

Strengthen own faith, not bar others, says PAS

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The clampdown on the use of the word 'Allah' by non-Muslims, leading to the raid on the Bible Society of Malaysia (BSM) yesterday is a political matter, instead of one meant to protect the Muslim faith said PAS.

Party vice-president Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man said this is because if the matter was truly about faith, then more would have been done to strengthen the Islamic faith, rather than clamping down on others.

The respected scholar added that if it was truly about faith, the ban on the use of the word 'Allah' by non-Muslims would apply nationwide, and not be differentiated between the peninsula and Sabah and Sarawak.

"The main question here is whether the faith of Muslims in this country is so weak that the use of several terms (by non-Muslims) could lead to apostasy...

"It is impossible for the government to stop the use of (Islamic terms), especially with the new media. Anyone can write, disseminate and propagate.

"The more pressing question is, what is the government doing to strengthen the faith of Muslims. For example, why is this not a compulsory subject in school from kindergarten to university?" he asked.

Meanwhile, PAS' Parit Buntar MP Mujahid Yusuf Rawa (below) said that yesterday's raid and seizure of 321 Bahasa Malaysia Bibles "goes against Allah's will".

Citing Quranic verses, he said Islam brings prosperity for all and guarantees the rights of adherents of other faiths, including the right to their own holy books.

"Seizing the holy book of another faith, even if it has to do with the ban on the use of the word 'Allah' (by non-Muslims) must be done carefully as it taints Allah's promise that Islam will bring good to all...

"Compulsion in religion does not only mean forcing physically. Any sort of force goes against Allah's teachings," he said, citing the Yunus chapter of Quran which states that only Allah can determine one's faith.

Interfaith dialogue

At the same time, Mujahid, who is also part of Putrajaya's National Unity Consultative Council, called on the Church and the Christian Council of Malaysia (CCM) to make a strong statement that it has no "hidden agenda" of "christianising" Malaysia as claimed by critics.

Separately, PKR information chief Muhammad Nur Manuty (left) has offered PKR's services in brokering an interfaith dialogue to ensure there is no religious tensions.

He said that all parties can lay down their anxieties on the same table and all can then work towards a solution.

"We should not be trapped by the devious agenda to ruin our peace and tolerance. Malaysia is a multi-religious country and we have always been harmonious, respectful and know how to give and take," he said.

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