

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

TORCHBEARER OF TRUTH



Shaykh Omar Suleiman

Ibrahim (AS): Exemplifying Courage and Faithfulness

Introduction

Context of the Ayah (Surah Al-Imran, Ayah 68)

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"Verily, those who have the greatest right to claim Ibrahim are those who follow him, and this Prophet (Muhammad), and the believers. Allah is the protective friend of the believers."

Context of the Verse:

- This verse was revealed during the time when the Muslims were in Abyssinia, amidst the tensions of identity and faith, especially with the Christians and Jews.
 - Scholars of Islam state that the Muslims felt some inferiority in their interactions with other religious groups in Abyssinia, as they were new to their faith and lacked full knowledge of the Prophet Isa AS (Jesus).
 - Despite being surrounded by followers of Isa AS, the Muslims' relationship with Isa was still developing.

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

TORCHBEARER OF TRUTH



Shaykh Omar Suleiman

Relevance to Current Issues (Palestine and the Prophet)

- The verse is significant in the context of ongoing struggles for Palestine, where various groups try to undermine the Muslims' historical and spiritual claim to the land, particularly regarding the legacy of the Prophets.
- Some European rhetoric seeks to alienate the rightful inhabitants from their ancestral land, replacing them with foreign influences. Muslims, especially those affected by this rhetoric, may feel inferior when speaking about figures like Prophet Isa (AS).

The Significance of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) to Muslims

Muslims' Spiritual Connection to Prophet Ibrahim (AS)

- Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and His Legacy: Ibrahim AS is a foundational figure in Islam, and Muslims are the closest to him in faith. The Prophet Muhammad (S) emphasized this connection, making it clear that Muslims have a special bond with Ibrahim (AS).
- Support from the Qur'an and Hadith:
 - Allah SWT specifically states in the verse that Muslims, especially the believers who follow Muhammad (S), are the closest to Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his legacy.
 - In times of challenge, when other communities claim lineage or association with Prophet Ibrahim, Muslims should confidently affirm their connection and heritage.

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

TORCHBEARER OF TRUTH



Shaykh Omar Suleiman

Theological Connections to Prophets:

- The importance of not feeling inferior when discussing Prophets such as Isa AS, Ibrahim AS, or Musa AS, because we, the Muslims, are the true followers of their teachings.
 - Prophet Muhammad SAW said, "There is no one closer to Isa (AS) than me, as the Prophets are brothers, and there is no Prophet between him and me." (Sahih al-Bukhari 3442).
 - Connection to Isa (AS): Isa (AS) is also a prophet for Muslims, revered as a beloved Messenger, born by Allah's word, and honored among "أولو العزم من الرسل" (the greatest of Allah's Messengers).

Interaction with Christianity:

- The Muslims in Abyssinia were interacting with people who were very knowledgeable about Isa AS through their Christian scriptures.
 - Initially, the Muslims did not have extensive knowledge about Isa AS except for Surah Maryam, which was revealed earlier.
 - Ja'far ibn Abi Talib (RA), in his conversation with Najashi (the Christian King of Abyssinia), recited part of **Surah Maryam** (the story of Isa AS) when Najashi asked about the Prophet's (S) teachings about Isa AS.
 - Najashi's reaction: When he heard the verses, his eyes welled with tears, acknowledging the truth in what was being recited.

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

TORCHBEARER OF TRUTH



Shaykh Omar Suleiman

SESSION 1

Closeness to Ibrahim (AS)

- Closeness to the Prophets: In the context of the ayah, the term "أولى" (the closest) refers to the profound spiritual closeness that believers who follow the Prophet Muhammad (S) and adhere to true faith have to Prophet Ibrahim (AS).
 - The importance of being proud of our connection to Ibrahim (AS) is emphasized. Muslims should never feel inferior to other groups that try to claim Ibrahim (AS) for themselves.
 - Allah SWT is the protective friend of the believers, and no external force can diminish the believers' rightful position.

Lessons from the Life of Ibrahim (AS)

Ibrahim (AS) as a Model of Courage

- Ibrahim (AS) was a courageous advocate for the truth, challenging the norms of his time, especially his people's worship of idols. His example teaches Muslims to stand firm in their belief and to advocate for what is right, no matter the opposition.
- **Example of His Sacrifice:** When Ibrahim (AS) was commanded to sacrifice his son, Ismail (AS), he exhibited perfect submission to Allah's will, demonstrating the true meaning of submission (Islam).

