

PAS and the politics of hudud

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ADUN SPEAKS PAS' greed, opportunism, chauvinism and bigotry will be solely responsible for the break-up of the Pakatan Rakyat; a coalition that sprang up to speak against the injustices of the Barisan Nasional government.

In whatever ways the PAS' obscurantists support hudud, the fact remains that the law is not suitable for Malaysia with its multi-racial and multi-religious population. It goes without saying that it is ultra vires the federal constitution, the highest law of the land.

Even though both DAP and PKR have always opposed hudud, their association with PAS for the last seven years or so have some political costs.

The DAP will never trust and respect PAS in the future, although it must be admitted there are some decent individuals in the party, but without a voice. They are defenceless when it comes to hudud.

There are some in the DAP and PKR who think that once the "moderate" faction takes over PAS in the coming muktamar, things will be back to normal. Nothing can be further from truth.

PAS under the leadership of president Abdul Hadi Awang is opportunistic and racist. The need to remain in power, to ward off the challenges of the moderate and rational minds, the need to hide its development failure in Kelantan are some of the reasons for the implementation of hudud.

However, this is not to deny that PAS has come in full-circle, suddenly it has found new bond and friendship with Umno. Without Umno's support for hudud, PAS would not have gone to the extent of presenting the syariah law proposal in the Kelantan state assembly. Well, organisations and political parties always mistakes this: political opportunism means, among other things, sleeping with "devil", in this case Umno.

Sleeping with the devil

For as long as Tok Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat was alive, he had kept the flame of dignity and independence of PAS burning bright. But alas, with him gone, Hadi has betrayed the principles of Tok Guru.

The very devil, Umno, that Tok Guru kept at bay is knocking at the doors of PAS. Hadi will oblige because he thinks that the longevity of PAS' hold on Kelantan depends on its relationship with Umno purely on an ethnic/racial basis. Now we see the true racist nature of PAS. Whoever said that PAS was different from Umno and vice-versa?

In the final analysis, hudud must be seen not from the perspective of some Islamic party implementing the provisions of the syariah, but how a party like PAS wants to remain and perpetuate itself in power on the grounds of Islam or ethnicity.

In Malaysia, the categories of Islam and Malay are quite interchangeable. Thus, when PAS talks about Islam, actually it means Malay-Muslims. Despite the large number of Islamic intellectuals swelling the ranks of the party, the party still faces an intellectual/ideological crisis.

It is this lack of internal discussions and criticisms, that the party has come to be dominated by the ulama faction, expecting nothing but obedience and compliance. Where is democracy in PAS?

Yet PAS criticised DAP for not accepting the basic norms of democracy. It was argued that the DAP by opposing the implementation of hudud, has denied PAS the democratic option to decide and implement hudud.

It is obvious that PAS will argue and snatch even a straw in defence of hudud, just one aspect of the large domain of syariah (Islamic law), and which seems to have no relevance to the contemporary modern society.

Falling for Umno's trap

Both Umno and PAS are feeble manifestations of the vast political, social, economic and religious challenges of Malay-Muslims in Malaysia. Despite the difference in labels, both the parties compete for Malay votes.

It is not intellectual differences or differences of ideology that created enmity among them, but rather the competition and conflict for the Malay heartland that laid the basis for political rivalry. This would explain why PAS could put aside its principles and ideology just like that, to seek the friendship of Umno.

Umno is not stupid. They have tasted power for many years. They cannot wait to make a comeback in Kelantan.

By projecting the image that they would support hudud, Umno is indeed laying the trap it had set once before. But PAS given its sheer blindness and having forgotten certain crucial historical episodes, is about to fall in the trap set by Umno.

I think that PAS will be damned with or without hudud. A ruling party that cannot even manage a natural disaster thinks of returning to the 'caliphate' by using hudud.

PAS', from the beginning, was never keen to associate with either the DAP or PKR. But it was its own political weakness, the need to draw upon Malay support and greed for power that drove the party to engage in temporary relationship with both the parties in Pakatan.

This honeymoon is over. As a matter of fact, given DAP's and PKR's opposition, PAS' hudud has provided a convenient and strategic weapon for it to move into the orbit of Umno. How sincere is PAS about hudud? Is PAS using hudud to split the Pakatan coalition?

From an ethnic or religious perspective, PAS - despite its rhetoric and its pretensions of being god's gift to Muslims - is a weak political party without any developmental agenda.

It has failed in Kelantan and earlier in Terengganu. A party that cannot even manage and mitigate the worst effects of the recent natural disaster seems to be hypocritically inclined to promote an obscurantist law that poses a danger for the well-being of all Malaysians.

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