



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

25 August 2017 / 3 Zulhijjah 1438

The Ethics of Engaging The

Community

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْغَنِيِّ 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 السَّدِيدِ، اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا. أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.

Respected Friday Jemaah,

All praises are due to Allah for the gift of iman and peace that we have enjoyed. Let us strive to guard our taqwa in Allah s.w.t. May Allah s.w.t. shower us with His barakah and peace in our lives.

Jemaah,

Throughout this month, the sermons have centred on an important issue that every Muslim should know. The sermons discussed on how Muslims should live today as a citizen of a

state. Muslims will always work hard to ensure that they contribute to the peace and prosperity of the community that they live in. They will join in the contributing and developing, and their existence is hence valued by those around them.

Jemaah,

Today, I would like to talk about another aspect that we need to pay attention to when interacting and dealing with the community. Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said:

المؤمن الذي يخالط الناس ويصبر على أذاهم خير من المؤمن الذي لا
يخالط الناس ولا يصبر على أذاهم.

Meaning: *The believer who mixes with the people and endures their annoyances, is better than the one who does not mix with them and does not endure their annoyances.* (Hadith reported by At-Tirmizi).

What does the phrase “mixes with people” mean? According to Imam Al-Mubarakfuri, “mixes with people” here refers to a Mukmin (believer) who lives with and among others.

Respected Jemaah,

This hadith is a prophetic guidance for a person in living as a member of a community. It was a choice made by Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. as well as his companions. When Rasulullah s.a.w. moved to the city of Madinah, he chose to live in the

heart of the community, and be part of the community instead of isolating himself. Our beloved Messenger s.a.w. interacted with those around him; he listened to their complaints, and he engaged them. And the *khulafa' Ar-Rasyidun* followed his footsteps. They ensured that besides themselves, their subordinates also take the same approach of engaging the people, and to be updated of the issues that the community are facing. By interacting and engaging the general public, a Muslim is able to extend his kindness where needed, to carry out good deeds for the sake of a greater good, as well as giving advice to one another. Allah s.w.t. said in Surah Al-'Asr verses 1-3:


 وَالْعَصْرِ ۱
 إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۲
 إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا
 بِالصَّبْرِ ۳

Meaning: *By time! Indeed, mankind is in a loss, Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.*

Jemaah,

The hadith that was read earlier was a reminder and guidance regarding the challenges that one will face when dealing with the community. Rasulullah s.a.w. said “*and endures their annoyances*”, as a reminder that people have different

characters, attitudes, whims and fancies. And thus, when dealing with a diverse community, there will be unexpected challenges, and misunderstanding is bound to happen. For example, there are those who do not observe good ethics in their speech, actions, or comments on social media.

Therefore, as people who live by the teachings of Islam, we understand the need to uphold good adab, to be patient at all times, and in any situation. When people extend kindness to us, we should repay with kindness. But when people are hurtful, even if it angers us, to the point that we are tempted to respond in a harsh manner, we are able to hold ourselves back, as we know that Islam teaches us to uphold good adab and to be ethical.

If we respond harshness with harshness, or evil with evil, then we are no different from them. Instead, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. taught us to guard our tongues and cleanse our hearts. Let the situation pass, and when the time is right, give advice and guidance with wisdom. Doing so means we do not make sinister remarks, or use sarcastic words that may worsen the situation.

Let me share with you some wise words from Imam Al-Ghazali r.a., on giving advice. To him, giving advice means we want Allah s.w.t. to continue showering His blessings upon our brother.

Subhanallah! If we ponder upon the words of Imam Al-Ghazali, we will realise that it is packed with wisdom. Imam Al-Ghazali opines that if one is to dispense advice to others, it is not meant to bring the friend down, nor is it to release anger or as an act of revenge. Instead, giving advice begins with having a sincere intention and hoping for goodness for all of humanity. This is the goal that a Muslim should have in mind when practising the sunnah of advising one another. Be conscious of the sincerity in your heart whenever you want to advise someone.

Jemaah,

The last lesson that I would like to share is that whenever we meet challenges while dealing with the community, or if we were to face a negative situation, we should not give up or feel despair. Rather, it should ignite our spirit to continue to contribute and strive to bring about changes and spread goodness.

It requires a paradigm shift in attitude, one that is always looking at the good of others and the potential of every individual to give, and not simply to look at the negative. Indeed, that was how the Prophet s.a.w. lived. This was especially true during the early days of Islam. He met with various challenges, backlash and opposition in his effort to spread the message of Islam to those around him. However, he did not give up, not even once. Instead, Rasulullah s.a.w. would always look towards the goodness of humanity. He would focus

on the potential of every individual – the current potential, and the future potential.

We pray to Allah and ask from Him that He grant us noble hearts, pure minds, and taqwa in ourselves that will drive us to always give, contribute and sacrifice for the welfare of others, solely for the sake of Allah s.w.t. And hopefully, through the efforts that we have undertaken to contribute, it will enable us to attain Allah's barakah in this life and the hereafter, Amin.

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.