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

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Role of Ibrahim (AS) in Faith

- Ibrahim (AS) is described as the friend of Allah (**Al-Khalil**), a title given to him in recognition of his unique and close relationship with Allah. وَأَتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا "I took Ibrahim AS as a close friend." An-Nisa,, Ayah 125.

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Allah SWT says to Ibrahim: "Submit yourself." Ibrahim replies, "I submit to the Lord of the worlds." (Al-Baqarah, Ayah 131)

- **Submission (Islam):** This is the essence of being a Muslim—to submit fully to Allah's will without hesitation or resistance.
- **Character of Ibrahim AS:** His life exemplifies both creed and character, which all Muslims should aspire to follow.

The Concept of Being a Friend of Allah (Awliya)

Becoming a Friend of Allah (Al-Khalil)

- The Path of Becoming a Wali (Friend of Allah):
 - To be a friend of Allah, one must begin by submitting fully to Allah and living a life of obedience to Him. This submission leads to a deep connection with Allah, which can result in being honored with the title of Wali. The journey from being a humble servant (عبد) to achieving nearness (ولي) through dedication, sincerity, and aligning actions with divine commands.

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

TORCHBEARER OF TRUTH



Shaykh Omar Suleiman

- **Ibn Rajab's Definition:** As one practices Islam and deepens their faith (iman), they gradually reach the state of Ihsan, where their actions are so in harmony with their internal beliefs that they seem to worship Allah as though they see Him.
- **The Ranking of Servitude:** The journey from being a **Muslim** (one who submits) to becoming a **Mu'min** (one who believes and internalizes the faith), and finally a **Muhsin** (one who excels in worship).

The Importance of Following the Prophet Muhammad (S)

- **Following the Prophet as the Closest Claim to Ibrahim:** Just as the verse from Al-Imran (Ayah 68) emphasizes the closeness to Ibrahim through following the Prophet Muhammad (S), Muslims are urged to maintain their connection to the Prophet by adhering to his teachings, both in worship and character.
- **The Prophet's Role in Strengthening Our Connection to Ibrahim (AS):**
 - **النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ** (Al-Ahzab, Ayah 6): The Prophet (S) is closer to the believers than themselves. This relationship affirms the strength of the connection between the believers and Ibrahim AS, because Muhammad (S) is the one who brings that connection to life through his teachings.

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

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Historical and Spiritual Connections to Jerusalem (Al-Quds)

The Land of Ibrahim (AS)

- Historical Context of Jerusalem: Jerusalem is not just tied to the night journey (Isra and Miraj) of the Prophet Muhammad (S), but it holds significant importance as the land where Ibrahim (AS) and other Prophets lived and worshiped Allah.
 - Ibrahim (AS) was the first Prophet to live and die in Palestine, making this land deeply connected to him and the history of Islam.
 - Muslims are urged to connect to this land not just through the Prophets of Islam but also through the spiritual and historical roots that trace back to Ibrahim AS.

Muslims' Connections to Jerusalem

- Jerusalem is not just a city of the past but an integral part of the Muslim identity, tied deeply to the Prophets and the worship of Allah.
 - **Ibrahim (AS)'s Influence:** The prophets and righteous figures who came before the Prophet Muhammad (S) are part of the Muslim heritage. It is important not to let others define the narrative of Jerusalem.
 - Muslims should assert their rightful claim to Jerusalem and understand its significance in the Islamic faith, including the

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

TORCHBEARER OF TRUTH



Shaykh Omar Suleiman

- connection to Ibrahim (AS), who laid the foundation for the monotheistic worship in the region.

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

"Allah is the friend of those who believe, taking them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their allies are the Taghoot (false gods), who take them from light into darkness. They are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally." (Al-Baqarah 2:257)

Explanation of the Verse

- **Allah as the Wali of the Believers:** Allah describes Himself as the friend and protector of the believers, guiding them from darkness (confusion, ignorance) into light (truth, clarity).
- **Disbelievers and Taghoot:** Those who disbelieve are led by their allegiance to "Taghoot"—false gods, idols, or any entity they wrongly place at the level of divinity. This includes:
 - Materialism, self-obsession, trends, and other distractions that lead people away from Allah.
 - Taghoot here symbolizes the worship of one's own ego and power, as seen in tyrants intoxicated by authority.
- **Holding onto the Trustworthy Hand:**

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TORCHBEARER OF TRUTH



Shaykh Omar Suleiman

SESSION 1

فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطُّغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ
(Al-Baqarah 2:256)

- Whoever disbelieves in Taghoot and believes in Allah has grasped the trustworthy handhold that will never break.
- This handhold represents complete submission to Allah alone, a relationship of dependence on the Creator without any weakness.

Story of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and His Argument with the Tyrant

The Example of Ibrahim (AS)- From Darkness to Light

- **The Transition to Ibrahim's Story:** Following the concept of Wilayah (friendship with Allah) and Allah guiding the believers, the Quran presents the story of Ibrahim (AS) as a model of one taken from darkness to light.
 - **Contrast of Light and Darkness:** This story illustrates a clear difference between Ibrahim (AS), a friend of Allah, and a tyrant steeped in darkness.

Confrontation with the Tyrant

- **Ibrahim's AS Declaration of Faith:**
 - Ibrahim (AS) proclaims, "My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death."
 - The tyrant, intoxicated with his power, responds by bringing sentenced to death and releasing them while executing an

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

TORCHBEARER OF TRUTH



Shaykh Omar Suleiman

SESSION 1

- innocent person, trying to demonstrate his own "power" over life and death.
- **Theological vs. Psychological Flexing:** This response shows not a debate on theology but rather a display of the tyrant's ego and reckless abuse of power.
- **Modern Parallel:** Such arrogance is mirrored in contemporary figures like Netanyahu, who exhibit disregard for justice and human life, viewing others as mere tools to feed their own power.

Ibrahim's (AS) Final Argument and the Tyrant's Humiliation

- **Challenge of Sun:**
 - Ibrahim (AS) says, *"Indeed, Allah causes the sun to rise from the east, so bring it from the west."*
 - This divine challenge, rooted in natural order, leaves the tyrant speechless and defeated.
- **Psychological Strength of Ibrahim (AS)**
 - The tyrant's psychological attempts to intimidate Ibrahim fail, as Ibrahim's clarity, strength, and connection to Allah render him immune to fear or doubt.
 - **Symbolism:** Ibrahim's (AS) calmness and conviction represent the strength of a true wali (friend of Allah), unaffected by the oppressive forces around him.

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

TORCHBEARER OF TRUTH



Shaykh Omar Suleiman

Implication for Believers

- **Endurance of Oppression:** The Quran shows that the true friends of Allah, like Ibrahim (AS), remain steadfast even when facing overwhelming power.
 - This resilience frustrates oppressors, as their power becomes meaningless in the face of true faith.
 - Palestinian Example: The example of Palestinian resistance embodies this spirit, where even the youngest and weakest show a fearlessness that flusters their oppressors.

Allah's Support of the Believers in Surah Al-Imran

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"Indeed, the people who have the greatest claim to Ibrahim are those who followed him, and this Prophet (Muhammad) and those who believe. And Allah is the protective friend of the believers."(Al-Imran 3:68).

Consistent Theme of Wilayah: The Quran consistently emphasizes that Allah is the Wali of the believers.

- The stories and teachings in Surah Al-Baqarah and Al-Imran reinforce the concept that closeness to Allah (Wilayah) grants strength, clarity, and divine support in the face of adversity.

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

TORCHBEARER OF TRUTH



Shaykh Omar Suleiman

SESSION 1

Conclusion

- **Identity and Connection to Ibrahim (AS):** The Muslim Ummah should feel confident and proud of their identity, never feeling inferior to any other group that claims lineage or history. Ibrahim (AS) is our Prophet, as is Isa (AS) and Musa (AS). Their stories and lessons should empower Muslims to advocate for truth and stand firm in their faith.
- **The Importance of Faith and Practice:** By following the example of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and striving for closeness to Allah, Muslims can achieve a deeper connection with the Divine and lead lives that reflect this ultimate submission to Allah's will.