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Mahathir-Mind

MALAYS MUST BE OPEN-MINDED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR SHORTCOMINGS, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the Malay Muslim community should make it a point to be open-minded to identify and acknowledge their shortcomings.

He said that the Malay Muslim community should also determine what needed to be changed and practised to benefit from their open-mindedness.

"The approach and capability to make an assessment on what is good or bad should be possessed by the Malay Muslims," he said in his keynote address at the Conference on Issues and Process of Mind-Opening of the Malay Muslims organised by the Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka (DBP) here.

Dr Mahathir said that in making a self-appraisal, they should not be embarrassed over their shortcomings or to be too proud to do so.

He said that the Malay Muslim community, on identifying their weaknesses, should also not be embarrassed to adopt and practise values found in others even though they do not care much for that community or race.

The prime minister said that open-mindedness among the Malay Muslim community should lead to receptiveness to what was obvious and the truth.

"What is obvious and the truth now is the insignificance of the Malay Muslims and their incompetence. What is obvious and the truth is that they, in their own country, have to depend on other races to build up the country's prosperity, and various affairs of the community are planned and implemented by other races," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that in terms of international relations, what was obvious and the truth was that the Malay Muslims could not build up a country that could provide help and assistance to save those who were oppressed and downtrodden especially the Muslims.

There were many other weaknesses of the Malay Muslims in dealing with international issues, he said.

He said that open-mindedness was an attribute which should be possessed by the Malay Muslims.

"The obvious and the truth should be acknowledged even though it is painful and the obvious and the truth should lead to open-mindedness and eventually changes embraced should bring about remarkable results but without eroding the identity of the race," he said.

The prime minister said that the Malay mind was closely linked with the Muslim mind as the Malays cannot be separated from Islam.

However, he said, the influence over the Malay Muslims was not religion alone because the Malay Muslims have their own culture, a system of values not based on Islam.

Dr Mahathir said that the Malays always had a tendency to take the easy way out, to the extent that they have to give up all that they had.

"When promised by the Chinese merchants a high and regular tax collection, the Malay rulers provided the Chinese merchants monopoly on tax and sale of opium.

"Then came the British with a promise that by listening to their advice, the Malay states will be better administered and the Malay rulers will enjoy regular pension payments and untold luxuries.

"With this promise, the colonists were given full powers to rule as they like and life was much easier but the states had to be given up," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that such an attitude still prevail to the extent that

some of them were prepared to sell off business facilities obtained from the government instead of using them for their own benefit.

He said that the minds of the Malay Muslims had actually opened up but most of things which had entered the opened minds were not constructive.

For instance, he said, the fundamental of Islam was very simple but there were people who were bent on imposing all sorts of conditions in accepting a person who is already a Muslim as a Muslim.

Instead, he said, if their open-mindedness allows the Malay Muslims to accept Islam as a religion which takes into account the constantly changing situation, the Muslims would never be backward.

"Even through the understanding of Fardu Ain and Fardu Kifayah as well as sunat and wajib alone, the opened minds could adapt Islam to suit the times," he said.

Fardu Ain refers to compulsory rituals and Fardu Kifayah refers to religious obligations while sunat refers to non-compulsory but commendable obligations and wajib the compulsory obligations.

Dr Mahathir said that many religious obligations had been deemed as compulsory by them and this hinders the mastery of knowledge and skills as well as essential tasks undertaken for the welfare and well-being of Muslims.

He said that open-mindedness should lead to the appreciation of those studying science and technology, enriching the Muslim community as well as inventing and producing modern weapons which could save the Muslims.

The prime minister said that the closed minds could be due to certain factors, among them the concern of those with religious education that the faith of Muslims would become weak or that their influence would be eroded if other knowledge were acquired.

They could also feel that if Muslims were too liberal and logical in their thinking, their religious belief would become weak, he said.

"This is the situation in the present Malay Muslim community. Influenced by the teachings of certain parties, they were incapable of thinking and assessing the situation around them whereas the situation around them has changed radically," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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