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Muslims told Valentine's Day can invoke wrath of God

Compass Direct (10.02.12) - An invitation "to be my Valentine" on February 14 is against Islamic beliefs and would incur the wrath of Allah, Muslims were told today in the official Friday sermon prepared by the federal government.

The sermon warned Muslims against celebrating Valentine's Day, which the federal Islamic authorities claimed was in breach of the tenets of their religion.

In the text of a sermon provided by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jakim) titled "Awat jerat Valentine" (Beware Valentine's trap), Muslims were told that asking someone to be his or her "Valentine" could lead to idolatry.

The text of a second optional sermon prepared by the Federal Territory Islamic Department (Jawi), titled "Butakah Cinta?" (Is love blind?), likened celebrating the global day of romance to celebrating the anniversary of "Islam's fall at the hands of Christians".

Citing a person named Ken Swiger who purportedly wrote an article titled, "Should Biblical Christians Observe It?", Jakim in the text of its sermon said the word "Valentine" originated from Latin and means "The Bravest, The Strongest, The Most Powerful" to refer to ancient Roman gods Nimrod and Lupercus.

The federal Islamic authority said it was wrong to ask someone to be his or her Valentine.

"Whether they realise or not, if a person asks another person or his partner to 'Be my Valentine?' it is clearly an act that is against the Islamic faith and that would invoke the wrath of Allah SWT.

"This is because they are asking a person to be their 'Most Powerful' this is the same as reviving the culture of idol worship," the sermon said.

It added that "love can only be to Allah SWT [and to] his prophet".

A quick search online failed to turn up details on Sweiger's identity or the alleged article he wrote that Jakim had referred to.

Jakim said that the National Fatwa Council had sat in 2005 and declared that Islam did not sponsor Valentine's Day, as the spirit of the celebration was mixed with vice activities which Islam forbids.

It urged Muslims to strengthen their faith, family and community through five steps, namely for parents to teach their children Islam's true path; to forbid Muslims, especially teens from copying pagans; to sow feelings of love for Allah SWT and his prophet; for unmarried Muslims to keep away from mixed company; and to leave celebrations that are not provided for under Islam's laws.

In the text of the sermon prepared by Jawi, it claimed that February 14 was celebrated as Valentine's Day to commemorate the victory of the Christian government in an offensive against the Muslim government in Cordoba, Andalusia, which is now modern-day Spain.

"Therefore, is it right for Muslims to celebrate the fall of Islam at the hands of Christians? Should we worship and celebrate the arrogant declaration of a Christian priest?" it asked.

"Are there no other prominent Islamic leaders for us to worship and follow?" it said.

Both texts of the government's official sermon called on Muslims not to be influenced by Western culture and celebrate Valentine's Day, which falls on Wednesday next week.

Valentine's Day celebrations have long taken on a commercial nuance since 1969, when the Roman Catholic Church dropped February 14 as the feast day of a purportedly beatified person named Valentine as it could not determine which one of three Christians to whom it was referred.

However, PAS Youth has been spearheading anti-Valentine's Day celebrations the past few years.

It has claimed that the celebrations would lead to greater vice among Muslim youths.

This year, the Islamist opposition party's Youth wing urged the federal government to exert greater control over Valentine's Day advertisements to curb social ills.

Malaysia detains Saudi writer accused of blasphemy against Islam

Voice of America (10.02.12) - Malaysian police say they have arrested a Saudi journalist who is accused of insulting Islam and the Prophet Muhammad on his Twitter feed last week in Saudi Arabia.

Twenty-three-year-old Hamza Kashgari fled Saudi Arabia after his controversial comments prompted online calls for his execution.

He was detained by Malaysian authorities upon his arrival Wednesday at the country's main international airport. Malaysian officials said Friday the arrest was made following a request by Interpol on behalf of Saudi authorities.

It was not immediately clear whether Kashgari will be extradited to Saudi Arabia, where insulting the Prophet Muhammad is a crime punishable by execution. It is not a capital offense in Malaysia, which is also a Muslim-majority nation.

Kashgari posted a series of comments last Saturday to mark the prophet's birthday. In one post, he said, "I love many things about you and hate others, and there are things about you I don't understand," in apparent reference to the Prophet Muhammad.

The writer later apologized for the posts, but insists he was only exercising his right to freedom of expression and thought.
