



PERGAS

جَمْعِيَّةُ الْعُلَمَاءِ وَوُجُوهِ الدِّينِ الْإِسْلَامِيِّ بِسِنْغَاپُورَةَ

PERSATUAN ULAMA DAN GURU-GURU AGAMA ISLAM (SINGAPURA)
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RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE ON SUPPLICATING AGAINST THOSE FROM DIFFERENT FAITHS

The *doa* or supplication is a way to seek God's help and assistance in all our actions and deeds, including asking for success and peace in this life and for the hereafter.

2 Making *doa* is an act of worship that is strongly encouraged in Islam. In fact, Muslims are encouraged to not just supplicate or pray for themselves and fellow Muslims, but also for the well-being and success of others including those from other faith groups.

The Islamic Perspective on Praying Against Those from Different Faith Groups

3 Essentially Islam forbids praying for negative outcomes on others, whether they are Muslims or believers of other religions. Among the evidences and arguments supporting this opinion is the hadith (sayings of the Prophet ﷺ):

Abu Hurairah r.a. narrated: It was said to Rasulullah ﷺ: "O Rasulullah, supplicate (for calamity) for the hypocrites." Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Verily I was not sent to scorn, but I was sent as a mercy." (Muslim)

4 The meaning of this hadith fits the purpose to which Allah ﷻ sent Rasulullah ﷺ as a mercy to the world. Allah ﷻ says in the Quran:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

Meaning: "And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds." (Al-Anbiya': 107)

5 Imam Ibnu Kathir, an esteemed scholar of *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis) explained that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent as a mercy to the worlds, and this includes believers of other faiths and not just Muslims.

No Enmity Between Islam and Other Faiths

6 Due to the centrality of *doa*, Muslims take examples from the Quran and from the Prophet's life history to conduct themselves in supplicating or asking for God's assistance. As the Prophet ﷺ and his companions were continuously mistreated and harmed by different groups of people in his lifetime, the Prophet ﷺ had sought God's help in many instances. Collectively, the *doa* was taught by the Prophet ﷺ to seek from God a place of safety, peace and security.

7 The Prophet's insistence of not causing evil and harm to those who attacked and did injustice to him was central to his beautiful conduct throughout his life.

8 Key to the message of Islam is that there is no injunction that Muslims are in enmity with Jews and Christians or to any other faiths. One of the tenets of faith (*Arkan al-iman*) in Islam is to believe in Prophets, some of whom are also acknowledged in the Jewish and Christian traditions.

9 Several chapters in the Quran were also named after these Prophets. There are therefore many similarities that we share within the Abrahamic faiths. The stories of their communities were elaborated in the Quran and their figures are venerated in the Islamic tradition.

Supplicating for the Victory of Muslims Against Those Who Oppress Them

10 At the same time, Muslims are allowed to pray for calamity against oppressors, where one is in a state of oppression and persecution. Allah ﷻ says in another verse in the Quran:

﴿لَا تُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوْءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا﴾

Meaning: "Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged. And ever is Allah Hearing and Knowing." (Al-Nisaa: 148)

11 In Ibnu Kathir's *tafsir*, he mentioned that Ibnu `Abbas understood this verse as a disapproval against supplicating for calamity except under oppression; patience is the better option. An example of oppression is when a person is harmed or grossly mistreated.

12 Clearly, supplicating for calamity to befall upon others without any reason is prohibited in Islam, whether the supplication is made against Muslims or non-Muslims, except against those who oppress and wage war against Islam. Allah ﷻ said in the Quran:

وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٥٤﴾

Meaning: “And they who deny the truth – it is they who are evildoers!” (Al-Baqarah: 254)

13 The Quran has taught us, as mentioned by Ibnu `Arabi in his book of *Tafsir Ahkam Al-Quran*, that Islam does not allow differences in faith as an impediment against cooperation and having good relations with others. In fact, the Quran does not forbid Muslims from helping and being kind towards believers of other faiths, if they do not oppress or persecute Muslims. Allah ﷻ said in the Quran:

لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ تُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ
وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾

Meaning: “Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.” (Al-Mumtahanah: 8)

14 It is on this basis that Muslims are commanded in the Quran to preserve and protect the religious abodes and house of worships of those used by Jews, Christians and believers of other faiths:

وَلَوْلَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ هَدَمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدٌ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا
أَسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۗ وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

Meaning: “And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.” (Al-Hajj: 40)

15 Imam Al-Qurtubi explained that this verse means Muslims are forbidden from destroying, demolishing or selling churches or any houses of worship that belong to other religions. This is because Islam allows freedom in practicing one’s faith, and it is the responsibility of every Muslim to guard that freedom and the safety of others in adhering to their respective faiths. Muslims are also not allowed to disturb them, and

should ensure that their friends and neighbours of other faiths are not being disturbed by anyone.

