEY WERE NOT FIGHTING OR PLOTTING AGAINST EACH OTHER, THEY WERE BUSY QUIBBLING OVER INSIGNIFICANT MATTERS OR ARGUING ENDLESSLY OVER WORDS, HE SAID.

AS A RESULT, THE BOUNTY THAT ALLAH HAD BESTOWED ON THE MUSLIM UMMAH HAD NOT MADE THEM ANY BETTER, HE SAID. -- MORE
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U E317 AAE
MAHATHIR-INSTRUMENT 5 KUALA LUMPUR

ON ISLAMIC BANKS AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, HE SAID THOSE EXISTING TODAY WERE DOING BUSINESS IN A VERY RESTRICTED ENVIRONMENT.

+INDEED THE SYSTEM OF FORWARD APPORTIONMENT OF PROFITS RESULTS IN REPAYMENTS THAT ARE MORE ONEROUS THAN INTEREST.

HE HOPED THE SEMINAR WOULD SUCCEED IN DEVELOPING A SYSTEM OF ISLAMIC BANKING THAT WOULD ALSO STRESS ON THE SPIRIT OF THE INJUNCTIONS OF THE QURAN, THAT LOANS SHOULD NOT BE A BURDEN TO THE BORROWERS BUT HELP THEM IN THEIR MOMENT OF NEED.

+WHAT THIS SEMINAR WILL DO WILL CONSTITUTE 'IJTIHAD' AND IT MUST THEREFORE EXAMINE INTERPRETATIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE PROBLEMS FACED BY MUSLIM SOCIETIES IN THE EIGHTH DECADE OF THE 20TH CENTURY, OTHERWISE IT WILL NOT BE TRUE TO SAY THAT ISLAM IS A RELIGION FOR ALL TIMES,+ HE SAID.

TWENTY-FOUR PARTICIPANTS FROM 19 CONTRIES ARE ATTENDING THE EIGHT-DAY SEMINAR JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE FINANCE MINISTRY AND THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK.

ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR IS TO EXPLORE WAYS OF CREATING, ORGANISING AND APPLYING ISLAMIC FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS THAT WOULD LEAD TO MORE EFFECTIVE MOBILISATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES. --

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