

Muslims told to correct belief that world is not

Dr M: All knowledge

18 JUN 1994

By Farush Khan and S. Jayakrishnan

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — There is a need to debunk some beliefs in the Islamic world which have contributed to the decline of the greatness of the Islamic civilisation, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the principal belief to be corrected was that the world is not meant for the believers, and that the world is meant only for the non-believers to enjoy.

He added that Muslims must also stop dividing knowledge into the religious and the secular. Unless Muslims stopped doing this, they may never rebuild Islamic civilisation and Muslims may forever remain in the modern equivalent of the Dark Ages, he said.

Dr Mahathir said all

Spain, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, Brunei, Bahrain, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, United Kingdom, Morocco, Iraq, India and other countries have contributed artifacts for the exhibition.

The Prime Minister said: "Surely our studies would make us appreciate and believe in Allah even more strongly. Surely the deeper and the more extensive the knowledge, the greater would be the faith for what we discover through our studies to be even greater miracles than we thought after a casual glance; miracles which only Allah can create."

Yet Muslims are afraid to study all the mysteries around them, to discover the wonders of Allah's creation, and to utilise them even as we utilise plants and animals for food and all the other creations of Allah to sustain and enhance the quality of our life.

knowledge should be regarded as "faith enhancing and vital to the Muslims and their faith."

He said this at the opening of the World Islamic Civilisation Festival 1994 at the Islamic Centre here today.

Dr Mahathir said: "And so the first step towards an Islamic renaissance is to debunk the belief that the world is not for us, that knowledge, other than spiritual knowledge, is secular and must be proscribed."

"Instead, such knowledge should be sought for it can truly strengthen faith and revive the greatness of the Islamic civilisation."

The festival is the first of its kind staged here. It has brought together under one roof more than 1,700 historic artifacts from 23 countries, including coins, ceramics, textiles, gems and stones, weapons, Al-Quran, manuscripts, calligraphy, engravings and other items.

Participating museums from Turkey, Iran, China,

meant for them

vital

FULL TEXT OF SPEECH: P10

"Because we do not study in depth, Muslims today have to rely on the results and the discoveries of those of other faiths."

"Today many of us are totally dependent on the results of the non-Muslims' application of their knowledge for our food, transport, defence, clothing and the roof over our heads. Indeed, even in the performance of our religious duties we depend on the non-Muslims."

"If this life, this bounty on earth is not for us, then why do we share the discoveries and inventions of the non-believers who study the creation of Allah, and use their knowledge to better their life on Earth?"

Dr Mahathir said the

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2, COL 4

PM; Muslims face problem of relating knowledge to faith

FROM PAGE ONE

great scholars of the golden period of Islamic civilisation were not just specialists in their fields but, almost invariably, they were learned in the teachings of Islam.

They were thus able to relate their knowledge to

their faith, he added.

"Today, Muslims either know the teachings of Islam exclusively or they are learned in other subjects, equally exclusively. They are therefore unable to relate the one with the other."

"As a result they either become spiritually fanatical

and reject anything they do not know as being secular and proscribed, or having studied non-religious subjects they find themselves unable to defend their knowledge as it relates to their faith.

"When challenged by religious fanatics as to the rele-

vance of their knowledge to Islam they are at a loss for an acceptable answer. They often feel guilty or alternatively they reject religion because of their inability to reconcile what they have learnt with the teachings of Islam.

"For as long as this di-

chotomy remains, there will always be a dearth of scholars of subjects which are not specific to the faith among Muslims, thus condemning the Muslims to backwardness and preventing the achievement of a glorious Islamic civilisation," he said.