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Dr Mahathir: Follow simple teachings of Islam

Ainon Mohd; Koh Lay Chin

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Muslims should adhere to the simple teachings of Islam and not spend too much time on polemics and different interpretations of Islam, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

The Prime Minister said such unnecessary diversions would only serve to disunite the ummah.

"We will not go wrong if we stick to the clear and uncomplicated teachings of Islam. This will make us more united and we can then become good and successful Muslims.

"There are some verses in the Quran which can be understood easily even by those who do not have an in-depth knowledge of the religion," he said at a buka puasa organised by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Also present were Dr Mahathir's wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Abdullah's wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood, several Cabinet Ministers, MPs and State Executive Councillors.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims were not united as they did not have the power or strength to defend themselves against their enemies and could only accept situations as they were.

"That is why we should remember that such a predicament is not only caused by the enemies of Islam, but because the Muslims themselves are not united, do not strive to strengthen the country and do not defend their pride," he said.

He said Muslims were weak because they did not follow the teachings of Islam which required them to be united and prepared to defend themselves.

Dr Mahathir hoped Umno members would always remember that while they could have political enemies, this was not because the latter were non-Muslims or "less Islamic".

"We are only adversaries in politics. It is due to a difference of opinion and not due to a difference in the fundamentals of Islam.

"Differences of opinions are everywhere ... let alone here where there are 11 million Muslims."

He said that was why it was much easier for Muslims in Malaysia to close ranks and lessen the feelings of hatred within the ummah.

Dr Mahathir reminded Muslims to be thankful for being able to celebrate Ramadan in peace and harmony unlike those in some countries like Palestine who were suffering.

"We find that some cannot fast like us or are in the midst of war and cannot perform their religious duties... Every year when we finish fasting, we get to celebrate Raya in a cheerful manner. That is our good fortune," he said.