



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

13 November 2015 / 1 Safar 1437

Assuming The Best In Others

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا
وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ
وَصَفِيُّ اللَّهِ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ وَحَبِيبُهُ إِمَامُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَسَيِّدُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ 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,

Alhamdulillah, once again Allah has given us the opportunity to come together, to be showered in His blessings and rewards on this noble Friday. Let us show our gratitude to Him by increasing our taqwa, and striving to ensure that we do not neglect any of His commands and violate His prohibitions.

Jemaah,

Last week's sermon discussed the importance of religious education for our families and those close to us. In fact, as

parents, we should also be learned in Islamic knowledge, and not simply expect changes from our children. Today, I would like to draw your attention to the importance of supporting and providing Islamic education for a specific group of people. Here, I am referring to individuals who have made mistakes in the past, including ex-offenders who have committed criminal offences, but are now working toward turning over a new leaf and improving themselves. Let us study the beauty of Prophet Muhammad's character (akhlak) in helping those who have erred.

Imam Bukhari reported that there was a man during Rasulullah's time who often entertained him and made him laugh. However, that man had a weakness- he drank alcohol. He had been punished repeatedly, but he still could not quit drinking. One day, a companion said to him: *"Allahumma, Ya Allah incur your wrath upon this man"*. Hearing those words, Nabi Muhammad s.a.w. said: *"Do not curse him, because by Allah, I do not know his goodness except that he loves Allah and His Messenger."*

Subhanallah! Such was the akhlak of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. in looking at a person's goodness. I do not mean to say that we should consent to a person involved in vices to continue doing so. No, that is never the case. What I mean is that despite being aware of a person's weakness, Rasulullah s.a.w.

recognised a person's strength and goodness. No matter how bad a person is, surely he has some good qualities. And that is the approach Rasulullah s.a.w. taught us in calling upon others to return to the path of Allah s.w.t.

Blessed Jemaah,

We are all humans who have made many mistakes and performed many sinful acts. There have been times where we were influenced by the whispers of Syaitan and transgressed Allah's commands. Hence, I would to call upon all of us to bow our heads in humility and seek Allah's forgiveness. Despite bearing a mountain of sins, we are blessed because Allah's love and compassion triumphs His anger and wrath. Allah s.w.t. says in surah Az-Zumar, verses 53 and 54:

﴿ قُلْ يَعْبادِي الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾
﴿ وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ ﴾

Which means: "Say, O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." And return [in repentance] to your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes upon you; then you will not be helped."

Beloved Jemaah,

There are two meanings in these verses that I would like to share with all of you. **The first:** Allah is always waiting for us to return to His path and seek His forgiveness. Allah is always waiting for us to acknowledge our mistakes and sins, and He will then shower us with His forgiveness and countless blessings. Every night, in the last third of the night, He will call to us, Who amongst my servants are asking for my forgiveness? In fact, in a hadith qudsi Allah says that if we come walking toward Him, He will come running toward us. This shows how much Allah wants us to turn to Him and seek only from Him.

The second meaning of the verses: Besides serving as a reminder for us to never lose hope and to never feel as if Allah will not forgive us, the verses also remind us that we should not give up on our fellow Muslims who are still far from Allah. Do not give up in hoping that they will receive guidance and hidayah from Allah and thus, change for the better. Allah s.w.t. reminds us to be gentle toward those who have yet to be moved in accepting His guidance. If we know of friends or relatives who are still ignoring Allah's commands and being involved in sinful acts, do not use harsh words toward them. And when they try to change their ways and start to learn about Islam, do not belittle their efforts or assume the worst of their

intentions. At those moments, they are most in need of guidance and religious knowledge.

We can encourage them to volunteer their time to help others. When we volunteer together with them, and prayer time beckons, ask them along when you take a break to perform your prayers. But if they are not ready to practise the religion, do not hurl harsh words at them, embarrass or hurt their feelings. Instead we should just continue with our worship and pray that they will be guided to uphold the religion in the future. If we have such friends or family members, include them in our activities. If needed, help them to rebuild their lives to be better. Hopefully by doing so, Allah will open their hearts to accept His guidance.

Friday jemaah,

We need to ensure that arrogance does not overcome us, we should never feel that we are more religious than others or are better than them. These are whispers from Syaitan who is always trying to influence us, which we must guard ourselves from. For those who often attend religious classes and do volunteer work, remember that Syaitan may not have prevented us from acts of worship and kindness, but he can snare us in the trap of arrogance and being boastful of our deeds. In the end, we are the ones who will be at the losing end because we do not gain anything from our ibadah and good deeds.

Jemaah, who knows, a person who might seem to be a sinner may at one point turn around and repent so deeply that Allah accepts his repentance and places him among those who have gained Allah's pleasure. Remember the story narrated by Imam Muslim, about a married woman who performed adultery? She lived during the Prophet's time, and after her punishment was delayed, Rasulullah ordered that it be carried out. Rasulullah s.a.w. then performed jenazah prayers for her. Saidina Umar r.a. asked him: *"Ya Rasulullah, did you perform prayers for this woman who committed adultery?"* Rasulullah replied: *"This woman made taubah (repentance) with the highest sense of taubah such that if it was divided among 70 residents of Madinah, it will still be sufficient for their sins to be forgiven"*.

Hence, if you feel that you have performed numerous sins, do not give up and despair. Seek forgiveness from Allah s.w.t. and strive hard to leave them behind. Ask Allah to grant you strength and the tenacity to leave behind those sins and to start a new life. Know that there are many opportunities to gain Allah's forgiveness, and that He has given us many chances to gain His mercy. Rasulullah s.a.w. said, which means: *"The five daily prayers, and [the performing of] Friday prayer to the next Friday prayer, and [the fasting of] Ramadan to the next Ramadan, is expiation of the sins committed in between them, so long as major sins are avoided"*. [Hadith reported by Imam Muslim]

May Allah s.w.t. guide us so that we are placed among those whom He loves and are pleased with. 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.