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Mahathir-Message

PRACTICE MODERATION, MAINTAIN CORDIAL TIES AMONG RACES, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysians should practice moderation and maintain cordial ties in this multi-racial and multi-religious country to preserve peace and prosperity, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

They should not take for granted that peace and prosperity can be maintained without an effort being made towards that direction, he added.

If Malaysians forget and follow their base desires, the nation too would be hit by the kind of chaos that is occurring in other countries, he said in his Hari Raya Aidil Fitri message broadcast over Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM).

"In Malaysia, there are Muslims as well as non Muslims... it has become normal for us to visit friends during their respective New Years," he added.

Visits made by Muslims on non-Muslims have no religious significance but it only serves to create good social relations and to help bring about peace and tranquility to the nation, he said.

"With peace, we are able to live happily and exercise our religious observance without any obstacle. On the other hand, we know that in countries where there is no effort to foster good relations, fighting often erupted even though the people shared the same religion," he added.

Dr Mahathir hoped Malaysian Muslims would visit their Chinese friends during the Chinese New Year, not to eat and drink, but to forge closeness and harmony among them.

Islam was not an obstacle if Muslims really want to develop the nation and restore their past glory.

"Actually, if Islam is interpreted without any political interest and the interpretations are used as a guide, there is no reason why Islamic nations cannot be peaceful and become advanced and capable of competing with other advanced nations in all fields, including science and technology and defence capability as required by Islam," he said.

The Prime Minister said the developed nation that Malaysia aspires to be is one that possesses the same capability in all fields, with incomes that give Malaysians a comfortable life, good moral ethics and strong religious virtues.

Unfortunately, even when the country is economically advanced and has acquired the necessary skills, there were unhealthy signs of deterioration in moral values and ethics which could destroy the society, he added.

Worrisome is the fact that the increase in social ills far exceeded the increase in population growth, he said, adding that even more alarming was the fact that the undesirable ills were more rampant among Muslims than non-Muslims.

The pursuit of materialism and modernisation which has opened up more opportunities for socialisation and urban migration, cannot answer why more Malays and Muslims get involved with undesirable activities compared with non-Muslims.

"If we strictly adhere to Islamic teachings, surely our resilience against evil doings would be stronger and more effective, but because our beliefs are limited to form and are shallow, Muslims are easily defeated by their base desires when faced with evil," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said instead of copying what is bad from the West, Muslims in this country should emulate the non-Muslims who have been able

to resist base desires, their dedication to education and work.

"Is it wrong and against our religion if we emulate the good things done by the non-Muslims when we so easily copy what is bad as part of our life?" he asked.

He said while Muslims celebrate their efforts in overcoming their desires on this Hari Raya Aidilfitri, they should realise and become aware of all the social ills affecting the Muslim community not only in Malaysia but also throughout the world.

Although it was the responsibility of the government to combat these social ills, the public, teachers, media and parents should also shoulder the burden to help combat the moral decline in the country, he added.

He reminded Malaysians to always remain cautious and avoid danger and not always link whatever that happens to fate and destiny.

He said: "Indeed, in this country, Allah has bestowed upon us all that are good, Malaysia is a country where the soil is fertile, where the rain greens the whole country, where water and food is plentiful.

"Our country is also blessed with a moderate climate and is not subjected to destructive typhoons and earthquakes.

"It's up to us to achieve a good life with all that we are blessed with. Actually, our burden is light in this beloved country. We can live comfortably with little effort and if we are resourceful and disciplined, we can be wealthy and comfortable." -- BERNAMA

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