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Mahathir-Interpretation

TUN DR MAHATHIR SUGGESTS `IJTIHAD' TO AVOID CONFUSION

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 30 (Bernama) -- Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today suggested that an `ijtihad' or thorough study be carried out

on the conflicting interpretations which lead to confusion on Islam.

He said the proposed `ijtihad' must involve all groups including experts on religion and other fields to study the conflicting interpretations in detail.

"The involvement of experts in other fields apart from religion is necessary because knowledge has progressed rapidly. We cannot reject knowledge as this may bring negative effects to the Muslims and the religion," he said.

He said this in his speech at the Special Convocation of Universiti

Malaya, here today. At the convocation, he was conferred the honorary

Doctor of Islamic Thought (DIslamTh) by UM Chancellor Sultan Azlan Shah.

Also present at the ceremony were UM Pro-Chancellor Raja Dr Nazrin Shah

Ibni Sultan Azlan Shah and Dr Mahathir's wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali.

"Interpretations are made based on the assessment and understanding of ordinary humans, it is not necessarily the same with religion. Thus, studying and re-interpreting the conflicting interpretations which are detrimental to the followers, does not mean rejecting the religion or questioning the faith. Our intellect can assist in making the interpretation," Dr Mahathir said.

In addition, he said, the divergent interpretations could also prevent the Muslims from enjoying God's blessings and could possibly lead to division and disasters.

"The foundation and fundamentals of Islam such as belief in Allah and that the Prophet Muhammad was His messenger, the tenets of Islam, the Al Quran and Hadith certainly cannot be disputed, but as interpretations on the issue over the contents of the Al-Quran and Hadith are exposed to the inadequacies of the interpreter, there is a possibility that Muslims

are
not benefiting from their religion," he said.

"Not using the intellect to study and endorse the interpretations made by ordinary humans, no matter how religious he may be, would mean rejecting the blessings of Allah S.W.T for the benefit of human beings in the present world and the hereafter," he said.

He said Islam would not be associated with failure and terrorism if Islamic teachings were interpreted accurately and taught to the Muslim community correctly.

The conferment of the highest degree was the first to be given to a former leader of an Islamic country by the university in recognition of Dr Mahathir's contributions and ideas towards economic development, administration, education and Islamic politics in Malaysia and at the international level.

Earlier, UM Vice-Chancellor Datuk Prof Dr Hashim Yaakob delivered a 16-page speech which, among others, highlighted significant events throughout Dr Mahathir's 22-year stint as the premier.

When met after the convocation, he said the first conferment in the field of Islamic thoughts was made based on the fact that Dr Mahathir had the correct philosophy on Islam in developing the country.

Dr Mahathir is also expected to be conferred an honorary doctorate from Universiti Padjajaran (Unpad), a leading university in Bandung, Indonesia on Friday.

Since he retired as Prime Minister on Oct 31 last year, Dr Mahathir had received two honorary degrees from local universities. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) conferred the honorary doctorate in Management and Engineering while the International Islamic University conferred the honorary Doctor of letters on the former Prime Minister.

-- BERNAMA

JUR NER AHH AO