The Second Eidul Fitri Sermon
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



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My blessed fellow Muslims,

On this auspicious day, all Muslims recite the *takbir*, *tahmid* and *tasbih* together in glorification of Allah subhanahu wata'ala. These *zikir* express our thanks and gratefulness for having succeeded in subjugating our nafs and attaining the bounties of the month of Ramadhan al-Mubarak just gone by. These divine and sublime *kalimah* (words of Allah) are proclaimed repeatedly from the eve of Aidilfitri by each and every muslimin and muslimat in their homes, surau or mosques.

It is customary practice in our country to enliven the joyous atmosphere of Aidilifitri by making visits to houses of family members, relatives, neighbours and friends and seeking forgiveness from one another in order to strengthen the ties of *silaturrahim* (bonding and goodwill). We need to remind ourselves, however, that in the camaraderie of the festivity we must always be mindful of the etiquette of good conduct as set out in the *hukum syara'* and not allow ourselves to be swept astray with improper and sinful activities such as shaking hands with a non-*mahram*, for example.

The shaking of hands between a man and a woman cannot be simply done arbitrarily at our whim and fancy, not even among our own family members. As a matter of fact, not all family members are permitted to partake in a handshake with one another because there are categories inherent within the family itself that qualify one either as a *mahram* or a non-*mahram.*

Know that *mahram* refers to people whom we are not permitted to marry. *Mahram* also can be further divided into three specific parts namely; *mahram* by virtue of blood ties; *mahram* derived from breastfeeding relations; and *mahram* based on marital / conjugal ties.

Examples of *mahram* related to blood ties are those of biological parents, including grandmothers etc, sons and daughters including grandsons and granddaughters etc, siblings born of same parents, siblings born of same father, siblings of same mother, paternal uncles and aunts (father's siblings) etc, maternal uncles and aunts (mother's siblings) etc, offsprings from both male and female siblings. These are the group of people we are allowed to shake hands with.

Incidentally, those categorized as *mahram* from breastfeeding relations are similar to those who are related by blood, as testified in a hadith relayed from 'Aisyah radhiallahu 'anha in which Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam said:

"*It is forbidden to wed female siblings who are your breastfeeding relations in the same manner as it is unlawful to wed female siblings who are related to you by blood."* (Hadith narrated by Muslim)

My blessed fellow Muslims,

***Mahram* derived from conjugal ties with whom we are permitted to shake hands with are, for example, fathers and mothers-in-law, sons and daughters-in-law, stepfathers, stepmothers and stepchildren.**

In contrast, family members whom we are prohibited to shake hands with are the wives or husbands of our father's siblings, wives or husbands of our mother's siblings, father's-in-law siblings, mother's-in-law siblings, children of wife's or husband's siblings, and in-laws. The same ruling also applies to chidren of our father's and mother's siblings.

Therefore, we should be more cautious about those whom we can or cannot shake hands with, since in today's modern society there are still many among us who unknowingly shake hands with people who we are actually forbidden to do so.

In a hadith, 'Aisyah radhiallahu 'anha said that Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam commented:

" *The hands of Rasulullah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam never touched that of another woman unless she is already married to him*." (Hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari)

My blessed fellow Muslims,

The reason why it is unlawful to shake hands with *ajnabiy* (strangers) is because women are deemed the biggest *fitnah* (slander) to men, as they can drive men to lust and desire and drawing of attention. This point is highlighted in a hadith which means:

"*There is no greater fitnah to men, after my death, than the fitnah of women."* (Hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari)

My blessed fellow Muslims,

Come let us all together celebrate our day of victory of Aidlifitri by obediently following the teachings of Islam, refraining from all of its prohibitions, purifying the heart and soul, remaining forever obedient to Allah subhanahu wata'ala and His Messenger. Hopefully through this Allah subhanahu wata'ala will bestow His Mercy, Guidance and Pleasure upon us all. Aamiin ya rabbal alamin.

In Surah an-Nisaa' verse 59, Allah subhanahu wata'ala has decreed:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best way and best in result."