



1	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CELEBRATE DIVERSITY, STRENGTHEN UNITY</b> 1 April 2016AD / 23 Jamadilakhir 1437H</p>
2	الحمد لله الذي علم وانعم، وهدانا بالقرآن للتي هي اقوم،
3	<p style="text-align: center;">قَالَ تَعَالَى: اَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ</p> <p>وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ رَجِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾</p>
4	أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، وأشهد أن سيدنا محمدا عبده ورسوله
5	اللهم صلِّ وسلم على سيدنا محمد، وعلى آله وأصحابه ومن تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين.
6	أما بعد، فيا عباد الله، اتقوا الله، أوصيكم وإياي بتقوى الله وطاعته، فقد فاز المتقون، وتزودوا فإن خير الزاد التقوى، واتقوا الله يا أولي الأبواب لعلكم تفلحون.
7	<p><b>Fellow Muslims blessed by Allah,</b></p> <p>On this blessed day, let us together increase the level of our conviction in Allah SWT by performing all His commands and abandoning all that He has prohibited. May we all find success in this world and in the Hereafter.</p>
8	<p>It is by nature that humans will have differences of opinions. But, this is not an excuse for us to constantly be in dispute and hostile with each other. Realising this, Islam as a comprehensive religion has put forth a solution to manage these differences.</p>



9	Thus, today's sermon will discuss the theme, " <b><i>Celebrate Diversity, Strengthen Unity</i></b> ".
10	Issues of differences and disagreements often cloud the soul and mind of mankind. But, it is an inevitable fact and part of the <i>sunnatullah</i> governing the creation of man. Conflicts not only exist in worldly affairs, but have also expanded into religious life.
11	Differences and disputes have occurred due to diversity of ability, differences in way of thinking, and in variety of languages, cultures, customs and backgrounds, as well as different perceptions and conclusions towards a particular argument or passage. All these indirectly increase diversity and proliferation of views and opinions.
12	From another point of view, it is a mark of His greatness that Allah SWT created creatures with individual uniqueness. Therefore, it is no wonder why these differences have been occurring since the early days until today.
13	This is indicated in verses 118 to 119, Surah Hud at the beginning of the sermon;  <b>Which means:</b> <i>"And if the Lord (O' Muhammad) has so willed, He could have made mankind one people. (But he did not do so), and that is why they will not cease to dispute. Except those on whom the Lord has bestowed His Mercy, (they are united in the religion of Allah SWT); and for (the purpose of the dispute and grace) that Allah SWT made man. And thus completed the promise of the Lord: Behold, I will fill Hell with the jinn and mankind (the guilty)."</i>
14	<b>Fellow Muslims blessed by Allah,</b> Ibn Kathir r.h states that it is clear, through the verse above, that disputes still exist among people in matters of religion and belief, they are divided into various sects and opinions. Ikrima r.h also felt that they still disagree in terms of the instructions. Thus, Islam has outlined the ethics and etiquette of managing differences, especially among Muslims, which are discussed as



	follows:
15	<p><b>First: Identify the limits of different opinions and do not transgress</b></p> <p>The differences occurring among Muslims since the time of the Companions until now manifests the celebration of diversity within Islam. This phenomenon is helpful and positive if the differences do not exceed the limit and become offensive, while still maintaining manners and proper etiquette as outlined by the law.</p>
16	<p>Keep in mind that we are only permitted to accept differences of opinion for matters considered <i>juz'i</i> (partial) or <i>Zanni</i> (not conclusive), while in matters of policy or <i>Qat'i</i> (ultimate) we are totally prohibited from questioning and disagreeing.</p>
17	<p>On this matter, al-Imam al-Syatibi r.h, through his book <i>Al-I'tisam</i>, has stated: <i>"The disagreements that occurred in the days of the Companions to this day are on issues of diligence (ijtihadiah). The first time it happened was in the days of the Caliph al-Rashidun and the Companions, then continued until the time of the tabi'in (friends of the Companions). All these happened whilst they were still mutually refraining from denouncing each other. "</i></p>
18	<p><b>Second: Sincere intention and not by impulsion or driven by desire</b></p> <p>Sincerity is a virtue which is demanded of all Muslims for any deed to be accepted by Allah SWT. It is an obligation and a key for someone who wants to find or uphold the truth so that he would not be overcome by desire.</p>
19	<p>Arrogance in the search for truth is also a trait or habit that should be eliminated. As reported by Imam al-Tirmidhi and narrated by Ka'b bin Malik RA, Rasulullah SAW said:</p> <p>مَنْ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمَ لِيُجَارِيَ بِهِ الْعُلَمَاءَ أَوْ لِيُمَارِيَ بِهِ السُّفَهَاءَ أَوْ يَصْرِفَ بِهِ وَجْهَهُ النَّاسِ إِلَيْهِ أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ النَّارَ. (رواه الترمذي)</p>



