



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

5 June 2015 / 18 Syaaban 1436

Practicing Self-Reflection in the month of Syaaban

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْمَلِكِ الْحَقِّ الْمُبِينِ الَّذِي أَبَانَ لِعِبَادِهِ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَا
بِهِ عِبْرَةٌ لِلْمُعْتَبِرِينَ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ
لَهُ إِلَهَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ
وَرَسُولَهُ الْمَبْعُوثُ رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا
مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا . أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَيَا
عِبَادَ اللَّهِ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.

Blessed Friday Jemaah,

In this moment that is full of barakah, let us pray to Allah and ask that He increase our takwa toward Him and our faith (iman) in Him. Seek from Allah to grant us the strength and sincerity to obey all of His commands and abstain from what He has prohibited upon us. Hopefully by doing so we will be blessed with His barakah in this Syaaban. Amin Ya Rabbal 'Alamin.

Jemaah,

We are now in the third week of Syaaban, a month described by Rasulullah s.a.w. as the month that many neglect its

significance. In a hadith reported by Imam An-Nasa'i Rasulullah s.a.w. said: *“Syaaban is the month where many are neglectful towards it, and that is the month between Rejab and Ramadan. It is the month where all of a servant's deeds are brought to the Lord of the Universe. That is why I like to fast when my deeds are raised.”*

This hadith reminds us that Syaaban is the month for us to increase our preparations spiritually, physically and emotionally to greet the month of Ramadan. Jemaah, Ramadan is the month where Allah showers His limitless rewards, blessings (rahmah) and goodness. Hence it is even more important that we prepare ourselves in order to be worthy of these blessings. Our souls are like vessels that need to be cleansed and purified from sins to enable our souls to receive the showers of rahmah from Allah. How can we expect to attain Allah's pleasure if we are still coloured by sins, our hearts filled with hatred, arrogance and other diseases of the heart. How can we expect to be among those freed from the hellfire during Ramadan if we still carry out acts that can cause us to trip and fall at the door of Paradise?

Hence, as a reminder to myself and to all of us here, let us return to the path of Allah. Let us begin these last few days of Syaaban by improving our hearts and not to allow our desires to get the better of us. This is in line with what Allah says in surah Yusuf verse 53:

﴿ وَمَا أُبْرِئُ نَفْسِي ۚ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

Which means: “And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.”

Jemaah, controlling our desires is an ongoing process. Humankind never neglect this and allow their desires to get the better of them. To ensure that our desires are controlled, we should always be in constant remembrance of Allah through zikr. When our desires or nafs whispers and encouraged us to do sin, that is the important moment where we should quickly remember Allah. At the same time, always ask from Allah that we are protected from self-destruction. The Prophet s.a.w. taught this doa:

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ أَسْتَغِيْثُ ، أَصْلِحْ لِيْ شَأْنِيْ كُلَّهُ ، وَلَا تَكِلْنِيْ إِلَى نَفْسِيْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ

Which means: “Oh Allah the Living, The Sustainer, in Your mercy I seek relief, improve my affairs and do not leave me on my own even for the blink of an eye.” [Hadith Reported by An-Nasa'i and Al-Baihaqi]

Friday Jemaah, in preparing our souls for Ramadan, ensure that we keep ourselves busy with good deeds and do not let the time pass by quietly without performing any good deeds. This is because when our souls are left empty without any deeds, syaitan will whisper devious schemes into us. If for some reason we faced difficulties to leave our homes, then we can still do good deeds by performing a good act at home. By helping out our mother, or assisting our wife with housework. Fathers can also take the time to review the recitation of Quran together with their children, or use the time available to share with them stories of the Prophets and Messengers. In addition to attend the various religious classes held at the mosques to increase our knowledge and deepen our understanding of fasting and other acts of worship this Ramadan. These are all acts of worship and if we make it a habit to increase our deeds as we prepare to usher in Ramadan, then insyaAllah when Ramadan arrives we will have the physical and spiritual stamina to increase our acts of worship.

In addition to what I have mentioned, part of our Ramadan preparation is to have an increase awareness of an enemy that cannot be seen. The enemy that I am referring to is syaitan and iblis. Often we preoccupied ourselves by looking out for enemies that are seen, and we discuss conspiracy theories on the enemies of Islam. However, often we forget how scheming and devious syaitan is. Syaitan works hard to take advantage of our weakness and our desires, to make us forget about Allah

and in the end, we do not gain the blessings of Allah. Especially when we are giving out utmost effort to prepare for Ramadan, syaitan will also increase his efforts to ensure that we do not do any good deeds, or our good deeds become useless. Remember jemaah, if syaitan cannot prevent us from carrying out acts of worship, he can still deceive us through acts of worship. How can this happen? Syaitan will whisper feelings of arrogance and the desire to show off to others the acts of worship that we undertake. Be careful of being controlled by feelings of arrogance. This feeling that we are more religious than others. Especially today where it is easy for one to “display” the acts of kindness that they carry out via social media. Remember the advise of Rasulullah s.a.w. that was reported by Imam Muslim: *“One will not enter paradise if he has an atom’s weight of arrogance in his heart.”*

Hence, for us to face Ramadan, we must train ourselves to be sincere. Whether it is in front of others or in private, we must continue to be diligent in our acts of worship and more diligent in protecting ourselves from syaitan’s devious acts and our desires. Remind ourselves of Allah constantly, and that every act of worship is for Allah. Rasulullah s.a.w. once said *“Whoever recites:*

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ؛ وَهُوَ
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

100 times in a day, then the reward he gains is equivalent to freeing ten slaves and it is recorded for him 100 good deeds and 100 of his bad deeds are erased and he is protected from syaitan for an entire day and night. And there is no one better except one who recites this more than him.” [Hadith reported by Imam Muslim]

May Allah help us in attaining the blessings of Syaaban and shower us with the barakah to meet with Ramadan. May Allah make us and our families among those who have the right to receive the advantages of Syaaban and Ramadan. Amin Ya Rabbal 'Alamin.

بَارِكْ اللَّهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعِنِي 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.