

23/08/1997

PM calls for reformation to guide them back to true path

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday called for a reformation of thought among Muslims who are still trapped in teachings which are not truly Islamic.

He said this self-deception over the real religious truth can affect efforts to overcome the challenges of the 21st century.

"The primary reformation is reformation of thought," he said in his keynote address at a conference in Kuala Lumpur on reformation and challenges facing Muslims in the 21st century yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the reformation that is required of Muslims is one that can guide them back to true Islamic teachings unadulterated by deviant interpretations, edicts and fatwas surfacing during the past 1,400 years after Hegira. The Prime Minister said the 21st century has been dubbed as the most challenging century where modern technology and IT will radically alter the life of mankind.

"No one could isolate oneself from the world community and such technologies ... Those who master the technologies will control world politics and economy," he added.

Dr Mahathir said such a power will also enable those possessing them to do almost anything they fancy, including discriminating against Muslims and Islamic countries.

He added that this had happened in Bosnia, Chechnya, Pakistan and South Asia where those in possession of high technology allowed mass murders of Muslims.

Dr Mahathir said there is no dispute on the need for Muslims to acquire religious knowledge, but this does not mean that the Muslims should only specialise in such matters alone. "Does it mean that all Muslim students should be experts only in religious matter to the extent of ignoring other academic fields which can develop and safeguard Muslims at large?"

"Are we not committing a sin because there is not a single Muslim expert in areas that can save other Muslims?" he asked.

Dr Mahathir also said the difference in opinions and Islamic teachings still exist in an Islamic society.

"Those who have deviated, must be guided back to the true path but the approach in doing that should be subtle and with finesse through consensus and not pressure, oppression and injustice," he added. Dr Mahathir said tolerance and brotherhood should be put first in the event of disagreement, adding that attempts to use force which could only lead to split and endless violence should be avoided.

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