

# Anyone can say 'Allah', not only Muslims

Previously in Malaysia, the use of the word “Allah” was prohibited for anyone other than Muslims as a result of a decision by a Malaysian court. The case was opened when the Catholic newspaper, The Herald, used the name Allah.

This mistaken decision was based on illogical and theologically unacceptable reasoning: “Preventing any confusion that might be caused for Muslims when using the name Allah by the non-Muslims.”

On the other hand, even though there were explanations the Malaysian government officials that this decision applied to The Herald newspaper only, it is obvious that in reality this decision will be applied to society in general and there will inevitably be an environment of severe oppression.

Such a decision cannot be accepted and defended even if it was directed at one newspaper or a single person. This decision, which is completely against Islam, a religion of peace and brotherhood, must be reversed and there must be freedom of expression for everyone.

However, following this decision, the statements of some extreme right Muslim groups like, “Christians must accept the supremacy of Islam or move to another country”, indicate the vastness of the danger at hand.

This wrong attitudes put forth by disobeying God’s command in the Koran — which is revealed in the verse: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256) — must be immediately changed. Freedoms must be respected equally for everyone. Muslims must unite and resist those who are attempting to create hatred against other faiths through such anti-peace movements and must not allow themselves to be deceived by such plots.

In order to better understand the effects of the consequences of such a decision, it will be good to look at the start of the trial. The crowds, which were provoked by radical and organized circles when the newspaper used the name Allah in 2009, were roused into anarchy in no time at all.

As a result of these provocations and incitements, violent attacks were organized against Christians and churches, which are acts implicitly prohibited and denounced by Islam. In the Koran, the places such as monasteries, churches and synagogues are mentioned as “places of worship protected by God” (22:40). So, it is apparent that these fanatics’ acts are a violation of the commands of the Koran and are totally un-Islamic.

Moreover, it is explicit that supporting a prohibition on using the name Allah aligns neither with Islam and the Koran or the international norms of human rights.

This prohibition will create tremendous pressure on the daily lives of members of all other faiths, especially Christians. Bearing in mind that 40 percent of the population

of Malaysia is not Muslim, we can realize the extent of the negative atmosphere such prohibition will cause in the country.

When we think that the word Allah has been used by all local residents in Malaysia for over 600 years and the name Allah was used in the Gospel printed in Malaysian 400 years ago, we can better comprehend the senselessness and impropriety of this prohibition.

The word Allah has been used by Christians in the Arabian Peninsula for centuries. There are 12 million Christians using the word Allah in the Arabian Peninsula today. Likewise, Christians in Indonesia can also use the word.

These practices should be taken as model and the necessity of tolerant understanding, which is a requirement of a pluralistic society and should be realized and adopted accordingly.

Meanwhile, such a prohibition would be imitated by radicals who adopt loveless and hateful manners of speech in all other Islamic communities. This situation would cause great discomfort throughout the world and strike a mortal blow to the freedom of faith, expression and worship.

While we Muslims are people who believe that all Prophets and all Holy Books were sent by the same Allah, and while we respect all of them, we cannot accept a mentality that prohibits the people of other faiths using the name Allah.

On the contrary, the common use of the same name is a blessing and beauty that must be demanded in general, not prohibited. It is something a Muslim should most want to see; a People of the Book (Jews and Christians) call upon God with the name Allah.

The Koran itself is very clear on this subject, by affirming that Muslims should say to Jews and Christians that "our God and your God is one" (29:46).

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, who was the greatest Islamic scholar of the 20th century, also noted in his works that Muslims and Christians must ally with one another against the forces of evil, which have themselves formed an alliance. However, today it is of the utmost importance that the good unite and remain standing together against the philosophical currents that propose war, terror, anarchy, destruction and conflict.

For Muslims, peace is important because the word "Islam" comes from the Arabic letters "s-l-m" meaning peace. In the concept of peace there is love, understanding, compassion, mercy and as much freedom as possible: There is freedom of faith, life, behavior, ideas and speech, even for atheists.

The religion of Islam supports such freedoms completely. Trying to change this religion of love into a completely different religion of cruelty and violence that has nothing to do with Islam, and trying to make life miserable for people through coercion and oppression, is completely unacceptable.

It is everyone's essential duty to let people live their lives freely and eradicate hatred

and bring love to the world.

Our world will be glorified when people of different faiths live together and compete in doing good and when everyone sets an example of love for one another.

Adnan Oktar's article on Jakarta Post

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/10/25/anyone-can-say-allah-not-only-muslims.html>

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/anyone-can-say-allah-not-only-muslims-85176>