



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

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Understanding the Story of the Prophets

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْغَنِيِّ الْحَمِيدِ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ 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.

Blessed Jemaah,

Let us maintain our taqwa in Allah s.w.t. and obey all of His commandments, abstain ourselves from sin and perform our obligations and responsibilities to the best of our abilities. May our lives be filled with Allah's blessings, and may He be pleased with us in this world and the hereafter.

Jemaah,

After several weeks of recalling the stories from the Quran on perseverance in facing trials and tribulations, I would like to invite all of us here today to reflect upon the main objective of Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.w.) life. Let us also ponder over the

meaning in the message brought by our beloved Prophet s.a.w.. Allah s.w.t. mentions in surah Al-Anbiya' verse 107:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

Meaning: *“And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.”*

The Prophet's primary mission as a messenger is really to extend and radiate mercy to all. The word “rahmah” in this verse means love, gentleness, compassion, and goodness that radiates joy to all of humanity. Therefore, all teachings, advice and guidance by the Prophet s.a.w. leads to rahmah. Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. mentioned in a hadith, which means: *“I was sent to spread a religion that is convenient and tolerant.”* (Hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad).

This is also applied to the lives of the Anbiya' before Rasulullah s.a.w. They were sent by Allah s.w.t. to spread peace and prosperity, and to contribute to the development of the civilization they were living in. The Quran records what Prophet Syu'ib a.s. said to his people:

إِنِّ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ

Meaning: *"I only desire (your) betterment to the best of my power;"* [Surah Hud, verse 88].

This was the thrust of the message that was brought by every Prophet and Rasul. It is a message founded upon peace and humanity, which is clearly distinguished by anyone who studies the history and lives of the Prophets.

Alhamdulillah, this is the form of religious life which we seek to inculcate and develop in Singapore. One where we adapt and ensure that the teachings of Islam are continuously upheld, where we contribute to the prosperity of the community that we are living in.

Jemaah,

Let us not lose sight of the importance of prosperity and development as key thrusts of religious teaching. So important it is, even in circumstances where there is a need to deviate from the encouraged peaceful approach, the Prophets would still call upon those around them to respond with kindness and graciousness. They held firmly to the objective of spreading rahmah and radiating blessings. In fact, such approaches were the exceptions. It was to be considered as the last resort. Violence, destruction and war was never the approach and first choice for the prophets in spreading the teachings of Islam and the message of graciousness.

Jemaah,

Sadly, today some have misused this exception. They choose war and violence as the main thrusts of Islam that must be upheld in all situation. This is a deviation and a *fitnah* that will taint and destruct our beloved religion.

Recently, this issue has been raised in a propaganda piece published by ISIS. A Singaporean who joined ISIS called upon others to join him on the path of destruction, which he distortedly believed was the path of the prophets (peace be upon them). This skewed belief espouses for Muslims to hostile relations with believers of other faiths. He also claims that he has answered the call for jihad and is of the opinion that he is under the leadership of a Muslim caliph. He also believes that anyone who follows ISIS and dies while fighting for ISIS will be a martyr.

Astaghfirullah! When did Islam consider the killing of innocent lives as jihad? When did Islam allow for violence and oppression to prevail, places of worship to be destructed and heritage sites to be destroyed and blown up? Sadly, those who took part in these crimes are under the skewed impression that they will die as martyrs or *syahid*?

Worst! They justify these heinous acts by misusing Islam, the Quran and the Sunnah! It is obvious that what is being

committed by ISIS is not just a crime towards Islam, but towards the global community! The actions undertaken by ISIS are fundamentally against the ethics and guidelines taught by Rasulullah s.a.w. And Allah s.w.t. will surely not grant success to violence, oppression and cruelty.

Jemaah,

Now, more than ever, we will need to ensure that ourselves, families, and our beloved community have the religious resilience to challenge the messages that violates Islamic teachings and endanger the lives of humanity.

It is the responsibility of every Muslim to fully understand religious text comprehensively. One cannot simply uncritically accept information received from unknown sources, without verifying the information. Essentially, this not only applies today, but also in any period of time. Failure to comprehend the context of religious texts can lead to problematic and inaccurate interpretations.

Various verses in the Quran have specific context and were revealed because of specific reasons, and thus its application may be limited to a certain situation. Hence, it cannot be generally applied to all circumstances. For example, in surah Al-Tawbah, verse 41, Allah s.w.t. talks about a specific situation in war. It does not in any way mean it is permissible for a

person to undertake violent means, to destroy and oppress others in all situations. The verse is pertaining to a specific situation, and cannot be generally applied.

The second example is the prophetic guidance that advises Muslims to hold firmly to the teachings of Islam, no matter what situation they are in. This has been misused by those with violent and radical ideologies to incite hatred among Muslims to be hostile towards those who do not share their opinions.

Applying these texts that are meant to be specific in nature, to any situation, is considered a deviance. Therefore Jemaah, let us be cognisant of our family members' religious learning. Find out where they obtain their religious instructions from, who their teachers are, and what religious content are being taught. We do this with the sincere hope that Allah s.w.t. will always protect us and our families from all forms of transgression and deviant teaching.

We pray to Allah s.w.t. for His protection that He will continue to bless our beloved country with peace and prosperity. And may Allah s.w.t. continue to guide us, and our children towards the path that He will be pleased with, and to guide those who have strayed off the right path to return to Him. Amin Ya Rabbal Alamin.

بَارَكَ اللهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا
فِيهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ 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.