Article

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The Weeknd's Concert in Malaysia: The Issue Extends Beyond Statues or Elements of Worship

The Weeknd's concert at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium on November 4 and 5 once again sparked outrage among Muslims in Malaysia. The performance featured a giant gold "sexy female robot statue" alongside red-robed dancers, which critics alleged incorporated ritualistic and devotional elements. Only after public outcry did the Minister in the Prime Department (Religious Affairs) announce that JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia) was collaborating with PUSPAL (Central Committee for Applications for Filming and Performance by Foreign Artistes) to investigate the allegations.

This is not the first time a controversial performance by an international artist has taken place in Malaysia. The 1975's performance at the Good Vibes Festival 2023 incited major controversy when the lead singer criticized Malaysia's LGBTQ+ laws, consumed alcohol, and engaged in same-sex kissing on stage. Coldplay's concert that same year was similarly mired in controversy, as the band – well-known proponents of LGBTQ+ rights – was personally welcomed by the Prime Minister of Malaysia. Likewise, Ed Sheeran's concert, featuring an artist who is an explicit advocate for the LGBTQ+ agenda, was permitted to proceed, with the Minister of Communications proudly stating that 16 agencies were involved in approving the concert, including JAKIM.

For this year (2026) alone, the Madani government has greenlit the organization of the "KL Headline Season 2026," which brings together 25 large-scale international artist performances in the capital. In short, a continuous string of vice concerts continues to fill major venues across the capital, some organized by the same promoters and approved by the government through the same agencies. These concerts persist regardless of whether under the Madani administration or previous governments; they are all cut from the same cloth.

The question is: why do controversies continue to repeat themselves despite the establishment of numerous guidelines and approval mechanisms? The answer boils down to who holds power and the profits to be gained. Guidelines are mere formalities and sweet words uttered by leaders and religious authorities during the talk, and a muzzle designed to silence critics.

In the Parliament session in November 2023, the government itself revealed that PUSPAL had approved 296 foreign artist performances for that year. The government has also asserted that the national stadium will remain a concert venue because it is viewed as the best revenue-generating strategy. In fact, the Madani government clearly aims to position Kuala Lumpur as a regional hub for international concerts, attempting to usurp Singapore's standing in that regard.

With such a governmental stance, divine law (Ahkam as-Shara') naturally has no place in decision-making. The decisive factors are profit and entertainment, not what is lawful (Halal) and unlawful (Haram). It is widely known in this country that Halal and Haram only serve as a sensitive benchmark strictly within the realm of food and beverage. In other domains, such as concerts, the sole consideration is the state's coffers, which must always remain full.

It is deeply agonizing that all these concerts organized over the past three years have taken place while Gaza is drenched in blood, while tens of thousands of Muslim lives are lost due to the cruelty of the Jewish entity, while the people of Gaza starve and thirst, and while they cry out for help from the leaders of the Muslim Ummah! Are these the leaders, and is this the country that claims to care about the plight of Gaza?

What Is the Role of Religious Authorities?

It is profoundly bizarre that JAKIM, sitting on the PUSPAL Committee, appeared oblivious to the fact that The Weeknd's concert featured a giant golden female statue and masked dancers clad in red amidst a dark setting reminiscent of a worship ritual. Did the organizers not need to inform PUSPAL of their event's intricate details?

Did JAKIM never conduct basic research revealing that this giant robot sculpture – a creation of artist Hajime Sorayama – has served as the main centerpiece of the After Hours Til Dawn Tour since 2023, before being introduced in a gold finish in 2025 and subsequently brought to Kuala Lumpur in 2026? Such statue displays and ritual-like performances have already taken place in several other countries. Is JAKIM completely oblivious to these matters?

As a constituent of the PUSPAL Committee, JAKIM cannot wash its hands or plead ignorance. JAKIM is not merely an audience member; it is the institution entrusted with ensuring compliance with Islamic law. What was JAKIM’s stance when the application and concert itinerary were presented? If JAKIM raised objections, why was approval granted anyway? If there were no objections, what was the basis of JAKIM's evaluation in granting approval? These questions must be answered openly and transparently, rather than swept under the rug of an internal investigation.

Furthermore, the public also wants to hear the voices of the religious leadership on this issue. People wonder where the multitude of Muftis in Malaysia are – figures who have traditionally been vocal and swift in issuing fatwas when ordinary citizens are concerned. While there is a Mufti attempted to advise Muslims to exercise caution regarding such concerts, the public demands to see where their Fatwas are regarding the concert itself, the attendees, the revenue generated by the government from the event, and above all, their Fatwa concerning the government that approved it!

Where are the voices of the religious authorities who have relentlessly supplied sermon texts to mosques, warning Muslims against the dangers of threats to Aqeedah (creed) in this country, deviant teachings, and ideologies contrary to Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah?

