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Muslims have themselves to blame (HL)

Patvinder Singh; Aion Mohd

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that if Muslims currently felt they were being oppressed, scorned and subjugated, directly or indirectly, it was because they did not make Islam a way of life.

"Our situation now is very different from that of Muslims in the earlier centuries where they were so successful as to control the world not only physically but also mentally," the Prime Minister said when launching Maulidur Rasul to mark Prophet Muhammad's birthday at Pusat Islam this morning.

The Prime Minister said if Muslims did not practise an Islamic way of life as a whole but limited it to certain matters only, they could not achieve happiness as would Muslims who took Islam as addin or way of life.

"It is clear that the Islamic way of life can bring happiness to its followers. This is what we should remember when we observe Maulidur Rasul," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there were some people who said Muslims would have a happy life if they increased observance of certain rituals.

"They say these rituals will ensure us a place in the hereafter, though not in the world. The world is for other people. The hereafter is for us. So, consider worldly efforts as secular and un-Islamic and reject them all," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Islam as taught by Prophet Muhammad was not limited to just rituals for that would have meant Islam could not be made a way of life.

"Is it enough if Muslims only knew of taking part in rituals only and finishing their time on certain rituals? Would their lives be complete if they did not know how to plant, rear animals, fish and produce food on a large scale for millions of Muslims?"

"Don't Muslims have to command and develop knowledge of health and medicine? Don't Muslims have to have command of all knowledge which can save and defend Muslims and Islamic nations?" he asked.

Dr Mahathir said the Quran repeatedly spoke about the environment, hills, skies and rains that made the earth fertile but learned Muslim scholars seldom explained these matters as if among Islamic teachings in the Quran there were those which were important and others that could be put aside.

"There is no emphasis put on these matters as on those about Islamic laws, the question of sex and women and others," he said.

Dr Mahathir said today Muslims no longer led in the field of knowledge and many other abilities and were weak and unable to protect themselves.

"Today, Muslims are split to the point of warring among themselves and having the enemies of Islam fight other Muslims. Half of Muslims' doings in this era are no different from that of the pre-Islam Jahiliah clan," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the clearest result of an Islamic way of life were the changes that happened to the Arab Jahiliah clan.

He said from being a clan that possessed a primitive culture, killed its own children, had many wives and concubines, were obsessed with palaces and fighting each other, wallowed in adulation and possessed cruel characteristics, the Jahiliah became Muslims who were highly civilised, knowledgeable and created the world's biggest empire.

Dr Mahathir also said observing Maulidur Rasul was meaningless if the day was not used to ponder the situation of Muslims in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iran, Iraq and several Asian and African countries where Muslims were being ill-treated, killed, hurt and evicted from their territories.

"Islam teaches us to be brave when facing hardships and trouble. Not all ambitions and dreams can be realised in the blink of an eye, but efforts and resolve must be continued until there is success."

He said the present economic situation had taught Muslims the need to be calmer and act positively.

"We are grateful that the economic problems are not as bad as in other countries where there are riots, wars, natural disasters and the like. At least the difficulties we face now will make us realise the greatness of Allah and to pray to him to restore everything to normal," Dr Mahathir said.

He called on Muslims to use the celebration to increase efforts to overcome all problems. It was the responsibility of all Muslims to pray and avoid negative attitudes.

"What is more important is we use the opportunity to continue elevating our creativity to advance our religion, race and country," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister later presented prizes to this year's national-level Maulidur Rasul winners.

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