16 The Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circle (IRCC) is a good example of government initiative that promotes harmony between religions and communities in Singapore.

17 Pergas acknowledges and understands the recent court's verdict on the Imam. We are also certain that the decision is based on considerations that the Imam has admitted that some of the supplication he used are not from the Holy Quran and are not a requirement for the *doa*, and he has expressed his regret and apology on this matter. Pergas also understands that this incident might have caused discomfort and unease, as well as confusion and misunderstanding among some groups of other-faiths, namely people of Jewish and Christian faiths.

18 There are verses in the Quran that supplicate for victory against oppressors. For *doa* that does not originate from the Quran or Hadith, we are not obliged to specify particular faiths in it such as the Jews and Christians. Therefore for any Imam or preacher, the usage of such *doa* must be nuanced with its proper understanding.

Prohibition of Spying with the Intention of Harming and Dividing the Community

19 As a Muslim, it is obligatory to be alert and listen attentively to the Friday sermon, and it is not permissible for one to busy themselves with matters that distract from listening to the sermon. Indeed, asking someone to keep their voice down during the sermon may reduce the reward of the Friday prayer.

It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Prophet ﷺ said: "If you say to your companion when the imam is preaching on Friday, 'Be quiet and listen,' you have engaged in idle talk." (Bukhari & Muslim)

20 It is the responsibility of every Muslim to help fellow Muslims in good deeds and acts that can increase one's piety to God, as well as to prevent any negative assumptions and suspicion towards one another. Allah ﷻ said in the Quran:

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبِ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَنُحِبُّ أَحَدَكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

تَوَابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Meaning: “O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.” (Surah Al-Hujurat: 12)

21 Clearly from this verse, it states that Muslims are forbidden to have negative assumptions of others, and to spy on others with the intention of seeking one’s faults and mistakes, as well as weaknesses. Majority of the scholars of *tafsir*, as mentioned in the book *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi*, are of the opinion that having suspicion towards a good person is forbidden.

22 This prohibition is also supported by the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah r.a.: “Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the most false of speech. Do not seek out faults, do not spy on each other, do not contend with each other, do not envy each other, do not hate each other, and do not turn away from each other. Rather, be servants of Allah as brothers.” (Bukhari)

23 This is because when a person has negative assumptions of others, it will lead to suspicions, which might then lead to spying. The suspicion is worse when the assumptions are towards a religious teacher who uses religious text for the purpose of worship.

Religious Guidance in Doing Good and Preventing Munkar

24 In carrying out the command to do good and prevent *munkar* (vice), one has to spread the message in a wise and prudent manner. Allah ﷻ says:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۗ وَجَدِلْ لَهُم بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

Meaning: “Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.” (An-Nahl: 125)

25 At the same time, preventing *munkar* by sharing articles on social media without proper verification is irresponsible, and can divide the Muslim community as well as members of other faith groups. This is especially when such articles contain religious rituals that require comprehensive understanding of its texts.

26 Islam is a religion of mercy and compassion, and emphasises the need to build and maintain warm relations and good ties with others. Thus, when we come across individuals who have made mistakes, we should approach them with

kindness, wisdom and prudence, and not to ostracise or isolate them.

27 Pergas would like to call upon Muslims to refer to Pergas or the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) when they are unsure about religious issues, or when they require religious guidance. Muslims should also ensure that religious teachers that they learn from are those who are accredited and registered under the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS).

Conclusion

28 Pergas as the organisation representing Muslim scholars and asatizah (religious teachers) will continue to spread the true understanding of Islam. Pergas, Muis and also the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) hope to share the beautiful message of Islam in our context.

29 We also urge the Singaporeans from all communities to come together in maintaining respect and tolerance towards one another.

30 May Allah ﷻ grant us peace, prosperity and harmony in this multi-racial and multi-religious society, and may we be protected from trials that can divide the community and country.

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