The public wonders where within the theological teachings of Imam al-Ash'ari and Imam al-Maturidi one can find justification for a concert featuring a giant naked female statue resembling an idol, or performances by masked artists in red robes simulating worship. Do such concerts not contradict the Aqeedah teachings of these two great Imams?

Where in the jurisprudential (Fiqh) teachings of Imam al-Shafi'i is there permission for a vice concert of such magnitude, permitting the free mixing of men and women, excessive entertainment, hedonistic lifestyles, the imitation of disbelievers, and numerous other vices? Does the "purification of the soul" demanded by Islam – as taught by Imam al-Ghazali and Junaid al-Baghdadi – exist in such concerts to warrant their approval?

In short, the public wants to know what part of The Weeknd’s concert complies with and aligns with the teachings of Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah, justifying its presentation to a Malaysian populace that is predominantly Muslim and adheres to Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah?

We have witnessed how JAKIM frequently "hides" behind investigations. When the public expresses outrage, JAKIM announces an investigation, yet the public never learns of the findings – let alone witnesses accountability or punitive measures against violators of laws and guidelines. More distressingly, months after an investigation concludes, yet another controversial concert emerges, followed by another, and another. No matter how loud the public outcry, millions of ringgits have already flowed into state coffers. The public is left empty-handed while the government reaps all the material gains.

To pacify the public and salvage the government's image, perhaps soon we will see the organization of a Majlis Zikr (Remembrance of Allah Gathering), Malam Cinta Rasul (Night of Love for the Messenger), or KL Berselawat (Collective Salawat in KL) at the exact same stadium. This mirrors the trajectory of the Rain Race Water Music Festival in Bukit Bintang late last April, which drew severe condemnation before the issue was "resolved" by the government hosting the Bukit Bintang Berselawat program shortly thereafter.

The Problem Extends Beyond the Golden Statue

Many perceive the primary issue of The Weeknd’s concert to be the 40-foot-tall golden female statue resembling an idol, alongside the sequence featuring masked and red-robed performers. We do not deny that this is a major issue, as it evokes ritualistic worship, even if

formally unproven. Organizers hide behind the veil of art, claiming everything – including the seductive gold statue – falls under artistic expression.

However, what we must understand is that even if investigations ultimately conclude there were no explicit ritualistic elements, that does not render the concert as a whole permissible. As Muslims, we must understand that the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a concert does not hinge solely on giant statues, ritual-like performances, or the political leanings of the singer toward LGBTQ+ or 'Israel'. Rather, the mere existence of the vice concert is inherently Haram in Islam due to the exposure of Awrah, the free intermingling of men and women, frivolous entertainment, the wasteful squandering of wealth for mere amusement, and much more.

We must understand that a performance does not become unlawful solely because elements of Shirk are present, but rather because even a single violation of Sharia occurs within it.

Furthermore, we must recognize that the influx of such concerts into Muslim lands is not merely for entertainment; its implications run much deeper. It represents a Western agenda to alienate Muslims from Islam and cultivate a culture of hedonism among the Muslims. All of this is orchestrated to ensure that Muslims adopt their ways of life and lifestyle, preventing the Ummah from rising as it once did.

The West understands that the only way to control and dominate Muslims is to sever them from their religion – cementing secularism (the separation of religion from life) as their guiding ethos. This is precisely what they pursued until the fall of the Caliphate (Khilafah) in 1924, and it is what they continue to enforce today to ensure the Khilafah never rises again. For the revival of the Ummah and the restoration of the Khilafah signifies the collapse of disbelief (Kufr) and the dismantling of Western dominance.

Additionally, Muslims must realize that these vice concerts are merely a drop in the ocean of vice and corruption plaguing the country, stemming from corrupted rulers and a flawed implemented system. Indeed, the current rulers and the democratic system are deeply damaged, beyond repair, and must be replaced. This entire system runs counter to Islam, having wrought immense devastation upon the country and society.

Conclusion

It is vital for Muslims to realize that they have repeatedly changed rulers, yet the outcomes remain identical. Why? Because the system remains the same! Changing the driver without replacing a severely wrecked bus will inevitably yield the same result – let alone when the driver is intoxicated, and be replaced with another intoxicated driver.

The sole exit strategy is Islam. Every Muslim, particularly those in authority, is obligated to return to Islam, implement Islam comprehensively (Kaffah), and discard everything that contradicts Islam – especially that originating from the Western disbelievers. We have observed that current leaders and democratic political parties will never undertake this task (of implementing Islam). On this basis, we are obligated to strive for the re-establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate): the sole Islamic State that will implement Islam comprehensively, safeguard and protect the Aqeedah of the Ummah, elevate Islam above all other religions, and actualize Islam as a mercy to all worlds (Rahmatan lil Alamin).

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