



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பினாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

Websites:
www.consumer.org.my

10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Tel: 604-8299511 Fax: 604-8298109
email: consumerofpenang@gmail.com

Media Statement

15 June 2017

Hari Raya Message from CAP President Haji S.M. Mohamed Idris Celebrating Eid-al-Fitr, Avoid Extravagance and Bid'ah

We are in the last ten days of Ramadhan when Muslims are required to spend more time in prayer, introspection and giving charity. Regrettably, they are bombarded with advertisements to buy and consume more. “*Ramadan Jam11, Gila-Gila Deals from RMI, Raya Ni Mesti Cun,, Jualan Hebat up to 50%*” are some of the ads to tempt consumers.

Advertising sales without misleading consumers and violating regulations may be acceptable. What is objectionable is linking sales promotion to Eid-al-Fitr celebration. It desecralises a highly spiritual event. What are the authorities and the Ulama doing? They need to take firm action to stop this secularisation of Islam.

According to the portal Al-Islam org:

“Eid-ul-Fitr is a unique festival. It has no connection with any historical event nor is it related to the changes of seasons or cycles of agriculture. It is not a festival related in any way to worldly affairs.

Its significance is purely spiritual. It is the day when the Muslims thank Allah for having given them the will, the strength and the endurance to observe fast and obey His commandment during the holy month of Ramadhan.

This day, in the Muslim world, brings rejoicing and happiness. The rejoicing is not, however, at the departure of the month of Ramadhan; it is the happiness which man feels after successfully completing an important task.”

In celebrating Eid-al-Fitr Muslims are required to practise moderation and avoid sinful activities. Allah swt has commanded us not to squander our wealth but to do charity. In the holy Qur’an, Allah exhorts and warns: “And give his due to the near of kin as well as to the needy and the wayfarer, but do not squander (thy substance) senselessly. Behold, the squanderers are, indeed, of the ilk of the satans – in as much as Satan has indeed proved most ungrateful to his Sustainer.” [Surah Al – Isra’, Verses 26, 27]

Many Muslims – the wealthy elite, the ‘orang kaya baru’ – have violated these commandments and indulge in wasteful, conspicuous consumption even during Ramadan. They spend lavishly decorating their homes, purchasing expensive furniture, curtains, clothes, watches and other personal items. While the average household income of our rakyat is less than RM2000 per month the handbags of the ‘orang kaya baru’ ladies could be worth over RM20,000.

The ostentatious lifestyle of the wealthy has negative effects on, and permeates to, the other layers of society. The lower income groups try to imitate the rich, over-consume, live beyond their means and

become heavily indebted. Financial problems create tension in families which could lead to the break-up of marriages where children become the victims.

Wealth in Islam is considered to be a gift from God to be held in trust. It is not to be squandered in ostentatious living but to improve and empower the community, and to help the poor, the needy and the marginalized wherever they may be.

Poverty is widespread in the world, particularly in many Muslim states. Over 2 billion people are poor living from hand to mouth. In Syria, Iraq and other countries, devastated by wars and conflicts, tens of millions of people are internally displaced living in hovels, or are refugees living in refugee camps. They do not have adequate food, clothing, education, healthcare and other basic needs. In this state of the Ummah, is it not a sin and a crime for the wealthy to flaunt their wealth in conspicuous consumption?

Having open houses during Eid-al-Fitri is peculiar to the Muslim community in Malaysia which is at the bottom of the income ladder compared to the other communities who do not practise such extravagance. Traditionally, after prayer, people visited the homes of their neighbours, friends and relatives to offer greetings, sembang-semang, and partake of simple kuih, ketupat, lemang and drinks.

Today it's very different. Open houses of organisations, political parties and politician, corporations and the wealthy provide a wide spread of rich foods and drinks and even some entertainment. A lot of food is also wasted. Putting an economic value to them, it would run to millions of ringgit. Wouldn't it be more beneficial if this money is used to provide scholarships for poor children or homes for the homeless?

Celebrations on a modest scale can be organized by Muslim and non-Muslim residents in their neighborhoods that would promote greater understanding, unity and brotherhood among them.

There is a practice of visiting the graveyard on Eid, pouring air mawa and placing flowers around the grave, reading tahlil, Yasin and al-Fatihah. Such was not the practice of our Prophet s.a.w.s or his companions. The Prophet s.a.w.s did not specify any particular day to visit the graveyard. We can do so at any time and therefore there is no spiritual significance on visiting it on Eid.

His (s.a.w.s) practice was as reported by Aisha: "I asked what should I say when I pass by a graveyard, O Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s). He (s.a.w.s) replied: 'Say Peace be upon the believing men and women dwelling here. May Allah grant mercy to those who have preceded us and those who are to follow them. Certainly, Allah willing, we will join you.'" Related by Muslim.

I appeal to Muslims to remember the spiritual significance of Eid-al-Fitr and avoid extravagance, waste and bid'ah.

Selamat Hai Raya Maaf Zahir Batin

S. M. Mohamed Idris
President
Consumers Association Of Penang

