

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا
وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ اللهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

Praise be to **الله**.

We praise him and ask him for help and forgiveness. We ask him for protection from the evilness in ourselves and from our bad deeds. Whomever God guides to the truth no one will lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, no one will ever guide.

I testify that there is no God but **الله** to whom there is no partner
and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is his servant and messenger

الْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ
أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

"This day, those who disbelieve are in despair of (ever harming) your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me! This day I have perfected your religion for you and I have completed My favour unto you, and I have chosen for you Islam as the religion" (S5, A3)



Brothers and sisters, ASA.

ISA we will continue with the story of Ibraheem^(AS). We continue today's khutbah from we left last time. Just to recap on some of the reasons that prompted us to go through the story of Ibraheem^(AS).

Firstly, Ibraheem^(AS) is the father of the religions of "Tawheed", that is, the religions that testify to the oneness of Allah, God Almighty. Secondly, every year at the end of Hajj, we Muslims, commemorate the sacrifice offered by Ibraheem^(AS) and thirdly, the story of Ibraheem^(AS) has so many lessons that remain eternally relevant for us Muslims, and it is a must that we learn, understand and apply these lessons.

The story of Ibraheem^(AS) teaches us how to seek the truth, how to handle the truth, what it means to believe in the oneness of Allah and what it takes to spread the message of Allah. These are all very important lessons for us today. We remember from last khutbah how we left Ibraheem^(AS) having confronted his people with the truth as he saw it at the time. The truth that he reached through reasoning and contemplation. His people found this truth very hard to swallow, and reacted very aggressively.

This is an issue that we need to look at closely. The problem of rejecting the truth was present at the time of Ibraheem^(AS) and it is present now. Many times do we see the truth being trampled over because it is not in some people's best interest. A good recent example is what Google did in China. In the western democracies, freedom of information is a right, but unfortunately, this is not the case in many eastern countries. Most of us have heard what Google had to do to gain access to the Chinese market. It had to agree to censor a number of undesirable sites, sites chosen by the Chinese authorities, to be censored from the Chinese people. Even though it is clear that the freedom of information is the right way forward, some governments still find this concept very hard to swallow.

When we look at this issue closer, we recognize that when people find it hard to accept the truth it is because they invariably have to give something up. Be that power, status, wealth or even a pre-existing custom or belief. When the truth shines, something has to go, something becomes extinguished. However, another very good reason for people finding the truth hard to swallow is when one tries to ram the truth down their throat. For many people, accepting the truth means accepting change, and some are just unable and unwilling to change yet, or change at the pace dictated on them.

If we feel, as Muslims, that we are entrusted with spreading the message of truth, we need to appreciate this point when dealing with others. Even though we believe that we have a truthful message, the fact that it is truthful does not automatically mean that others will accept it with open arms and will readily change. We need to be patient and we need to be understanding. ISA, Allah has declared that He will reveal the truth, and we can rest assured with this:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ

وَوَكَّفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٢٨﴾

"It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion: And Allah suffices as a Witness" (S48, A28)

Another important point that we need to appreciate relates to the fact that Ibraheem^(AS) was a young man. A rebellious young man. Allah^(SWT) gave him the wisdom at an early age to question the traditions and practices of his elders. Is this relevant for us today? Ibraheem^(AS) stood against what his people have believed and practiced for decades. He has new ideas, and even though he was able to put his point of view forwards in a convincing way, it was rejected because what he had did not agree with them.

For the younger brothers and sisters here, we sometimes can have an equally difficult challenge. It is the challenge that we face in understanding and practicing Islam in a manner that is seemingly different to that of our fathers and forefathers. We now live in the era of information. Our young are always questioning what is around them, and they do not accept things at face value. Our young do in fact challenge us in a manner that we are not familiar with. I definitely did not challenge my parents in the same way. This can create difficulty and cause conflict. The question for us is how should we deal with this phenomenon. Do we react as the father of Ibraheem^(AS) reacted, aggressively and destructively, or should we take advice from the Holy Quran:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَدِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ
أَحْسَنُ

"Invite to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious" (S16, A125)

The older generation is entrusted with passing Islam on to the next. Times are changing, and we must adapt our ways to pass the message on, and we must be patient and understanding. If we are unable to pass the message, rest assured someone else is waiting there to pass on their message. So, again, brothers and sisters, we must be patient, understanding and generous with our time and effort.

