

Anwar must forgive and work towards a better M'sia
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Over a century ago, standing up against the White apartheid regime in South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi said, "They may torture my body, break my bones, and even kill me. Then they will have my dead body, but not my obedience."

That was Gandhi who was one of the greatest icons for freedom in recent history.

Right here in our country, on the eve of his Sodomy II verdict on 9 January 2012, convinced of being convicted and sent to jail at the age of 64, Anwar Ibrahim has this to say to the Malaysian people. "They can put me in a cage and chain me to the ground but they can never imprison my soul and my spirit".

The day after the verdict to acquit him of the sodomy charge, in India to meet with Rajmohan Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Anwar said he is "prepared to forgive" those who have caused his suffering.

On his return after his meeting with Rajmohan Gandhi, in front of a crowd he recalled Gandhi's word, "the world has enough for the needs of all but not enough for the greed of a few".

While there may be some similarities in those statements between Gandhi and Anwar, it would be great if Anwar takes Mahatma Gandhi to be his example in moving the nation forward, peacefully without any anger, violence and bloodshed.

Anwar may be magnanimous to forgive those who have plotted to topple him by shameful and humiliating means but it is the way forward, putting the wrongful and painful past behind and together build a better future for all regardless of our differences.

If we act with anger towards our adversaries and seek vengeance, there can be no real and effective nation building.

Of late the Pakatan Rakyat seem to have closed ranks and have come solidly behind Anwar, recognising him as the only candidate for the premiership if it wins the elections.

Anwar has indicated he is willing to move forward towards the formation of a more democratic two-party system for the long term benefit of the people.

The biggest question is whether his rivals are ready to apologise for persecuting him and accept him and his opposition pact as legitimate and equal partners in administering the country.

From past experience we know that Unmo-BN will never accept defeat and will go all out to bring down Anwar and the PR and if possible wipe out any form of opposition to their rule. Anwar could have won the battle but not the war as much more obstacles could be well crop up to cripple him and PR.

Recently at the Royal Selangor Club, the refusal by Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak to answer whether he will facilitate the smooth transfer of power in the event the Opposition wins the 13GE, does not augur well for democracy and a two-party system in the country.

If only he had answered in the affirmative, which he should have as the PM, he would have gained the much needed support and admiration of many fence sitters.

By now Anwar must be well aware that his acquittal was not because of an independent judiciary, a reformed Umno-BN government or the repentance of his enemies.

It is basically due to the massive support of the people who are clamouring for change. They want an end to the rot there is going on for over five decades; an end to the rampant corruption, blatant abuse of power, oppression and tyranny.

It is the pressure of the people or People Powe, that stopped those in the corridors power from sending him to jail. The last thing they want is to make a martyr out of Anwar and lose the elections.

If only Prime Minister Najib can reconcile with Anwar and work together towards greater democratisation and a two-party system, he will be able to get back the support of a large section of the people.

Although it is that simple but it is also the most difficult for a party like Umno-BN which has been ruling interruptedly for five decades without a significant opposition until 2008.

If Najib has the courage to brush Umno hardliners aside and press forward with his reform agenda, he may lose power but he can walk tall that he has tried to do the right thing for the country and the future generations.

Failure or success is not the issue but doing the right thing is all that matters and the only right thing at this time is to facilitate the peaceful evolution of a two-party system of governance.

The recent verdict of Sodomy II has catapulted Anwar as the only leader in PR eligible to become the PM. The support for Anwar and PR is tremendous and is on the rise each day with every blunder that the ruling party makes.

The BN should not write off the huge crowds that take pains to turn up at his ceramahs as mere curious onlookers. In fact they are genuine supporters who want change which they increasingly believe only Anwar can bring about.

Without their knowledge, Umno-BN, is pushing up the popularity of Anwar thereby making him appear as the only one eligible for the post of prime minister.

Meanwhile Anwar and his coalition should not be carried away with the large turnouts at their rallies. They should not take the people's support for granted but go all out to prove that they can rule the country effectively and fairly to fulfil all their promises.

They should gain power by their merits not the demerits of their opponent.

The people have risen to help free Anwar in his sodomy case. He must value their sacrifice and must remember the pledge he made on the eve of his Sodomy II verdict, "I make this solemn promise to you that I will not rest until we make right the wrongs committed by this corrupt government and bring about a just and equitable nation. I will remain with you in heart and soul and together we will build a new Malaysia".

These are very powerful words that ensued at a very emotional time in his life, at the fearful thought of going to jail for life.

We are confident he will honour them when he is up and high again, in keeping with the principles of Mahatma Gandhi, whom he has quoted several times of late and looked up to for guidance.