



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Eidul Adha Sermon

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Religious Knowledge As Our Guidance

الله أَكْبَرُ 9x

الله أَكْبَرُ، مَا تَقَرَّبَ الْعَبْدُ بِقُرْبَانٍ.

الله أَكْبَرُ، مَا رَغِبَ الْعَابِدُونَ فِي الْعُفْرَانِ.

الله أَكْبَرُ، مَا حَمَدَهُ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجَانُ.

الله أَكْبَرُ، مَا جَرَتِ الْكَوَاكِبُ بِحُسْبَانٍ.

الله أَكْبَرُ، اللهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللهُ أَكْبَرُ.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَاللهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللهُ أَكْبَرُ وَاللهُ الْحَمْدُ.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ هَذَا الشَّهْرَ وَجَعَلَ عِبَادَةَ الْحَجِّ وَعِيدَ

الْأَضْحَى مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللهِ وَإِحْيَاءَهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ. أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا

إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ

وَرَسُولَهُ الْمَبْعُوثُ رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى

سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَيَا عِبَادَ اللهِ، اتَّقُوا اللهُ، وَأَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللهِ، فَقَدْ

فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Blessed Jemaah,

In these blessed moments, let us seek from Allah s.w.t. to help increase our iman and takwa towards Him. As we make takbir praising His might and glorifying Him, let us humble ourselves. Let the awareness of Allah's greatness be present in our hearts by reflecting on all the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon us. He is the One who has given us good health and iman. He has also blessed us with our families and wealth so that we may enjoy peace and happiness in this temporary life. May Allah s.w.t. place us, as well as our brothers and sisters who are performing haj, among those who attain His pleasure. Amin ya Rabbal 'Alamin.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ،
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APPRECIATING THE MONTH OF ZULHIJJAH

Beloved Muslimin and Muslimat, the coming of Eiduladha every year reminds us of the sacrifice of Prophet Ibrahim and his son, Prophet Ismail. Theirs is a great story of sacrifice and is a lesson repeated told every Eiduladha.

However, the precedent of Prophet Ibrahim's noble character is not only reflected when he fulfilled Allah's command to sacrifice Prophet Ismail, but was also evident in his concern towards the success and welfare of his family. The supplications he made for his children and his progeny captured the profound love of a

father. Among the supplications mentioned in the Quran is in surah Al-Baqarah verse 128:

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا
مَنَاسِكَانَا وَتُبَّ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

Meaning: “Our Lord, make us Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You. And show us our rites and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Most Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.”

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اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ .

A PROBLEMATIC UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGION

Jemaah,

Prophet Ibrahim was not only diligently guiding humankind, but he also directed equal attention to his family. He wanted to ensure the success and safety of his children both in this world and the hereafter. My brothers and sisters, this is an example we should emulate. It is natural for us to yearn for the success of being rewarded with a place in Paradise with our family and descendants. That is what true love is: the love of parents that will ultimately guide their children to Allah’s Paradise. This is as what Allah s.w.t. says in Surah at-Thur verse 21:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ
مِّنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ ﴿٢١﴾

Meaning: *“And those who believed and whose descendants followed them in faith - We will gather them with their descendants, and We will not deprive them of anything of their deeds. Every person, for what he earned, is retained.”*

Muslimin and Muslimat, this desire will not be attained if we were to simply dream and wish for it. Besides making prayers, we need to be diligent in carrying out efforts that will gain us and our families a place in Allah’s Paradise.

One of the most essential efforts is to ensure that we develop their religious knowledge and understanding. Only with knowledge will they be equipped with the belief that Allah is One. Only with knowledge will they be able to perform acts of worship as commanded by Allah. And only by having a proper understanding of religion, will they be guided to continue living as Muslims who have earned Allah’s pleasure, and to be safe from confusion and ignorance in practising religion.

In the past we were concerned of ideologies and concepts that were contradictory to Islamic beliefs as we worry that these may lead our children astray. But today, we also need to be careful of interpretations within our religion that can cause confusion,

disorder and problems. One particular example would be the teachings that encourage its followers to condemn fellow Muslims as kafir, or those that call upon their followers to judge other Muslims as deviant. This clearly contradicts what Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. had reminded us in a hadith:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَ : مَنْ قَالَ لِأَخِيهِ يَا
كَافِرٍ، فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِهَا أَحَدُهُمَا.

Meaning: *“Verily Rasulullah s.a.w. said: When a man says to his companion ‘O you Kafir’ then this would be necessarily binding upon one of the two!”*.

This habit of labelling others as kafir or a deviant, or to perceive that one is in a position to deprive others from receiving Allah’s mercy is not something that we should allow to perpetuate among the community. These days we find that there are people – and sometimes they are not even experts in the field of Islamic studies – who will irresponsibly judge fellow Muslims as practisers of bid’ah, worshippers of the grave, or that they are not from amongst the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama’ah – over matters that are being debated by the scholars.

