

# PM: We make certain culture is not against Islam

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The following is an  
excerpt of the dialogue  
between Prime Minister  
Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir  
Mohamad and  
participants at the  
Young Malay  
Professionals Congress.

**Q: Ferry Anugerah Makmur of Anugerah Gallery Sdn Bhd: Malay culture was born long before the arrival of Islam to the Malay States. Many are now commenting that Malay culture is not Islamic. Could you comment?**

**A:** Malay culture is related to Islam, but there are also parts from Malay culture which began before the arrival of Islam. But since they are not against Islam, we can continue with their practice.

Sometimes, we mix old beliefs with Islam. For example, during the *Mandi Safar*, we usually take a leaf, inscribe a Quranic verse on it, dip the leaf in water and drink the water. The original practice was pre-Islamic and we created an Islamic element to it where there was none before.

The same with *Puja Pantai*. That too is against Islam. But *Alhamdulillah* (Praise to God) we've dropped it.

## Malay

There are also Malays who take a *dian* (candle) and go into the forest — looking for what, I don't know. All these are against Islam and need to be stopped. But there are Malay cultural elements which are not against (Islam). And that we do not need to stop.

Because of that, Malay culture is not the same as Arabic culture. In today's Malay culture, we ensure that it is not against Islamic teachings. Even Arabic culture sometimes does not demonstrate Islamic principles.

The first thing we see is how Muslims are asked to foster brotherhood. But in the Arab world, I don't know whether we can say they are fostering brotherhood or not — they are often at war with each other.

We can maintain our Malay identity without turning our backs on Islam.

**Q: (Hamzah Othman, a UiTM graduate): How can we address the problem of low participation by Malays in retail?**

**A:** Malay participation in retail is

PLEASE TURN TO  
PAGE 16, COL 3