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PM: Return to true Islam (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on Muslims to resolve to return to the true teachings of Islam by strengthening their relationships with fellow Muslims.

He said Muslims should do this when going to mosques; greeting each other; forgiving one another; and visiting relatives and friends both near and far.

Dr Mahathir added that they should also discuss Islamic teachings with one another so that they could live together as Muslims who did not only place importance on fardhu ain (compulsory practices for individuals) but also contribute to the community through fardhu kifayah (obligations to the community).

"After Hari Raya, we Muslims must change our culture to truly reflect Muslim culture, that is by reducing emphasis on the form of Islam but focus on the content of Islamic teachings that places importance on efforts to improve our lives in this world and the next," Dr Mahathir said in his Hari Raya message aired over RTM, TV3 and Astro tonight.

He said this meant that Muslims must strive to acquire all knowledge that could strengthen and increase their resilience. "Let no one obstruct our children from acquiring the knowledge that can free us from depending on others, on our enemies for our needs," he said.

He said Muslims in Malaysia, in other Islamic countries and also in non-Islamic countries must acquire knowledge and skills in order to compete successfully with non-Muslims.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims must become more determined, even more than non-Muslims who are developed, to move at the same pace as them.

"Surely if we do not keep pace with them, the gap will grow bigger over time. Remember today how easily we are pressured, subjugated and played out by them. If we in future are left far behind, our fate will be worse than now," he said.

The Prime Minister said Muslims must defend the honour of Islam and Muslims.

"We can pray and ask God to save us, but we know that God does not tell us to ask for things without striving for them ourselves."

Dr Mahathir said Muslims were also saddened by the death of Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, the 11th Yang di-Pertuan Agong, who was close to the people.

On behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, he extended condolences to the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, the Selangor royal house and the former Permaisuri Agong.

"The Government and people are happy on the appointment of Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail as the 12th Yang di-Pertuan Agong," Dr Mahathir said.

He said Malaysia was a country of various races, religions, cultures and languages. And although Malays, as the majority race, could wrest all power for themselves, as Muslims, they were not greedy.

"We are not only willing to share power with the other races but also wish to show that Muslims are generous and fair, do not oppress minorities and do not wish to be enemies with anyone," Dr Mahathir said.

He said as such, visits by non-Muslims to Malay homes should be sincerely welcomed and Muslims would not lose out by being on good terms with non-Muslims. This would ensure harmonious relations in the country.

Dr Mahathir said Hari Raya provided an opportunity to Muslims to show the goodness of Islam to all, and to dispel allegations of certain quarters that taint Islam and Muslims.

"We can show what Islam really is and the character of Muslims through the true teachings of Islam," he said.

The Prime Minister also called on the people to remember those who contributed to their safety by ensuring peace and security.

"Our security personnel are dedicated and efficient, acting professionally and are aware of their responsibilities.

"To the security forces and other Government officers and staff, the Government and people say thank you very much."

"To them, Muslims in Malaysia and Malaysian Muslims wherever they may be, I as Prime Minister and a Muslim, and my family wish you Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri," Dr Mahathir said.

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