Majlis Perundingan Malaysia Agama Buddha, Kristian, Hindu, Sikh dan Tao

Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism

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MCCBCHST: Muslims have no right to enter and preach Islam at non-Muslim places of worship

1. The Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) is perturbed by a report (FOCUS Malaysia dated 04/08/2024) which quoted Terengganu Mufti Datuk Dr Mohamad Sabri Haron as saying **"Muslims are permitted to enter places of worship of other religions for the purpose of spreading Islam, its teachings and principles". He further added that Muslims could only go to non-Muslim places of worship if their purpose was to introduce Islam to them and to preach, that is to proselytize".**

2. Non-Muslim places of worship just like mosques are places for devotees of a particular faith to gather and pray according to their respective beliefs and practices. Article 11 of the Federal Constitution gives right to every religious group to profess and practice religion and subject to clause (4) to propagate it. Clause (4) allows State law and Federal Law "to control and restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the religion of Islam". Thus, Clause (4) provides legal shield to Muslims in that propagation of other faiths to them may be controlled or restricted. This clause (4) cannot be interpreted to mean that Muslims are free to propagate their faith to non-Muslims as there is no such provision in the constitution. Clause (4) talks about protection of **"persons professing the religion of Islam".** It does not talk about preaching in non-Muslim places of worship.

3. Terengganu Mufti claim that Muslims are **permitted to enter places of worships of other religions to preach Islam may affect SANCTITY of the non-Muslim places of worship and thus creates a hostile atmosphere which may lead to disturbance of peace. Terengganu Mufti suggestion can further lead to feelings of ill-will, disharmony, hatred, enmity etc. amongst the different religions.** Any unauthorized entry into a non-Muslim place of worship with purpose to propagate Islam to other faith may invite the following Penal action:

(i) S.298 - wounding the religious feelings of any person or group

(ii) S.298 A - Causing etc, disharmony, disunity or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will or prejudicing, etc. the maintenance of harmony or Unity, on grounds of religion.

(iii) S.505 (c) - Statement likely to incite persons to commit offence

4. The MCCBCHST therefore calls upon the Terengganu Mufti to respect the rights of all persons and adhere to the correct interpretation of the Federal Constitution and Malaysian Laws. **All places of worship are places of sanctity. Each religion has the right to regulate their own affairs.** If the purpose of entry to a place of worship is with a view to fostering unity and promote interfaith relations and understanding then it should be welcome. **But if the purpose of the visit is to propagate one's own faith at another faiths place of worship, then it becomes offensive and may affect the sanctity of the place of worship and cause disharmony.** Every religious group has the right to forbid any other religious group from propagating their faiths at their place of worship. The MCCBCHST calls on all religions to respect sanctity of each other's place of worship and refrain from committing disharmony amongst adherents of different religions. No religion has the right to go to another religion's place of worship and propagate their faith without invitation or permission.

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