

Avoid spiritual void, King tells Muslims

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KUALA LUMPUR: The King has urged Muslims not to neglect spiritual development, as those without direction and principles will easily fall prey to deviant beliefs.

Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Tuanku Putra Jamalullail said Muslims must be cautious in preventing a spiritual void, which had happened to many

people, especially in the more advanced countries.

"They are prone to evil-doings and immoral acts that will give rise to social problems," he said when launching the national-level Maulidur Rasul celebrations at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil here yesterday.

Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin advised Muslims to enhance

the strength of the *ummah* and acquire expertise in the various fields of economy, technology and military so that they would be able to face competition and be vocal on the international front in defence of oppressed Muslims.

"Among the teachings of Islam upheld by the Prophet was the emphasis in striking a balance between worldly

advancement and the hereafter through physical and spiritual development," he said.

"Spiritual development is very important to clean the soul and mind of all ills that can lead to evil and destruction."

The King said that negative attributes such as self-importance, arrogance, obstinacy, envy and complacency would

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not only create problems to the person concerned but also to the rest of society, stifling its progress and retarding national development.

Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin said Muslims should be grateful that development in Malaysia was in tandem with the requirements of Islam.

"Apart from physical development, the Government has also focused on the development of Islam," he said.

He urged Muslims to cherish and emulate the noble life of Prophet Muhammad by loving peace and unity.

In his message in the Maulidur Rasul souvenir programme, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged Muslims in Malaysia to make efforts to restore Islamic excellence and develop themselves to be on par with or be better than other communities.

He said they should also adhere to the true teachings of Islam.

The religion propagated by Prophet Muhammad had produced a strong and excellent community who built Islam's greatest empire stretching from China in the East to Spain in the West, he said.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims succeeded in doing this because they held fast to the true teachings of the religion, possessed great fighting spirit, were determined in the pursuit of knowledge and worked hard to develop themselves, the community, religion and country.

"Unfortunately, this excellence could not be sustained. The emphasis on religious matters and rejection of other fields not related to religion had caused Muslims to be left behind in various aspects."

Dr Mahathir said Muslims should not waste time debating the question of who among them were more Islamic.

He said they should also refrain from labelling fellow Muslims as infidels as this would only divide and weaken the Muslim community.