



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

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Appreciating the Beauty of Islamic Jurisprudence

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَ أَيْدِ النَّاسِ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَ الْبَيَانَ،
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ شَهِدَ لِنَفْسِهِ
الْوَحْدَانِيَّةَ وَ الْإِحْسَانَ وَ شَهِدَ بِهِمَا مَلَائِكَتُهُ وَ الثَّقَلَانِ، وَأَشْهَدُ
أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ الْمَبْعُوثُ بِالرَّحْمَةِ وَ الرِّضْوَانِ ،
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ
تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا. أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا
تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.

Respected Jemaah,

In this blessed moment, let us humble ourselves and ask Allah s.w.t. to strengthen our iman and taqwa, and grant us thorough understanding of our beloved religion. A thorough understanding of religion gives light to religious practices which radiate goodness and brings about prosperity. Likewise, religious practices which stem from misguidance will lead a person to difficulty and may even cause harm to those around

him/her. Hence, Allah s.w.t. places emphasises in surah Az-Zumar, verse 9:

أَمَّنْهُوَ قَنْتُءَانَاءُ أَلَيْلٍ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُو رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٩﴾

Meaning: *"Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing [in prayer], fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, [like one who does not]? Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding."*

This verse reminds us of the relationship shared between knowledge (ilm), practice (amal) and acts of worship (ibadah). Without knowledge, one may find himself/herself trapped in the pits of destruction due to his/her insistence to practice religion without sufficient knowledge.

Allow me to share a story that took place in the lifetime of our Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. which serves as evidence on the importance of practicing the teachings of Islam based on knowledge and understanding. Once, a companion (Sahabah) of the Prophet s.a.w. suffered a grievous wound whilst he was travelling. He was then in a state of janabah. He sought the opinions of several other companions who were travelling with him if he should be performing ghusl or was there any other

means of purification which were better suited for his condition. The companion who was with him told him to perform ghusl as he was under the impression that there was no concession on the matter. He then proceeded to perform ghusl, which inevitably caused his death. When news of his death reached Rasulullah s.a.w., the Prophet s.a.w. became very angry and said: *“Why did they not ask when they didn’t know the answer for sure. Surely the medicine for ignorance is by asking!”* In fact, when wounded, it is sufficient for one to perform tayammum and wash the remaining parts which are unharmed. [Hadith reported by Imam Abu Daud]

Jemaah,

This story emphasizes the importance of comprehensive knowledge and understanding of religion in any given religious practice. What is meant by knowledge is not only limited to acts of worship such as how we perform our prayer. We need to realize that the fields of Islamic knowledge such as fiqh, extends far beyond practices and rituals. It takes into consideration one’s situation, whether the environment he/she is in allows him/her to perform prayer as he/she normally would, or would he/she require concession in certain areas.

When it comes to religious practices, Allah s.w.t. does not want us to feel burdened or experience difficulty. Thus, we should never shy away from asking questions in any religious practice,

whether a religious practice performed in a particular manner at a particular time and condition may cause ease or difficulty for someone, or even endanger his/her life. Hence Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah wrote in his book *I'lam Al-Muwaqqi'ain*: “*The Shariah is justice (‘adl) in its entirety, mercy (rahmah) in its entirety, wisdom (hikmah) in its entirety and benefit (maslahah) in its entirety.*”

Such words from scholars reminds us that there is a need for change and development in Islamic jurisprudence. This ensures that the objective of Islam, which safeguards the prosperity of human life, is maintained. It is undeniable that there are rulings (hukum) which can never be changed, for example, performing the five daily prayers, fasting the month of Ramadan, and so on. Even though there are instances which requires a person to make adjustments according to his/her needs and condition. For example, a patient who is unable to stand and perform his/her prayers is given concession to perform his/her prayers in a manner suitable to his/her health condition, yet the ruling of performing prayer remains obligatory till the end of time.

Despite that, there are several rulings which were based on *ijtihad* and the needs of the community at a certain point in time, that requires change and development to better suit the needs of time. The fluidity of Islamic jurisprudence ensures that wherever a person is, he is able to practise and uphold the teachings of Islam.

Therefore, when we hear changes to fatwas and religious rulings. We should not limit to only asking for evidences supporting the fatwa or rulings, but we should also strive to understand and comprehend the need for change. What are the needs and benefits that it seeks to fulfil? What are the difficulties it seeks to overcome?

Let us not be quick to assume that a change in fatwa means it is dated and does not fulfil the needs of Islam. In fact, if we study the changes that were made, we will surely realise that it is aimed to preserve life, health, wealth, progeny, intellect and environment.

For example, let us look at the fatwa on the Organ Transplant Act which has since developed over time. It is a fatwa which required time and in-depth study, it was not declared in a haste. It took time for the issue to be discussed and debated, to understand the needs of the society, for several years. That is why the fatwa started with allowing only one organ to be donated, and over time it allowed for 4 organs to be donated. This aims to ensure that those who are ill would be able to live normally, whereas the donors who have passed on can continue to reap the rewards of their good deeds.

This is just one example of how Islamic jurisprudence takes into account the needs and benefit (maslahah) of an individual and the community. It reflects the beauty of Islamic Jurisprudence.

Jemaah,

Let us strengthen our resolution to enhance our efforts in understanding the religion and increase our acts of worship to Allah s.w.t. May Allah s.w.t. accept our every step as we seek to uphold our religious life. Amin Ya Rabbal Alamin.

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.