



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

13 May 2016 / 6 Syaaban 1437H

Manners When Interacting With Non-Muslims

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْحَمِيدِ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ الْمَبْعُوثُ بِالرَّحْمَةِ وَالْقَوْلِ السَّديدِ، اَللّهُمَّ 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,

Have takwa in Allah with the highest level of takwa by obeying all of His commands and abstaining from His prohibitions. One of the meaning of takwa is to feel Allah's presence – to constantly be God-conscious. Being aware of Allah's presence is not limited to the time when we are at the mosque, or on the prayer mat. It is more than that – it is feeling Allah's presence in our hearts, wherever we are.

Friday Jemaah,

Last week's sermon discussed about diversity in humankind, as well as Allah's reminders that we have to take into account when interacting with others. Today I will expand on these reminders, focusing on our interactions and communications with non-Muslims.

The Quran often calls upon Muslims to reflect upon our origins, and it often reminds us to never deviate from Allah's path and guidance. This is to ensure that we have constant reminders of Allah's guidance, and that we will always be aware, appreciative and truly understand the signs of Allah's greatness.

When Muslims interact with non-Muslims, whether at work, school, their neighbourhood, or any other places, they should remember and abide by Allah's reminders. One of these important reminders is: **Appreciating and recognising a person's freedom of religion**. In this matter, Allah says in the Quran:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ

Which means: *"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion"*. [Surah Al-Baqarah 2:256]

Syeikh Muhammad Rasyīd Redhā deliberated on this verse in his book tafsir al-Manār. He wrote that *"no compulsion in the*

acceptance of the religion” is one of the main principles of Islam and is a very important pillar to abide by. Hence, we cannot force a person to embrace Islam nor can we force anyone, including our own family, to leave their religion.

The thrust of dakwah in Islam is by explaining and clarifying the religion to those who have yet to believe, the truth from misguidance. It is then up to them to accept Islam or otherwise.

The verse provides guidelines that Islam does not allow for one to be forced into the religion, in fact, Islam emphasises respecting one another. Hence, on the same note, Allah forbids us from insulting others’ beliefs and faiths. Allah s.w.t says in Surah Al-An’ām, verse 108:

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

Which means: *“And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge. Thus We have made pleasing to every community their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them about what they used to do”*.

There are several main lessons that we can learn from the verse. It is not the way of a Muslim to insult nor make fun of the beliefs of others because it will not bring about any benefits to Islam. Islam was revealed to guide humankind to the truth, whereas insults and harsh words are the weapon of those who have weak faith. Hence, the voice and words of those who insult others should not be exemplified by any Muslim who loves goodness and harmony. Not only will it drive people apart but it can also harm the relations that have been established, and it can bring one further from the mercy or rahmah of Allah s.w.t.

Blessed Friday Jemaah,

The unrest and violence that we witness around the world today, done in the name of religion, have brought about much hostility, enmity and death. It is a tragedy where no one wins, and everyone loses.

Not a single person (whether a Muslim or non-Muslim) who has good, noble values in him, would rejoice at the sight of the destruction and death caused by oppression. What more when it involves millions of lives – from innocent children, to fragile elderly, and many innocent others.

Although there are people out there who are trying to destroy humankind, let us be among those who strive to bring goodness to the world community.

Blessed Friday Jemaah,

As Muslims in Singapore who live in a multi-faith and multi-racial society, we should not make differences of religious beliefs as a hurdle for us to live harmoniously together. We cannot allow any war, enmity and conflicts to colour our thoughts as to how we view people of other faiths, and people who hold a different opinion from us. We cannot allow people who like to incite hatred, stroke the flames of anger and encourage hostility, to destroy the peace and good relations that we have achieved in this country.

We have to hold true to the Islamic principle of spreading peace and harmony. This should be reflected in our speech and action. By holding on to this principle, we will always love peace, tranquility, and be willing to extend our hand to those who love prosperity for all.

One of the first things that was mentioned by Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. when he arrived in Madinah after his migration (hijrah) was:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ، أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ ، وَأَطْعِمُوا الطَّعَامَ ، وَصِلُوا الْأَرْحَامَ ،
وَصَلُّوا وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ .

Which means: O' People, spread salaam and feed the people, keep good relations with your kith and kin and at nightfall engage yourself in salaah while others are asleep, for you will enter Paradise safely. (Hadith riwayat Imam At-Tirmizi dan Ibn Abi Syaibah).

Jemaah,

Just as how we yearn for Allah's forgiveness and rahmah in this blessed month of Sya'ban, we should also exude the values of mercy in our daily lives. Let us reflect upon ourselves and strengthen our religious practices so that we will be at the forefront in spreading peace and mercy to those who are in need of them. May Allah grant us happiness in this world and eternal success in the hereafter. Amin Ya Rabbal Alamin.

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