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# Inspired by 5 great rulers

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## MY VIEW

BY DZULKIFLI ABDUL RAZAK



**T**HE events leading to the enthronement of the 35th Sultan of Perak and indeed the event itself were historic in many ways. Apart from demonstrating the richness and uniqueness of the customs and heritage of the sultanate in general, and that of Perak in particular, it also made history.

The book launch on May 2 set the tone for the days ahead marking knowledge and wisdom as the basic foundation of the ascent to the throne. The book entitled *His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Shah - Reflections and Recollections* contained 30 essays and articles written by 28 authors whose "friendship" with the sultan has spanned decades. The authors comprised academics, literary personalities, journalists, social activists and others from within and outside the country covering an array of frank perspectives. The book added more meaning to the historical enthronement by recognising the voices of the rakyat as the pulse in bringing the sultanate closer to the aspirations of all Malaysians. After all the sultan has often said and demonstrated that the institution of the monarchy is one of the main pillars of the nation's unity and harmony. It plays a role of a bi-partisan institution that stood for the rule of justice and fairness.

"The institution of the monarchy is not an old mirror to glimpse the reflection of a wizened visage. Governance anchored by the axis of royalty is entrenched in the Federal Constitution as 19 of the 183 articles in the constitution are related to the royal institution," the sultan noted. It supports "a government based on constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy" that "has legally allocated a specific role and responsibility for the ruling monarch."

"Thus, the monarch has to be energetic, dynamic and convincing while also fulfilling his duty as a unifying presence," he further asserted. That the principle of loyalty of the rakyat based on justice will forbid the sultan to act wantonly in a manner aptly described in a Malay saying "bersultan di mata, beraja di hati". Instead the strength of any nation is very much influenced by the level of good deeds as well as the national will to fight against ill-deeds resulting in crises and uncertainties. This is a pearl of a lesson that would ensure harmony and prosperity - one that



Accessible ... Sultan Nazrin Shah meeting his subjects in Pasir Salak after visiting a royal mausoleum yesterday.

Inset: The book, *His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Shah - Reflections and Recollections*, was launched on May 2.

must not be allowed to slip away at any cost. The five major leadership personalities that Sultan Nazrin chose to cite in his royal address further illustrates the point. One of them is the well-known seventh Caliph of the Ottoman Empire, Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih (1432-1481). Though he came to power in his early 20s, he was able to rule gloriously bringing changes that shaped the direction of history supported by scholars both religious and secular, apart from the various other support that is deeply religious and balanced in its way of life.

More than a thousand years earlier was the legendary Dzul-Qarnain, or Alexander the Great (356-323BC), who was not just pious and modest but also endowed with wisdom to helm one of the largest empires of the ancient world. Similarly renowned was Salahuddin Ayubbi (1138-1193), or better known to the Western world as Saladin, being the first sultan of Egypt and Syria with a sultanate extending to include Mesopotamia, a good part of the Arabian Peninsula, and parts of north Africa. Yet on his passing way from such a rich life, left no more than a piece of gold shilling and 47 pieces of silver to his name. Last but not least, was the righteous Caliph Umar Abdul Aziz (682-720) best cited for his humility as a leader who was just and meticulous in handling the affairs of the nation. In particular in dealing with corruption and corrupt practices; in ensuring socio-economic justice; as well as exhibiting the highest level of integrity.

This is well illustrated by his action of turning off the lighting in his official

premises when undertaking a private task.

What is immediately distinctive among these personalities: they were learned and of high scholarly standing not only in what they achieved and professed but equally in their leadership qualities that far exceeded the demands of their times. They commanded the confidence of the royalty as eminent and enlightened advisers who were expected to provide honest guidance without fear or favour. This Sultan Nazrin is clear about when he concluded his inspiring address:

*Era kegemilangan sesuatu pemerintahan tercipta apabila pemimpin menghormati ulama dan menghargai ilmuwan; ulama dan ilmuwan yang berani menyuarakan yang hak dan tegas menentang yang batil. Lalu Raja mendapat nasihat tepat, dilindungi dari tersasar arah. Era kecemerlangan sesuatu pemerintahan dipengaruhi oleh khidmat tulus lagi murni para umara yang teguh imannya, kukuh prinsipnya, bersifat amanah, jujur dan ikhlas; pada setiap masa mendaulatkan undang-undang dan sama sekali tidak akan bersekutu melakukan perkara mungkar.*

The writer was privileged to be a contributor to the royal volume. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com