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Mahathir-Quran

MUSLIM DISUNITY THE RESULT OF VARIED INTERPRETATIONS OF QURAN, SAYS PM

SHAH ALAM, July 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the disunity among Muslims now is not because of the true teachings of Islam but the result of the varied and contradicting interpretations of the Quran and the Hadith by scholars.

"There is nothing wrong with the Quran. But the interpreters, who are only human, even though learned with in-depth knowledge of Islam, may still make inaccurate interpretations," he said when launching the Mushaf Malaysia Taba'ah' ain At-takwa Quran (collection series) at the Islamic Arts Complex here.

Dr Mahathir said that these arrogant interpreters, who claimed that only they were knowledgeable in Islam and the interpretation of the Quran while the teachings of others were incorrect and that they should never be criticised, had frequently been the cause of Muslims being confused, misled and divided.

"They have a tendency to cite verses of the Quran at every whim whereas Allah s.w.t forbid such action in the Quran," he said.

Dr Mahathir said: "What have been disseminated to us are the comprehension of those who have mastered the language of the Quran and the translation of their understanding into our own language."

"In the event that their understanding or translation is inaccurate, then our understanding of the teachings of Islam will be incorrect," he said.

As such, the prime minister said, the Muslim community would always clash among themselves because of the differing understanding, interpretation and translation by those disseminating the teachings of Islam.

He said that if those interpreting the Quran cannot be criticised and everything disseminated by them were to be fully accepted without any referrals, "then the likelihood of us being misled is very great."

That was why, he said, there were people claiming to be Muslims but their Islamic principles had been doubted by other Muslims.

Dr Mahathir said that since there could be varying interpretations of the verses of the Quran by the scholars, "we may be guided by incorrect reference as we're referring to interpretations instead of the actual Quran".

"What is obvious is that the individuals make their own interpretation. Even though learned, they need not necessarily be correct and accurate," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that if the Quran were to serve as reference, its interpretation must be carried out by a group of Islamic scholars who have no other interest but that of the Muslims and Islam.

"And they should not be so arrogant, regarding themselves as the descendants of the Prophet, with no weaknesses or shortcomings like other human beings.

"They always claimed to be the descendants of the Prophet but lacked the characteristics of true ulamas," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that there would always be objections against any views different from the traditional interpretation, as though it was an attempt to alter the Quran.

He said that there could never be any alterations to the Quran as the holy book contained Allah's revelations.

Any alterations needed to be made would be to the interpretation of the Quran, in line with the changing times, he said.

The prime minister cited defence equipment required during the time of the Prophet and the present time.

He said that the call in Islam for Muslims to be prepared to defend themselves had not changed and the difference in interpretation would only be in terms of the defence equipment required.

Dr Mahathir said that those who always condemn what they perceive as non-traditional interpretation of the teachings of Islam were those who frequently come up with new interpretations, contrary to the established interpretation.

He said that it would be considered "new interpretation and different from the traditional and original interpretation" when they stated that God resorts to profanity and is the greatest thug as well as the claim that a person is Muslim only if he joins a certain political party.

"The question is, why have they come up with a new interpretation not based in any way on the Quran whereas the interpretation based on the crux of the Quran is alleged to have been a rejection of the teachings of the Quran," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that if their mistakes were clear and obvious, causing disunity and failure of the ummah, their interpretation of the verses of the Quran and the Hadith needed to be studied and changed so that the unity of the Muslims could be restored.

Mushaf Al-Quran Malaysia is a project of Yayasan Restu, an organisation which adopts dakwah through the Islamic arts approach.

The manuscript is decorated with local Islamic motifs, by 50 workers skilled in Islamic arts.

At the function, Dr Mahathir was presented with a special edition of the Mushaf Al-Quran, produced by Yayasan Restu after three years.

-- BERNAMA

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