

Heaven and hell: Nik Aziz told to repent
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Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin today advised PAS spiritual leader Nik Aziz Nik Mat to admit his mistake and repent for his remarks on who would be able to go to heaven or hell after death.

He said the National Fatwa (Edict) Muzakarah Committee had decided that Nik Aziz's statement was wrong and contrary to Islamic teachings.

The decision of the committee had to be accepted by all Muslims and could not be disputed because it was based on studies and had the consent of the Conference of Rulers, he said.

Muhyiddin, who is Umno deputy president, spoke to reporters after a visit to Bukit Kepong town and a meeting with the residents.

Two days ago, Nik Aziz was reported as saying that Muslims who separated "iman" (faith) from Islam would not go to heaven, and that the two were inseparable, just like the body and soul, and that they must be together or one.

"The statement (by Nik Aziz) is contrary to not only the fatwa (edict) but also Islamic laws and principles. By right, when one has committed a mistake, one must admit one's mistake, repent and seek forgiveness from Allah (God)," Muhyiddin said.

Council ticks off PAS leader

Chairman of the National Fatwa Muzakarah Committee Prof Abdul Shukor Husin said in a statement yesterday the committee was of the opinion that whoever taught or preached such ideology was deviating from the actual Islamic teachings.

He also said that the National Fatwa Muzakarah Committee had stipulated that only Allah had the absolute power to determine whether one would go to heaven or hell based on his or her faith and devotion.

The Conference of Rulers had given its consent to the decision at its 188th meeting in March 2001, he said.

Muhyiddin said all quarters should not mix politics with religion and added that he hoped that the issuing of such statements would cease.

He also advised Nik Aziz to give his opinions through media statements so as to avoid blaming the media later for purportedly misquoting him.

Nik Aziz prepared to meet council

Meanwhile, Nik Aziz said he was prepared to meet the council members and face action if his statement was deemed wrong.

"I can explain my statement to avoid confusion," he told reporters at his office in Kota Darulnaim, Kota Bharu.

The Kelantan menteri besar said the negative comments by various quarters following his reported statement in the media, were unfair.

"They should tell me where I am wrong. I am prepared to explain to them face to face," he said.

He, however, admitted that he was not one who could determine "who goes to heaven or hell".

He said "only God decides to who goes to heaven or hell", but upheld his earlier statement that the Islam practised by Umno would not guarantee its supporters a place in heaven.

A controlled environment for protesters

On a proposal by the Home Ministry to amend the Police Act to allow the public to assemble at specific places without having to obtain a police permit, Muhyiddin said the move reflected the openness of the BN government in wanting to give the people the freedom to express themselves.

He said that based on current developments, the people needed a platform to state their opinions or criticism, but in a controlled environment.

"This is one way of giving them an avenue for expression because we cannot restrict opinions. Perhaps, there is some good when people are allowed to express themselves in a controlled environment.

"They will not become too emotional so as to cause chaos. I do not think there is any Malaysian who would want to see his country go to ruin. It is preferable to gather at one place and say whatever one wants to say," he said.

Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein had yesterday announced the proposed amendment of several acts including the Police Act to enable the people to assemble at specific places without having to obtain a police permit.