

gerak independent

Media Statement: Towards a Malay-Islam Leadership: Use of the term "Allah"

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today. However, if we consider the actions, behaviours and rhetoric of the so called Malay leaders who claim to be defenders of Islam, we would think that Islam is about to perish from God's great earth; that the usage of words such as "Allah" and other religiously-linked words by non-Muslims are so dangerous, that the world is about to face Armageddon because those of other faiths use them.

Why is this so, you may ask? The answer is actually pretty simple. This is the only way these people think they can seize the mantle of being "warriors" for the Malays - by dividing the natural multitudes of people created by Allah into an Us versus Them narrative. They need Muslims to feel superior to others, create a hatred for others, so that they become the saviour of the race and religion. Their real objective is to reap influence, power, and ultimately, positions of power and wealth, by being the authority lording above all of us.

Al Hajj 22:40 - "[They are] those who have been driven from their homes unjustly, for saying only that "Our Lord is God." And, if God did not intervene by using some people to drive out others, many monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, where God's name is much remembered, would have been destroyed. God is sure to help those who help His cause, for truly God is strong and mighty"

Allah did not make His name the exclusive domain of any particular race or religion. No one has a monopoly on God's name. But this is not so, it seems, in our community. It is this peculiarity of the Malay-Muslim world that even other Muslims around the world find bizarre. Such controversies do not exist elsewhere except in the Malay-Muslim domain.

In my opinion, it is time that the Muslim ummah and the Malay community act with total rejection of "leaders" who use religion to differentiate our Malay community from the other communities in Malaysia. They do not want Malays to think for themselves; this is crucial for those riding on the fervour of religion to ensure that the Malays follow them without question, with no critical thinking and no reasoning.

They want sole domain over religion. They want it to be according to their interpretation and conclusions. Theirs is the final say in all things religion. Also observe, that their final say will always end up putting a wall between Malay-Muslims and the rest of the world. And in addition, should any of us disagree with their say, their solution is punishment of the highest order they can bring upon those who disagree.

gerak independent

They will justify and describe themselves as the saviour of the ummah by forcing a rigid and narrow doctrine upon Muslims of this Nation. Should we allow such teachings and worldview to continue to spread, I fear it will be the death of Islam in Malaysia.

This is not a new phenomenon in the history of human civilization. During the Golden Age of Islam, all knowledge, secular and religious, exchanges and debates centred in the glorious city of Baghdad. There was no such concept of an in-betweener between Allah and the individual. But in the same period, Europe was in the Dark Ages. It's religious leaders held the key of thought in their communities through the restrictions to religious knowledge by the limited capability of the populace in Latin. All interpretations and finality of thought was the domain of the priesthood. They were the go-between and interpreters for mere mortals and the wants of God. And similarly, their final say was not to be challenged at the risk of the highest form of punishment.

Hundreds of years later, we see a flip in the destiny of these two civilizations. When Muslims stopped being inclusive, reject and banish critical thinking and the room for freedom of thought no longer exists, where has all the glory and success of Muslims gone? This is now the fate of Muslims, especially Malay-Muslims of today.

The Islamic world in general has no qualms for anyone of any religion to use the term "Allah" in the Middle East or anywhere else for that matter, but not so for our country. Why is this so? The Islamic world today is striving hard to integrate and be part of the multitudes of Nations that make up the world. But in Malaysia, voices of extremism seem louder than ever; insisting that Malay-Muslims be more and more exclusive, and differentiation and separation of Malay-Muslims from other races and religions has somehow become a priority in life!

How ironic; when Islam is a religion that practices moderation and the middle road as its central precept. Why then do the teachings of differentiating, being cynical and worrisome of others and what is out there, seem to trump the principles of accepting and having faith in the all-knowing God, not the road taken by Malay-Muslims in their daily lives?

Islam is a universal religion. It cannot be willed and be the sole possession of any race or people. A religious term originating in a language of a people does not mean a monopoly of that term by said people. The sharing of terminologies, words and even phrases are a feature of a shared civilization. And such a sharing is the hallmark of the strength of its unity of the diverse culture, race and religion in that civilization.

The recent High Court decision in affirming the usage of terms such as Allah, Baitullah, solat and others in Christian books in Bahasa Melayu-Indonesia has been made a racial issue by extremists in our midst. Allah as a term in the Bahasa Melayu Bible has been around for almost 400 years, especially in Sabah and Sarawak.

gerak independent

Islam does not teach its followers to be obsessively vain and prideful, nor for us to be cruel. The rights of Sabahans and Sarawakians to practice their religion in their way are guaranteed in the three nation agreement that made Malaysia as enshrined in MA63. The verdict of the High Court merely affirms this Agreement and finds that the seizing of the religious sermon recordings to be against the spirit and facts of our history. This is a verdict that is consistent with the philosophy of Islam as a just and universal religion.

Malaysia is for all. Allah is for all no matter where we are, or however we may believe in Him. It is not for us, mere mortals, to decide on what Allah has created to be in existence amongst us.

It is with this we must conclude that the time has come for us, Malay-Muslims, to stop being the victims of these purveyors of religion who use the fear of punishments of after-death to cow us to their bidding and false-authority. They teach us to hate others amongst our fellow humans for matters that only Allah has the final say at the end of times. Let us, with grace of Allah, be those who bring together all of us in this multi racial and multi religious Malaysia, as one people TOGETHER.

"People, We created you from male and female, and made you nations and tribes so that you may know one another. The best among you in the sight of God is the one who is most mindful of God. God is All-knowing and All-Aware." Al Hujurat 49:13

Tawfik Tun Dr Ismail

MAJU ADVISOR



gerak
independent

13 March 2021