

SAMBUTAN BULAN KEMERDEKAAN



Ubah pemahaman simplistik perpaduan, hayati erti sebenar kemerdekaan

KUALA LUMPUR - Rakyat Malaysia perlu mengubah pemahaman simplistik mengenai perpaduan untuk menghayati erti sebenar kemerdekaan yang didekapi negara sejak 63 tahun lalu.

Profesor Ulung, Datuk Dr Shamsul Amri Baharuddin berkata, ini kerana nilai perpaduan bukan hanya diterjemahkan dalam 'detik persamaan', sebaliknya turut dijemakan dalam 'detik perbezaan' yang diraikan

masyarakat majmuk di Malaysia.

Beliau yang merupakan Penasihat Perpaduan kepada Kementerian Perpaduan Negara merujuk kepada detik persamaan, misalnya, kebersamaan ditonjolkan rakyat Malaysia ketika jaguh badminton negara, Datuk Lee Chong Wei menentang Lin Dan dari China dan usaha menangani pandemik koronavirus (Covid-19) atau detik perbezaan masyarakat Malaysia

dalam penerimaan isu tulisan khat dan jawi di sekolah.

"Kesepaduan adalah apabila rakyat Malaysia bersetuju dengan dua bentuk persetujuan iaitu untuk hidup di Malaysia kita semua, perlu bersetuju untuk bersetuju dan bersetuju untuk tidak bersetuju.

"Kesepaduan adalah sebahagian perpaduan. Penyatupaduan pula adalah jalan ke arah perpaduan. Inilah kefahaman baharu

dan jurang yang kita kena urus," katanya kepada *Bernama* dalam temu bual di Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) baru-baru ini.

Shamsul Amri, 69, merupakan salah seorang individu yang terbabit dengan usaha pemulihan pascaperbalahan kaum 13 Mei 1969 yang menyaksikan pelancaran Rukun Negara pada 31 Ogos 1970 bagi menyatupadukan rakyat.



SHAMSUL AMRI

Change your understanding of unity: Professor

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysians have to change their rudimentary understanding of unity to appreciate the true meaning of independence, which the country has enjoyed for the past 63 years.

Distinguished professor Datuk Dr Shamsul Amri Baharuddin said the value of unity is not only translated into "moments of similarity", but also translated in the "moments of difference" celebrated by the plural society in the country.

Shamsul, who is also Unity Adviser to the Ministry of National Unity, referred to moments of similarity as the togetherness shown by Malaysians when national badminton ace Datuk Lee Chong Wei competed against Lin Dan of China and efforts to address the Covid-19 pandemic, and moments of difference in

acceptance over the issue of Jawi writing in school.

"In this moment of similarities and differences, we continue to walk because there is cohesion (kesepaduan) among us towards the process of unity (perpaduan).

"Cohesion is when Malaysians agree with two forms of agreement ... to agree to agree and (also) agree to disagree.

"Cohesion is part of unity. Reconciliation is the path to unity. This is a new understanding and a gap that we have to manage."

Shamsul, 69, who is also the founding director of the UKM Institute of Ethnic Studies, was among others involved in the post-racial dispute recovery effort following the May 13, 1969 incident, which saw the launch of Rukun Negara on Aug 31, 1970 to unite the people.

He said he does not agree with people who say the people had failed where unity was concerned.

"We Malaysians like to engage in verbal war, but we will not be wielding machetes," he said, while referring to the norms of Malaysian society which often quarrel over sensitive issues, but never resorted to violence or bloodshed like other countries.

He said the country had never failed in the process of reconciling the people, but the initial understanding of unity should be changed from being only simplistic, mechanistic and literal.

He said the early understanding of unity should change in line with the social development in Malaysia, which also inherited elements of difference from the colonial era, like the vernacular system. - Bernama

A CARING SOCIETY

Make kindness part of schools' Rukun Negara curriculum

ADAM Makos' 2012 book, *A Higher Call*, recounts an amazing story of two fighter-pilots during World War 2.

This true story offers insights for the development of the proposed Rukun Negara-based subject for schools.

It was Dec 20, 1943. An American pilot, Charlie Brown, and his crew were returning to base after bombing a German munitions factory. They were hoping to get home for Christmas. However, en route they came under heavy anti-aircraft fire which left them badly injured, and one dead.

Having lost three of its four engines, the bomber, a B-17, was barely aloft.

It was an easy target for any German fighter-pilot. One spotted the sputtering US B-17. He was Franz Stigler, a 26-year-old conscript to Hitler's much-feared air force, the Luftwaffe.

His piloting skills were exceptional. He had already shot down 22 enemy aircraft before encountering his vulnerable prey. All he



**DATUK DR
JOHN ANTONY
XAVIER**

needed was to shoot this one down to claim the coveted Knight's Cross, the highest honour for bravery for a German soldier.

As Stigler manoeuvred his plane to blast the Americans out of the sky, he sensed something was amiss. The enemy was not returning fire. As he drew parallel to it, Stigler saw the enemy soaked in blood. Stigler immediately mouthed the course that the US bomber should take and wildly signalled in the direction of Sweden.

Not fathoming his noble intentions, the injured gunner was

struggling to reach the gun turret.

Not wanting to be fired upon, or be spotted helping an enemy, Stigler quickly looked Charlie Brown in the eye, saluted him and peeled away, much to the wounded crew's astonishment.

Many years after the war, Stigler was asked why he did what he did. He recalled his commanding officer, Lieutenant Gustav Roedel, telling him that they did not fight the war by the rules of the enemy: "You fight by rules to keep your humanity."

Stigler felt that to shoot a helpless enemy went against the values of chivalry and honour.

There is something worse than death — the loss of one's humanity. Stigler's compassion saved the lives of the 10 US airmen.

Stigler's action in the sky symbolises the value of compassion shown even to enemies. It resonates with our aphorism, "*Masyaratkat Penyayang*", or caring society.

As the government seeks to

reintroduce the Rukun Negara-based subject in schools, compassion and kindness should be emphasised among the virtues of our multi-racial society.

A caring society goes beyond inter-personal and inter-ethnic relations. It also is about inter-generational kindness when we practise sustainable development and preserve precious live-giving resources for posterity.

Inter-generational kindness, too, means that we do not indiscriminately ratch up public debt only to be repaid by our children and their children.

By educating our young on these values, they will not depart from them when they grow up. This is because unlike laws, core values modify behaviour without any force of sanction.

Once assimilated, these values become our moral compass. We use them to measure every action we take and decide on its rightness.

But the assimilation of these values to the point that they be-

come second nature is critical. Ellen DeGeneres, an American comedian, has been hosting a popular talk-show since 2003. Her mantra is "Be kind". But now she stands accused of abusing her crew.

Despite her apologies, her show's rating has plummeted so much that DeGeneres has hinted she may scrap it altogether.

Kindness is all the more important during these trying times.

Remember *Cinderella*? Despite her stepmother's and half-sisters' cruelty, she never wavered from showering them with kindness. That kindness, paired with a little bit of magic, earned her Prince Charming's love to become the queen of the kingdom.

As the narrator of *Cinderella* said: "Where there is kindness, there is goodness. And where there is goodness, there is magic."

The writer is a professor at the Putra Business School