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Strengthen spirit of brotherhood in Islam, say King, PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The call for Muslims to be united while setting aside political differences and self-interest was the central theme of this year's Hari Raya Aidiladha messages by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The King in his message urged Muslims to discard factionalism and focus on strengthening the spirit of brotherhood as required by Islam.

"The spirit of brotherhood and unity among Muslims will give strength to us and it will be a solid bulwark against negative elements which are out to destroy Islam," he said.

"During the times when Rasulullah was propagating Islam, one of his main efforts was to unite the various factions and create a united Islamic community.

The King said it was his hope Muslims would ponder the Prophet's efforts and the successes achieved so that they could continue to prosper now and in the future.

"Muslims here are blessed as the continued economic prosperity had enabled them to enjoy many benefits and luxuries," he said.

The King said their standard of living has also improved with higher household incomes and better infrastructure facilities.

"Muslims should not be complacent, abuse or be swayed by these benefits which are given to them," he said, adding that they should always be grateful for these gains.

He said they should not forget their responsibilities as Muslims in their pursuit of material gains.

"I would also like to urge Muslims to acquire knowledge as much as possible. In this era of information technology, Muslims will be left behind in all fields if they do not acquire new technologies and knowledge."

The King said although most of these technologies originated from the West, Muslims should not ignore them.

He said Muslims would have to acquire such knowledge, as long as it was not against the teachings of Islam, to further improve themselves.

Dr Mahathir in his message said Islam called on its followers to be always united and to avoid disunity so that Islam and the fate of Muslims are always protected.

The Prime Minister said Muslims should set aside all self-interests for the good of their society.

"Set aside political differences among us; sacrifice our self-interest; show our repentance and gratitude by being united and elevating our religion's dignity; and nurture good relations with friends of other races and religions.

"On this noble day, as our pilgrims are busy fulfilling the fifth pillar of Islam in the Holy Land, let us together complete our duty and responsibility as Muslims who obey the teachings of Allah by closing ranks and strengthening the bonds among us," Dr Mahathir said.

He said that Muslims were being increasingly oppressed; that many Islamic countries were not progressive, undeveloped and poor; and this made it difficult to save fellow Muslims from the tyranny of the enemies of Islam.

"Alhamdulillah, in Malaysia, Muslims are still respected. Although our

country has a large non-Muslim minority, they are willing to accept a Government helmed by Muslims based on shared administration," Dr Mahathir said.

He said Muslims here could practise their faith in peace and contentment (sempurna) and that this was a comfort that perhaps was not enjoyed by Muslim societies in other places.

"Although we should sympathise with them and help them to the best of our ability, we must not forget to be grateful for the comforts that Allah has bestowed on us," Dr Mahathir said.

"This is the blessing that Allah has bestowed on us. Therefore, do not forget to be grateful to Him.

"Here we learn that Islamic teachings nurtures a society that is caring, loving and always helping each other without taking into account race, skin colour or political leanings."

(END)