



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

23 January 2015 / 2 Rabiulakhir 1436

**Acting Wisely and Graciously as  
The Sunnah of Rasulullah s.a.w.**

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

Beloved jemaah,

Let us strengthen our takwa by upholding the teachings of Allah and His messenger s.a.w. and avoiding all His prohibitions.

Friday jemaah,

In the past month of Rabiulawal, we have immersed ourselves in the fragrance of the beautiful character and exemplary personality of Rasulullah s.a.w. We have been reminded to emulate him and follow in his footsteps. We proclaim our love

for him, and express how much we miss him; we recite blessings upon the Prophet s.a.w. and read stories about him, in our hope to become better believers.

My dear jemaah, with our love and respect for him, we are angered, disappointed and shocked by acts which insult, revile and mock our beloved Rasulullah s.a.w. These feelings stem from the love of his ummah for their Prophet s.a.w; our love to the beacon that enlightens our lives.

This love stems from our iman (faith), and begins with the shahadah that we proclaim; that there is no God but Allah and Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. is His last Messenger. However, does everyone in this world share our belief? Obviously not. Humanity is diverse, and this is a fact. The noble Quran often reminds us that the diversity of humankind is a sunnah of God's creation. As humankind, we must therefore be wise in managing differences and living in this diversity. If we fail to do so, then humanity as a whole will crumble.

Because of such differences, problems and issues cannot be avoided. Therefore, what we need is a code of conduct and fundamental principles that are agreeable to all; a code of conduct that can be accepted by all civilised communities; a code of conduct that allows us to live together in peace and harmony despite our differences and diversity. A key principle and code of conduct is the need for mutual respect – respect for

one's beliefs, one's religion, and refrain from hurting the feelings of any group. That is a key principle of Islam. Allah s.w.t. says in surah Al-An'am 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.”*

The Prophet s.a.w. himself led by example in this matter. In a hadith reported by Imam Al-Bukhari, a group of people walked past the Prophet s.a.w. and said: *“As-sam ‘alaikum”* which means *“death be upon you”*. Hearing that, Saidatina Aisyah r.a. stood up and said: *“death and the curse of Allah be upon you”*. Allah's Messenger s.a.w. said: *“Be calm, O 'Aisyah! Allah loves gentleness and calmness in all matters.”* In a narration reported by Imam Muslim, Rasulullah s.a.w. said: *“Oh Aisyah, verily Allah is the Most Gentle and loves gentleness, and He bestows gentleness upon what was not bestowed with harshness”*.

This incident shows how Rasulullah s.a.w. distinguished what is “good” from what is “bad”. This is an important distinction which Allah s.w.t. explains in Surah Fussilat verse 34:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۗ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ  
أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ

حَمِيمٌ

Which means: *“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”*

Friday jemaah, in light of this, how should we react when we encounter what is bad? What should our response be? Whether in the hadith earlier, or in many other stories of the Prophet s.a.w., he had shown us that it is our right to react and respond. But as an ummah that truly love the Prophet s.a.w., we must aim to react and respond like him. Yes, we must be firm to reject mocking, ridicule, and insult, but firmness does not mean aggression, let alone violence. Be firm and be wise in our response. Reject such hurtful ideas and views at the level of ideas.

Just imagine for a second if the Prophet s.a.w. responded unkindness with the same level of bitterness, or worse, with violence. He never did, and instead, chose a wise way to deal with hurtful expressions. He did not get distracted from his mission to do good to everyone. He broke the cycle of hostility and enmity.

The path of the Prophet s.a.w. is not an easy one. It is not easy to return an evil act with kindness. It is a lot easier to listen to our emotions, and to let anger determine our reactions. However, this is our challenge set to us in the Quran. The Quranic verse read earlier continues in verse 35 Surah Fussilat:

وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

Which means: *“But none is granted it except those who are patient, and none is granted it except one having a great portion [of good].”*

Patience here means that we, Muslims, always need to think long-term. We have to be persistent in upholding the nobility and purity of our religion, and the beauty of good character, and only this will change the perception others have of our religion. Remember, perceptions cannot be changed overnight.

At the same time, we need to maintain the need for mutual respect. Where we live, mutual respect is a gift that we have

enjoyed, and we should be grateful to Allah for this great blessing.

Blessed jemaah, we therefore have a challenge before us. Throughout his life, Rasulullah s.a.w. had been chased away, he had been hurt, insults were hurled at him. But the Prophet s.a.w. took a better and more effective approach. This is the Islam that we inherit. This is his sunnah that we must follow. This is the path that we should tread. Know that we are being tested by Allah s.w.t. to enliven this sunnah. Defend our beloved Rasulullah s.a.w. and his teachings by increasing our efforts to be an exemplary community. Spread goodness. Instill mutual respect. Let us become those who appreciate and uphold the sunnah of Rasulullah in all aspects of our lives; socially, economically, and educationally.

Let us be mature in dealing with today's life's challenges. Strive to display the way that is *al-ahsan*, i.e. the better approach. Indeed that is the challenge set for us in the Quran in Surah An-nahl verses 125:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ  
وَجَدِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ  
ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

Which means: *“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.*

May we become such people. May Allah grant us wisdom and patience in holding on to the teachings of our religion.

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.