

# Islam teaches moderation, not force,

# PM: Be wary of

## Muslims reminded

# fanatics

**By Ahmad A. Talib**

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Muslims should be wary of fanatics who may appear to be promoting Islam. History has shown that fanatics merely helped to weaken Muslims and their countries, the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said fanatics did not think the way sane people did and were not able to differentiate between good and bad. When they were obsessed with their belief, movement or leaders, they would follow them blindly.

Dr Mahathir said: "They will accept whatever their movement or leaders do without question. They will carry out anything if ordered to do so by their leaders, even though this may be clearly wrong."

The Prime Minister said this in his Hari Raya Aidilfitri message over Radio and Television Malaysia tonight. He said that one of the weaknesses of Muslims was that they were easily influenced by anything that appeared to be done in the name of Islam.

Following this, they often became fanatical in their belief and it was often difficult to bring them back to the true path, he said. The history of Islam had repeatedly shown how fanaticism resulted in enmity among Muslims, he added.

The Prime Minister then recalled the Al-Muwahhidun Movement led by Muhammad Ibn Tumart in Morocco in the 12th century and another movement in Sudan. In both countries, some Muslims were led to believe that they were led by individuals who would save them as they neared doomsday.

He said that everyone now knew that the world did not end in the 12th or 19th century. But it was re-

called that followers of Ibn Tumart killed many Muslims in Morocco and Spain whom they claimed did nothing to promote Islam.

Apart from these two examples, there were many others, which showed that fanaticism only weakened Muslims and caused them to be disunited.

Dr Mahathir said: "Even today, there are examples of fanaticism in some countries in North Africa and West Asia. Many fellow Muslims are killed in the name of wanting to build a Muslim nation.

"They hate peace and purposely create trouble, something which is repeatedly forbidden in the Quran. Even if they manage to topple their rivals and form the Government, their administrations are usually more cruel. In turn, they too would be toppled.

"Fanaticism is not the Islamic way. Islam practises moderation and places great appreciation on intellectual capabilities. And force is not the way to spread Islam."

The Prime Minister said Muslim fanatics were willing to kill other Muslims and were also willing to destroy Muslim states. They reject peace, and will surely not be willing to accept the fact that they are wrong.

They would also reject the fact that what they were doing was unIslamic and certainly very much against Islam, Dr Mahathir said. These people were seldom rehabilitated and brought back to true Islamic teachings.

Dr Mahathir said he was thankful that Malaysia managed to overcome a problem related to fanaticism recently. He said the Al-Arqam movement was not fanatical in the beginning but when the leadership became more influen-

□ PLEASE TURN TO  
PAGE 2, COL 1

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# Uphold proper teachings of Islam, says Dr M

□ FROM PAGE ONE

tial, there were attempts to develop a personality cult within the movement.

If left unchecked, their leaders could be seen as another Imam Mahadi (the Messiah) and this could lead to many unhealthy developments.

That was why the Government decided to move in on the movement and work to rehabilitate the leaders and followers to the true Islamic path.

But while Malaysians generally supported the move, the Western media criticised the Government for being undemocratic, saying that it was fearful of being defeated by Al Arqam in the general election.

Dr Mahathir said: "The Western media are aware of the chaos taking place in Islamic countries where such a fanatical movement exists. But they deliberately support this movement. But is their support due to democracy or is it because they want to see the collapse of yet another Islamic nation?"

He said Muslims could continue to blame others for all their woes but added that as long as they continued to reject the Islamic brotherhood and as long as they were so fanatical as to even undertake killing in mosques during Ramadan, they would forever be looked down upon by others.

For as long as they continue with this outlook, the Muslims would continue to see fellow Muslims being killed, chased away and have their nations taken from them, the Prime Minister said.

However, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was fortunate not to suffer the kind of fanaticism seen in some other countries. It has managed to steer clear of this because the various races were united, besides the moderate and rational stance of the Muslim population.

Because of this, he said, Malaysia was now more free in expressing its views and taking actions in and outside the country. In some ways, Malaysia had been able to contribute towards defending justice through diplomatic and military channels, Dr Mahathir said.

He said: "It is true that we have not been that successful, especially in trying to save Muslims who are being oppressed. But we are not keeping still, like many other developing nations, including the Muslim countries."

He said that efforts to improve the nation's image and that of Islam was still at the early stage. For this to continue, the unity among the races and the brotherhood of Islam must be there, he added.

Dr Mahathir said: "On this day, Muslims should renew their commitment to uphold Islam's true teaching, especially that which concerns the brotherhood among Muslims.

"We should reject all deviationist teachings, and those which smack of fanaticism. No matter how much we differ in terms of views and opinions, we should never forget that Islam is the binding force among us and this should not weaken and divide us.

"We should also not forget those who have to work while we enjoy our Hari Raya, especially our security forces in and outside the country. We should say 'thank you' to them and wish them Selamat Hari Raya. Their deeds can never be forgotten."