

The Ugly Façade of Politics in Democracy

News:

The UMNO (United Malays National Organization) General Assembly, which ended on 11th June 2023, has recorded another history on the country's democratic political landscape with the presence of the Democratic Action Party (DAP) leaders at the event. DAP has for a long time been the main political enemy of UMNO and has thoughts that are diametrically opposed to it. UMNO fights for the privileges of the Malay race while DAP fights for the equality of all races even though the party is dominated by the Chinese. DAP is also seen as strongly opposed to any effort to make Malaysia an Islamic country. UMNO has long rejected any association with DAP, but after the 15th general election, when all parties failed to achieve a simple majority to form a government, everything changed.

Comment:

The sharing of power among political parties with different views occurs in almost all countries that practice democratic politics. When this happens, differences in principles and ideologies are no longer relevant. What is important is gaining and staying in power. This is pragmatism within the democratic political practice. In democracy, the criteria for ascertaining the truth of an idea or an action is the benefit that the idea/action brings. Pragmatism in democratic politics can be understood from the words of Lord Palmerson, the former British Prime Minister in the 19th century who stated; "We have no permanent friends or enemies. Only our interests remain and we must follow them." What he meant can be easily observed today. Parties that used to be enemies, have now become 'friends' and can sit at the same table, sharing power in the government. They ignore their conflicting principles through compromise in order to achieve the common benefit of power. In the pragmatic politics of democracy, the essence of truth has no value. All that exists are theatrical façade based on Machiavellianism - the goal justifies the means. If there is no real truth, then there are no consistent political action. The actions of today's political parties are driven solely by power and realization of interests. Truth has become irrelevant.

Islam teaches that true iman (belief) can only be achieved through rational thinking. By thinking rationally, we find that behind the universe, life and man, there exist The Supreme Creator, Allah (swt). Allah (swt) has revealed the Qur'an through His Messenger (saw) to provide guidance to man in all aspects of life including politics. Faith in Allah (swt), the Qur'an and His Messenger (saw) allows every Muslim to understand his relationship with Him at each moment in his life. Though this believe, man will act according to the commands and prohibitions of Allah (swt). The Shari'a of Islam is the yardstick and standard of truth; benefit as the objective of an action has no place in Islam. Consequently, by holding on to Shari'a, the thoughts and actions of man will always be consistent. In gaining power as an example, the Prophet (saw) showed us to grasp firmly to the tariqa (method) and not compromise with things that deviate from it. Such is the Islamic da'wah and politics shown by the Prophet (saw). There are no flip-flops or U-turns ubiquitous in the politics of democracy.

Politics of democracy stand on the grounds of benefit and interest. It does not stand on truth. Democratic political parties will, by default, stand on pragmatism and compromise. All democratic political movements, even those labelled as 'Islamic' run on these principles. Those who try to straddle a different path will have everything to lose, be humiliated and be left behind. This situation will never change unless an effort is made to uproot the democratic system through an intellectual revolution and establish the true Islamic political system on the dust of the destruction of secular and pragmatic democratic politics.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Dr. Mohammad – Malaysia