



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

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Lessons from the story of Prophet Yusuf a.s.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْغَنِيِّ الْحَمِيدِ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولَهُ الْمَبْعُوثُ بِالرَّحْمَةِ وَالْقَوْلِ السَّدِيدِ، اَللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا. أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.

Blessed Friday Jemaah,

Have in taqwa in Allah s.w.t. Obey all of His commands and abstain from His prohibitions. May we constantly be in Allah's rahmah. Amin.

Beloved Jemaah,

On this day of barakah, we welcome the arrival of Muharram, a blessed month that is very special as it marks the start of the new Islamic year. Hence, let us renew our determination and make positive resolutions at the start of this new hijri year.

Jemaah,

Today, let us reflect upon several lessons contained in a hadith of the Prophet s.a.w.:

عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ
سَرَاءٌ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَاءٌ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ

Meaning: *“Wondrous is the affair of the believer as there is good for him in every matter, and this is not true for anyone but the believer. If he is pleased, then he thanks Allah and there is good for him. If he is harmed, then he shows patience and there is good for him.” [Hadith narrated by Imam Muslim].*

Based on this hadith, we understand that Allah s.w.t. bestows upon the believers a special trait. This is because, no matter the test that is inflicted upon a believer – be it a blessing or a trial – he will strive to understand and appreciate the wisdom (hikmah) behind it. In other words, he will always seek the silver lining and what is positive from the situation. Every blessing is accepted with gratitude, and every musibah or problem is faced with patience or *sabr* – that is the character of a believer (mukmin).

Respected Jemaah,

When we discuss about *sabr*, we cannot deny the importance of studying the lives of the Prophets (Anbiya’) for they were those who faced all sorts of tests from Allah s.w.t. Among them,

Prophet Yusuf a.s., whose story of patience is often mentioned. In fact, the Quran affirms his patience as a sign and an example for those who wish to emulate. Allah s.w.t. says in surah Yusuf, verse 7:

﴿۷﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٍ لِّلسَّآئِلِينَ ﴿۷﴾

Meaning: *“Certainly were there in Joseph (Yusuf) and his brothers signs for those who ask.”*

Jemaah,

In the story of Prophet Yusuf a.s., we learn that he was tested by Allah s.w.t. through consecutive tests. It started with the hostility between some of his siblings towards him because they were jealous of their father’s affection towards Prophet Yusuf a.s. The Quran describes how they threw him into a dry well. After he managed to escape from the well, he was then tested when he worked as a helper in the home of a governor. Even after he was taken out from the well, the tests that befell him continued and even increased in intensity. This includes the temptations that tried to lure him to committing sins, and the false allegations made against him.

Jemaah,

The story of Prophet Yusuf a.s. teaches us the true meaning of being tested, and also of patience (sabr). At times when a person is tested by Allah s.w.t., some may complain and whine,

and some may even blame fate and so on. Some may also assume that they are tested because Allah s.w.t. is not pleased with them and does not love them. Jemaah, even the prophets whom Allah s.w.t. loved dearly, were tested. In fact, Prophet Yusuf a.s. were tested with such major challenges, yet, he continued to be firm in his faith, resilient, and faced the tests with patience and in firm belief that Allah s.w.t. knows best. Allah's tests for a person do not mean that the person is despised, in fact it could mean the complete opposite. At times, a person is tested even though he is the most beloved servant of Allah s.w.t.. There are those who are tested because these challenges are *kaffarah* or an expiation of their past sins. Let us look at a hadith of our beloved Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. that was recorded by Imam Bukhari:

مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ وَلَا وَصَبٍ وَلَا هَمٍّ وَلَا حُزْنٍ وَلَا أذى وَلَا غَمٍّ حَتَّى
الشُّوكَّةِ يُشَاكَّهَا، إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ

Meaning: “No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that.”

Jemaah,

We now understand the wisdom behind Allah's tests. The question that follows is how can one practise patience when faced with challenges? How can one develop resilience? There are two lessons that I would suggest to all:

First: As taught by Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. in a hadith narrated by Imam Muslim.

انظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ فَوْقَكُمْ فَهُوَ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ لَا
تَزِدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ

Meaning: *“Look at those who are beneath you and do not look at those who are above you, for it is more suitable that you should not consider as less the blessing of Allah.”*

Hence, when we feel that the tests Allah s.w.t. has given to us is too heavy and we are unable to shoulder it, then look around and think of those whom Allah s.w.t. has tested with even greater challenges. In doing so, we will be grateful to Allah s.w.t. for the blessings He has showered upon us. We will also realise that despite the fact that the test we are facing is hard, there are many other blessings that Allah s.w.t. continues to bestow us with.

Secondly: Patience and consistency (Istiqamah) in having taqwa will lead to good results.

Let us look back at the story of Prophet Yusuf a.s., whom after some time, was shown the way out by Allah s.w.t. and he eventually achieved victory. He was made an important person who was in a position of power and leadership. In fact, it is by Allah's decree that he reunited with his siblings who asked for his help because their country was facing a major drought. Allah s.w.t. described how their reunion in verse 90 of surah Yusuf:

قَالُوا أَأَنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ يُوسُفُ قَالَ أَنَا يُوسُفُ وَهَذَا أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

Meaning: They said, "Are you indeed Yusuf [Joseph]?" He said "I am Yusuf [Joseph], and this is my brother. Allah has certainly favoured us. Indeed, he who fears Allah and is patient, then indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good."

Jemaah,

In this world, one will not be able to fulfil their hopes and dreams, nor realise one's ambitions unless one has patience. Anyone who is patient will eventually succeed, and the opposite holds true as well. Think about it, if a farmer does not wait patiently for his seeds to grow and ripen for harvest, then he is unable to reap what he has sown. If an entrepreneur is impatient when facing losses, then he will not be successful. And so, it is with patience that those who are successful are able to achieve success in this world.

We pray that Allah s.w.t. grants us a strong heart and soul that will continue to strive hard to achieve our goals and objectives. May Allah s.w.t forgive our past sins, and ease our affairs. Amin
Ya Rabbal 'Alamin.

بَارِكْ اللَّهُ 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 اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا
فَوْزَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِينَ.