

## Youth, Politics and Islam

### News:

Recently, a discussion on the involvement of Malaysian youths in politics ensued. There had been media reports that youths of the country are getting less interested in politics. This is inferred from the lack of youth participation in political talks or activities carried out by political parties as well as the reducing percentage of young voters in Malaysia. It is reported that some 14 million voters who have reached the age of 21 have already registered, however, over 3.8 million young voters have not yet registered for voting. Some surveys have also shown that many young people, for some reason, have very little interest in politics. It is thought that among the key factors is the negative perception among youths of the politicians and political parties. This led them to no longer put any hope, which consequently made them decide to not care about politics.

### Comment:

At a glance, we recognize that Malaysian youths may have lost interest in politics based on voter registration and attendance in political talks. However, if we examine the issue profoundly, there are many other factors that have influenced young people to be disinterested in politics. It is not really accurate to measure this phenomena based on only the percentage of voters' registration or attendance in political talks. If one looks deeply into the development of the youths, one will find that the loss of interest or ignorance in politics have a long history and involve various factors. In addition to being frustrated by politics and political parties, most young people are struggling to find a way out of life which consequently made them focus only on personal matters. There are also some youngsters who are just indifferent to politics and are only concerned with entertainment and fun. Some are concerned with family matters, prioritizing the responsibility of serving their parents over other issues. No less are those who are afraid of involving themselves in politics, especially when siding with the opposition for fear of being monitored, dismissed or arrested. Furthermore, political hindrances in mosques and campuses, with Acts such as the Sedition Act, Printing Press Act, SOSMA, POCA and other draconian acts create fear among youths and consequently making them lose interest in politics. In addition, stresses that exist under the secular-democracy system defocuses the lives of youths to the point that some of them not only ignore politics, but worse, end up as the garbage of society!

These reasons do contribute to the loss of interest in politics among youngsters, however, the real reason is more fundamental. It is the misconstrued understanding of the meaning of politics that creates negative perceptions amongst youths. Politics is understood in a very narrow sense. To many, politics means elections or parliament and is concerned only with power and the struggle for power. As a result of these misconceptions, the failing of the government and the dreadful political nuance of the country, politics is viewed as a dirty and disgusting thing, cramped with fraud, ignorance, corruption, abuse of power, oppression, scandals and tyranny.

In order to truly understand politics, one must return to the Quran and Sunnah. Linguistically, politics refers to the preservation and management of interests. According to Shari'ah, politics is defined as the governance of, or looking after, the affairs of the citizens within the state or outside of it. Hence, in Islam, looking after affairs of the citizens in all aspects of life including governance, economy, education and others, constitutes politics. In Islam, politics in its general sense exist in all spheres of life, what more handling the affairs of the citizens of a state! Every single Muslim has no choice but to be politicized, with its true meaning. This is because politics is part of Islam, and it cannot be separated from Islam. Hence, what young people are obliged to do now is not distancing themselves from politics or ignoring politics, but grasp politics in the right way. The young generation should embrace true politics in order to understand the diabolical nature of modern day secular politics and instigate change. This change involves focusing the hearts and minds of youths to aspire and work for a state that will carry out the responsibility of implementing Islam in looking after the affairs of the citizens of the state. A state that, through politics, will bring about prosperity and balance of power by implementing the Laws of Allah and gain the pleasure of Allah (swt), InshaAllah.

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