



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

LESSONS FROM PROPHET IBRAHIM (AS)

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) has always been a prophet close to our hearts, as we usually send our blessings to him in our tashahud everyday. He is also called an intimate friend of Allah in the Qur'an. His name appeared 69 times in the Qur'an.

قَانِتًا أُمَّةً كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّا
الْمُشْرِكِينَ مِنْ يَكُ وَلَمْ حَنِيفًا لِلَّهِ
وَهْدَاهُ اجْتَبَاهُ ۖ لِأَنعُمِهِ شَاكِرًا
مُسْتَقِيمٍ صِرَاطٍ إِلَى

“Verily, Ibrahim (Abraham) was an *Ummah* (a leader having all the good righteous qualities), or a nation, obedient to Allah, *Hanifa* (i.e. to worship none but Allah), and he was not one of those who were *Al-Mushrikun* (polytheists, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, and those who joined partners with Allah).

(He was) thankful for His (Allah's) Graces. He (Allah) chose him (as an intimate friend) and guided him to a Straight Path (Islamic Monotheism, neither Judaism nor Christianity)” 16: 120-121

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Prophet Ibrahim and his Tawakkul in the Almighty

We offer salutation to our dear Prophet Ibrahim (‘alayhissalam) in every prayer. He is one of the five strong will Messengers of Allah. He chose him, guided him and

blessed him with sound wisdom. Since an early age, Ibrahim (‘alayhissalam) stood in the face of evil, debated with his people, called them to worship Allah alone and when they persisted in disbelief, he destroyed the idols that his people were worshipping. As a consequence, when their arguments were refuted and their incapability became clear, when truth was made manifest and falsehood was defeated, they resorted to using their power and strength, and decided to throw him in the raging fire. They were so full of hatred for him that they considered it a religious duty to put him in torment. In Tafsir Ibn Katheer it says that, “If a woman was sick, she would make a vow that if she recovered she would bring wood to burn Ibrahim.” SubhanAllah there was no limit to their hostility but all their aggressiveness could not make Prophet Ibrahim’s faith in Allah flinch even a tiny bit. We can’t even imagine the plight of Ibrahim. He was the only believer among the huge crowd of polytheists and even his own father was on the side of the prosecution. Ibrahim (alayhissalam) heard them when they plotted against him, he saw them when they made a hole in the ground and set it aflame, and it burned with huge sparks and immense flames yet his faith in Allah remained unshakable and his heart in full submission to His plan for him.

Al-Bukhari recorded from Ibn `Abbas that he said: **“When Prophet Ibraheem was thrown into the fire, he said: ‘الْوَكِيلُ وَنِعْمَ اللَّهُ حَسْبُنَا - Allah (Alone) is sufficient for us, and, He is the Best Disposer of affairs.’ So did Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (sallAllahu alaihi wasallam), when he was told: ‘A great army of the disbelievers had gathered against him, so fear them’. But this (warning) only increased him and the Muslims in Faith and they said: ‘الْوَكِيلُ وَنِعْمَ اللَّهُ حَسْبُنَا - Allah (Alone) is sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us)’ (3:173).” [Al-Bukhari].**

Both our awesome prophets (‘alayhimussalam) uttered these beautiful words. Words which mean *Allah is sufficient for us*, we don’t need anybody else but Him, He is someone we delegate our affairs to and He is the Only One who will take care of us.

A heart devoid of faith will never be able to say these words. It’s only a true believer who will understand and know without a doubt that Allah alone is the One who Bestows help and protection and the One Who Withholds, and He alone is the Remover of Harm and Affliction. When Prophet Ibrahim uttered these words he affirmed the Power of Allah, His Love and His knowledge. He knew that Allah is Aware of his feelings and his condition. He said these powerful words as if they were a shield for him against the raging fire and he didn’t care who was against him because he had the Most powerful and Most Merciful with him. And history is aware how the response of Allah came as a swift command and He said to the raging fire:

وَسَلِّمًا عَلَىٰ يَنَارٍ كُونِي بَرْدًا
إِبْرَاهِيمَ

“O fire! Be you cool and safety for Ibrahim!” (21: 69)

and there was no fire left on earth that was not extinguished.” Ibn `Abbas and Abu Al-`Aliyah said: “Were it not for the fact that Allah said, *وَسَلَامًا* “..and safety”, Ibrahim would have been harmed by its coldness.”

