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Mahathir-Message

PM: DANGEROUS IF THE PEOPLE ARE NOT GRATEFUL

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is concerned about the "serious implications" to the country if the people are not grateful and are taught not to be thankful for what they have received.

He said there were parties who, purposely and for specific interests, were teaching the people not to be thankful for what they enjoyed or to be grateful to those who made it possible.

They were taught not to be grateful to those who gave them the bounty because ostensibly they were entitled to the bounty which would have been given by others anyway, he said in his Aidilfitri message aired over Radio Television Malaysia tonight.

"This change in the meaning of gratitude has serious implications on our society. If we are not appreciative and grateful to those who give us something, then surely no one will want to give us anything.

"If we bite the hand that gives us gifts or assistance or saves us, who will strive, sometimes at great lengths, to give us anything?" he said.

Saying that today the Muslims in Malaysia were disunited and weak, the prime minister warned that if they were not grateful to their benefactors, there would be no mutual help among their community.

"Each one will tend to mind his own business even during emergencies. Then, surely our Muslim community will disintegrate because each one will save his own skin although the attack is on the whole community," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this kind of teaching was against Islam which required its followers to be thankful for every blessing that they received.

"Gratitude does not mean gratitude only to God but gratitude to those who give the bounty. Unfortunately, today we are taught to be thankful only to God and not to those who give the bounty," he said.

He said those who advocated this were afraid that the gratitude felt would be to their detriment.

Dr Mahathir said Hari Raya this year fell in the first month of the new millennium which brought with it serious challenges to Malaysians, and Muslims in particular, including external attacks on their culture.

He said that in their quest for power the Muslims were prepared to collaborate with enemies from outside and their cohorts from within.

He said that whereas in the past the weak would seek foreign help in a tussle for the throne, in this era there were also signs of those thirsting for power befriending the country's enemies for support.

"These foreigners give their support because they believe that those seeking their support would repay them by siding with them and allowing them to control our country," he said.

The prime minister said, however, that the Muslims could now celebrate Hari Raya with joy because the country had been saved from attacks on its currency and economy from foreign rogue traders.

Dr Mahathir said that today the country's economy and finance had recovered and the people no longer felt pressured because they could buy imported goods like before while the government servants enjoyed a bonus and salary increase.

The petty and big traders made good profits, the shopping complexes

were filled with customers, more Muslims from Malaysia could perform the umrah, especially during Ramadan, while nearly everyone could buy food and clothing for Hari Raya.

"We wait for visits from our relatives with happiness and our house is open to all. This Aidilfitri should indeed be joyous and we are thankful in the real sense of the word. And we should pray that our country continues to be peaceful and more prosperous," he said.

The prime minister also urged Muslims in Malaysia to pray for Muslims in other countries to be free from hardship, oppression and massacre and promised that Malaysia would extend assistance to them where able.

He also spoke of the ugly side of freedom if practised without restraint.

He said although Muslims in Malaysia did not receive too much freedom, they were bombarded with western propaganda through the electronic and print media which influenced them to accept the new norms of the western society.

He said the west was so taken up with democracy in its political system that what was important was no longer the country and the people but the practice of democracy which was becoming increasingly liberal.

"We see how democracy has obstructed the establishment of an effective government because no party has a sufficient majority. What's important is democracy, especially liberal democracy according to the western interpretation and not the good of the country and people.

"Let the people suffer, the economy slide and the foreign powers conquer the country as long as democracy is practised," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the west had forgotten that the democratic system was crafted because it promised to bring good to the people.

-- BERNAMA

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