

TV commercials with powerful Raya messages



HARI Raya Aidilfitri is just a few days away. On that day, we will read about what our leaders and dignitaries have to say about the celebration and hear them also on the radio, TV news and social media.

Hari Raya Aidilfitri, the festival of the breaking of the fast, is a religious holiday celebrated by Muslims in Malaysia. Also known as Hari Raya Puasa, it concludes the holy month of Ramadan or fasting month.

In their Raya greetings, Muslim leaders will generally share their wishes and hopes and advise Malaysians to be grateful for Allah's blessings and to take care if they are going back to their kampung for the celebration and holidays.

My friends, do you know that big Malaysian companies are now coming out with their own Hari Raya TVC to advertise their brands?

TVC is the acronym for television commercial — a form of advertising that promotes products, services, ideas, individuals or organisations.

I watched two such commercials

last night and I was very much impressed by the high quality productions.

They were not only advertising their brands but the messages two of them carried were so touching that I cried. In fact, except for the credits, I did not know the companies were advertising their products or their brands.

Apparently, unknown to me, Malaysian companies had been embarking on such brand awareness campaigns for a few years already. Congratulations to the companies and the advertising heads for such innovative brand awareness campaigns.

The first Raya TVC I came across on the YouTube channel was "Sadaqah" by Taylor's University, a private university in Subang Jaya, Selangor. Often regarded as Malaysia's top private university based on the QS World University Rankings, it was founded in 1969 as a college. It was awarded university college status in 2006, and university status in 2010.

I know about the college because one of my nieces studied there. She is now a banker.

I found out from the Internet that "Sadaqah" is charity given voluntarily in order to please God. "Sadaqah" also describes a voluntary charitable act towards others, whether through generosity, love, compassion or faith. These acts are not necessarily physical or monetary.

The star in the TVC is none other than one of my favourite Malaysian actresses and singers, Adibah Noor.

"Sadaqah" centres around the topic of helping the underprivileged through education that is conformed to the paradigm of charity.

"Sadaqah", which translates to charity, is all about helping those in need.

The campaign video, set in the holy month of Ramadan, relates the tale of Amin, a young beggar looking for a free meal for breaking fast. He encounters the fierce-looking restaurant owner, Kak Zaiton, who wants him to work for his free meals.

Although taken aback, he accedes to Kak Zaiton's demands. While running his errand, Amin comes across another restaurant owner who provides free food without requiring him to work. Because of this, Amin abandons his post at Kak Zaiton's restaurant and does not return.

One day, Amin unexpectedly runs into one of Kak Zaiton's employees, Aini, and explains his reason for leaving.

In an interview with *Advertising and Marketing Magazine*, Taylor's chief marketing officer Ben Foo pointed out that often, when people thought of charity, they thought about the usual good deeds — providing cash donations, free food and essential necessities, amongst other things.

"These are wonderful acts but equally powerful is the act of empowerment so they have an opportunity to thrive in life," he said.

"Most Raya videos encompass

the customary themes of family and forgiveness. We thus wanted to break expectations with this festive ad to deliver a story laden with lessons for people to ponder," he explained.

"For Amin, all he wanted was to be fed. So, when the 'right' opportunity came along that satisfied his expectations, it motivated his actions because he believed he did not need to be bossed around to get food. People respond well to their personal wants and desires," added Foo.

"Taylor believes that education does not just benefit oneself but also enables the institution to help others.

"Education is a tool that can make a lasting impact. The end of the film showcases this perpetual impact, as those who receive eventually grow to become givers," he said.

MSM Malaysia Holdings Berhad (MSM), the leading refined sugar producer in Malaysia, debuted its Raya TVC entitled "Abah" this year.

The TVC features legendary actor and TV personality Datuk Rahim Razali.

"Abah" in Malay means dad. The commercial tells the story of a Raya gathering.

"Abah" is a significant figure in the family. He is firm and seems to disapprove of both his daughters' comments about their late mother's level of quality when preparing for the Hari Raya celebration, from setting up the curtains to baking their favourite Raya cookies and

'There are no regrets in life. Just lessons.'

— Jennifer Aniston, American actress and producer.

cooking the signature household dish.

Later as the story unfolds, we learn that Abah deeply misses his other half. However, because of the male ego, he does not express his grief over the loss of his wife easily in front of his children. The story reminds us that although losing someone is painful and hurt, the sweet memories stay forever with us.

MSM Head of Corporate Communications, Siti Noorbaya Mohd Yunus explained that MSM had been embarking on a brand awareness campaign since Merdeka celebration last year.

"We hope Keluarga Malaysia enjoyed our first Raya TVC that captured family values, strong bonding, and undivided love. Always cherish the sweet memories with your loved ones. On behalf of MSM, I would like to wish Keluarga Malaysia Selamat Hari Raya and stay safe," she added.

My dear friends, if you have time, do watch the TVCs. I hope you will be as touched as I was by their powerful messages.

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