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Mahathir-Interpretations

VARIED INTERPRETATIONS ARE DIVIDING MUSLIMS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

JOHOR BAHRU, Sept 9 (Bernama) -- Varied interpretations of the teachings of Islam and at times against the Quranic verses have divided the Muslims and profited their enemies, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight.

He said these varied interpretations had not only divided Muslims according to sects and groups but also had led them to kill each other.

"It is very sad indeed to see at a time when Muslims are under attacks by their enemies, other Muslims are willing to kill fellow Muslims because of varied beliefs on the teachings of Islam.

"Naturally people who will profit from all this are the enemies of Islam. In other words, the Muslims are actually helping the enemies to achieve their objective," he said when opening the 46th National Quranic Reciters Assembly here.

Dr Mahathir said the Quranic verses could not be questioned, changed or removed but the interpretations of these verses would depend on the interpreters who were after all ordinary humans.

"Our understanding of these verses depend on the interpreters, who like all humans are not likely to make mistakes," he said.

He said the Quran had provided a comprehensive way of life for the Muslims but there were many verses which did not get attention as much as the others.

Dr Mahathir said a fatwa (religious ruling) made without study and in agreement with the view of Islamic scholars, Quran, hadith and experts in the field concerned would only confuse and of no benefit to the Muslims.

He said the view that only those with religious knowledge would be given pahala (reward) while other branches of knowledge would not had also caused Muslims to be left behind, weak, easily fooled and manipulated by others.

"Is it true that people with the knowledge that could save Islam and the Muslims will not get the same reward as those possessing religious knowledge?" he said.

He said what would happen to the Muslims if none among them knew and capable of providing safety to fellow Muslims and the religion of Islam.

"If giving water to a thirsty dog is rewarded (in Islam), certainly people who save other Muslims and Islam are also rewarded," said Dr Mahathir.

He said some Quranic verses were given priority while others were neglected, resulting in Muslims to benefit only half of what the holy Quran had to give.

Dr Mahathir said sections or verses of the Quran which mentioned of justice were not accorded the same level of importance as those dealing in the process of justice as required by Islam.

"The Quran stresses that when sentencing, sentence with just. There is no mention in the Quran that justice is not important or that the process and procedure are more important," he said.

The Prime Minister also said there were many things in this present time which were not there 1400 years ago.

Dr Mahathir said at present scientific means could be used to determine who committed the offence such as through the DNA test.

He said it would not be fair to accuse a rape victim of committing a crime of giving birth to a baby out of wedlock when the offender was the

rapist and father to the child.

He said these were questions which Islamic scholars should look into as it would influence the way Muslims would lead their lives, productive or otherwise.

-- BERNAMA

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