

Real Substantive Change Can Only Be Achieved With Islam

News:

Following the presentation of the Declaration of the People, which was held by a coalition of more than 50 people in Kuala Lumpur on March 4, 2016 recently, a rally was held on Sunday, March 27, 2016. The declaration, which was headed by the ex-Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed aims to urge the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Najib to step down from his post. The individuals who were previously political rivals were willing to sit down together in order to oust their shared rival. This reminds us of the words of Lord Palmerston, the British Prime Minister in the mid-19th century, '...We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow'. This is the way Western political thinking have long threaded the minds of the politicians in this country and now it is clearly manifested through this declaration.

Comment:

Although the key objectives had been set out clearly in the declaration, the procedure for achieving this objective is still unclear. This issue continues to play in people's mind – how would the leaders of this declaration intend to achieve their stated objectives. Are the declaration and rally forms of political pressure on Najib to resign? Or do they expect change to occur via a mass revolution based on people power? What is the intended methodology? On the same issue, when the Declaration of the People was presented, Dr. Mahathir claimed that efforts initiated with the signing of this declaration is not a movement to topple the Barisan Nasional (BN) government, instead it is focused on getting rid of the leader. Yes, Najib deserves to be ousted. With all the allegations of corruption and wrongdoing, he deserves it. However, a question remains; is ousting Najib going to really solve all problems?

In this context, Malaysians should learn from the experience of the Arab Spring. The revolution was honorable, but with all the bloodshed that had occurred, this revolution resulted in only a change in the face of the leaders. Worse, these changes cause far greater problems on the people! If what is expected from the Declaration of the People is simply a change of leadership, it will be a futile effort because no real substantive systemic change will be seen. Real change can only be achieved by following the method of Rasulullah (saw). This is the only proven systemic change that involves a very smooth transition without any bloodshed. If a true change is what the leaders of the declaration intended, it has to be a total change to Islam. To ensure that this change can be achieved and to ensure that the implementation of Islam is perfect and comprehensive through the enforcement of the Khilafah state (caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood, there should be at least four conditions at the point of transition.

First: The existence of a group (*kutlah*) whose ideology is Islam in leading this change. This group should be a political organization working to establish the Khilafah as the institution of political Islam. Political activities conducted by this party must be comprehensive in providing guidance to the public by building public opinion (*ra'yul ahm*) with Islamic political thoughts resulting from the public consciousness (*wa'yul ahm*) of political Islam.

Second: This movement for change must have a clear ideological direction. The methodology in gaining power must also emulate the model of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). A clear understanding of the root of the problems faced by the Ummah must be ascertained by the movement. An understanding that this root must be replaced by Islam and that Islam is the only reference in solving life's problems must be established.

Third: Support from the community / society. Support from people is a matter of great importance. This is because the Sharia to be implemented by the Khilafah will be enforced in the midst of the people, and not limited to a group of people only. In short, the 'Khilafah project' brought about by the political party must be considered by the people to be their own project. When this happens, only then will the support from the people to the Islamic political party that leads the movement for change be able to maintain the established Khilafah from external attack or aggression from within.

Fourth: Support of the *Ahlul Quwwah*, consisting of those who are able to provide material and authoritative support for the movement of change. They can consist of groups that hold real power such as influential politicians and Commanders of the Armed Forces, or those who are not in power but still has a strong influence in the community or among those in charge of state security. Support from the people alone will not be enough without the support of the owners of real power in the country.

This is how real change can be achieved. It can only be achieved based on the methodology left to us by Rasulullah (saw). Real change can never be achieved by only changing the leaders. Neither can a stable, smooth systemic change be achieved by mass revolution or democratic means. The Declaration of the People will be a futile effort if the objectives do not steer the movement towards real change within the framework shown to us by our honorable Prophet (saw).

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