

CLASS 4

PROPHET IBRAHIM عليه صلعم

Ibrahim's Childhood

Ibrahim A.S. was born into a family where the head of the family was not even an ordinary idolater, but was one who totally rejected Allah and who used to make the idols with his own hands. He was endowed with spiritual understanding from an early age. Allah enlightened his heart and mind gave him wisdom from childhood.

Ibrahim's Hatred for Idols

Since his childhood his heart had been full of hatred for these idols. He could not understand how a sane person could make a statue and then worship what he had made. He noticed that these idols did not eat, drink or talk and they could not even turn themselves right side up if someone turned them upside down. How, then could people believe that such statues could harm or benefit them?

Ibrahim Reasons with Idolators

Ibrahim did his best to make his people heedful to the belief in the oneness of Almighty Allah and to the worship of Him alone. He bade them to firmly renounce the worship of idols. 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 of the witnesses."* (21:52-56)

Ibrahim reasons with his Father

Ibrahim felt that it was his duty as a good son to advise his father against this evil so that he could be saved from Allah's punishment. Being a wise son he did not make his father feel foolish, nor did he openly laugh at his conduct. He told him that he loved him, thereby hoping to generate fatherly love. Then he gently asked him why he worshipped lifeless idols who could not hear, see or protect him. before his father could become angry he hastily added:



"O my father! Verily! There has come to me of knowledge that which came not unto you. So follow me. I will guide you to a Straight Path. O my father! Worship not Satan. Verily! Satan has been a rebel against the Most Beneficent (Allah). O my father! Verily! I fear lest a torment from the Most Beneficent (Allah) overtake you as that you become a companion of Satan (in the Hellfire)." He (the father) said: "Do you reject my gods, O Ibrahim? If you stop not this, I will indeed stone you. So get away from me safely before I punish you." Ibrahim said: "Peace be on you! I will ask Forgiveness of my Lord for you. Verily! He is unto me, Ever Most Gracious. And I shall turn away from you and from those whom you invoke besides Allah." (19:43-48)

Ibrahim Breaks the Idols

Ibrahim decided to do something about their state of disbelief, but did not reveal it. He knew that there was going to be a great celebration on the other bank of the river which would be attended by all the people.

Ibrahim waited until the city was empty, then came out cautiously, directing his steps towards the temple. The streets leading to it were empty and the temple itself was deserted for the priests had also gone to the festival outside the city. Ibrahim went there carrying a sharp axe. He looked at the stone and wood statues of the gods and at the food laid in front of them as offerings. He approached one of the statues and asked: "The food in front of you is getting cold. Why don't you eat?" the statue kept silent and rigid. Ibrahim asked all the other statues around him: *"Will you not eat of the offering before you?"* (37:91)

He was mocking them for he knew they would not eat. He once again asked them: *"What is the matter with you that you do not speak?"* (37:92)

He then raised his axe and started smashing the false gods worshipped by the people. He destroyed them all except one on whose neck he hung the axe. After this his anger subsided and he felt at peace. He left the temple. He had fulfilled his vow to show his people a practical proof of their foolishness in worshipping something other than Allah.

The Idolaters Question Ibrahim

When the people returned, they were shocked to see their gods smashed to pieces, lying scattered all over the temple. They began to guess who had done that to their idols and Ibrahim's name came to their minds.

Allah the Almighty said: they said: *"Who has done this to our aliah (gods)? He must indeed be one of the wrongdoers." They said: "We heard a young man talking against them who is called Ibrahim." 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?" Ibrahim 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 wrongdoers)." Then they turned to themselves (their first thought and said): "Indeed you (Ibrahim) know well that these idols speak not?" Ibrahim said: "DO you then worship besides Allah, things that can neither*

profit you nor harm you? If upon you, and upon that which you worship besides Allah! Have you then no sense?" (21:59-67)

Furious, they demanded that Ibrahim be arrested and tried. Ibrahim did not resist. This was precisely what he had been aiming for, so that he could show them up in public for their foolish beliefs. At the trial they asked him if he was responsible for breaking the idols. Smiling, he told them to ask the biggest idol which was still whole. He told them that he must be the culprit! They replied that he knew well that the idol could not speak or move which gave Ibrahim the chance to prove the foolishness of worshipping these lifeless objects.

They then realized the senselessness of their beliefs; however, their arrogance would not allow them to admit their foolishness. All they could do was to use their power of authority as tyrants usually do to punish Ibrahim. They kept him in chains and planned their revenge.

The Idolaters Try to burn Ibrahim

They decided to throw Ibrahim into the biggest fire they could build. All the citizens were ordered to gather wood as a service to their gods. For several days they collected fuel. They dug a deep pit, filled it with firewood and ignited it. They brought a catapult with which to cast Ibrahim into the fire. Ibrahim was put on the catapult, his hands and feet were tied.

The angel Gabriel came near Ibrahim's head and asked him: "O Ibrahim do you wish for anything?" Ibrahim replied: "Nothing from you." The catapult was shot and Ibrahim was cast into the fire. But his descent into the blaze was as descent on steps in a cool garden. The flames were still there, but they did not burn for Allah the Almighty had issued His command: *"O fire! Be you coolness and safety for Ibrahim."* (21:69)

The fire submitted to the will of Allah, becoming cool and safe for Ibrahim. It only burned his bonds, and he sat in the midst of the fire as if he were sitting in a garden.

The throng, the chiefs, and the priests sat watching the fire from a distance. It was burning their faces and nearly suffocating them. It kept burning for such a long time that the disbelievers thought it would never be extinguished. When it did burn out, they were greatly amazed to find Ibrahim coming out of the pit untouched by the fire. Their faces were black from the smoke, but his was bright with the light and grace of Allah. The raging fire had become cool for Ibrahim and had only charred the ropes which held him. He walked out of the fire as if he were walking out of a garden. Cries of astonishment were heard from the heathens. *"They wanted to harm him, but We made them the worst losers."* (Ch 21:70)

This miracle shamed the tyrants, but it did not cool the flame of anger in their hearts. However after his event many of the people followed Ibrahim, although some kept their belief a secret for fear of harm or death at the hands of the rulers.

Ibrahim challenges those who proclaim themselves as gods, King Namrud

Ibrahim had established a definite reasoning against idolaters. Nothing was left for him except to reason against the people who proclaimed themselves gods. When the king, Namrud, heard of Ibrahim's safe exit from the fire he became very angry. He feared that the status of godhead he had proclaimed for himself was not challenged by an ordinary human being. He summoned Ibrahim to the palace and held a dialogue with him which Allah Almighty recounted:

"Have you not thought about him who disputed with Ibrahim about his Lord (Allah) because Allah had given him the kingdom? When Ibrahim said to him: "My Lord (Allah) is He Who gives life and causes death." He said: "I give life and cause death." Ibrahim 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. Allah guides not the people who are Zalimeen (wrongdoers etc). (2:258)

Ibrahim's fame spread throughout the entire kingdom. People talked about how he had been saved from the blazing fire and how he had debated with the king and left him speechless. In the meantime, Ibrahim continued calling people to believe in Allah, exerting a great effort to guide his people to the right path. He tried every means to convince them. However in spite of his love and care for his people, they felt angry and deserted him. Only one woman and one man of his people shared his belief in Allah. The woman's name was Sarah and she became his wife. The man's name was Lot and he became a prophet. When Ibrahim realized that no one else was going to believe in his call, he decided to emigrate. He left his people and traveled with his wife and Lot to a city called Ur, then another called Haran, and then to Palestine.

Allah the Almighty told us: *"So Lut believed in him (Ibrahim's message of Islamic Monotheism). He (Ibrahim) said: "I will emigrate for the sake of my Lord. Verily, He is the All Mighty, the All Wise." (29:26)*

After Palestine, Ibrahim traveled to Egypt, calling people to believe in Allah wherever he traveled, judging fairly between people, and guiding them to truth and righteousness. Hadith about Ibrahim, Sarah and Hajar Abu Hurairah narrated that Ibrahim (pbuh) did not tell a lie except on three occasions, twice for the sake of Allah (Exalted and Almighty) when he said: *"I am sick," (when his people were holding a festival in honor of their gods, Ibrahim excused himself by saying he was sick. (37:89)* and when he said: *"(I have not done this but) the big idol has done it."* The (third was) that while Ibrahim and Sarah (his wife) were going (on a journey), they passed by (the territory of) a tyrant. Someone said to the tyrant: "This man (Ibrahim is accompanied by a very charming lady." SO, he sent for Ibrahim and asked him about Sarah saying "Who is this lady?" Ibrahim said: "She is my sister." Ibrahim went to Sarah said "O Sarah! There are no believers on the surface of the earth except you and me. This man asked me about you and I have told him that you are my sister do not contradict my statement." the tyrant then called Sarah, and when she went to him, he tried to take a hold of her with his hand, but his hand got stiff and he was confounded. He asked Sarah: "Pray to Allah for me and I shall not harm you." SO Sarah asked Allah to cure him and he got cured. He tried to take hold of her for the second time, but his hand got as stiff as or stiffer than before and he was more confounded. He again requested Sarah:



"Pray to Allah for me, and I will not harm you." Sarah asked Allah to again, and he became all right. He then called one of his guards who had brought her and said: "You have not brought me a human being but have brought me a devil." The tyrant then gave Hajar as a maid servant to Sarah. Ibrahim, gesturing with his hand, asked: "What has happened?" She replied: "Allah has spoiled the evil plot of the infidel or immoral person and gave me Hajar for service." Abu Hurairah then addressed his listeners saying: "That Hajar was your mother, O Bani Ismael (Arab, the descendants of Ishmael, Hajar's son)."

Hajar and Sarah

Ibrahim's wife Sarah was sterile. Therefore, she offered her husband her servant Hajar in marriage. Hajar gave birth to her first son Ishmael (isma'il) when Ibrahim was an old man.

Ibrahim Questions Resurrection

Ibrahim lived on earth worshipping Allah and calling people to monotheism, but he was journeying to Allah, knowing that his days on earth were limited and that they would be followed by death and finally resurrection. The knowledge of life after death filled Ibrahim with peace and love and certitude. One day he begged Allah to show him how He brought the dead back to life. Allah commanded Ibrahim to take four birds, cut them up and mingle their body parts, divide them into four portions and place them on top of four different hills, then call back the birds in Allah's name. Ibrahim did as he was told. Immediately the mingled parts of the birds separated to join their original bodies in different places and the birds flew back to Ibrahim.

Almighty Allah revealed: *"Remember when Ibrahim said: 'My Lord Show me how You give life to the dead.' Allah said: 'Do you not believe?'" Ibrahim said: "Yes I believe, but to be stronger in Faith." HE said: "Take four birds, the cause them to incline towards you (then slaughter them, cut them into pieces) and then put a portion of them on every hill and call them they will come to you in haste. And know that Allah is All Mighty and All Wise."*(2:260)

Note: The story will be continued in the next class with Prophets Ismail & Ishaq عليه صلعم