Allahu Akbar. Allah responded to the faithful statement of Ibrahim in the best of ways and made him land into a place similar to a garden with no sign of the blazing fire and gave him victory over the ones who thought that they had power over all things. And this is only because of his strong faith and his du`aa filled with certainty, the effect of which made the world sit up and watch in amazement! It was the same faith and certainty in his Lord that made Ibrahim (alayhissalam) disassociate himself from his father and his people and make hijrah to someplace where he could establish the religion of Allah with his wife Sarah and his nephew Lut who had accepted faith. And Allah tells us of another similar and equally beautiful du`aa that he uttered when he left:

أَنْبَنَا وَإِلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ رَبَّنَا
الْمَصِيرُ وَإِلَيْكَ

Our Lord, upon You we have relied, and to You we have returned, and to You is the destination. (Al Mumtahina 60:4)

Know dear believers, submitting to the will of Allah and leaving your affairs to Him provides the healing touch that is much necessary in one’s life. One has to believe in the promise of Allah when He tells us in the Qur’an:

حَسْبُهُ فَهُوَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ يَتَوَكَّلُ وَمَنْ

And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him. (At Talaq 65:3)

Relying on Allah Alone, trusting Him for His Decisions for us and patiently waiting for an outcome that will always be best for us even if it is not pleasing to us, is the condition for Allah being sufficient for us! When we don’t have such a belief then Allah leaves us on our own. By putting one’s complete Trust in Allah, by leaving matters unto Him, by seeking only His grace and mercy, by accepting His decree, by submitting to His Will - a Muslim can equip oneself to face all the challenges of life.

And this one single statement:

الْوَكِيلُ وَنِعْمَ اللَّهُ حَسْبُنَا will be enough in itself to be a source of all strength, all comfort and success, Insha Allah!

Lessons from the Attitude of Prophet Ibrahim’s dialogue with his father

Knowledge and understanding is not necessarily something that comes with age and just because a person is older does not mean that he or she is someone to emulate. Most of us notice our parents or other elders involved in wrong practices but hesitate to correct them or give them sincere advice out of fear of offending them or upsetting them. Sometimes, even when advised parents would not even admit that what they are doing is wrong, rather, they actually try to convince their young who

are adhering to the limits and laws of Allah to instead follow their wrong ways. So how do we react to such a situation?

While analysing the many amazing qualities of Prophet Ibrahim and extracting lessons from his fascinating life, let's also try to study about his sincerity in trying to save his own father from eternal loss, by warning him about the destructive sin of shirk (polytheism) that he was indulging in. The way he interacted with his father is a very good example of a person respecting his parent yet rejecting his (the parent's) ways and lifestyle and calling him to the right path.

Prophet Ibrahim's father Azar was a sculptor of idols, so from a young age Ibrahim ('alayhissalam) was aware that idols were nothing more than pieces of wood or stone – inanimate objects that could extend no benefit or harm. He tried to convince his father that his practice of idol worship was wrong and ultimately useless. He spoke to him in a gentle voice, using kind and loving words to address him, and he tried to warn him of the dangers inherent in worshipping idols. Allah tells us about the approach that Ibrahim uses in calling his father to Islam, in beautiful ayahs of Surah Maryam:

“[Mention] when he said to his father, “O my father, why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see and will not benefit you at all? O my father, indeed there has come to me of knowledge that which has not come to you, so follow me; I will guide you to an even path. O my father, do not worship Satan. Indeed Satan has ever been, to the Most Merciful, disobedient. O my father, indeed I fear that there will touch you a punishment from the Most Merciful so you would be to Satan a companion [in Hellfire].” [Maryam 19:42-45]

Lessons Derived:

- Notice how Prophet Ibrahim says: **أَبَتِي يَا** In Arabic this is a very endearing term. This is an expression of love for a father. Even though he is a mushrik and involved in an act that is abhorrent to Allah, Prophet Ibrahim's actions teach us that we should hate the sin and not the sinner himself. He uses the best of loving and kind terms to call his father to Islam teaching us that being gentle, loving and polite is an important factor while addressing the elders.
- Prophet Ibrahim ('alayhissalam) then starts off by making him reflect over his actions. He doesn't start by condemning his wrong actions but instead invites him to reason, use his intellect by asking him how something that *does not hear and does not see can benefit him*. He then moves from intellect to knowledge and explains how revelation has come to him from the Creator, thus showing him that what he is calling him to is special knowledge given to him from the Lord of the world – Allah. Thus teaching us that it's necessary to arouse interest in the elderly listener by using logic and by appealing to his sense of right and wrong alluding to the consequences.
- We read that Prophet Ibrahim, then explains to his father about the plot of shaytan and how following his path would lead him to eternal loss and informing him about the extreme mercy of Allah who is merciful even to a disobedient creature like Iblees. Also notice how he juxtaposes the mercy of

