

28/04/1998

Seek new ways to overcome economic woes, Dr M urges Muslims

Farush Khan

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Muslims to seek new ways to overcome the current economic problem faced by the country.

He said if need be, they must be willing "to be thrifty, to work harder, to be more patient and moderate" in their stand.

In his Ma'al Hijrah 1419 message to mark the beginning of the Muslim calendar year tomorrow, he said: "God willing, if we are prepared to change, this Ma'al Hijrah will not just be a historical day for celebration but also more beneficial and meaningful.

"God willing, we Muslims will be able to free ourselves from the problems affecting us and to overcome all forms of oppression."

Dr Mahathir also spoke about Muslims who knew the Quranic verses and prophetic tradition of changing oneself for the better but did not pay attention to their actual meanings.

"Therefore, if our situation is not good, certainly the fault is ours as we do not act to change the situation."

He said while Muslims in the country lived peacefully and did not face problems such as famine and other catastrophes, they were still weak and easily oppressed.

"Our weaknesses are due to our culture which does not stress hard work, seeking of knowledge, moderation in life, adopting good values and other things. It is, therefore, easy for anybody to defeat and humiliate us. This leads our religion to be humiliated too."

He said if they understood the true meaning of hijrah and the Quranic verses on the changing of oneself, they would definitely adopt a culture which could make them progressive and strong.

"Actually, our ability is no less better than other people's. We have proven that if we make efforts, Insha Allah, we can achieve whatever that have been achieved by others."

Citing Prophet Muhammad's determination to spread Islamic teachings despite the unwillingness of the people of Taif to accept changes, the Prime Minister said that had the Prophet been frustrated by this, Islam might not have spread as it had.

"Although we know that God can make anything happen easily, He wants us to strive for it. Our efforts may or may not be fruitful. It is up to God to determine. But just because success is not assured, it does not mean we should not work and try to change our lot," Dr Mahathir said.

Hijrah, he said, was a great lesson for Muslims. Among the Prophet's sunnah (traditions), "the hijrah from Mecca to Medina 1,419 years ago was a significant event in the Prophet's struggle in propagating Islam, so much so that this particular date was made the beginning of the Islamic era".

Dr Mahathir said Hijrah meant moving from one place to another in anticipation of change for the better. The Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina followed the oppression he faced in the former that prevented him from propagating Islam.

(END)