20	<b>Which means:</b> "Whoever seeks knowledge for the sake of arguing with the scholars, or to mock the ignorant, or to gain attention, then Allah SWT will commit them to the damnation of Hell."
21	One of the signs of sincerity is the will to accept the truth even if it comes from someone who is inferior to us. This is what has been exemplified by earlier generations.
22	<b>Third: Avoid self-glorification, prejudices and always preserve Islamic unity</b> One of the properties that we should avoid when differences of opinion occur is being uncompromising and adamant, even when faced with the fact that our position is indefensible, like the Malay saying 'menegakkan benang yang basah'. Truth belongs only to God and He alone has the right to determine, whether for an individual or a group.
23	Furthermore, fanatical followers of religious sects, groups, country or religious mentors or teachers are very steadfast in their opinions and would refuse to budge on what they believe and stand for. Their actions are not solely for Allah SWT but for some other reason or agenda. In addition to that, they would force others to accept their beliefs, opinions and views.
24	Allah SWT has declared in Surah al-An'am verse 159:  <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَأَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾</b> </p>
25	<b>Which means:</b> "As for those who divide their religion (with disputes based on lust) and break up into sects, you have no part in them in the least: their affair is with Allah: He will in the end tell them (on the Day of Resurrection) the truth of all that they did".
26	We must instil within us the belief that we can accept or reject opinions or words from anyone, except the words of Rasulullah SAW, as only he alone is faultless and protected from error.
27	<b>Fourth: Embrace brotherhood and the Islamic camaraderie</b>



	Islam emphasizes on Muslim camaraderie. Accordingly, even if a discrepancy arises, every Muslim should preserve manners, behaviour, and actions, so as not to cause strife. Harsh words, insults, vilification and slander should be avoided.
28	<p>As stated by Allah SWT in surah al-Hujurat, verse 12:</p> <p>يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اجْتَنِبُوْا كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ اِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ اِنْتِهٰٓءٌ وَّلَا يَحْسَبُوْنَ وَلَا يَحْتَسِبُوْنَ وَلَا يَغْتَبِبْ بَعْضُكُمۡ</p> <p>بَعْضًا اٰيۡحُبُّ اَحَدُكُمْ اَنْ يَّكُلَ لَحْمَ اَخِيْهِ مِيْثًا فَكَرِهَتْهُمُوْهُ وَاَقۡنُوا اللّٰهَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ تَوَّابٌ</p> <p style="text-align: right;">رَجِيْمٌ ۙ</p>
29	<p><b>Which means:</b> "O, you who believe! Shun much suspicion (lest you think thoughts that are prohibited) Indeed, some assumption is sin; and do not spy nor find fault and stigmatization of people; and do not some of you swear at each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? (If so slander) then of course you loathe it. (Thus, abhor such) and fear Allah; Allah is Relenting, Merciful. "</p>
30	<p><b>Fellow Muslims blessed by Allah,</b></p> <p>Differences of opinion is by no means a hostile act. Although our views may differ, it is still not an excuse for the community or society to break apart. Those whose views are true should not be arrogant and shame those with different views than theirs. As for those whose views are wrong, it is more honourable to concur and forgive. If we accept these views with an open heart, unity will definitely be preserved.</p>
31	<p>To end today's sermon, let us reflect on these conclusions as guidance and reminders for all:</p> <p><b>First:</b> Disputes and differences of opinion among mankind is natural and is proof of the greatness of Allah SWT.</p>



	<p><b>Second:</b> Disputes and differences which are extreme and unmanageable will invite discords and divisions among mankind.</p> <p><b>Third:</b> Any dispute that occur must be referred back to the Al-Quran and As-Sunnah, which are the major sources of reference and guidance in Islam.</p>
32	<p>As stated by Allah SWT in Surah al-Nisa, verse 59:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ</p> <p>يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾</p>
33	<p><b>Which means:</b> "O you who believe! Obey Allah SWT and obey Rasulallah and the ulil Amri (leaders) among you. And if you disagree (dispute) in a matter, then go back to (the Book of) Allah SWT and the (sunnah) of Rasulallah SAW, if you truly believe in Allah and the Day of Resurrection. That is better (for you), and more deserving in the end. "</p>
34	<p>بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ بِالْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّي وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ، إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. أَقُولُ قَوْلَ هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ. فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا فَوْزَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِينَ.</p>