



**Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura**

**Friday Sermon**

**15 July 2016 / 10 Syawal 1437H**

**Al-Ilm as The First Pillar of Hikmah**

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْغَنِيِّ الْحَمِيدِ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ الْمَبْعُوثُ بِالرَّحْمَةِ وَالْقَوْلِ السَّديدِ، 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.

Jemaah,

Let us fill our hearts with taqwa to Allah s.w.t. with the highest level of taqwa. Fulfil all of His commands and abstain from His prohibitions. May Allah s.w.t. grant us His forgiveness. Amin.

Beloved Friday jemaah,

In last week's sermon, we have discussed about one aspect of hikmah. Today, let us continue to learn the other aspects of having hikmah.

Friday Jemaah,

What would you do if you know a teenager who was born Muslim, raised as a Muslim and staying with a Muslim family, but he doubts the existence of God, or refuses to perform acts of worship such as solat? How would we approach the teenager? What is the approach to help guide the teenager back to the right path?

We cannot deny that a person who wants to advise others must ensure that he himself is knowledgeable. In our effort to guide others to the path of Allah s.w.t. with hikmah (wisdom), one must first be equipped with knowledge. Allah s.w.t. says:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Meaning: *“Say, “This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me. And exalted is Allah; and I am not of those who associate others with Him”.* [Surah Yusuf, verse 108]

According to Imam Ibn Kathir rahimahullah, the verse that has just been recited teaches us that the approach used by Rasulullah s.a.w. in his effort to call others to the path of Allah, was to present evidences that appealed to the common sense and that were in line with the Syariah. In other words, the approach that Rasulullah s.a.w. used was based on knowledge or ilm.

Respected jemaah,

Let us reflect upon a story that was shared by Rasulullah s.a.w. It is about a man from Bani Isra'il who killed 99 people. When he wanted to repent, he consulted a monk. *“Will the door of repentance be opened for me?”* he asked. The monk replied: *“No”*. Out of desperation, the man ended up killing the monk as well. He then asked another person the same question and was told: *“Go to that village (to seek repentance)”*. However, on his way to the village, the man passed away.

Rasulullah s.a.w. said: *“Because of that incident, the angel of mercy and the angel of wrath (azab) had a disagreement, and so Allah commanded the land that he was headed to (which was the village from which he wanted to seek repentance) to move nearer, and the land that he left (the place where the sin was committed) to move further. Allah then commanded the angels: “Measure the distance”. And as a result, the man was closer to the village (to seek repentance), and he was forgiven”*.

Jemaah,

Among the important lessons from the story is the need for knowledge in guiding others. In fact, if we guide others but we ourselves lack knowledge, then it will bring about negative effects to ourselves as well as others. A good example would be the story I have shared earlier. When the monk gave the wrong answer he had caused the man to commit another crime

and the monk himself ended losing his life. Hence, the wrong answer given can cause a person who wants to repent to be diverted from the door of repentance. As a result, he ends up further away from God and His guidance.

The second lesson for us to learn from, is that a person who needs guidance should always refer to those who are knowledgeable and experts in the field. This is to ensure that he receives proper and appropriate guidance.

A person who is ill should seek help from a medical expert. Likewise, a person who has questions about the meaning of verses in the Quran, the meaning of any hadith as well as fiqh rulings, has to refer to an expert in tafsir, hadith and fiqh. Each field has its experts and we need to respect their expertise. Allah s.w.t. says in the Quran:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِيْ اِلَيْهِمْ فَسْأَلُوْا اَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ  
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾

*“And We sent not before you except men to whom We revealed [Our message]. So ask the people of the message if you do not know.” [Surah an-Nahl verse 43]*

Friday Jemaah,

Rasulullah s.a.w. emphasised the need for knowledge in guiding others to the path of God. Imam Sufyan al-Thauri

rahimahullah said: “One should not call upon others to goodness and prevent harm unless one has these three traits. **First:** Gentleness when asking and gentleness when forbidding. **Second:** Being just when asking and just when forbidding. **And third:** Has knowledge about what he is asking others to do and has knowledge about what he is forbidding others from doing.”

The importance of knowledge when reprimanding others is also emphasised by the companions. For example, when we study the life of Khalifah ‘Ali bin Abi Talib r.a., we will find that among his biggest challenge was to deal with the *khawarij*. To deal with the issue, he sent ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas r.a. to meet them and have a dialogue with them.

According to a scholar of history, Dr. Ali Muhammad As-Salabi, there are several lessons that can be gained from the debate between Ibn ‘Abbas and the *khawarij*. For example, one must not only be equipped with knowledge and information when being involved in discussions and dialogues, but one also has to be tactful in presenting the arguments with *hikmah* (wisdom). Khalifah ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib r.a. chose ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas r.a. to meet with the Khawarij because he was one of the companions who was an expert in the tafsir of the Quran. With his knowledge, steadfastness and his wise approach in discussions, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas r.a. met the Khawarij. Alhamdulillah, almost 2000 of them returned the right path. Allahu Akbar!

Hence, while we may be armed with religious knowledge, or are aware of a certain religious issue, we must also be tactful and wise in delivering the information to others. For example, when visiting relatives during this month of Syawal, we may notice something that may make us feel uneasy. We may also be aware of the religious ruling regarding the matter that we have noticed. However, we should think hard if it is the right place and time to bring up the matter. Is it appropriate to reprimand a person in front of other family members? Would this embarrass the person and hence causing the message and advice that we intended to deliver be ignored?

Thus, take into consideration wisdom, or *hikmah*, when spreading religious knowledge and information about the *deen*.

Blessed Friday jemaah,

Let us make doa to Allah s.w.t. that He grants us beneficial knowledge and bestows upon us the determination and strength to always seek knowledge as long as we live, and to make it easy for us to perform good deeds based on the knowledge that we have gained. Amin Ya Rabbal Alamin.

بَارَكَ اللهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ  
الآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ 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.