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Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Friday Sermon

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Faithful Guidance in Facing Distress

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي الْاِيْمَانِ رَاحَةً لِلْقُلُوْبِ، وَفِي ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ فَرْجًا مِّنَ الْكُرُوْبِ. اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ، وَاَشْهَدُ اَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ. اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ، وَعَلٰى آلِهٖ وَاَصْحَابِهٖ اَجْمَعِيْنَ. اَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَيَا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ، اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ. قَالَ تَعَالٰى فِي التَّنْزِيْلِ: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.

Blessed congregation,

Let us nurture our hearts with taqwa or mindfulness of Allah s.w.t. Taqwa that results in Allah's love for us, and protects us from His displeasure. May we be granted clarity in our hearts and steadfastness in **faith** as we journey through the **trials** of life.

Beloved congregation,

Is it possible for a *mukmin* or believer to experience **stress** and anxiety? If this happens, does it reflect a weakness in **faith**? To respond to this question, let us reflect on the story of the mother of Prophet Isa a.s., that is Maryam a.s.

In the Quran, Allah s.w.t. describes Maryam a.s. as a woman of great honour due to her devotion to Allah. She was chosen, purified, and elevated in status above all women of the worlds.

Yet, the story of Maryam a.s. is not without great **trials** which burden the soul. Without the presence of a husband, she conceived and gave birth to a baby boy, while facing a storm of harsh criticism and painful accusations from her community. Her agony was captured in Surah Maryam, verse 23:

فَاجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ
يَلَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَّنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾

Which means: *"And when the pains of childbirth drove her to (cling to) the trunk of a palm tree, she exclaimed, 'I wish I had died before this, and had been all forgotten'"*

Dear congregation,

The story of Maryam a.s. teaches us that **stress** and emotional burden are part and parcel of life. Every person will face it, and it is not a sign of weak **faith**.

Each **trial** reveals how we manage and overcome **pressure**, grounded in **faith**. As believers, beyond it being a personal duty, we must see this as a communal responsibility or fardhu kifayah, to help one another through **stress** and hardship.

My dear brothers,

Life today is full of **challenges** that can trigger **stress**. Among them: a lifestyle influenced by multiple elements, causing confusion between personal identity and religious values, especially among youth. Financial struggles, with the rising cost of living, weigh heavily, particularly on single parents. The instability of global politics affects economies and results in job losses. All of this contributes to mental **stress** for those impacted.

This trend has led some of our brothers and sisters to seek ways they believe can relieve the **pressure** they are facing. At times, the path they choose may even make things worse.

For example, it is discussed today how studies show a clear link between vaping and the rise in chronic **stress** levels, as well as the deterioration of mental health. A person facing **stress** might turn to smoking or vaping and even Kpods in an attempt to cope with or overcome that **stress**. However, this could potentially lead to even more severe **stress** and mental strain, negatively impacting one's mental and physical conditions.

Dear brothers, whatever form of **trials** and **stress** we may face, the support of family and those around us is crucial. It requires attentiveness and collective action, as a sign of our *amanah* (responsibility) and *ihsan* (compassion). We must not let those being tested to face their struggles alone.

So what lessons can we draw from the story of Maryam a.s. in facing **trials**?

First: Behind every difficulty lies wisdom and lessons.

Each **trials** carries lessons, even if we do not yet understand them. Just like Maryam a.s., a **trial** can become an experience that shapes our character, or even become a legacy. For example, today, former inmates who have turned their lives around now help others still trapped in similar cycles. With **resilience** and sincerity, the darkness and hardship we face today can become a light which illuminates guidance for ourselves and others.

Second: Seek and offer support.

True enough, as believers, our spirituality is our primary source of **strength** and protection. Yet often, stress requires a holistic approach, which includes physical, emotional, and social dimensions.

Even the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. found comfort in Sayyidatina Khadijah r.a. during times of distress. Just imagine: had Maryam a.s. received compassionate care and support from her community, would it not have eased her burden?

Therefore, it is important that we both seek support and become sources of support. Get professional help when needed. Do not let anyone go through **stress** in isolation.

Dear blessed congregation,

We must strive to build a society that is caring and compassionate. One that offers a listening ear before a word of advice. A society that upholds spirituality while also embracing a holistic approach, and full of empathy.

May we all draw **strength** from the example of Maryam a.s. in overcoming **trials** and hardship. And may we be among those who spread hope, who instill **strength**, so that we too may always receive the mercy and help of our Allah. Amin, ya Rahman ya Rahim.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ
الرَّحِيمُ.

Second Sermon

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا كَمَا أَمَرَ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ تَعَالَى فِيمَا أَمَرَ، وَانْتَهُوا عَمَّا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ وَزَجَرَ.

أَلَا صَلُّوا وَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ الْمُصْطَفَى، فَقَدْ أَمَرَنَا اللَّهُ بِذَلِكَ حَيْثُ قَالَ فِي كِتَابِهِ الْعَزِيزِ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ.

وَارْضَ اللَّهُمَّ عَنِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمُهْدِيِّينَ سَادَاتِنَا أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَعُثْمَانُ وَعَلِيٌّ، وَعَنْ بَقِيَّةِ الصَّحَابَةِ وَالْقَرَابَةِ وَالتَّابِعِينَ، وَتَابِعِي التَّابِعِينَ، وَعَنْ مَعَهُمْ وَفِيهِمْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، الْأَحْيَاءِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْأَمْوَاتِ. اللَّهُمَّ ادْفَعْ عَنَّا الْبَلَاءَ وَالْوَبَاءَ وَالزَّلَازِلَ وَالْمِحْنَ، مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ، عَنِ بَلَدِنَا خَاصَّةً، وَسَائِرِ الْبُلْدَانِ عَامَّةً، يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ انصُرْ إِخْوَانَنَا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي غَزَّةٍ وَفِي فَلِسْطِينَ وَفِي كُلِّ مَكَانٍ عَامَّةً، يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ بَدِّلْ خَوْفَهُمْ أَمْنًا، وَحُزْنَهُمْ فَرَحًا، وَهَمَّهُمْ فَرَجًا، يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ اكْتُبِ السَّلَامَ وَالْأَمْنَ وَالْأَمَانَ

لِلْعَالَمِ كُلِّهِ وَلِلنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ. رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً، وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً،
وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ.

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى، وَيَنْهَى عَنِ
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ، يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ، فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ
يَذْكُرْكُمْ، وَاشْكُرُوا عَلَى نِعَمِهِ يَزِدْكُمْ، وَاسْأَلُوهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ يُعْطِكُمْ، وَلَذِكْرُ
اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ، وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ.