



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

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The Value of Forgiveness in Islam

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْخَبِيرِ الْحَكِيمِ ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ
الْقَوِيُّ الْمَتِينُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ صَادِقُ
الْوَعْدِ الْأَمِينِ ، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ
وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ .
أَمَّا بَعْدُ ، فَيَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ ، أُوصِيكُمْ وَنَفْسِي بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ ، فَقَدْ
فَازَ مَنْ اتَّقَى وَخَابَ مَنْ عَصَى .

Allah s.w.t. says in Surah Al-Aa'raf, verses 199 and 200:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾
وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

Which means: “Keep to forgiveness, and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant. And if it should happen that a prompting from Satan stirs thee up [to anger], seek refuge with Allah: behold, He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”

In another Surah Al-Syura, verse 37, Allah s.w.t. says:

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ
يَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

Which means: *“And who shun the more heinous sins and abominations; and who, whenever they are moved to anger, readily forgive.”*

Respected jemaah,

Let us increase our taqwa to Allah s.w.t. by obeying all of His commands and abstaining from His prohibitions. Uphold the noble values that Allah s.w.t. taught us, as exemplified by His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. May Allah s.w.t. grant us His blessings and forgiveness.

Let us take some time to reflect upon our lives. Do we remember a time in our adulthood in which we did no wrong in our lives? Do we know of a human, apart from the protected messengers of God, who do not err? I am certain the answer is no. Our human tendencies and emotions, of fear, anger, resentment, hostility, disgust, contempt, often lead to errors and mistakes on our part whether these are through words, actions, or decisions. When we do wrong, we often hurt others, whether in small or big ways.

Our mistakes and wrongdoings are reminders that as humans, we are not perfect. But does Allah s.w.t. want us to remain as

such? Are we left to drown in our shortcomings as a result of our mistakes and sins?

No. In fact, Allah s.w.t. wants the shortcomings that caused one to make mistakes, to be replaced by good deeds. Allah wants mistakes to be mended and corrected. He wants hurt to be permanently removed. How can this be achieved?

We can seek guidance from the attributes of Allah s.w.t. and His beautiful names. One of His names mentioned in the Holy Quran is “*al-Ghafūr al-Rahīm*”, which means the All-forgiving, All-merciful. This pairing is mentioned more than 70 times in the Quran.

Friday jemaah,

The way to make up for our shortcomings and imperfections is through forgiving. Forgiveness is therefore a sacred act. It originates from Allah s.w.t., taught and exemplified by Allah himself, for He is most generous with His forgiveness toward His creations.

Therefore as Muslims, forgiveness is not a strange concept. We often seek forgiveness from one another, especially during festive seasons. This is a very important practice in life, and not just a seasonal practice. Let us reflect upon this.

Forgiveness is a positive deed, which follows a negative act. It is extremely powerful, because it erases any bad act. It allows one to restart and rebuild. It fuels optimism. It transforms attitudes, from the negative to the positive.

Just think about it, when you forgive someone, what actually happens? Firstly, is it easy to forgive someone who has hurt us or wronged us? When we choose to forgive, we have managed to overcome our emotions and control our desires. In a sense, we have obtained victory over our own nafs, which is also the objective we seek to achieve through the many acts of worship we are recommended to perform.

To forgive is not the same as being weak. In fact, forgiveness reflects strength. Because when you forgive, you are able to control your feelings and anger, which is the most difficult human desire to overcome. This is already explained in the Holy Quran in Surah Al-Shura verse 43:

﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

Which means: *“But indeed those who show patience and forgive, that would be an affair of great resolution.”*

Blessed jemaah,

Let us reflect upon how the Noble Quran discusses mercy and mutual forgiveness among humankind. Allah s.w.t. says in Surah Al- Taghabun, verse 14:

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنِّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا
لَكُمْ فَأَحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِن تَعَفَّوْا وَتَصَفَّحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

Which means: “O you who believe! Truly, among your wives and your children are enemies to you (i.e. some of their demands may conflict with moral and religious teachings), so beware of them. But if you forgive, overlook, and cover up (their faults), verily Allah is most Forgiving, most Merciful.”

This verse speaks of human forgiveness using three beautiful concepts:

First: “*ta’fū*” which means, to forget and to remove the mistakes of others from one’s mind; second: “*tasfahū*” which means to turn away from and to ignore other’s mistakes; third: “*taghfirū*” which means to cover up the sins and wrongdoings of others.

Let us strive to emulate the character and noble akhlak of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w., especially how forgiving he is. Among the beautiful traits of Rasulallah s.a.w. as reported in the many books of sirah (prophetic history):

كَانَ يَعْفُو عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَهُ

Which means: He (Rasulallah s.a.w.) often forgave those who hurt and oppressed him. Rasulallah s.a.w. chose to forgive and not to retaliate.

Friday jemaah,

Let us try to appreciate the importance of forgiveness. Let us instil forgiveness in our lives. Start today. Start right now. Think of someone who had wronged us, someone whom we still could not forgive. Someone whom we are still angry at, for the words they uttered, or an act which had transgressed us or our loved ones. Now, try to forgive them. Hopefully, when we make this choice, Allah s.w.t will shower us with His rahmah and forgiveness, InsyaAllah. Amin Ya Rabbal 'Alamin.

InshaAllah, in next week's sermon, we will discuss more about forgiveness. We will focus on divine forgiveness and how God shows His mercy to us through His attributes of being the All-forgiving.

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.