



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

8 September 2017 / 17 Zulhijjah 1438H

Lessons from the Story of Prophet Ismail A.S.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا وَقَضَىٰ بِمَا يُرِيدُ حِكْمَةً
وَ حُكْمًا، أَنْعَمَ بِالنَّعَمِ ابْتِلَاءً وَامْتِحَانًا، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَ حُدَّهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا
مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَفْضَلُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَ مَصْبَاحُ الظَّلَامِ، اللَّهُمَّ
صَلِّ عَلَىٰ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا
كَثِيرًا. أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَيَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ وَ عُلَانِيَتَكُمْ

Blessed Friday Jemaah,

Have taqwa in Allah s.w.t. Obey all of His commands and abstain from what Allah s.w.t. has prohibited upon us. May we all be placed among His servants who are successful in this life and the hereafter, Amin.

Beloved Jemaah,

The story of the sacrifice between Prophet Ibrahim a.s. and his son, Prophet Ismail a.s., represents the pinnacle of obedience and servitude of a father and son towards the commands of

Allah s.w.t. This would not have been possible without a healthy and nurturing environment for the child during his/her upbringing years.

As humans, we are shaped by the environment we live in. If a child is raised in a healthy and safe environment, insya Allah he or she will grow and develop well. However, if the opposite is true, it becomes a challenge for an individual to be inculcated with good values and positive traits. This is due to the fact that they lack good role models to emulate.

The story of how Prophet Ibrahim a.s. raised his son, Prophet Ismail a.s., sets a wonderful example which should be incorporated into our parenting skills today. Allah s.w.t. mentioned in the Quran, in Surah Al-Baqarah verses 127 – 128:

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٧﴾

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٨﴾

Meaning: “And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord, and 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 Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.”

Blessed Jemaah,

Let us ponder upon these verses and appreciate the lessons from the relationship that was established between Prophet Ibrahim a.s. and his son.

First: Interacting with our children. Imam At-Tabari rahimahullah, in his tafsir of the aforementioned verses, drew from the story of Sayyiduna Abdullah Bin Abbas r.a. who wrote: When Prophet Ibrahim a.s. and Prophet Ismail a.s. came to the well of zamzam, he said to his son: “Oh Ismail! Verily Allah has commanded me to do something.” Prophet Ismail a.s. replied: “Then do what God has commanded upon you.” Prophet Ibrahim a.s. then asked: “Will you help me?” Prophet Ismail a.s. replied: “Yes, I will help you, Father!” Prophet Ibrahim a.s. then said: “Verily Allah s.w.t. has commanded me to build a building here (that is Kaabah).”

Jemaah, despite his status as father, Prophet Ibrahim a.s. did not force his opinion upon his teenage son. In fact, before informing his son of Allah’s command, Prophet Ibrahim a.s. had asked for his son’s opinion on the matter, and it was his son who willingly volunteered himself to help his father. This goes to

show that parents should respect and acknowledge the views and opinions of their children. Hopefully by doing so, children will be more open to follow in the footsteps of their parents by exemplifying their good deeds and acts of kindness.

This highlights the importance of our treatment towards children. We need to acknowledge their capabilities and their level of development. For example, have we paid attention to the way we communicate with them? Do we simply bark orders and commands? Or do we continuously strive to instil confidence and motivate them from a young age?

We are responsible for guiding our children, shaping their mind, speech and actions. Virtuous values such as obedience, respect and communicating in a diplomatic manner are values which must be instilled from young. We should thus lead by example when we communicate with our children.

We often hear complaints from parents about children who lack good manners as they grow older. Although this may be true, the question we should ask ourselves is: Have we been setting good examples when we communicate with our children? Do we speak to them in a manner which develops their abilities to contemplate and choose? Or are we always shouting and denying them the opportunities to discern the intended message?

The second lesson from the story of Prophet Ibrahim and his beloved son, Prophet Ismail a.s. is: To involve our children with tasks that complement their abilities. Educating them in such a manner will teach them the importance of helping one another in daily activities and yield positive psychological effects. Research has shown that children whose parents are involved in their growth and development will become more self-confident as compared to children whose parents are absent in their daily activities.

Third: Placing our trust in Allah s.w.t. after we have given our very best. This exemplary trait was displayed by Prophet Ibrahim a.s. to his son, Prophet Ismail a.s. As we face tougher challenges in life, it is critical that we focus on developing our relationship, as a family, with Allah s.w.t. Let us also increase our supplications for our children because the dua of parents are *mustajab* (undoubtedly answered by Allah s.w.t.) Rasulullah s.a.w. mentions in a hadith narrated by Imam Ibnu Majah:

ثَلَاثُ دَعَوَاتٍ يُسْتَجَابُ لَهُنَّ لَا شَكَّ فِيهِنَّ دَعْوَةُ الْمَظْلُومِ وَ دَعْوَةُ
الْمُسَافِرِ وَ دَعْوَةُ الْوَالِدِ لِوَلَدِهِ

Meaning: *“There are three supplications that will undoubtedly be answered: the supplication of one who has been wronged; the supplication of the traveller; and the supplication of a parent for his child.”*

Jemaah, the hadith that was mentioned previously does not only serve as a reminder on the importance of a parent's supplication. It also highlights the significance of making dua in the life of a mukmin (believer). Whether it is to achieve success in our efforts, or to seek protection from matters that are out of our control, we should always make dua. I am confident that each and every one of us desires peace and prosperity in all aspects of life. Hence, in this blessed moments, let us humble ourselves to Allah s.w.t and ask from Him.

Ya Allah Ya Hafizh, resolve any conflicts and extinguish the flames of enmity and hostility wherever it may be. Ya Allah Ya Muhaimin, return peace, tranquillity and safety to the people who are faced with disasters and who live in fear of being attacked. Grant them resilience and strength. Ya Allah Ya Hakim, guide the hearts of humanity towards goodness, towards finding solutions for every challenge and trial that we face. Protect us, our families, our country and this earth from all evil. Please grant us our dua Ya Sami Ya Mujib.

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، فَاسْتَغْفِرُودُ فَيَا
فَوْزَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِينَ.