



Synopsis of Friday Sermon

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IONA
REPENTANCE
REVITALIZATION OF FAITH
RENEWAL OF COVENANT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Synopsis of the Friday Sermon

The Hajj and the Legacy of Ibrahim (AS)

Every season of Hajj reminds us of the legacy of Ibrahim (AS), who, along with his son Ismail (AS), raised the Ancient House (*al-Bayt al-Ateeq*) or Ka'bah from its foundations to restore the worship of the One God.

Ibrahim (AS)'s search for truth began when he was a teenager living in the household of Azar – his father, who was engaged in the making and worshipping of idols. Guided by his pure nature, sound intellect, and rational mind, Ibrahim (AS) questioned his father about idol worship, pointing out that he and his people were clearly in error. *"Mention (O Prophet, when Ibrahim said to his father, Azar, 'Do you take idols as gods? I see that you and your people are clearly misguided.'" (al-An'am, 6:74)*

Testifying to Ibrahim (AS)'s firm belief in *tawhid*, Allah (SWT) likens him to an entire nation or community (*ummah*), affirming more than once that he was not among the polytheists (*mushrikeen*). *"Ibrahim was a community in himself, devoted to Allah and true in faith. He was not one of the polytheists" (al-Nahl, 16:120)*. Ibrahim (AS)'s unwavering stance eventually led him to distance himself from his household and his people. *"When Ibrahim said to his father and his people, 'I am free of everything you worship, except for Him who brought me into being. He will certainly guide me.'" (al-Zukhruf, 43:26-27)*

Allah (SWT) blessed Ibrahim (AS) with a discerning mind, enabling him to clearly distinguish between the Creator and His creation. By keenly observing the heavenly bodies – particularly the stars, the moon, and the sun – and using his intellect, Ibrahim (AS) reinforced his faith in the Creator of everything, who alone should be worshipped.

Possessing an intuitive and unwavering faith in Allah (SWT), Ibrahim (AS) discovered God through his rational faculty and could not help but proclaim, *"I have set my face with single-minded devotion towards Him who has created the heavens and the earth, and I am not one of the polytheists" (al-An'am, 6:79)*. To those who argued with him, he responded, *"Are you arguing with me about Allah, while He has guided me?" (al-An'am, 6:80)*.

As evident from the Qur'an, Ibrahim (AS) faced severe trials and tribulations in his quest for truth. He succeeded in all the tests he encountered, and as a result, Allah (SWT) made him the leader of humanity (*Imam un-Naas*).

Disgusted with idols and idol worship, and eager to teach his people a lesson about the powerlessness of their false deities, Ibrahim (AS) smashed the idols. Similarly, we must examine whether we have enslaved ourselves to modern-day idolatry – consumerism and materialism in all their forms. Our salvation lies in freeing ourselves from the grip of these contemporary idols and becoming true, humble, and obedient servants of Allah (SWT) alone.

In his youth, Ibrahim (AS) used his power of logical reasoning when confronting Nimrod, the king, in a debate about the existence of God, leaving Nimrod dumbfounded. Islam is a faith that aligns with reason, with no conflict between reason and revelation. There are occasions when we must rely more on our logical reasoning than on our intuition.

Among Ibrahim (AS)'s trials was being thrown into a blazing fire. In His infinite mercy, Allah (SWT) ordered the fire to become cool and safe for Ibrahim, miraculously leaving him unscathed.

Another severe trial for Ibrahim (AS), in compliance with Allah (SWT)'s orders, was to leave his wife Hajar and his infant son Ismail in the harsh, desolate desert land of Mecca, where there was no water, cultivation, or human presence. Once again, in His infinite mercy, Allah (SWT) saved both mother and child by making the spring of Zamzam gush forth from that desert land. The seven rounds (al-Sai') between the hillocks of Safa and Marwa that Hajar took in search of water for her baby son have become one of the essential rituals (*manaasik*) that pilgrims perform during Hajj.

Finally, Ibrahim (AS) faced one of the most severe tests when he was commanded by Allah (SWT) to sacrifice his young son Ismail. Both father and son, displaying complete obedience and steadfastness, willingly complied with Allah (SWT)'s command. Miraculously, Allah (SWT) replaced Ismail with a ram, which was sacrificed instead, establishing the offering of a sacrificial animal as an important ritual of Hajj.

In reality, the Hajj season traces back to the legacy of Ibrahim (AS) and his quest for truth. He established the center of *tawhid*, which remains to this day the Qibla for all Muslims around the world.