Allah over his punishment. When people learn about Allah, they shouldn't learn He is the One who puts them into hell fire but that Allah is the One who has been taking care of them their whole lives, the One who provides for them even when their sin and disobey and the One Who accepts people's repentance and forgives their shortcomings. So know that from the best way to introduce Allah ta'ala in da'wah is by His Mercy. Muslims who have fallen into sins and non Muslims should be made to reflect about the mercy of their Lord in all the facets of their lives and then they should be reminded that what Ar Rahman commands is for His servants own good.

Prophet Ibrahim (alayhissalam) was wise beyond his years yet his father did not listen perhaps because of extreme ignorance or arrogance and threatened to stone him. But we notice in the continuing ayahs of the Surah Maryam that our dear Ibrahim (alayhissalam) did not lose his temper but instead responded to his father's threatening attitude with respect and wisdom.

[Abraham] said, "Peace will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, He is ever gracious to me. And I will leave you and those you invoke other than Allah and will invoke my Lord. I expect that I will not be in invocation to my Lord unhappy." (Maryam 19:47-48)

Once again Prophet Ibrahim uses the best of speech and tells his father about the mercy of Allah and His generosity showing him he still has a chance to reflect, repent and turn to Him in submission. This teaches us that no matter how rude or unpleasant the attitude of the elderly, we should never be offended by the negative reactions, continue being kind to them, pray for them and never become weary of continuous work for His cause.

Conclusion:

We learn from the dialogue between Prophet Ibrahim and his father that the message should be shared with wisdom and gentleness and understand that the outcome is not always positive. We should be prepared for opposition, ridicule and unresponsive behavior. Nevertheless we should do our part, convey the message keeping in mind the instruction from Allah when He says: **"O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded."** (Al Furqan 66:6)

We must do our duty and then let Allah take care of the rest, believing that we cannot guide the one we love, it is Allah Who guides whomever He wills. Allah (Subhahau wa Ta'ala) says:

وَلَكِنَّ أَحَبَّتَ مَنْ تَهْدِي لَا إِنَّكَ
أَعْلَمُ وَهُوَ ۖ يَشَاءُ مَنْ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ
بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He is most knowing of the [rightly] guided.” (Al Qasas 28:56)

Lessons from the attitude of Namrud (The king where Prophet Ibrahim was born)

Like Prophet Muhammad (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam), Ibrahim (alayhissalam) was born at a time when ignorance was at its peak, at Babylon in Iraq during the reign of a tyrant disbeliever Namrud. Namrud was a ruler who was filled with misguidance...he used to term himself as lord of everything. Allah tells us in the third juz of the Qur’an, how Prophet Ibrahim [‘alayhissalam] debated with this ignorant ruler to explain that Allah is the Lord of everything that exists. Allah says: **“Have you not considered the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord [merely] because Allah had given him kingship? When Abraham said, “My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death,” he said, “I give life and cause death....” [Al Baqarah 2:258]**

SubhanAllah! Notice how Allah says “*..the one who argued with Ibrahim about his Lord [merely] because Allah had given him kingship..*” showing us that Allah had blessed Namrud with kingdom and power and this blessing was what had made him arrogantly deny the favors of Allah instead of being humbly grateful for them. He was deceived by this gift to such an extent that it had made him compete with the One who had given him the gift!

SubhanAllah! This should actually make us fearful, as when Allah gives us and gives us without account we usually tend to take His favours for granted, while the attitude that Allah wants from us is that whenever we are blessed with gifts from Him, it should be a reason for us to contemplate over His Generosity and His Mercy and never let it be a case where we ungratefully engage in sins and turn to disbelief and misguidance. Never let it be a case where we feel safe from the punishment of Allah just because He has kept us blessed, thriving and secure. Allah says about some tyrants and arrogant disbelievers: **“So when they forgot that by which they had been reminded, We opened to them the doors of every [good] thing until, when they rejoiced in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly, and they were [then] in despair.” (Al An’aam 6:44)**

We have to know and understand that Allah always tests people with either one of the two conditions:

First, with hardship to see if they humble themselves and turn to Him by increasing in du'aa to Him but when they don't do that, He tries them with ease, sends them His blessings so that they might turn to Him in gratefulness and submission. But when they still remain arrogant and oblivious to the signs sent by Him, He punishes them in ways they never imagined! Allah says: **"And We sent to no city a prophet [who was denied] except that We seized its people with poverty and hardship that they might humble themselves [to Allah]. Then We exchanged in place of the bad [condition], good, until they increased [and prospered] and said, "Our fathers [also] were touched with hardship and ease." So We seized them suddenly while they did not perceive." (Al A'raf 7:95)**

So let's always take account of ourselves.., keep a check on our reactions to the numerous gifts and blessings coming from Allah. Let's ask ourselves: 'Have we thanked him for the food we enjoy daily, the security of our homes, our loving families, our five senses that work perfectly...? Hasan Al Basri said: *"Verily, Allah lets [a person] enjoy a blessing for as long as He wills. But when He is no longer thanked for it, He turns it into a punishment."*

Let's not take our blessings for granted. Let's thank Him and humbly submit to Him so that these blessings do not turn into a means of increased punishment.

Namrud was given a kingdom and he disbelieved but on the other hand we have lessons from Prophet Suleiman ('alayhissalam) who was given such a kingdom where almost all the creation of Allah was placed under his control. He had men, jinn, animals, birds and the wind submitting to his commands and totally in his power but was his attitude like that of Namrud? No! Allah tells us in the Qur'an, about how he reacted to his Lord's favors: **"He (Suleiman) said: 'This is from the favor of my Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful - his gratitude is only for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever is ungrateful - then indeed, my Lord is Free of need and Generous.' "** (Al Naml 27:40)

Allah also says: **"And We had certainly given to David and Solomon knowledge, and they said, "Alhamdulillah - Praise [is due] to Allah , who has favored us over many of His believing servants." (Al Naml 27:15)**

This is the attitude of the righteous servants of Allah. This amazing behaviour of Allah's beloved prophets is what we need to emulate in our daily lives! Plus Allah says: لَازِيدُنَّكُمْ شَكَرْتُمْ لِنِّين

'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]..." (Surah Ibrahim 14:7)

So let's be grateful for the numerous favors and blessings that keep being showered on us and let's believe in the promise of Allah that He will increase His blessings on us if we keep thanking Him by submitting to His commands and His decree for us. Let's be grateful and hope, expect and pray for increase in favors from Him...but let's make sure we pray for increase in good in Dunya as well as increase in good in the Hereafter. Let's pray not be of the unfortunate ones who receive the result of their good deeds in dunya and then find nothing but scattered dust in the Hereafter.

Alhamdulillah! We praise You and thank You ya Allah for your infinite blessings! Indeed we can never enumerate your favors on us! Ya Allah! Forgive us for our shortcomings and make us of Your grateful and humble servants! Aameen!

Blind Following – Not from the Characteristics of Prophets

As humans we are imitative by nature. We tend to follow copy and emulate the actions from the environment around us or learn from people around us. Notice this in little kids around you, the way they copy their elders in their actions and style. We know that Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) grew up in a household of shirk (polytheism) where they worshiped idols, and in a community that worshiped idols of stone and wood; a community which had a king who claimed to be God; but he never let this environment of shirk and kufr affect his way of life or his sound faith. Prophet Ibrahim was inclined to his Fitrah, his natural disposition, as was Muhammad (peace be upon him). He boldly stood against his own family, against the entire system of his community, against all kinds of shirk, kufr and sin, alone, with no companion or support except that of Allah. He was endowed with spiritual understanding from an early age. Allah enlightened his heart and mind, gave him wisdom from childhood; and Ibrahim (peace be upon him) never took this gift for granted. Allah Ta'ala says:

“And We had certainly given Abraham his sound judgement before, and We were of him well-Knowing.” [Al-Anbiyaa’ 21:51]

He used his intellect, his power to reflect, and reason to reject the practices of his community and submitted to the Creator of the heavens, earth, moon, stars and sun. Even in his childhood he was not like the people around him who had succumbed to blind following of their ancestors. Allah tells us in more than one ayah of the Qur’an that when Ibrahim (peace be upon him) asked them about the idols they worshiped...they replied: *“We found our fathers worshipers of them.”* (Al Anbiyaa’ 21:53)

SubhanAllah! When we apply this to today’s world, we see a lot of people taking their fathers, ancestors or other people as the yardstick of right and wrong. There exist in Muslim communities too, many innovated cultural practices and beliefs which have no basis in the Qur’an and Sunnah. Innovations like specifying words of Dhikr that are not prescribed in the Sunnah, or to say that a particular Du’aa or Dhikr should be recited a specific number of times without any proof from the Hadith, or to specify a day or night for religious celebration that the Prophet (peace be upon him) or his companions never did. Yet, unfortunately, when these misunderstandings are brought to the attention of people, many respond in the exact words of the disbelievers of old, *“This is what our forefathers used to do so we will do the same.”* People who make such statements should think about whether they are following the guidance of Allah or the way of the disbelievers.

One of the key characteristics of Islam is the importance given to verification of information and to the prohibition of blindly following practices which are proven to be unislamic. So wake up dear Muslims, and stop blind following! Instead, follow the examples of our beloved Prophets Ibrahim and Muhammad (Peace be upon

them), and use the gift that Allah has blessed you with – the built-in recovery drive through which Allah has given man the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood, between what is beneficial and what is harmful. For the function of divine revelation conveyed by the prophets is not only to remind you about that to which your soul already testifies (that is, tawheed due to the pre-existent Fitrah), but also to teach you that which you never could have known (that is, the Shari'ah). The prophets came only to remind you; the choice is left to you-alone! Heed the reminder and be of the successful ones, or reject it and be of the doomed!

Allah says: **“Indeed, this is a reminder, so he who wills may take to his Lord a way.”** (Surah al-Insān, 76:29)

May Allah guide us to the right path, the path leading to Jannah and make us steadfast on it! Aameen.

Prophet Ibrahim: The Honored one

Prophet Ibrahim (‘alayhissalam) is the great patriarch of all Abrahamic religions. All the Prophets who came after him descended from him via Ishaq and Ya‘qoob, apart from Muhammad (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam), who descended from Ismaa‘eel ibn Ibrahim.

So Ibrahim (alayhissalam) is the father of the Arabs and the forefather of the Prophet (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam) in terms of descent. Because of this, Prophet Ibrahim (‘alayhissalam) is the single most respected human being on the face of this earth because every single major religion of this world looks up to him. He was so **honorable** that the previous nations fought over him and argued that they had more right over him. But Allah says, refuting the Jews and the Christians: “Ibraheem (Abraham) was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to Allah]. And he was not of the polytheists. [Aal ‘Imraan 3:67].

Ibrahim (alaihissalam) was the father of the Arabs, and the father of the Israelites, and he called people to pure Tawheed, and when the Jews and the Christians claimed to be his followers, Allah (swt) taught our beloved Prophet (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam) and hence the world in its entirety that the only ones who have a right to claim attribution to Ibrahim (‘alayhissalam) are the Muslims; the ones who are his true followers. Allah Ta‘ala says: “Indeed, the most worthy of Ibrahim among the people are those who followed him [in submission to Allah] and this prophet (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam), and those who believe [in his message]. And Allah is the ally of the believers. ” [Aal ‘Imraan 3:68].

Allah, Master of the worlds, uses the term “Millat – Ibrahim” (the religion/way of Ibrahim) for Islam – the religion of Believers, throughout the Qur’an. He (Subhanahu wa Ta’ala) says: “Say, “Indeed, my Lord has guided me to a straight path – a correct religion – the way of Ibrahim, inclining toward truth. And he was not among those who associated others with Allah .” [Al An’aam 6:161]

He also says: “And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father, Ibrahim. Allah named you “Muslims” before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. So establish prayer and give zakah and hold fast to Allah . He is your protector; and excellent is the protector, and excellent is the helper.” [Al Hajj 22:78]

Alhamdulillah Rabbi Al A’alameen for this amazing blessing! He has certainly blessed us by giving us this claim to Ibrahim (“alayhissalam). Let us not take this gift for granted. Let us stick to Tawheed and stay far away from Shirk and all that leads us to it.

May Allah guide us to be true followers and gather us with our dear Prophets Ibrahim and Muhammad (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam) in the highest levels of Jannah so that we can sit with them and discuss how amazed we were at the lives that they lived! Aameen ya Rabb!