



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

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The Value of Justice (The Story of Saidina Umar)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْخَبِيرِ الْحَكِيمِ ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ
الْقَوِيُّ الْمَتِينُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ صَادِقُ
الْوَعْدِ الْأَمِينِ ، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ
وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ .
أَمَّا بَعْدُ ، فَيَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ ، أُوصِيكُمْ وَنَفْسِي بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ ، فَقَدْ
فَازَ مَنْ اتَّقَى وَخَابَ مَنْ عَصَى .

Beloved Friday congregations,

Let us strengthen our taqwa in Allah s.w.t. and strive to obey all of His commands and distance ourselves from His prohibitions. May Allah s.w.t. will bestow upon us His Blessings. Amiin Ya Rabbal 'Alamin.

My beloved brothers,

Last week, the Khatib reminded us of the importance of the value of taqwa in our life. This is the value that distinguishes us

servants in the eyes of Allah s.w.t. In our efforts to attain this value, there are other important values that we must first acquire – being just is one such value. Let us reflect on verse 8 of surah al-Ma'idah, where Allah s.w.t says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا
يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلٰٓى ءَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ءَعْدِلُوا هُوَ
أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

Which means: *“Oh believers! Be dutiful to Allah, bearing witness to the truth in all equity. Do not allow your hatred for other men lead you into sin deviating from justice. Deal justly (with all people), for justice is closest to God-consciousness. And remain conscious of Allah, for truly Allah is Ever-Aware of all that you do.”*

This verse explains that justice should not only be meant for those whom we like, but it is a principle that we need to apply in all aspects of our life. A just believer does not choose a place and space for him to be just. No matter where he is, with whom he deals with, he is constantly mindful of the need to be just.

My brothers,

One of the important values in the earlier verse that we can learn from is the value of justice. In fact, justice is given such importance in Islam, that it is mentioned together in this verse with the value of doing good, such as providing sustenance for our families. While the term 'justice' has a broad meaning; linguistically, it means according something its rightful place or position. Thus, the value of justice that is instilled in a person will guide him to be honest, wise and responsible in his thoughts and actions.

This is a trait that we can learn from the life of the famous companion, Saiyidina Umar ibn Al Khattab r.a. His documented life stories as a leader depict the characteristics of a believer who paid special attention to various aspect of justice in his life and affairs.

My brothers,

In a gist, we can summarise Saidina Umar's r.a. life into four distinct aspects of justice:

1) Fristly: To be just to Allah s.w.t.

My brothers, we firmly believe that it is Allah s.w.t. who created everything and it is He who bestows the sustenance for all His creations. Hence, as His creations and obedient servants, it is only just for us to affirm Allah's Oneness and direct all our

needs and pleas to Him, and obey His commands and distance ourselves from His prohibitions. A believer who strives to be just in his life would always reflect if he is fulfilling all of Allah's s.w.t. rights and commands. Saidna Umar r.a. was known to have led a busy life, but that did not prevent him from dedicating time for worship (ibadah) and to continuously humble himself before Allah s.w.t.

2) Secondly: To be just to one's self

Justice is not just a value to be extended to others – it is also a value that needs to be accorded to our own bodies and minds. In fact, being just to ourselves precedes the need to be just to others. This means that we should not succumb to our desire, and to preserve our health and avoid all that could bring harm to our soul, body and mind. Examples of such transgressions would be to indulge in over-eating or excessive entertainment, to a point where we become ignorant of our duties to Allah s.w.t. and neglect our prayers and other forms of worship.

3) Thirdly: To be just to others

This third form of justice can be witnessed clearly in the life of Saidina Umar ibn Al Khattab r.a.. In a famous narration, during Saidina Umar's r.a. time as the second Caliph, he once heard the cry of a child while walking at night. He enquired from the

child's mother of the cause of the cry – she answered that the child was crying out of hunger and she was the least suspecting that the one who was asking was the Caliph himself. However, due to their state of poverty, she had to pretend to cook stones in the pot, in order to pacify her children. Saidina Umar r.a. could not hold back his tears upon knowing this, realising the heavy responsibility he was shouldering as a Caliph. He immediately rushed back to the Baitul Mal to get the family some food. He then carried the heavy load himself, declining help from anyone. Upon returning to the lady, Saidina Umar r.a. cooked for the family with his own hands and later personally ensured that the family would not sleep in a state of hunger again.

Such is the value of justice that we can exemplify in our lives. It is a value that shapes one's character such that he will strive to protect himself and others from harm. Justice is a trait that will guide us to perform our duties and responsibilities consciously as a family member or an employee, as well as to be mindful in making decisions.

My brothers,

Saidina Umar's trait of justice was not only limited to fellow Muslims. On the day that the city of Al Quds or Jerusalem was liberated, Saidina Umar r.a. never exerted any form of force to the dwellers of the city, even when he had all the opportunities to do so. On the other hand, he declared that every dweller will

be guaranteed of their safety and their freedom to practice their religions. Such is the wisdom that we can derive from being just and an example that we can put to practice in our daily lives.

4) Fourthly: To be just to all of His creations

My brothers, this final aspect calls upon us to be fair and just to all other things that have been entrusted to us by Allah s.w.t. as a form of responsibility, such as our environment. Irresponsible acts of harming and destroying our land and environment, have never been the characteristics of a good Muslim. On the contrary, Muslims should be the ones to proactively promote good acts in preserving our environments and resources, such as avoiding excessive usage of water and electricity, promoting the usage of recycled items and many more.

My beloved brothers,

These are the few forms of justice that we can heed and put to practice in our lives. Indeed, it is a value that is taught by our religion, and embracing this value will bring all forms of blessings to our lives. Let us together instill this beautiful value in ourselves. This is line with the words of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.: *“A just person will be by Allah’s s.w.t. side, on a pulpit made of light, on the right side of Allah The Most Merciful. They are those who judged with justice, treat their families with*

justice and perform their responsibilities with justice.” (Hadith narrated by Imam Muslim).

May Allah s.w.t. continue to protect us and enliven the trait of justice in us and our family members so that we are able to perform all that is ordained upon us by Allah s.w.t.. Ameen 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.