

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE IN ISLAMIC CELEBRATIONS

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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ. وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us increase our righteousness to Allah the Almighty by doing all that He prescribes and leaving all that He prohibits. May we be blessed by Allah the Almighty in this life and the hereafter.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Tomorrow we will celebrate Hari Raya Aidiladha or the Eid al-Adha which is the second festival after Aidilfitri. Our society makes these two Eids a day of joy that is welcomed and celebrated together. The actual celebration is not just a custom filled with joy, food and forgiveness, but rather a day to strengthen bonds of brotherhood, strengthen relationships among Muslims and express gratitude for the blessings and mercy from Allah the Almighty.

The rituals and customs in celebrating Hari Raya are very delightful and full of wisdom. However, sometimes we forget whether these customs are permissible or not. Among the customs and manners that we must maintain are:

1. The custom of greeting each other

Shaking hands during Hari Raya is a sign of asking for forgiveness and strengthening brotherhood. It should be noted that shaking hands is allowed between mahrams and the same gender only. Avoid shaking hands with non-

mahrams and people of the opposite sex, even in the name of "forgiveness". This practice of shaking hands is very noble, as stated by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in a hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad:

مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ، فَيَتَصَافَحَانِ، إِلَّا غُفِرَ لَهُمَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَتَفَرَّقَا

Which means: *"Two Muslims will not meet and shake hands having their sins forgiven them before they separate."*

2. Manners of visiting

During the Aidilfitri (Eid al Fitr) celebration, visiting especially relatives, neighbors and friends is a very noble practice,. However, Islam teaches us customs and manners in visiting. Among them is choosing the right time and not visiting during rest or prayer times, as well as avoiding visiting for too long a period of time that would inconvenience the host.

Likewise, make sure to dress and socialize in a polite manner and maintain the boundaries of Islamic modesty and etiquette. At the same time, do not force someone to come and visit, and do not be offended if you are not treated as expected. Allah the Almighty says in chapter 24 (surah an-Nur) verse 27:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ٢٧

Which means: *"O believers! Do not enter any house other than your own until you have asked for permission and greeted its occupants. This is best for you, so perhaps you will be mindful."*

3. Be Modest in celebrating

Islam teaches us moderation in eating, drinking, dressing, and spending. Avoid going into debt to look great and stay away from waste. Allah the Almighty says in chapter 17 (surah al-Isra) verse 27:

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ ط وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ٢٧١

Which means: *“Surely the wasteful are like brothers to the devils. And the Devil is ever ungrateful to his Lord.”*

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said in a hadith narrated by Imam Ibn Majah:

كُلُوا، وَاشْرَبُوا، وَتَصَدَّقُوا، وَالْبَسُوا، غَيْرَ مَخِيلَةٍ، وَلَا سَرَافٍ

Which means: *“Eat and drink, give charity and wear clothes, as long as that does not involve any extravagance or vanity.”*

Likewise, Allah the Almighty forbids us from adorning ourselves excessively as mentioned in chapter 33 (Surah al-Ahzab) verse 33 which means: *“Settle in your homes, and do not display yourselves as women did in the days of pre-Islamic ignorance.”*

Dear brothers and sisters,

Two months ago we celebrated Aidilfitri to celebrate the success of a month of fasting. However, it is indeed saddening that during the festive season, many Muslims have spent hundreds to thousands of ringgit to buy fireworks and firecrackers, even though they are not part of Islamic culture, and in fact they lead to safety hazards, injuries, fires, waste of money and disrupt public order.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said in a hadith narrated by Imam Ibn Majah:

لَا ضَرَرَ وَلَا ضِرَارَ

Which means: *“There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm.”*

It also went viral last Aidilfitri, where people danced while handing out raya money. Giving charity has great benefits, but it is worrying that this practice may cause the wrath of Allah the Almighty. Children, teenagers and even the elderly were dancing together, sharing their respective styles to share on their social media pages.

This practice opens the door to slander and immorality and erodes the purity of Islamic teachings which do not make begging a culture, let alone performing such dances.

Remember that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once said in a hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari which means: *"You would tread the same path as was trodden by those before you inch by inch and step by step so much so that if they had entered into the hole of the lizard, you would follow them in this also. We said: Allah's Messenger, do you mean Jews and Christians (by your words)" those before you"? He said: Who else (than those two religious groups)?*

Dear brothers and sisters,

The conclusion of our sermon today is that let us avoid foreign cultures that are damaging Islamic culture which is embedded in the cultural customs of the Malay community. Practice the culture of shaking hands, visiting each other and being modest as required by Islamic law. Avoid prohibited acts when celebrating Islamic festivals by staying away from waste, immorality, excessive adornment, and so on.

Also remember our brothers and sisters who are less fortunate, especially the Muslims in Palestine. May Allah the Almighty give them strength and grant them steadfastness in their struggle. May Allah grant them victory in liberating the land of Palestine.

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ
لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ
مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ١١

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ، إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَانِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.