

Letters

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INTEGRITY

Ethics is all about doing good

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As a developing nation, Malaysia has achieved success in many fields. From an agricultural state, it is progressing to be a fully-developed nation by 2020.

Many variables have been achieved through initiatives and policies, but in return, we have disregarded many good values and practices.

Yes, we have world-class infrastructure, but our delivery system is poor.

We have cheating taxi drivers in contrast to honest drivers in Japan. We have corrupt public officials.

We have housing developers and businessmen who are more interested in making quick profit instead of protecting consumers.

We have dishonest citizens who would do whatever it takes to get hold of 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M), which negates the noble intention of the government.

We have teachers and lecturers

who are not truthful to their profession and who do not execute their duties diligently and honestly.

We have seen givers and receivers in public and private sectors who make malpractice flourish.

We have politicians from both sides of the political divide who are concerned more about their power base than the stability and harmony of the country.

Why do these things happen? Is it because we have moved too fast too soon?

We have grown from a simple society to a materialistic culture.

Today, what is important to most of us is realising our self-actualisation at all costs, and in this pursuit, we are not able to distinguish between what we need and what we want.

Along the way, we have thrown away good norms, values and systems. What do we need to do to rectify things?

Good governance and leaders who are honest is the answer. But, this cannot be achieved without the right culture.

Integrity is a quality of excellence that is manifested in an integral manner in individuals and organisations.

Good governance entails honesty, trustworthiness, wisdom, fairness, transparency and gratitude.

This calls for integrity.

Tan Sri Dr Abdul Samad Alias, past president of the Malaysian Institute of Accountants, once said: "Integrity is really a matter of who are you when no one is around."

Integrity is a quality of excellence that is manifested in an integral manner in individuals and organisations.

Moreover, it has to be inculcated in one's self through ethics and

noble values.

In Islam, ethics is based on *akhlaq*, one's personality that is reflected in one's individual behaviour to God and human beings.

Ethics is not a numbers game. It has the concept of *amanah* (trust). It represents a psychological contract between a leader and his followers that he will try his best to guide, protect and treat fairly with justice.

Hence, it is all about doing good. From the Islamic point of view, all these are combined under the concept of *tauhid*, meaning the political, economic, social and religious aspects of a man's life form a homogenous whole, which is consistent from within, as well as integrated with the universe.

This is the vertical dimension of Islam.

If we practise *tauhid*, the implications are diverse: sincerity in our business dealings; conscious of responsibility to customers, com-

munity and the environment; geniality to humans and being fair to others.

To sum up, I would like to quote Pak Hamka (Indonesia), a verse from the Quran and a poem by Arab poet Ahmad Shauqi Bey:

"In the 1960s, while we are now able to create cities and modern concrete jungle; yet at the time the soul of its inhabitants appear to be empty and bereft of meaning." — Pak Hamka

"By the soul, and proportion and the order given to it and its enlightenment as its wickedness and its piety, successful is the one who keeps it pure and ruined is the one who corrupts it." — Quran 91:7-10

"Nations survive as long as their morality is alive, when morality is gone, they too perish." — Ahmad Shauqi Bey

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