



**Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura**

**Friday Sermon**

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**Understanding The Textual Sources Of Shari'ah**

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا وَقَضَىٰ بِمَا يُرِيدُ حِكْمَةً  
وَ حُكْمًا، أَنْعَمَ بِالنِّعَمِ ابْتِلَاءً وَامْتِحَانًا، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ  
وَ حُدَّهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا  
مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَفْضَلُ الْأَنَامِ وَ مِصْبَاحُ الظُّلَامِ، اللَّهُمَّ  
صَلِّ عَلَىٰ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا  
كَثِيرًا. أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَيَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ وَ عِلَانِيَتَكُمْ

Blessed Friday Jemaah,

Let us be pious towards Allah s.w.t with utmost piety. Let us realise that everything we say and do in this life, will be judged by Him in the Hereafter.

My brothers, Allah s.w.t. says in the Quran:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ  
النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ  
رَفِيقًا ﴿٦٩﴾

Which means: *“And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions”*. [Surah An-Nisaa’: 69]

This verse illustrates the importance of obeying Allah s.w.t and His Messenger s.a.w. It states that the reward of sincere and faithful obedience is that we shall be gathered in Heaven amongst those whom Allah is pleased with, like the Prophets of Islam, the Truthful and Righteous (Solihin) amongst us, and the Martyrs (Shahid). My brothers, to obey Allah s.w.t. and His Messenger s.a.w. is to obey Quranic commandments, and to emulate the Prophet’s Sunnah.

However, let us not forget that part of the commandment to hold firm and adhere to the Quran and Sunnah is also to seek a proper understanding of both as well. The Quran and the Sunnah are not merely sacred texts recorded in volumes. Know that the correct understanding of both constitutes part of holding on to the Quran and Sunnah as well.

My dear brothers,

The question now is how do we obtain a comprehensive understanding of the Quran and the Prophet's Sunnah? With the advanced developments of social media today, we are witnessing mass sharing of information pertaining to religion. Yet such shared information may not necessarily be accurate. I would thus like to suggest a few simple steps that could help guide us in obtaining a correct and comprehensive understanding of the Quran and the Sunnah.

**First:** To understand the Quranic texts and Sunnah by perceiving the underlying objectives of the text at hand.

This should be the first step in our effort to understand the Quran and the Prophet's Sunnah, via the understanding of the higher objectives that the Shariah seeks to preserve. The Quran and Sunnah seek to provide us with core abstract Islamic principles to act as guide while we manage our affairs in life. On this basis, the main objective that the Shariah seeks to achieve is the preservation of the welfare of individuals and society. Ibn Qayyim once wrote in his book *I'lam Al-Muwa'qien* that the Shariah is built upon the core values of justice, mercy and public welfare. He went further noting that whatever forms of injustice and destruction that occur do not constitute part of the Shariah. Despite this, some will still claim that such injustices and destructions are indeed part of Islam.

Therefore, the sacred texts will always seek to preserve the welfare of the individual and the wider community. And if we are to scrutinise the violence and cruelty portrayed by the lost and misguided amongst us, it will be clear that such violence has nothing to do with the Shariah.

**Step Two:** To understand the background and context of the revealed text or Sunnah.

By understanding the background and context of the Quranic text and Sunnah, we will be able to get a clearer picture of the intended meaning of the texts. In fact, if we analyse all of the different sciences in Islamic knowledge, we will discover that our scholars have outlined in great details the principles and methods to understanding the sacred texts. All of these are to act as guidance for the Ummah. For example, they have conceptualised the science of "*Asbabun Nuzul*", which is a branch of Islamic knowledge that deals with the reasons behind the revelation for all Quranic verses, and the respective contexts. Similarly for the Prophet's Sunnah, the science of "*Asbab Wurud Al-Hadith*" deals with the background for every Hadith narration.

The Prophet's Companions r.a. are the best examples for this matter. Umar ibn Al-Khattab's r.a. evident experience in his numerous applications of ijtihad, proved Islam's flexibility and universality that serves to uphold justice despite existing in

different conditions and contexts. A good example would be when Caliph Umar decided not to distribute captured lands among the Muslim soldiers. Although it is something which the Prophet s.a.w. often carried out, Caliph Umar r.a. made the decision by taking into account the context and the background when the Prophet s.a.w. did so during his time. Additionally, Caliph Umar also took into account the possible adverse effects in the future on the local communities if the practice of distributing lands were to continue.

This and many more examples, illustrate the significance of first understanding the background and context of our sacred religious texts. In fact, it would actually provide us a more comprehensive understanding of the Quran and the Sunnah.

My brothers,

**The third and final step** that we have to note in our effort to understand the Quran and Sunnah, is to build this understanding on the foundation of moderation (*Al-wasatiyyah*). Allah s.w.t. Says in surah Al-Baqarah verse 143, which means: *“And thus we have made you a moderate (just) community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you.”*

The meaning of “*Wasatiyyah*” or balance and just, does not mean that we should be lax in our religious duties and obligations. Far from it, the “*Wasatiyyah*” that Islam promotes is

a balanced view of everything that would not lead to any extreme attitudes, such as fanaticism, extremism and radicalism. “*Wasatiyyah*” here promotes a harmonious understanding of religion that leads to the development and progress of the Muslim community instead of leading to its destruction. Hence, a “*Wasatiyyah*” attitude will be able to provide every Muslims with the guidance to evaluate any information pertaining to religion.

My brothers,

Since knowledge is part of our religion, a strong faith should also be built upon credible and verified religious knowledge. Therefore, let us ensure that our religious knowledge and information obtained pertaining to Islam are accurate. May Allah s.w.t. grant us taufiq and inayah, so that we may adhere to Islam in accordance with His commandments. May Allah s.w.t. bless us all with high manners and nobility. Amin Ya Rabbal Alamin.

بَارِكْ اللَّهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ  
الآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ  
الْعَلِيمُ، أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ  
الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا  
فَوْزَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِينَ.