

IBRAHIM'S SACRIFICE

DAR UT TAWHEED PUBLICATIONS

And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Tagut (all false deities, etc. i.e. do not worship Taghut besides Allah).' Then of them were some whom Allah guided and of them were some upon whom the straying was justified. So travel through the land and see what was the end of those who denied (the truth)." (16:36)

Many messengers and prophets have come and gone with the one call of Tawheed (oneness and worship of Allah s.w.t exclusively). The lives of these prophets and messengers have left awe inspiring effects on the lives of mankind, bringing forth guidance, hope, and a source of light that would provide the true meaning of life. As it is well known the prophets and messengers (as) were all most beloved and favored by the Lord of Alameen, Allah (swt). Five prophets have specifically been mentioned by Allah (swt) for their great struggle to uplift His name and make worship exclusively for Him alone. These prophets are Ibrahim (a.s), Nuh (a.s), Musa (a.s), Isa (a.s) and last but not least Muhammad (s.a.w). There is no doubt that the prophets and messengers all came forth to bring mankind out of the darkness of shirk (polytheism) into the light of Tawheed, which their Lord had willed for them. The stories of all of them have provided ample examples of lives that were truly beloved by Allah (swt). Many people know the great story of Ibrahim (a.s), but how many truly understand the significance of it?

Ibrahim (a.s) is unquestionably distinguished in the Quran with the title of khalil-ul-Allah (the intimate friend of Allah). In surat an-Nisa, Allah says, "For Allah did take Ibrahim for (an intimate) friend" (4:125). The reasons for this are vast in number. From his beginning to his end, Ibrahim's struggle left unimaginable marks within history and mankind. The story of Ibrahim (a.s) is mentioned and discussed with great detail by Allah (swt) in the Holy Quran. Thus it is incumbent upon mankind to refer back to the Holy Quran to truly understand and get a hold of what it was that formed such a light to be born amongst the most ignorant of mankind. Allah (swt) says in the Quran, "Ibrahim was indeed a model. Devoutly obedient to Allah, and true in faith, and he joined not gods with Allah" (16:20).

Born among the star and idol-worshipping people of Chaldea, and son to an idol-maker, Ibrahim broke through the shatters of jahiliyah (ignorance) and set forth to call people to the worship of Allah (swt) alone. Living amongst the most sincere idol worshippers who loved their idols and would sacrifice everything for them, it was indeed a grand challenge for a young man to rise up and call for the worship of ONE illah (God). The Quran says, "And (remember) when Ibrahim said to his father Azar: Do you take idols as aliha (gods)? Verily, I see you and your people in manifest error." (6:74)

In the Quran there are numerous verses, which describe how Ibrahim argued against Idol-worshippers. His arguments were ration at times, and the way he dealt with the people was truly unique. For instance, in surat al-Baqara Allah says: Have you not looked at him who disputed with Ibrahim (Abraham) about his Lord (Allah), because Allah had given him the kingdom? When Ibrahim (Abraham) said (to him): "My Lord (Allah) is He Who gives life and causes death." He said, "I give life and cause death." Ibrahim (Abraham) said, "Verily! Allah causes the sun to rise from the east; then cause it you to rise from the west." So the disbeliever was utterly defeated. And Allah guides not the people, who are Zalimun (wrong-doers, etc.) (2:258). Also, it states in the Quran : And indeed We bestowed aforetime on Ibrahim (Abraham) his (portion of) guidance, and We were Well-Acquainted with him (as to his Belief in the Oneness of Allah, etc.). When he said to his father and his people: "What are these images, to which you are devoted?" They said: "We found our fathers worshipping them." He said: "Indeed you and your fathers have been in manifest error." They said: "Have you brought us the truth, or are you one of those who play about?" He said: "Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, who created them and of that I am one of the witnesses. "And by Allah, I shall plot a plan (to destroy) your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs," So he broke them to pieces, (all) except the biggest of them that they might turn to it. They said: "Who has done this to our aliha (gods)? He must indeed be one of the wrong-doers." They said: "We heard a young man talking (against) them who is called Ibrahim (Abraham)." They said: "Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may testify." They said: "Are you the one who has done this to our gods, O Ibrahim (Abraham)?" [Ibrahim (Abraham)] said: "Nay, this one, the biggest of them (idols) did it. Ask them, if they can speak! "So they turned to themselves and said: "Verily, you are the Zalimun (polytheists and wrong-doers)." Then they turned to themselves (their first thought and said): "Indeed you [Ibrahim (Abraham)] know well that these (idols) speak not!" [Ibrahim (Abraham)] said: "Do you then worship besides Allah, things that can neither profit you, nor harm you? "Fie upon you, and upon that which you worship besides Allah! Have you then' no sense?" They said: "Burn him and help your aliha (gods), if you will be doing."(21:51-68)

