

YOURSAY | Bon Odori – another culture war to divide M'sians

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BusinessFirst: This is the sort of extremist behaviour, which has now found its way from the fringes to the government, that makes people wary and weary of PAS and their shenanigans.

It is bad enough they are mismanaging the states they run, and with positions in government, they are going to ruin Malaysia too.

This is what happens when people lack skills or education and you let them run the country. All they have is religious learning which some might call an education, but others have a different view of what it means to be "educated".

In Malaysia, when a fresh religious teacher can earn more than a fresh doctor, you need not guess where the priorities lie. Whatever the case, their lack of

ability and sense of proportion shows how unfit they are for government.

I think most cultural events if you go back to their origins, would have some religious underpinnings. This is because these cultural events emanated from the traditions of those cultures and in ancient times, almost all celebrations have some religious connotations.

However, many who participate in such events do this to have fun with friends and family and enjoy themselves. Religion does not even feature.

For example, take Valentine's Day. This is just a day when loved ones give gifts to each other. Is such gift-giving to be forbidden?

We have seen Christmas has become an issue too. To some, it is because the celebration is said to be based on beliefs that contradict Islam and yet many non-Christians celebrate Christmas because they view it as a time of merriment when bonuses are normally paid coinciding with many holidays.

Where do we draw the line? Is New Year on Jan 1 to be an issue because it could confuse Muslims about the Muslim New Year, like 'Timah' whiskey? Is the Lunar New Year an issue too?

So Sabahan and Sarawakian Muslims should not participate in Kemaatan and Gawai festivals as these have animalistic underpinnings?

This is the danger of PAS and their insidious attempts to divide Malaysians because this is the only way they and those indoctrinated by them in their schools, know how to make themselves relevant in the real world.

Note that Indonesia, the largest Muslim nation in the world, has managed to attract vast amounts of investments. Malaysia is falling behind. Hence, it is not Islam that is the issue; it really is the politicians in Malaysia who use religion for their own ends that is the problem.

Indeed, the problem is not Bon Odori which contributes to the nation financially and culturally. The problem really is PAS.

I Must Be Dreaming: If Minister in the Prime Minister's Department for Religious Affairs Idris Ahmad is right in his logic, then Muslims should not partake in Deepavali, Chinese New Year, Christmas and Gawai festivals.

They also cannot eat in open houses in case they get 'confused'. They cannot go overseas, especially Western nations as they are predominantly Christian.

"Bon Odori contained influences from non-Islamic religions," according to Jakim.

So does a shopping mall when it puts up decorations for non-Muslim festivals.

What about the local council that puts up lights to celebrate Deepavali?

Proarte: Hari Raya has strong Islamic elements in it, so according to the logic of our religious affairs minister from PAS, non-Muslims should avoid celebrating Raya with their Muslim friends.

Is Islam a religion of tolerance - will our minister care to elaborate?

OceanMaster: In the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam, the people there are much more pragmatic, as the younger generation of leaders takes over the running of states.

Well-educated, they are seeing the world in a much more inclusive way as opposed to the older generations who lived through strict dogmas, much of it driven by fear and hatred.

But in Malaysia, things have really gone, seemingly, backward. Muslims here are nurtured with the ideologies which the rest of the Islamic world is trying to wiggle themselves out from; a dogma that is centred around fear and hatred.

The younger educated Malays must come forward and must actively curtail these so-called religious leaders who obtained their academic qualifications from other failed states such as Pakistan.

Get rid of them and you will see positive changes coming, just like in the Middle East.

Hmmmmmmmm: This is how the freedom of Muslims is curbed. They start off by banning very small, insignificant events until one day when the Muslims finally wake up, they find that there are so many things they are not allowed to do in this country.

Dr Suresh Kumar: With RM1 billion in their purse, is this how the Department of Islamic Development (Jakim) spends its money - doing research on unproductive things?

Only the Malays can change the fate of this country before it nosedives further to a point of no return. What a waste of money and human resources.

YellowGecko9040: After 30 years of having this cultural activity on a regular basis (bar the last few years due to Covid), suddenly Jakim decided to conduct research (funded by taxpayers' money) and found it to be contradicting the

teachings of the main religion of the country.

I wonder if the research is going to be published in some respectable journal, or will it get published in one of the many 'paid' journals similar to our great established universities with their many 'professors and associate professors'?

It is so depressing to see our beloved country sink even lower in our dealings with one of our most important trade partners since the 1980s. I guess no more 'Look East' policy. Let's all be ostriches and stick our heads in the sand, similar to what our government is doing now.

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