

02/08/2001

Don't succumb to hate campaigns

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JOHN Teo gave an encouraging response to my letter about the Prime Minister's 20 years of service and my gratitude to the man and his family (NST, July 30).

In response to the unwelcome remarks I get when expressing positive opinions on Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, I always stick to Dale Carnegie's advice that "the best way to win an argument is to avoid it". Despite what the critics say, at the end of the day truth will prevail.

I believe in my opinion of the man but I also know that I will accept it if I am proven wrong. However, I definitely will not resort to calling people "firaun" or "dajal".

To do otherwise will simply mean I am the same as them. Imagine, some of our politicians got elected because they repeated the same nasty names everywhere they went.

To make it easier to call people names and make unfounded accusations, websites are created where they can say all sorts of things and embark on hate campaigns, and most of the time get away with it. If they are lucky a few of us will believe the contents.

Why do you think a certain website has links to all the slandering websites? To promote constructive criticism? These websites reinforce my belief in the destructive nature of this kind of politics.

To think that these websites are endorsed by a party claiming to uphold Islamic values. They are in fact showing disrespect for the religion.

Despite this, Malaysia is a democracy and everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. There can never be just one opinion in a healthy democracy. The majority via elections will determine which opinions are accepted and carried out.

Maybe more people like Teo should make their voices heard and make it clear to the "minority" that the "majority" do have a voice. Don't do things blindly but look at the facts instead.

Ask ourselves where we want to take this beloved country. Like it or not voting citizens are the ones who determine the fate of the country and its people.

If we allow ourselves to succumb to hate and blind aggressiveness - we should know the results. Even if we get a new government, will it really be a better one?

Look at the leaders who say they will serve us better. What kind of values are they promoting? They say justice but they support blind aggressiveness, street demonstrations and slanderous remarks.

It seems justice can only come from them. Do we really want this kind of leaders?

If the courts do not decide in their favour, these leaders will reject the ruling. Read the judgment by High Court judge Datuk Augustine Paul in the trial of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and you will see what I mean.

None of the defence lawyers protested formally that it was a lopsided judgment. This means they knew the judge had decided fairly. But they never encouraged their supporters to read the judgment and understand it.

Instead, they turned the despair of defeat into hate for one man, hoping that they could draw more supporters.

The case will probably continue in appeal, but the point is, look at what these people are telling us. Look at their actions. Are they worthy to be called leaders?

Islam promotes peace and justice but these leaders use slander and call other people not in their camp hideous names, so that the hate will be more intense as the next election approaches.

The fact that this approach divides the Muslims is not important as long as they draw more people to their cause.

All of us can see this if we are willing to be sincere and look at the facts. These facts are everywhere, freely distributed and accessible. We can then evaluate both sides and draw our own conclusion on what kind of government we wish to "lend" the reins of power to in the next general election.

Like Teo said, some people question my intelligence for saying positive things about the Prime Minister. I take it in stride because my children will probably live longer than I and I want them to realise the fruits of Vision 2020.

I think it is worth the while, even if I need to lend an ear to people who themselves simply refuse to listen.