Back to story of Ibraheem^(AS). As we know, he confronted his people with the evidence: "ask them if they can speak". This was after he destroyed the idols and left the biggest idol standing. Once they realized the error of their way, how did they react? This is again a very important issue for us Muslims. What did his father and his people say:

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

"They said: Burn him and help your gods, if you are to do (anything)" (S21, A68)

When we look at the manner in which the people of Ibraheem^(AS) reacted, how do we feel? Who was asking for Ibraheem^(AS) to be killed? It was his people, including his own father, Azar. Isn't that abhorrent. One would have expected Ibraheem's^(AS) father to stand by him and protect him for he was his son. This was not the case. Brothers and sisters, forgive me for going through this point again, but it is very important. This story demonstrates to us the aggressive and violent reaction that people who do not believe in Allah are prepared to inflict on those who do not agree with them. We need to ask a very important question, are we Muslims better than that? Does Islam teach us to react and to behave differently?

If our reaction, as Muslims, to the decision to burn Ibraheem^(AS) is utter condemnation, we, as Muslims, should never ever behave in the same way.

Brothers and sisters, aggression and violence is not the way of he or she who fears Allah, but, as the Quran shows us, it is the way of he or she who does not fear Allah.

Please remember that we cannot spread the message of Allah's infinite mercy through violence. We cannot spread the message of Allah's infinite forgiveness through aggression, and we cannot spread the message of Allah's infinite love through hatred. Can Islam be any clearer than that?

Now for the next episode in the story of Ibraheem^(AS). We understand that the revelation came to Ibraheem^(AS) after he destroyed the idols, and left to the mountain. The angel Gabriel gave him the revelation of his message, and then the Quran tells us:

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمِ قَالَ أَسَلَّمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾

"And his Lord said unto him: Surrender (Asslem)! He said: I have surrendered to the Lord of the Worlds" (S2, A131)

Ibraheem^(AS) received the message to submit to the Lord of the Worlds, and to no one else, and he did. Now comes the test. When Ibraheem^(AS) returned to his people, they decided to burn him, and make him an example. The fire they had prepared for him was so intense, people had to stand meters away from it, and Ibraheem^(AS) was to be catapulted into it. As Ibraheem^(AS) was strapped to the catapult, and as he was just about to be thrown into the fire, the angel Gabriel came to him, and asked him: do you want anything? What did Ibraheem^(AS) answer. What should Ibraheem^(AS) answer? It should have been: of course, get me out of here. You don't even have to ask, just do it, save me.

Brothers and sisters, the answer Ibraheem^(AS) gave had to be a fitting answer to our father Ibraheem^(AS). It had to be a fitting answer to the message of Islam. Ibraheem^(AS) was the one who was entrusted with the message of the oneness of Allah, the message of "La-Ilaha-Illa-Llah".



This is how Ibraheem^(AS) responded to Gabriel^(AS): **of you I ask nothing, it is to Allah alone that I ask, and it is Allah alone that can answer.**

What an amazing reply. This is the reply of the believer, and the reply of the messenger of Allah. This is the reply that we Muslims should understand very clearly.

It is to Allah alone that we ask, and it is Allah alone that can answer.

This simple statement tells it all. Very simple, very true and very profound. This is the concept of Islam, the concept of total submission and surrender to the will of Allah. This is the message delivered by Ibraheem^(AS) as his people are just about to extinguish him in that great fire. The message of total submission to the will of Allah.

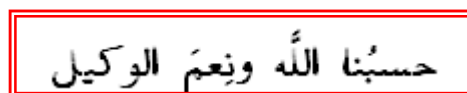
Imagine that thousands of years ago, this young man strapped to the catapult, made this statement which we now read. This is how the lasting message of Islam is spread. It is not spread by aggression and violence, it is not spread by force, but it is spread by our total submission to the will of Allah. As much as I read this story, I ask myself, why can't I submit to the will of Allah like this. Why can't we submit to the will of Allah like this.

We are entrusted with spreading the message of Islam. Allah^(SWT) will not allow us to spread the message of his love, mercy and forgiveness through hatred, aggression and violence. And by the way, spreading the message of Islam does not mean to non-Muslims only. It also means spreading the message of Islam to our children, to our brothers and sisters and to our community. The only fitting way to spread the message of Islam is through patience, endurance and sacrifice, through love, mercy and forgiveness, and through total submission to the will of Allah.

When we are in any doubt as to how we should react in a testing situation, let us remember the words of Ibraheem^(AS), and keep them close to our hearts:

It is to Allah alone that I ask, and it is Allah alone that can answer.

