



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

PROPHET IBRAHIM (AS) - LESSONS TO BE GAINED FROM HIS STORIES

INTRODUCTION

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was the forefather of most of the prophets of Allah.

1. Prophet Ishaq (AS) – which leads to other descendants such as Yayub (AS), Yusuf (AS), Daud (AS), Sulayman (AS), Zakariyya (AS), Yahya (AS), Musa (AS), Isa (AS), etc
2. Prophet ismail (AS), which eventually leads to Prophet Muhammad (SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam).

Allah described Prophet Ibrahim (AS) in the Qur’an as a leader (imam), an Ummah (a nation by himself), a Haneef (monotheistic) and very much devoted to Allah. Allah even described him as His Khaleel or extremely close friend:

وَ اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا

“And Allah did take Ibrahim (Abraham) as a Khaleel (an intimate friend)” (4:125).

Even Prophet Muhammad (SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) instructed us to follow the ways of Prophet Ibrahim (AS):

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Then, We have inspired you (O Muhammad SAW saying): "Follow the religion of Ibraheem (Abraham) Haneefa (Islamic Monotheism - to worship none but Allah)" (16:123)

As Muslims, we have the best claim to Prophet Ibrahim (AS), and NOT the Jews or the Christians, as Allah Described in the following verse:

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ
لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

“Verily, among mankind who have the best claim to Ibraheem (Abraham) are those who followed him, and this Prophet (Muhammad SAW) and those who have believed (Muslims)” (3:68).

In fact, Allah clearly Informed us that Ibrahim (AS) was neither a Jew or a Christian:

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا
نَصْرَانِيًّا كَانَ حَنِيفًا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِ
مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Ibraheem (Abraham) was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim Haneefa (Islamic Monotheism - to worship none but Allah Alone) and he was not of Al-Mushrikoon” (3:67).

Lastly, of all the prophets, we send our greetings and Blessings to Ibrahim (AS) and his family, not other prophets (apart from Prophet Muhammad [SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam]) - perhaps because:

1. The immense sacrifice he made which we in 2022 are currently enjoying the benefits.
2. The various du’a that he made for us, even though we are NOT his Ummah (nation)
3. On the night of the Mi’raaj, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) saw all the Prophets and Messengers, and he greeted each Prophet with salaam, but none of them sent greetings to his ummah apart from Ibraaheem (peace be upon him). Hence the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) instructed us to send blessings upon him at the end of every prayer until the Day of Resurrection, in response to his kindness.
4. It was also said that when Ibraaheem (peace be upon him) had finished building the Ka’bah, he prayed for the ummah of Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), saying: O Allah, whoever performs pilgrimage

to this House from the ummah of Muhammad, give him greetings from me; and his family and children also offered this supplication, so we are instructed to remember them in the prayer, in response to their kind deed.

Sharh Sunan Abi Dawood by al-'Ayni, 4/260

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) made a du'a to Allah to send you and me a Messenger who will teach us everything, as well as sanctify the Ka'bah:

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ
يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own (and indeed Allah answered their invocation by sending Muhammad Peace be upon him), who shall recite unto them Your Verses and instruct them in the Book (this Qur'an) and *Al-Hikmah* (full knowledge of the Islamic laws and jurisprudence or wisdom or Prophethood, etc.), and sanctify them. Verily! You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.”
2: 129

LESSONS FROM PROPHET IBRAHIM (AS)

1. When faced with falsehoods and idol worshippers - Prophet Ibrahim (AS) simply did not follow the majority but make the effort to seek the truth.

Therefore, we do not follow the majority if the majority are in error. Allah warned us against following the majority:

الْأَرْضِ فِي مَنْ أَكْثَرَ تُطِيعُ وَإِنْ
إِنْ ۖ اللَّهُ سَبِيلٍ عَنْ يُضِلُّوكَ
إِلَّا هُمْ وَإِنْ الظَّنَّ إِلَّا يَتَّبِعُونَ
يَخْرُصُونَ

And if you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you far away from Allah's Path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie. 6: 116

Prophet Ibrahim (AS), through the Guidance of Allah, searched for the truth:

76. When the night covered him over with darkness he saw a star. He said: "This is my lord." But when it set, he said: "I like not those that set."