What is more alarming is that such a perspective exists not only within one particular orientation of the religion. In fact, individuals who perpetuate such an exclusive mindset may

come from the different orientation within the religion – the Sufis, the Salafis and so on.

Dear jemaah, do not let the devil stoke the flames of hatred between us. Heed the opinion of Imam Ibn ‘Abidin in his book Rad al-Muhtar: *“If there are 70 opinions that agree to condemn a mukmin as kafir and there is only one opinion – even if it is weak – that does not condemn the believer as a kafir, then a Qadhi or Mufti must take the opinion that does not condemn the believer as kafir.”*

And then there are also religious opinions which state that Muslims cannot live in harmony with non-Muslims. These are the people who selectively choose and search for opinions which are more antagonistic towards non-Muslims, when in fact if we were to study them, we will find that those opinions and fatwa were issued at a time when Muslims were living in an environment where there was conflict and tension, and in some instances during times of war.

Those opinions are hence inappropriate to be applied in Singapore where we live in peace and have good relations with followers of other faiths. Such antagonistic opinions can fan the flames of hatred and discomfort in engaging with people of other religions, and will in fact give the wrong impression about Islam and Muslims.

Those who are inclined toward these opinions often quote certain verses from the Quran, including Surah al-Maidah, verse 51, in which Allah s.w.t. says, which means: *“O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.”*

At a glance, one may interpret this verse as a command to prevent us from having good relations with non-Muslims. However, we need to truly understand the reason behind the revelation of this verse in order to be able to understand according to the objective of its revelation.

In his tafsir, Imam As-Suyuthi wrote that it was narrated that the verse was revealed when there was conflict and treason committed by the Jews towards the peace treaty with Rasulullah s.a.w. This means that this verse is only appropriate to be used only in similar situations. It is not a blanket statement calling us to develop enmity with non-Muslims. And it is definitely not to be used as a form of evidence to prevent us from exchanging greetings during religious festivals of other faiths, or to work together with them in living together as a community – especially when they are our friends, neighbours or even family members. In fact, Rasulullah s.a.w. had also

engaged the service of non-Muslims to help with important matters.

One such instance was when Rasulullah s.a.w. engaged Abdullah bin 'Urayqit, a non-Muslim, as a guide during his important migration to Madinah. The Prophet s.a.w. also gave protection to Muth'im bin Adiy, a non-Muslim, when he came back from the battle in Thaif.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING KNOWLEDGE FROM RELIABLE SOURCES

Jemaah, the misconstrued opinions that I have shared earlier, although they may seem valid, may actually spark hatred and animosity between Muslims and non-Muslims in today's context. Such opinions can also create unhappiness and discomfort in staying in a plural society like Singapore, on the basis that Singapore is not deemed as Islamic enough. If we allow such perspectives to influence the minds of our children and families, I fear that they will be misguided from the path of goodness and mercy as required by the religion. What is worse is if they were to believe in the propaganda of groups that call Muslims to acts of violence and terrorism that can claim many innocent lives.

Hence, we should be careful in choosing the person who would guide us religiously. We need to ensure that the religious teachers that teach us and our families have the expertise, knowledge, and ability to teach Islam in accordance with the needs of the Singapore's context. Are we willing to seek knowledge from teachers who will preach problematic ideas, as I described earlier? I believe not.

It is on this basis that the scholars and senior asatizah in this country, together with Muis and Pergas, had decided to set up the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS) more than ten years ago. It was started with the aim of ensuring that members of the community who wish to seek religious guidance are able to identify asatizah who are trained and have the required skills needed. It is hoped that with the accreditation system, ARS, the integrity of the Islamic education institution in Singapore will be safeguarded from irresponsible individuals who want to spread religious perspectives that can be problematic or even deviant.

Besides that, we also need to take note of the content taught during the religious classes attended by our children, as well as the sources that they access online. As parents, we must be curious as to what our children are learning, reading and watching. We need to ask what they learn. Problematic teachings are easily accessed via the internet, and are widespread online, thus we must be extremely concerned. If, for

example, we find that our children were to start discussing about taking up arms and fight for a certain group, community, Islamic state and so on, we should ensure that we get immediate help from the local mosques, or directly contact Office of the Mufti or the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG).

Muslimin and muslimat, let us humble ourselves and together extend our doa to Allah Azza wa Jalla. Ya Allah, the Protector of Kaabah! Protect us, our families and community from negative influences in this world and the hereafter. Protect our iman and takwa with true knowledge that You are pleased with. Guide us with the inextinguishable light of Your hidayah. Guide us in upholding Your religion and spreading goodness as You have commanded.

Ya Halim Ya Latif, strengthen our relationships, extinguish the flames of animosity, hatred and vengeance in our hearts. Soften our hearts with showers of Your mercy. Adorn our character with the beauty of the sunnah of Your Messenger and place us among those who will be the dwellers of Your Paradise, Ya Arhamar Rahimin.

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.