

27/09/2002

Check moral decadence among Malaysian youth

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THE current state of morality of the Malaysian youth is cause for grave concern. If previously, subjects like pre-marital sex, co-habitation out of wedlock, homosexuality and promiscuity were subjects that were taboo and rarely spoken of in public, much less matters of common practice, nowadays it seems such things are quickly becoming the norm.

I find it most disturbing that, among other things, young men and women talk of consensual pre-marital sex and living together without so much as an eyebrow raised or even a hint of shame.

What has happened to our value system? What has happened to things like tradition, honour and sanctity of marriage? Have we forsaken all our values in favour of lifestyles clearly of foreign origin, in the name of progress and modernity?

Most of us who place importance on values, culture and tradition are by no means pruders. We are all for a healthy and positive attitude towards sex, sexuality and the human body.

We are not religious zealots and we certainly do not advocate segregation of the sexes or locking women up in the name of chastity.

Yet it must be acknowledged that a line has to be drawn somewhere. There has to be a limit to this cultural erosion that we see happening before us. At some point, it is imperative that we ask ourselves how much deeper into this hedonistic whirlpool will we let our youth sink before we say enough is enough.

It must be remembered that how we mould our youth today will determine the shape of our nation tomorrow. We need only to look at certain developed nations in Asia to see the grave repercussions of forsaking our values as we become increasingly more affluent and prosperous.

In these countries, which were once upon a time rich in tradition, culture and values of their own, it can be clearly observed that large segments of society have taken to blindly aping the West to a point where they are often labelled more Western than the West.

Such is not the case with Malaysia yet. It is heartening to note that when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad unveiled our blueprint towards achieving the status of a developed nation, Vision 2020 makes provisions for the formation and preservation of a wholesome society.

It must be our aim, as we strive for physical and material development, to ensure that we inculcate into our society the importance of cultural values and traditions. The question is, where do we begin to instil these values?

Clearly, education begins at home. Parents must be firm in imparting these values and they must be uncompromising in teaching their children what is right and wrong. There is no room for fear of being regarded "un-cool"; or not "trendy"; because you refuse to accept behaviour that is clearly immoral.

Malaysians, regardless of race and religion, must see to it that they inculcate in their young the right attitudes and values. All of the main religions and cultures in Malaysia propagate good moral values such as the importance of family and the sanctity of marriage and renounce such immoral activities as pre-marital and illicit sex and promiscuity. We must instil these values in our children.

Say what you may about these Asian values; one thing is obvious for all to see. These values have kept our society whole and have seen us through

to where we are today. If we have been lulled by our own success, perhaps it's time we are awakened to the reality that if we do not do something fast, the values that we hold dearly will soon become a thing of the past.

In its place will be a society we can barely recognise as our own. We must start now to ensure that our society does not continue to succumb to moral decadence, and that the Malaysian society of the future is one we