

'It is okay as long as there is no visible unclean elements'

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PETALING JAYA: There is no problem in Muslims and non-Muslims sharing the washing machines at laundrettes "as long as there are no visible unclean elements", said Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) senior lecturer and independent religious speaker Dr Shauqi Othman.

"So long as there are no visible unclean elements and things that could lead people to believe that the clothes of the non-Muslim person is tainted, there is no issue for Muslims to share the washing machines at laundrettes," he told mStar Online yesterday.

He added that Islamic teachings were not based on an individual's assumption but something that can be obviously seen.

It was reported that a self-service laundrette in Muar, Johor, limited its clientele to Muslim customers only.

The matter came to light when a photo, believed to be taken at the laundrette, showing an "Only for Muslims" sign went viral on social media.

On Monday, Perlis mufti Datuk Dr Mohd Asri Zainal Abidin also criticised the laundrette's "Muslim-only" policy.

Mohd Asri said "such narrow-mindedness" would only lead to extremism and the incapability of people to live in a multi-racial society.

He said Islamic teachings were not meant to be a burden to the people but to make things easier for them.

Mohd Asri advised Muslims that if the origin of a thing is clean, and there is no sign of dirt (*najis*), be it through its colour, smell or

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Tan Sri K. Kenneth Eswaran

taste, then it is considered clean.

He also advised people to never easily assume and make judgments until the "dirt" (*najis*) is clearly seen.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Associated Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MAICCI) president Tan Sri K. Kenneth Eswaran lauded the Sultan of Johor's order to the Muar laundrette to stop the practice.

Eswaran said Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar made an "emphatic stand" on the controversy, adding that the laundrette operator had "flagrantly ignored and disregarded" the sensitivities of many non-Muslims.

"What is especially comforting to everyone and particularly non-Muslims in general is not the Sultan's condemnation of the controversial laundrette owner, but the force and bluntness with which His Majesty expressed his displeasure.

"His Majesty has once again proven to be a wise, just and fair ruler," he said.

Eswaran said MAICCI also believes that religion should never be used to divide people, especially in a multi-cultural society like Malaysia.

"All businesses should be free from any religious agenda," he said.