

PM: Let's of dynamic

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OUR gathering is essentially different from meetings of other fora. Though many or even all of us belong to other groupings, our congregation in this manner every three years, while representing a community of nations, is also a meeting of the Islamic ummah in consonance with the injunctions of our holy religion, Islam.

While we are Kings, Presidents and Prime Ministers, we are all faithful servants of Allah and, in accordance with the teachings of the religion of Allah, we must try, despite our human frailties and weaknesses, to fulfil our obligations to our faith and for the common good of the Islamic ummah.

The mantle of power that each of us wear as leaders in our own countries is but nothing before Allah if it is not used for the betterment of the Islamic world and the ummah.

The Islamic world may be fragmented into numerous political and ethnic entities but the brotherhood of the ummah must and should transcend these divisions.

For good or for bad, the 900 million Muslim ummah impacts upon the world at large. Our issues have become issues of world concern. Our wars have threatened the fabric of international peace. Whether we like it or not, we are as accountable to humanity as we are to the ummah.

In the eyes of Allah this is as it should be, for Muslims are as much the custodians of this world as are the others.

We can speak of the past glory of Islam, but really this is an admission of our present decline. The past is irrelevant and meaningless unless it teaches us the way out of our present failures. There must be lessons from history which can help us overcome our present problems, help us achieve greatness again.

Indeed, the Hadith, the true traditions of the Prophet are a part of our historical heritage, and are meant to guide us. But we frequently ignore them in favour of our ambitions and passions.

— If the Muslim world was pre-

Excerpts from the speech delivered by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Islamic summit in Kuwait on Wednesday.

viously like a meteor containing within it the human treasury of knowledge, the wisdom and insights that have made permanent contributions to the betterment of mankind, today it is weak and divided. The spirit of Islam is missing. Unity and brotherhood is largely absent. We are left only with the rituals in most cases.

That the machinations of the outside powers have resulted in the appearance within our midst of the State of Israel intended to permanently drive a stake into our hearts is undeniable. It is equally undeniable that our eclipse came also from our own weaknesses as we let our ambitions and passions take over.

Changing world

Driven by doctrines alien to us, we have built walls around ourselves so that our common faith, Islam, can no longer penetrate and bring us together.

We fight wars and foment revolutions and interfere in the affairs of our Islamic neighbours in furtherance of our ideology or the needs of our mentor.

The conference of Heads of States and Heads of Government of Islamic countries is the supreme gathering of the Muslim world. It must be here that we ponder and deliberate over problems and issues by falling back on the essence of our faith for the further progress of the Muslim world and ummah.

If we meet in a salubrious surrounding such as this only to repeat yet again the points we made at the General Assembly of the UN or the Non-Aligned movement, it will all add up to a wasteful and futile

exercise. It pains us to have others outside our fold talk with derision of our fractious gatherings, all sound and fury from which emerge little that is of consequence.

The world around us has changed tremendously, due in some measure to the enlightenment that Islam brought to the world in the early centuries after the demise of the Prophet.

It is questionable whether in the context of a world of scientific advances and an accelerated process of change, we from the Muslim world have taken our rightful place.

If we have not we must refocus our attention to the changing world outside, or else the Muslim people will be left forever at the periphery, helpless even to defend ourselves and our faith.

In essence we must rekindle the vision of a dynamic Mus-

rekindle vision

D. Makbulin - Overseas Trip

Muslim ummah

lim community. The fallacy of regarding the Islamic way of life as confined solely to codifying the "Do's" and "Don'ts" will shut the gates of *Ijtihad* — the quest of knowledge, judgment and reason in accord with Muslim values and mind.

It is time we discarded outdated interpretations which still linger in our thinking that this world and all its wealth and potentials are not for us — that our reward is purely in the hereafter.

Special efforts

Economic and technological progress in the Muslim world has been tortuously slow. Islamic nations reel under the impact of a world economic recession and an increasingly unco-operative developed world. These are the realities.

Whether we like it or not, what others do will affect us. We cannot shut ourselves in as

we used to do in the days of the camel and the sailing ships. If Islam is for all times, then its followers must know how to handle the changes that affect us.

With "North-South" efforts abandoned, greater effort must be made for the implementation of a network of co-operation among member States of the OIC and other developing countries.

While this will take time to materialise it is important that a start should be made now. We appreciate the special efforts of Turkey as chairman of the Standing Committee on Economic and Commercial Co-operation.

In the eyes of Allah, all Muslims are equal. If they differ it is only in the degree of their submission to the will of Allah. In the affairs of the Muslim world, all Muslims have equal right to be concerned and to act.

No particular race or nation or ethnic group has more right than others when something that affects the faith and the well-being of Muslims is involved.

We would like to think that the Muslim ummah forms just one single integrated community unseparated by boundaries of race or worldly ideologies. And indeed they do belong to one community when their faith and religion is threatened or besmirched.

But otherwise there is a need to acknowledge that we do belong to separate countries and races and in matters that do not threaten the ummah as a whole. There should therefore be no interference in the purely domestic affairs of each other. There should be no subversion or instigation merely because we do not like the Rulers of a particular Muslim country or their system.

Narrow nationalism

Yet we find that the problems of the Middle East have become a web of power, rivalries and intrigues among Muslim States to the extent that the central issue, that is, the restoration to the Palestinians their homeland and to end the desecration on our holy shrines in Al Quds has been side-stepped.

Why have we, through our strife and discord, enfeebled ourselves to the extent that there is hardly any resistance left against the rampaging Zionists?

Any perceptible chance of a real solution in the Middle East now depends primarily on the initiatives of others, not us. We have at various OIC meetings declared our unity of purpose on this matter but the fact is, we remain in disarray. When we should all be behind the PLO, some of us plot for the downfall of its acknowledged leader, Yasser Arafat.

The Iraq-Iran War is further evidence of the manipulation of religion in the interest of narrow nationalism. The war has become a monster, a vehicle for the destruction of Muslims and their faith.

We see and we know of the hands of superpowers in the perpetuation of this hideous war. We know they want to perpetuate this war for their own purpose, to ensure the continued weakness of Muslim countries and prevent the solution of the Palestinian problem. But it is saddening that there should be Muslim countries, knowing all these, working hand in glove with the enemies.

Islam is concerned with justice everywhere. Justice is not for Muslims alone. It is for everyone. Just as we do not want to see Muslims oppressed, we cannot just stand apart and watch others being oppressed with injustice. It is for this reason that we must strive to bring about the demise of the apartheid regime of South Africa.

If there are Muslims in South Africa who are also oppressed, we should be even more concerned. It behoves us to cut all trade and economic connections with the dastardly regime of South Africa.

Tragedies

Malaysia is also gratified that two major issues have now been included in the agenda of the OIC. I refer to the status of Antarctica and the drug problem. The concern of this conference will strengthen the efforts to make Antarctica accessible to everyone, while the fight against drug addiction will be more likely to yield results.

There is a catalogue of other problems and tragedies in the Muslim world which have already been mentioned by others in this debate. I do not propose to repeat them except to say that I share the views expressed. Fortunately, the grim picture that has been painted is pierced by one small ray of hope.

For a long time the OIC has been striving to bring to a successful conclusion the struggle of the Moro people of the Philippines. The efforts of the OIC have now resulted in an agreement which will accord autonomy to the islands peopled by Muslims.

We congratulate the office of the OIC which has helped in bringing about this agreement. We hope that both sides will honour the agreement and this problem in the Islamic world can be taken off our agenda.