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MALAYSIA: DR MAHATHIR URGES MUSLIMS TO REFORM THOUGHTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged Muslims today to bring about reformation to potted thinking which confuses them as such thoughts are not based on the true teachings of Islam.

He said present day realities have to be accepted and self-deception of the true teachings of Islam could only undermine efforts by Muslims to take on the challenges of the 21st century.

"The reformation that is required of Muslims is one that can guide them back to Islamic teachings unadulterated by deviant interpretations, edicts and fatwas surfacing during the past 1,400 years after Hegira," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this when delivering a keynote address at a conference here today on reformation and challenges facing Muslims in the region in the 21st century.

The prime minister the reformation should take back Muslims to the teachings of the Quran and the wisdom of Prophet Muhammad which put brotherhood and avoidance of hostilities among Muslims with divergent interpretations of what Islam should be, above others.

Dr Mahathir also urged Muslims to master other disciplines apart from religious knowledge to safeguard themselves from their enemies who are out to split and weaken them.

"In Islam we are required to use the hands, mouth and the heart (in dealing with problems). We can use the heart to show sympathy to their (those who label others as apostate) lack of knowledge," he said.

The accusations came about because of misunderstanding or shallow knowledge of Islamic teachings, he said.

More than half of Malaysia's 20 million people are Muslims and the coalition government of Dr Mahathir is introducing by stages Islamic principles and values in the administration and commerce. -- Bernama