



Islamic Religious Council of Singapore

Friday Khutbah

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The Positive Impact of Forgiveness

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَنَا مِنْ أُمَّةٍ خَيْرِ النَّاسِ خَلْقًا وَخُلُقًا، وَاصْطَفَانَا عَلَى سَائِرِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالرُّسُلِ بِأَحْسَنِ الشَّرِيعَةِ مِنْهَجًا وَطَرِيقًا، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ، حَبِيبِنَا الْكَرِيمِ، وَرَسُولِنَا الْعَظِيمِ، سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَيَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ، أَوْصِيكُمْ وَنَفْسِي بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Blessed Friday congregants,

In these blessed moments where Allah answers the prayers of His servants, let us humble ourselves and ask Allah to strengthen our taqwa. Let us devote ourselves to Allah by returning to Him, repenting to Him and seeking His forgiveness. May Allah s.w.t. accept our taubah, and may He be pleased with us and our families. Amin ya Rabbal 'alamin.

My brothers,

Last week we were reminded of how our beloved Prophet Muhammad s.a.w dealt with anger. Anger is a natural human emotion; and this anger, if steered in the right direction, can indeed be a positive thing. At the same time, we must acknowledge that it is not healthy to bottle up our anger. Anger is a flame that, if left to its own devices, could eventually consume its owner. It yields the power to affect our relationships with those around us. Thus, it is important that we douse our anger with forgiveness; for with forgiveness comes barakah, peace of mind, and many benefits in this life and the hereafter.

Brothers,

Know that Allah loves those who forgive others. The one who yearns for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah s.w.t. will take the opportunity to constantly forgive others. Allah s.w.t. says in the Quran:

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا
تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Meaning: “And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah, and let them pardon and

overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” (Surah An-Nur, verse 22)

The context in which this verse was revealed contains many lessons from which we can learn. Sayyidina Abu Bakr r.a. used to provide financial support for his cousin named Mithah. However when it was revealed to him that Mithah was involved with spreading falsehoods about Sayyidatina Aisyah r.a., which both disgraced her and caused grief to the Prophet s.a.w., Abu Bakr r.a. refused to forgive Mithah and even stopped providing for him. Imagine, my brothers, the anger we would feel if someone whom we had been providing for out of the goodness of our hearts had the audacity to slander and disgrace our own daughter; it would be immensely difficult to forgive that person. Thus when Abu Bakr r.a. made that decision, Allah s.w.t. revealed this verse. It reminds us that if we truly wish for Allah’s forgiveness, we ourselves must be forgiving of others as well. And what an apt reward this is; because Allah s.w.t. knows the sheer amount of emotional strength and faith it takes to forgive in spite of the anger we feel.

My brothers, this is Islam. It emphasizes the value of forgiveness. On the surface it may seem like a trivial matter, but having a heart big enough to forgive others can change our fate and the direction of an entire community.

Medical and psychological research reveals that forgiving and letting go of grudges brings many benefits to our health. When

we forgive, we release the anger bottled up inside us. We become at peace with ourselves and others. This, in turn, lowers our stress levels and blood pressure, and strengthens our immune system.

In other words, the benefits of forgiveness extend to all aspects of our life. And Rasulullah s.a.w. indeed spoke the truth when he said: *“And Allah does not increase His servant’s capacity to forgive except that He also increases him in honour.”* He is not only honoured by man, but also by Allah s.w.t.

My brothers,

Forgiveness is also a measure enjoined by Islam in tackling issues within a society. Allah s.w.t. says in Surah As-Syura, verse 40:

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

Meaning: *“And the retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is [due] from Allah. Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers.”*

This verse reminds us that if a bad deed needs to be punished, the punishment must be fair and not excessive. For this very reason, many legal processes have been put into place, as well as mediation centres where disputes may be heard and resolved.

Nonetheless, Allah s.w.t. tells us that forgiveness is always preferred and that He guarantees us the reward.

Remember, my brothers, harshness in our actions indicates a lack of compassion in our hearts. It reflects a disposition to acquire vengeance and retribution. It reveals the absence of mercy and forgiveness in our hearts. And above all, it diverges from the noble teachings and character of the Prophet s.a.w.

We must therefore purify our hearts from anger, hatred and bitterness. In some circumstances we may even need professional advice as to how can manage our anger and let go of our deep-seated grudges. Let us not allow Shaitan to use these feelings against us in order to pit us against one another, regardless of our race or religion. Whenever we are overcome with anger, Islam teaches us to remember Allah, to send salutations (salawat) to the Prophet s.a.w. or to make ablution so that we are able to control our emotions and return to our source of peace – Allah s.w.t.

My brothers,

I call upon you; if, in this moment, there are those of us whose hearts contain any bitterness or anger towards someone who has hurt us or done injustice towards us, let us free ourselves from the shackles placed upon us by the Shaitan. Let us try our very best to forgive them; we will feel as though a burden has been lifted from our shoulders. Not only that, Allah s.w.t. will forgive our sins and be pleased with us.

Let us internalise these noble values to the best of our abilities. May Allah s.w.t. always guide us and grant us the strength to continue treading the path which leads us to Him. Amin ya Rabbal 'alamin.

بَارَكَ اللهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ
الآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ 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.