



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

22 January 2016 / 12 Rabiul Akhir 1437H

The value of forgiveness and Shariah.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَنَا مِنْ أُمَّةٍ خَيْرِ النَّاسِ خَلْقًا وَخُلُقًا، وَاصْطَفَانَا
عَلَى سَائِرِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالرُّسُلِ بِأَحْسَنِ الشَّرِيعَةِ مِنْهَجًا وَطَرِيقًا،
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا
مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ،
حَبِيبِنَا الْكَرِيمِ، وَرَسُولِنَا الْعَظِيمِ، وَشَفِّعِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ، سَيِّدَنَا
مُحَمَّدًا وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ .
أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَيَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ، أَوْصِيكُمْ وَنَفْسِي بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ
وَجَلَّ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ .

Respected Jemaah,

Let's increase our taqwa to Allah s.w.t. Continue to serve Allah by obeying all of His commands and abstaining from His prohibitions. Let us uphold the noble values that Islam has taught us. May Allah s.w.t. accept our deeds and always forgive us.

Jemaah,

This week, we are still on the topic of forgiveness. As we have discussed in the previous sermons, forgiveness is closely related to ihsan or compassion. And ihsan brings about excellence. As Muslims, we strive hard to become individuals or insan who are able to achieve excellence, individuals who uphold noble values, and thus a community of excellence.

Let us thus ask ourselves these important questions: have we truly understood the value of forgiving others in our lives? Have we forgiven our spouses, children, parents, relatives, and friends? Or are we still haunted by anger and vengefulness?

Beloved Jemaah,

If we truly pine for Allah's forgiveness, then take some time to reflect upon how Allah s.w.t. called upon the ummah of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. to embrace this noble trait, even when our hearts are filled with anger and pain. Allah s.w.t. says in the Quran:

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا
تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

Which means: *“And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah , and let them pardon*

and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” (Surah An-Nur, verse 22)

Let us understand the context in which this verse was revealed. It was revealed when Sayyidina Abu Bakar r.a. wanted to cut off the help he gave to a man named Mistah, whom he had been supporting, after he found out that Mistah was involved in slandering Aisyah r.a.

Indeed Islam places much emphasis on forgiving others. Even though it may seem simple and easy, it actually reflects the purity of one’s heart and the beauty of one’s character (akhlak). It is a noble attitude that can change a person’s life and also the direction of an entire community.

For example, medical and psychological research and studies have shown that forgiveness brings about many positive effects, including health benefits. By forgiving others, we will not harbour anger and thus it will allow us to be at peace with ourselves, and thus with others. It also helps us to be calm, as well as bring down stress levels and also our blood pressure. Our body’s overall immune system will also improve.

Generally, this simple trait will bring about remarkable changes to our lives and help us achieve excellence in a holistic manner. Thus it is true what was said by our beloved Messenger, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w: “No one forgives others except that his honour is increased.”

Jemaah,

Forgiveness is also an approach that is encouraged by Islam in dealing with issues faced by the community. Allah s.w.t. says in the Quran, in Surah Al-Syura verse 40:

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۗ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا
يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

Which means: *“And the retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is [due] from Allah. Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers.”*

Hence, Islam has no relations whatsoever to any form of violence. Remember jemaah, any form of violence is but a reflection of our internal self. I am not just talking about violent acts that cause injuries, destruction and bloodshed – I am also referring to brute mannerism and actions.

A heart that is filled with vengeance is a cold heart. It reflects a heart that is void of gentleness and forgiveness; a heart that has drifted far from the good character and noble values taught by Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.

A cold heart that leads to acts of violence has no place in Islam. It needs to be cleansed, purified and led back to the righteous path.

The effect of such cold-heartedness is wide-ranging. Today, it is very easy for many non-Muslims to misunderstand Islam. This then causes us to feel angry, and challenged.

However, our real challenge is to respond in a manner where we uphold the value of forgiveness. If we are able to control our emotions, we are then better able to think rationally and plan our next move. We will also be able to deliberate on our actions better: how should we interact and engage with those who have negative perceptions toward us? And how can we correct these false, misleading perceptions?

These are some of the challenges that our community is currently facing. Let us return to the true and beautiful values taught by Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. Understand and appreciate these noble values. May Allah s.w.t. grant us guidance and strength during these trying times, to continue to be on the path chosen by Allah. Ameen.

بَارَكَ اللهُ 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 اللهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا
فَوْزَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِينَ.