

Prayers should not be offered at 38000 feet in a troubled airplane!

News:

On June 25th, Air Asia X flight D7237 from Perth to Kuala Lumpur was diverted back to Perth after damage to the engine which had caused severe vibrations in the flight. One of the blades of the aircraft's Rolls Royce Trent 772 engine had broken off causing severe imbalance to the engine of the airplane. Thankfully, Flight D7237 with 359 passengers onboard returned safely to Perth by 10:00 am that day. Aviation mishaps such as this are always followed by questions related to various technical issues in an effort to ascertain the cause of the incident. However, in this episode, the concern that was first raised was not a technical one, rather, a spiritual one. The pilot of the flight was severely criticized for asking the passengers of flight D7237 to '...pray that we may reach home safely'. (Asian Correspondent)

Comment:

Datuk Zaid Ibrahim, a former minister of Malaysia took to Twitter in criticising the pilot, "AirAsia pilot urged passengers to pray on distress Perth flight. Good Lord, I much prefer pilot don't tell me death is imminent". The former de facto law minister then turned to sarcasm to mock AirAsia over the issue of praying, saying, "Pilot has to give hope, and leave the rest to God and the passengers. If AirAsia are big into prayers; engage proper Imam and priest". Comments ensued supporting the ex-minister's tweet. But no less are those who condemned and criticized his comments. One of the passengers on the flight, a 15 year old girl by the name of Madeline Wright, had posted her grievances towards the public's condemnation in her Facebook account where she wrote: "It disgusts me that people are criticizing our captain for telling us to pray and are trying to get him fired". Her comments had been publicized all over the Malaysian media.

For Muslims, prayers (du'a) is an integral part of our lives. Du'a manifests our reliance to Allah. Allah (swt) has said in the Quran that He answers our du'a.

﴿وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ﴾

"And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible." [TMQ Ghafir:60]

And it is human nature to ask for help from Allah (swt) when we are in a dire state. The spiritual instinct in us dominates at that moment and by then, even the most wretched of beings ask for forgiveness to Allah when he realizes that his end is coming. Allah's (swt) description of pharaoh when he was about to drown illustrates this clearly. But it was indeed too late for the pharaoh.

﴿وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْيًا وَعَدُوًّا ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا آذَرَكَهُ الْعَرَقُ قَالَ أُمِنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي آمَنْتُ بِهِ ۗ بَنُوا إِسْرَائِيلَ وَ أَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾

"And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea, and Pharaoh with his hosts pursued them in rebellion and transgression, till, when the (fate of) drowning overtook him, he exclaimed: I believe that there is no Allah save Him in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those who surrender (unto Him)." [TMQ Yunus:90]

Then there is the question of tawakkul... Was the pilot of the aircraft 'leaving everything to Allah (swt)' without any effort to ensure the safety of the passengers? Reports indicated that the pilot followed standard operating procedure and managed to bring the plane back to Perth. He was reported to be calm and spent his utmost effort in ensuring the safety of the flight. Tawakkul must come with effort. Rasulullah (saw) was asked of this in a hadith;

عن أنس بن مالك قال رَجُلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَغْلِقُهَا وَأَتَوَكَّلُ أَوْ أَطْلِقُهَا وَأَتَوَكَّلُ قَالَ: «أَغْلِقُهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ»

Anas ibn Malik reported: A man said, "O Messenger of Allah, should I tie my camel and trust in Allah, or should I leave her untied and trust in Allah?" The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Tie her and trust in Allah."

It was with these efforts that he asked the passengers to pray for safety. The plane may have been a human marvel of design but in the end it is to Allah (swt) that everything returns. As a Muslim, du'a and tawakkul are a constancy, and under conditions of desperation, they are everything. The pilot has carried out the necessary procedures and left everything else to Allah (swt) and invited the passengers to do the same. From the reports, it seems that he had done everything right and was also right in putting his trust to Allah (swt):

﴿رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا﴾

“[He is] the Lord of the East and the West; there is no deity except Him, so take Him as Disposer of [your] affairs.” [TMQ al-Muzammil:9]

As a Muslim, Zaid's tweet seems to be at odds with his faith although he may justify this with a thousand justifications. Zaid is known to spur comments that strike him as being a liberalist. But he is just an individual. It is the nuance of liberalism in Malaysia that provides him the support. We believe we have arrived at Shawwal victorious over our *nafs*. But in reality we have failed miserably by allowing liberal ideas to pollute the blessed month of Ramadhan.

This Ramadhan, Islam had been insulted in numerous ways in Malaysia. The Star's May 27 issue featured the title "Malaysian Terrorist Leader" on its front page accompanied by a picture of a Muslim congregation as if to say that Muslims are terrorists. No punishment had been imposed on the newspaper except for a lousy apology. A similar trend was also observed when writers of the Malay Mail Press linked Ramadhan with murder trends, bloodshed rituals by ISIS and dubbed Ramadhan as a month of murder. In addition, this Ramadhan was also full of liberalist propaganda as an effort to 'legalize' LGBT, secularism, pluralism and liberalism. A group of youngsters of the Universal Muslim Community openly celebrated Ramadhan with the believers of Qadiani, praying behind them and supplicating that Christians be blessed. There was also the biggest gay *iftar* event of June 10, organized by the Rainbow Campaign which blended LGBT festivals with the glory of Ramadhan. Clearly, all these events are a reproach and insult to Islam. The proponents claim to show Islam in a more 'modern, peaceful, open, tolerant, modest and humanitarian' terms but clearly these are designed to fit the liberalist and Western propaganda and perspectives. Muslims are being misled by the fact that they are unable to see which acts are considered as *amar ma'roof* and which are *munkar*. The secular-liberal thinking of the West had been deliberately mixed with the mission of 'Islamic reform' in trying to make Islam to be an 'artificial religion' that can be altered and interpreted according to the desires of man. And the current dominating secular-democratic governance designedly act as a catalyst in brewing this diabolical trend.

May Allah give us the strength to re-establish the life of Islam and the victory in re-establishing Islam politically under the umbrella of the Khilafah (Caliphate). By then, there will be no leeway whatsoever for this devilish trend to continue.

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