77. When he saw the moon rising up, he said: "This is my lord." But when it set, he said: "Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among the erring people."

78. When he saw the sun rising up, he said: "This is my lord. This is greater." But when it set, he said: "O my people! I am indeed free from all that you join as partners in worship with Allah.

6: 76-78

Eventually Prophet Ibrahim (AS) made a declaration by following his Fitrah:

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا
أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Verily, I have turned my face towards Him Who has created the heavens and the earth *Hanifa* (Islamic Monotheism, i.e. worshipping none but Allah Alone) and I am not of *Al-Mushrikun* (see V.2:105)". 6: 79

Afterall, Allah Informed us, through Adam (AS) - to constantly seek His Guidance:

﴿ جَمِيعًا مِنْهَا أَهْبَطُوا قُلْنَا
فَمَنْ هُدَىٰ مِنِّي يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ فَأِمَّا
وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ خَوْفٌ وَلَا هُدَايَ تَبِعَ
يَحْزَنُونَ هُمْ

وَكَذَّبُوا كَفَرُوا وَالَّذِينَ
النَّارِ أَصْحَابُ أُولَئِكَ بِآيَاتِنَا
خَالِدُونَ فِيهَا هُمْ

We said: "Get down all of you from this place (the Paradise), then whenever there comes to you Guidance from Me, and whoever follows My Guidance, there shall be no fear on them, nor shall they grieve.

But those who disbelieve and belie Our *Ayat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) such are the dwellers of the Fire, they shall abide therein forever.

2: 38-39

Afterall, we have made a covenant with Allah that we will recognise Him as our Rabb:

And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed (or from Adam's loin his offspring) and made them testify as to themselves (saying): "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes! We testify," lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: "Verily, we have been unaware of this."

Or lest you should say: "It was only our fathers afortime who took others as partners in worship along with Allah, and we were (merely their) descendants after them; will You then destroy us because of the deeds of men who practised *Al-Batil* (i.e. polytheism and committing crimes and sins, invoking and worshipping others besides Allah)?" (*Tafsir At-Tabari*).

7: 172-173

2. 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: **أَبَتِ 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)

3. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) thrown in the fire - but he relies completely on Allah

In the Qur'an surah al Anbiya' (21) verses 51 - 68 Allah described Ibrahim (AS) giving da'wah to the idol worshippers and eventually he destroyed the idols, except the biggest one. The idol worshippers punished Prophet Ibrahim (AS).

According to hadith in Sahih Bukhari it shows that this dua was sufficient for Prophet Ibrahim (may peace be upon him). It was narrated by Ibn 'Abbas who said: When (Prophet) Ibrahim (Abraham) was thrown into the fire, he said: "Allah (Alone) is sufficient for us, and, He is the Best Disposer of affairs." So did Messenger of Allah Muhammad (ﷺ) when he was told: "A great army of the pagans had gathered against him, so fear them". But this (warning) only increased him and the Muslims in Faith and they said: "Allah (Alone) is sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us)". [Al-Bukhari].

Then Allah Ordered the Fire to be cool

بَرْدًا كُونِي نَارُ يَا قُلْنَا
إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى وَسَلَامًا

We (Allah) said: "O fire! Be you coolness and safety for Ibrahim (Abraham)!" 21: 69

This complete trust and reliance in Allah is a very important lesson. Nothing can happens without Allah's Will. No matter how impossible the situation is, it is Allah Who will be the final disposer of our affairs.

