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2019 — SET ASIDE PREJUDICES

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In a manner of speaking, May 9 has shown us two ways of looking at Malaysia: the old and the new

AIN sent her second daughter to school orientation a few days ago. Both mother and daughter were excited. A new year, a new beginning. Plenty of possibilities and discoveries.

In the last few days, many parents were accompanying their children to schools as they enter school for the first time. Some moved from primary schools to secondary schools.

Nowadays, schools have orientation programmes to get these children ready when school re-opens on Wednesday. Many parents like Ain have high hopes that their children will do well and grow up to become decent human beings, productive and responsible.

It's no different with us. With each new year, we look forward to a brighter year, one that is fulfilling and happy. After the events that took place this year, all we want for 2019 is peace and quiet, a thriving economy and an efficient and reliable public administration.

For the bigger part of 2018, events have been somewhat tumultuous. Exciting, no doubt, but grim and frightening at times. As things go, common sense prevailed and things returned to normal. We now greet the new year with a combination of hope and trepidation.

As we all know, 2018 turned our lives upside down and triggered new possibilities never seen before. The good, the bad and the ugly were all there. As the year comes to an end, I'm sure all of us are reflecting on how the year has affected us.

The change in federal government must surely be the most talked about event for the country. No one is unaffected by it. The May 9 general election sparked widespread changes throughout every level of our society.

I hope we can all deal with these changes in a positive and rational way. It has brought turmoil to



Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad making a comeback as the eighth prime minister, signalling a new way forward for himself and the nation. FILE PIC



The future is for children like Nur Iman binti Jihad Iman (centre) who is eager to take on new challenges.

Barisan Nasional. The component parties saw leadership changes in quick succession and this has led to plenty of speculation on its direction and indeed, future.

After the departure of one of its founding components, the Malaysian Chinese Association, will the BN remain as it is, or will it disintegrate? We wait for things to unfold in the new year.

As for Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's Pakatan Harapan, the serious business of governing the country is a work in progress. It enters its eighth month as national administrator with numerous internal and external challenges.

Some would say that it is still trying to find a firm grip in Putrajaya. Inexperienced cabinet members have yet to fully shed

their "opposition" mindset. They have been given time by Dr Mahathir to improve themselves.

This has led to criticisms from some quarters, a fact that is surely not lost on the coalition. But that's Dr Mahathir — he won't reshuffle the cabinet just because so and so says so!

Politics seem to be very much in many people's minds. There wasn't a *kenduri* that went by without some political discussions. It's the same with class reunions or meetings of residential associations anywhere.

At the national level, the debates are raging. The pros and cons of the new government are being discussed every day. The blame game continues unabated. Politics has taken centre stage with fault finders having a field day.

Some of the criticisms are valid, of course. Yet others were more like potshots intended to poke fun and ridicule their political opponents.

After a while, these potshots become stale and tiring to the mind.

While freedom of expression seems to be very much alive and thriving, the fact remains that not everyone can accept a view that is different from theirs. There are bits of our society that seem eager to capitalise on these differences, especially in social, political, religious matters.

The way forward is to leave much of the old way of doing things aside. The Internet of Things will force us to change and innovate. If you stick to the old ways of doing things, you may be left behind.

We must change our mindset fast. Things are no longer the same, mind you. Things are no longer the same since May 9. So get your butt up and start cracking! Start by changing your value system.

It's not easy because we each have prejudices which have been embedded in our life for a long time. Once these prejudices are removed, then we may start seeing things differently.

Happy New Year everyone. In your own way, serve the nation well.

ahmadt51@gmail.com

Twitter: @aatpahitmanis

The writer is chairman of Yayasan Salam Malaysia