I heard in a lecture by Dr A'ed Al-Qarni, that as the catapult was unleashed, the prayers of Ibraheem^(AS) was:



All I ask off is Allah, and Allah is the best to be dependent on.

This was the unyielding faith of Ibraheem^(AS), and Allah^(SWT) answered his prayers:

قُلْنَا يَنَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٦٩﴾

"We said, O fire be thou cool and (a means of) safety for Ibraheem" (S21, A69)

What a wonderful response. It is not simply the fact that the fire was made safe for Ibraheem^(AS), but listen to what the Quran tells us: Allah Says:

قُلْنَا "We Said"

This is how close and instant the response of Allah is:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٨٢﴾

"His command, when He intends, is only to say: Be and it is" (S36, A82)

In this testing event, we witness so much. We witness the resolve of the believer, we witness the message of Islam and we witness the closeness and the power of Allah.

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَ لَكُمْ

2nd Khutbah:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ثُمَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ. الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ
أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. أَمَا بَعْدُ:

The fire does not harm Ibraheem^(AS), and he leaves his people and travels to the land of Babel. His message is now very clear. It is to spread the concept of the oneness of Allah. At that time, people used to worship idols and celestial bodies. Ibraheem^(AS)

initial message challenged these two traditions, but there was also a third and very sinister pattern of worship. It was the declaration by kings that they had divine qualities, and that they should be worshiped as gods. Imagine people having to worship and prostrate to another human being, another creation that is equal to them. Is that relevant for us today?

Ibraheem^(AS) went to the king "Namrud" and confronted him with the message of Islam. Ibraheem^(AS) was not content with the fact that he has just escaped the blazing fire. He had a message. That message was not only for his time, but it is was also for us. This is what the Quran reads:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ

"Have you not considered him (Namrud) who disputed with Ibraheem about his Lord, because Allah had given him the kingdom" (S2, A258)

إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أَحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ

"Ibraheem said: My Lord is He who gives life and causes to die, he said: I give life and cause death" (S2, A258)

We know the story of how Namrud argued his point of having the power to give life and to take it. He brought two people in front of him and condemned them both to die. One was killed, and the other was pardoned, hence demonstrating the power to give life. Again we have a clear example of the ways of those who do not believe in Allah. Namrud had no qualms about killing a fellow human being just to prove his point. Again the Quran testifies that unlawful killing is not the way of those who believe in Allah. So, how did Ibraheem^(AS) respond. Did he fear for his life? Did he renegotiate the terms of the debate? No, he went straight for it:

قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ
فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٨﴾

"Ibraheem said: So surely Allah causes the sun to rise from the east, then make it rise from the west; thus he who disbelieved was confounded; and Allah does not guide the unjust people" (S2, A258)

This is how Ibraheem^(AS) argued the message of Islam against the three modes of worship that existed at the time. He did not blow up his ideas through people. He did

not terrorise them into believing in him. He did not cajole and bribe his way. He did not submit to the whims of him or her to have his message accepted. **His message was too important to be marred by the manner it was spread.** Is that relevant for us today?

When the message is so important, the manner in which it is spread must be fitting, otherwise, in time to come, the message will be harmed by the manner it was propagated. We have seen that. We have seen it in the war on terror. The American administration is convinced that the only way to defeat terror is through terror. We all know that terror must be defeated, but we all also know that restricting civil liberties and harming innocent people in the process can only be harmful to the war on terror in the long run.

Muslims must recognise that even though it seems that power is the prevailing ideology, Islam as a message is far too important for Muslims to copy the Americans in their approach. Muslims can never be involved in terror if they want to spread the message of Islam. Muslims must never condone the restriction of civil liberties anywhere in the world if they want to spread the message of Islam. Islam is far too precious for us to spread it in any other way.

When the message is so important, the manner in which it is spread must be fitting. When we think about spreading the message of Islam, let us remember Ibraheem^(AS). It was him who started the message of Islam, and thousands of years later, we still have it. Namrud and his ideology have vanished, Azar and his idols have vanished, but Islam has remained and has prospered. The message can only be spread through knowledge, through reasoning, through patience, through endurance, through debate, through perseverance, through strength of character and most of all through an unyielding belief in the oneness of Allah.

We can never blow Islam into people's homes. We can never shout and scream the message down people's throats. When a true believer wants to spread the message of Islam, it is no longer his or her wellbeing that is most important, but it is the wellbeing of his or her conduct that is paramount.