We see this in other examples in the Qur'an:

- i. The people of the cave
- ii. Mother of prophet Musa (AS)
- iii. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) when he and Abu Bakr (RA) were being pursued by the Quraysh during Hijrah and they hid in a cave.
- iv. Prophet Yoonus (AS) who was in the belly of the whale (21: 87)
- v. Prophet Yusuf (AS) after being tested by Allah in so many ways

4. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) patiently asking Allah for a child 37: 100

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) did not have a child until he was over 90. (11: 69-73) He made du'a to Allah in surah 37 verse 100

الصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ لِي هَبْ رَبِّ

"My Lord! Grant me (offspring) from the righteous."

Being patient is one of the important virtues all of us must have.

آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا
وَالصَّلَاةِ بِالصَّبْرِ اسْتَعِينُوا
الصَّابِرِينَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ

“O you who believe! Seek help in patience and *As-Salat* (the prayer). Truly! Allah is with *As-Sabirin* (the patient ones, etc.).” 2: 153

5. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) Ordered to leave wife and son (Ismail) in the middle of desert.

After making du'a to Allah for a child, and being patient, Allah Granted him a child through Hajjah first - only to be Ordered to leave his wife and child in the middle of the desert must be difficult for Prophet Ibrahim (AS). However, prophet Ibrahim (AS) was very patient and obeyed Allah absolutely without any hesitation.

One day, Prophet Ibrahim(AS) woke up and asked his wife Hajar to get her son and prepare for a long journey. In a few days, Abraham started out with his wife Hajar and their son Ismael. The child was still nursing and not yet weaned.

Ibrahim (AS) walked through cultivated land, desert, and mountains until he reached the desert of the Arabian Peninsula and came to an uncultivated valley having no fruit, no trees, no food, no water. The valley had no sign of life. After Ibrahim (AS) had helped his wife and child to dismount, he left them with a small amount of food and water which was hardly enough for two days. He turned around and walked away. His wife hurried after him asking: "Where are you going, Ibrahim, leaving us in this barren valley?"

Ibrahim (AS) did not answer her, but continued walking. She repeated what she had said, but he remained silent. Finally, she understood that he was not acting on his own initiative. She realised that Allah had commanded him to do this. She asked him: "Did Allah command you to do so?" He replied: "Yes." Then his great wife said: "We are not going to be lost, since Allah, Who has commanded you, is with us." Ibrahim (AS) invoked Almighty Allah thus:

ذُرِّيَّتِي مِنْ أَسْكَنتُ إِنِّي رَبَّنَا
بَيْتِكَ عِنْدَ زَرْعٍ ذِي غَيْرِ بَوَادِ
الصَّلَاةَ لِيُقِيمُوا رَبَّنَا الْمُحْرَمِ
تَهْوِي النَّاسِ مِنْ أَفِيْدَةٍ فَاجْعَلِ
الثَّمَرَاتِ مِنْ وَارِزُقُهُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ
يَشْكُرُونَ لَعَلَّهُمْ

وَمَا نُخْفِي مَا تَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ رَبَّنَا
 مِنَ اللَّهِ عَلَى يَخْفَى وَمَا ۙ نَعْلِنُ
 لَسَّمَاءِ فِي وَلَا الْأَرْضِ فِي شَيْءٍ

"O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley with no cultivation, by Your Sacred House (the Kaba at Mecca); in order, O our Lord, that they may offer prayers perfectly (Iqamat-as-Salat), so fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks. O our Lord! Certainly, You know what we conceal and what we reveal. Nothing on the earth or in the heaven is hidden from Allah." [14:37-38](#)

An important lesson is to completely obey Allah without any questions. Perhaps a thing which is seemingly hateful to us is good for us, but a thing which is seemingly good for us, is bad for us, as Allah Reminded us:

وَهُوَ شَيْئًا تَكْرَهُوا أَنْ وَعَسَىٰ
 تُحِبُّوا أَنْ وَعَسَىٰ ۙ لَكُمْ خَيْرٌ
 يَعْلَمُ وَاللَّهُ ۙ لَكُمْ شَرٌّ وَهُوَ شَيْئًا
 تَعْلَمُونَ لَا وَأَنْتُمْ

