

Protesting Selena Gomez's Concert is Just the Tip of the Iceberg

News:

The arrival of Selena Gomez, a famous American singer, who will be holding her live concert in Kuala Lumpur on July 25th has stirred controversies in Malaysia these past few days. A huge hype on this issue was created when the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) and other Islamic movements are persistent in opposing the concert, declaring that the former Disney TV star's concert would contaminate the month of Shawwal and that the singer is synonymous with a "sexy image" and her appearance would tarnish the sanctity of Shawwal which follows the fasting month of Ramadan.

On the other hand, criticism had also been thrown against those who opposed the concert, especially on PAS, by other parties. The Chief Minister of the state of Selangor commented that being sexy is God's gift and nothing can be done about it. The Democratic Action Party (DAP)'s youth wing (Dapsy) said that PAS Youth are using religion and the upcoming Selena Gomez concert next week for "cheap publicity". Dapsy claimed that the organizers sought permission for her to hold her concert here but PAS did not protest anything until the very last minute, after thousands of ringgit had been spent for promotional purposes. Several Islamic organizations have also called upon Muslims to a sit down at the venue of the concert to show their opposition to the event.

Comment:

Apart from the fact that such a concert is haram and is certainly destructive to society, the presence of the Texan born singer manifests much more than just issues associated with the concert. Among the manifestations are:

- The response of the Selangor Chief Minister that being "sexy is a creation of God. What can we do? It was created by God and should not be an issue" is totally unacceptable. This was the "brilliant" answer given by the Minister who was controversially appointed with full support by PAS! Indeed the body shape and appearance of a person is created by Allah, but Allah forbids it to be shown to others (*ajnabi*) and it is certainly not an object of pleasure for everyone! Scholars who endorsed the Minister's appointment must strongly advise and criticize him for he has the power to stop the immoral concert.

- The Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture, Datuk Mas Ermieyati Samsudin assured that the organization of this event has been examined and given the green light and that JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development of Malaysia) guidelines have also been met. Such an irony! Those who have the power should realize that what is haram is haram, even after thousands of green lights!! Woe to Malaysia, a land where anything can be lawful if there is a green light from the authorities! Just like all the gambling dens, breweries, night clubs and so on, everything becomes

lawful when license and green light are given by those in power. And woe to JAKIM as the body authorized to take care of Islamic matters that has the audacity to issue guidelines for those who intend to do mischief in Malaysia!

- Although there state representatives who protested the concert, it seems that they have failed to advise and restrict their political allies. Ironically the concept of "*muhasabah* and prevention of haram" is often used as an excuse by the Islamist party to join the secular democratic government. Although they are not pleased with this disobedience, they cannot escape the sin as they are an integral part of the machinery of government that allows such haram to occur.

- Concerts by entertainment artists, both from the West or the East, even local artists, is only a small manifestation of the transgressions and disobediences that occur in Malaysia. Hence, Muslims should look at this issue in a larger context. The implementation of the secular system in this country, is the greatest evil that brings about various other transgressions. Similarly, the capitalist economic system that is rooted in usury and speculation (stock), taxes and all other forms of oppression, is a tree that produces damaging branches to the country and to Muslims.

Opposing and protesting Selena Gomez's concert alone will not bring us far in bringing change to the society, as this is only the tip of the iceberg, a small effort in opposing transgression in life and one should never be satisfied only with this effort. As long as the system we are living in is rooted deeply in the ways of disbelief and as long as leaders who sustain disobedience to Allah are entrusted to rule over us, evil and wickedness will continue to thrive.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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