

The Young Generation – The Kingmaker in Establishing Islam

News:

The appointment of Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim as the 10th Prime Minister of Malaysia has finally ended the 5-day 'government vacancy' period after the 15th General Election (GE15). The King of Malaysia, Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, have consented to this appointment and the establishment of a unity government for Malaysia. Although no single party or coalition of parties was able to form a majority in parliament, there is little doubt that the outcome of the election hinged in a significant manner on the involvement of young voters in GE15. In GE15, automatic registration of voters for any Malaysian who has reached the age of 18 was approved, thus altering the demography of voters significantly. This has no doubt changed the country's political landscape with political parties realigning their approach in attracting voters and we can be sure that the upcoming unity government would be focusing on the needs of the young to maintain the support from this important generation.

Comment:

As far as the number of young voters of GE15 is concerned, a total of 10.6 million young voters were recorded (18-40 years old), which forms 58.5% of the 21.1 million registered voters. A significant number of constituencies are inhabited by young voters and this fact had a great influence on the approaches of contending political parties. They can be seen highlighting young candidates and eliminating veteran candidates even though the influence of these veterans can still be felt. Furthermore, the issues that are played prior to GE15 revolve around the concerns of the young such as the increase in the cost of living, unemployment, education, political stability, corruption and abuse of power.

In reality, youths not only represent the future of a particular country, they are society's main agents for change and progress. With the current political nuance being dominated by secular democratic principles, it is not difficult to see the younger generation, with their vigour, being steered towards avenues which may prove to be destructive in the future. Hence it is of utmost importance that this generation is guided towards embracing Islam in its totality to break the shackles of secularism that have locked them from steering their potential towards Islamic renaissance. The energy possessed by this generation is capable of aggressively changing societies compared to the older generation. This can be observed not only in terms of physical energy, but also in terms of spirit and intelligence. It is during our youth that we begin to search for our identity and develop thought processes that would last our lifetime. It is during this moment that if a young person is guided towards the right direction with the right thought process and the correct identity, that we will witness an explosion of potential within them. Therefore, in order to awaken Muslims and achieve *nahdhah*, the affairs of the young should be given a very serious emphasis. This is a very critical concern that we need to focus upon - ensuring the correct development of our youths so that their potential can be fully realized.

In order to produce youths who are able to navigate the turmoil of Islamic renaissance, we need to take heed on how Rasulullah (saw) interacted with this group at the beginning of his da'wah. What Rasulullah (saw) showed is a revelation for us to follow and it is enough to look at how the young generation was changed as a result of his da'wah. The majority of the early Muslims were from the younger generation - Saidina Abu Bakar embraced Islam at the age of 37, Saidina Umar al Khattab at 26 years old, Talhah Ubaidillah at 11, Mus'ab Umair at 24 and Al-Arqam Abi Arqam at 12 years old. Each of them had a strong pillar of Islamic aqidah and thoughts and maintained their imaan and commitment until the end of their lives. Similarly, when Rasulullah (saw) was in Madinah, it was the youths who defended him in his da'wah. During the Battle of Uhud, a young man, Anas Ibnu Nadhar, was willing to sacrifice himself as a shield and received 80 stab wounds to protect Rasulullah (saw). These youths are important figures in the spread of Islam and in awakening the Arab society from ignorance. Our young generation must be instilled with a comprehensive understanding of Islam and by the will of Allah (swt), with their hands, we will be blessed with the establishment of the true Islamic state, the Khilafah (Caliphate) on the method of the Prophethood.

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