As one can see when falsehood is defeated intellectually, this leads to plotting and oppression. In Surat al-Ankabut: "So naught was the answer of (Ibrahim's) people except that they said: Slay him or burn him" (29:24). Ibrahim could have given up the call of tawheed, but instead he preferred the fire. He chose to die for the purpose of Allah's message to live. He was cast into the fire, however Allah had other plans for him, and by Allah's will he was safe. "But Allah did save him from the fire. Verily in this are signs for people who believe" (29:24). Allah also says: "We said 'O fire! Be cool and a means of safety for Ibrahim' " (21:69). After this miracle from Allah (swt), the disbelievers still did not believe. There was persecution, abuse, cruelty and isolation against Ibrahim but he remained uncompromising in his beliefs and patient in his suffering until he made his hijra (he migrated) to the lands of Aram and Canaan. Ibrahim continued a lifetime of struggle. He gave da 'wa, bearing alone the heavy responsibility of the mission of Tawheed (monotheism) in an age of darkness and ignorance. Ibrahim did not have children. However, as he aged he longed for a son, but by the will of Allah his wife was barren. "O my Lord! Grant me a righteous son!" (37:100) Indeed Allah is the most merciful, and against all expectations Allah fulfilled his promise. "So we gave him the good news of a forbearing boy," (37:101). Ibrahim's son was named Ismail (as), and he was truly a blessing from Allah (swt). Ismail was a promise for future generations, but also he was cherished by Ibrahim. There was joy and rejoicing in Ibrahim's house as his beloved son was growing older. Those who truly believe know that there will come a day where Allah will test them, and put forth trials and obstacles. Ibrahim was to be tried once more.

Ibrahim (a.s) had a vision in which he was commanded to slaughter his son. It will not be justice to convey in words what it must have meant for Ibrahim to be commanded by Allah (ta'ala) to sacrifice his only son Ismail. How could it be possible for Ibrahim to take his beloved son, whom he longed for most of his life, and put a knife to his throat and kill him? This became a struggle, between the love of God and the love of ones self. Ibrahim had not chosen immediately. After his third vision he finally decided to carry out Allah's command. This is demonstrated in the hajj ritual of stoning the three idols representing Iblis who tempted Ibrahim to disobey Allah. Khalil-ul-Allah had faith in Allah, and he knew that Allah demanded the sacrifice. Ibrahim chose God and gave up Ismail. Ibrahim said to his son: "O my Son, I see in a vision that I offer you in sacrifice. Now see what is your view? " (37:102). In turn the obedient slave of Allah, Ismail stated: "O my father! Do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah so wills, patient and constant "(37:102). Ibrahim had even consulted with his son, and his son willingly offered himself to Allah's command. This was self-sacrifice.

Ibrahim laid Ismail on the ground, putting his face away from him to give him strength, and he slaughtered Ismail. Or shall we say he attempted to because the knife did not cut. Ibrahim received a ram and was called by Allah: "O Ibrahim! You have confirmed the Vision, Thus indeed do we reward those who do right this is indeed the manifest trial!" (37:104-105). Ibrahim gained everything, and kept Ismail. How great is our Lord! Mankind has needs but Allah (swt) has no needs. He is Self-Sufficient. He is the all wise; it is He who tries whom He loves according to His knowledge. Indeed if we ponder this event, there are various lessons to be learned, and a few sentences cannot do justice. What can be said is that, when one truly submits himself to Allah (swt) nothing else becomes as important anymore. When one claims he is the slave of Allah, he should be willing to sacrifice anything for his Lord, his Master. Life is truly short; a temporary illusion. The celebration of the two Eids is yet another blessing upon mankind from Allah, the most Merciful. From the above, the writers hope, and make dua that the reader has come to a realization of the significance that Ibrahim (a.s)'s sacrifice had. Indeed it is the significance of our observance of Eid ul Adha.

Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Ibrahim (Abraham) and those with him, when they said to their people:

"Verily, we are free from you and whatever you worship besides Allah, we have rejected you, and there has started between us and you, hostility and hatred for ever, until you believe in Allah Alone," except the saying of Ibrahim

(Abraham) to his father: "Verily, I will ask for forgiveness (from Allah) for you, but I have no power to do anything for you before Allah.

" Our Lord! In You (Alone) we put our trust, and to You (Alone) we turn in repentance, and to You (Alone) is (our) final Return.[60:4]

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