"...and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know." 2: 216

Also, in the second last verse of surah Al Baqarah, Allah Reminded us:

إِلَيْهِ أَنْزَلَ بِمَا الرَّسُولُ آمَنَ
 آمَنَ كُلٌّ ۙ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ رَبِّهِ مِنْ
 لَا وَرُسُلِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ بِاللَّهِ
 ۙ لَهُ رُسُ مِنْ أَحَدٍ بَيْنَ نَفَرَقُ
 ۙ وَأَطَعْنَا سَمِعْنَا وَقَالُوا
 الْمَصِيرُ وَإِلَيْكَ رَبَّنَا غُفْرَانِكَ

“The Messenger (Muhammad SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. They say, “We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers” – and they say, “We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your Forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return (of all).” 2: 285

We understood from the story that continues:

6. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) Ordered by Allah to build ka’bah 2: 127

Ibn Abbas (ra) narrated, ‘Ismail’s mother went on suckling Ismail and drinking from the water. When the water in the water-skin had all been used up, she became thirsty and her child also became thirsty. **She started looking at him tossing in agony - and she left him, for she could not endure looking at him.** She found that the mountain of As-Safa was the nearest mountain to her on that land’. [Tafsir Ibn Kathir]

Ibn Abbas (ra) continued, ‘She stood on it and started looking at the valley keenly so that she might see somebody, but she could not see anybody. Then she descended from As-Safa and when she reached the valley, **she tucked up her robe and ran in the valley like a person in distress and trouble,** until she crossed the valley and reached the Al-Marwa mountain, where she stood and started looking, expecting to see somebody, but she could not see anybody’. [Tafsir Ibn Kathir]

Hajar (as) ran between Safa and Marwa seven times, and each time she searched the desert, expecting to see somebody. SubhanAllah, despite being in the midst of an unsettled and uncultivated desert, **she did not lose hope that Allah would send her help.**

The bond between mother and child is one of the strongest ties Allah has created. Hajar (as) could not even bear to look at Ismail (as) when he was thirsty, and we cannot imagine the pain she must have felt. Equally, it is impossible to imagine holding onto hope in that situation, and firmly believing that Allah would not neglect them.

But Hajar (as) continued to run between the two mountains, **believing her situation would change.** It was an act of trust so powerful that the Ummah of Muhammad (saw) commemorate it to this day, every year at Hajj.

4. The miracle of Zamzam

When Hajar (as) had run between the mountains seven times, she heard a voice as she was standing on Marwa. She forced herself to be quiet and she heard the voice again. So she called out, ‘You have made me hear your voice, **have you got something to help me?**’

After calling out, she saw an angel at the place where the Zamzam water well now stands. It was Angel Jibril (as), and he was digging the earth with either his heel or his wing. Hajar (as) was amazed to see water flowing out of the earth! She raced down to the valley and started **pushing the earth around the water to make a basin,** and then she filled up her water-skin with her hands.

As she scooped up the water, it continued to flow, so she said 'Zome, zome', which meant 'Stop, stop' - as she was worried the water would run out!

Angel Jibril (as) said to her, 'Don't be afraid of being neglected, for this is the House of Allah which will be built by this boy and his father, and **Allah never neglects his people**' [Tafsir Ibn Kathir]. He thus reminded her that, no matter how long they remained in the desert, she could continue to have confidence that Allah would provide for her, just as He had sent her water when she had thought the ground was barren.

SubhanAllah, **the Zamzam well continues to provide water to millions of pilgrims every year.** And the best of creation (saw) himself prayed for Hajar (as)

7. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) calling people to come to ka'bah for pilgrimage 22: 27
8. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) making du'a to Allah for Allah to Protect children from shirk (14: 35)
9. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) making du'a to Allah to Guide family to worship Him and for provisions 14: 36
10. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) making du'a that Allah send a prophet to send prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)
11. Sacrifice of Ismail (AS) - 37: 102-105