

07 MAY 2002

Mahathir-Knowledge

QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE IMPORTANT FOR MUSLIM WELL-BEING, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Muslims of the importance of knowledge and skills, saying the acquisition of knowledge that contributes to the well-being of the ummah is a primary obligation.

The prime minister said the quest for knowledge was the first step towards the fulfilment of the Muslim injunction to be charitable, and to endow the wealth earned for the well-being of the Muslims and their need for institutions and facilities to perform their ritual and non-ritual obligations as Muslims.

"With skills we can enrich ourselves and enrich our society. We can produce things and invent things, trade and manufacture," he said in his keynote address at the Seventh Conference of the Ministers of Endowment and Islamic Affairs here.

Dr Mahathir reminded Muslims that they were craftsmen and thinkers but for a long time they had stopped improving their production or their thinking.

They kept on labouriously producing things by hand one by one, which could not supply the needs of the six billion plus people in the world, he said.

He noted that because Muslims did not know how to mass produce goods to meet the demand of a mass market, they became poor and consequently were not able to give alms and to endow towards the Muslim community.

Dr Mahathir said: "We have not made use of what Allah has endowed on us with the brains and the brawn and it would seem that we are ungrateful for what He has showered on us.

"On every occasion we pray for Allah's help but Allah will not help us because we have not help ourselves."

The prime minister said if today few Muslims could practise charity and they were often so oppressed and harrassed by their enemies that they could not even perform the solat, it was because the Muslims were poor in knowledge and skills, were unable to enrich their countries and strengthen them against aggression by their enemies.

"It is shameful and unIslamic that all we Muslims can do when the Isrealis massacred the Palestians in Jenin and elsewhere is to appeal to others for pity and help," he said, noting it was clear that Muslims had not been doing anything to change their own helplessness.

Dr Mahathir said said Muslims had themselves to blame if they could not expect charity from fellow Muslims who were equally poor and oppressed.

"If we want to fulfill the Islamic injunction that we be charitable then we must use our brains and brawn among us and to provide the amenities for the performance of what is obligatory for us as Muslims," he said.

Dr Mahathir said while mosques should be endowed by the rich after they had paid their tithe and given alms to the poor, Muslims should also endow institutions of learning, research and development which could contribute to a better life for them and their capacity to defend themselves.

-- BERNAMA

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