

Prophet Ibrāhīm
Sura Saffat, verses 99-105

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ (99)

He said, 'Indeed I am going toward my Lord, who will guide me.'

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (100)

O my Lord! Grant me a righteous child!

فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ (101)

So We gave him the good news of a son who was forbearing

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ ۚ قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ ۖ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ (102)

When he was old enough to work with him, he said, 'My son! I see in dreams that I am sacrificing you. What do you think?' He said, 'Father! Do whatever you have been commanded. If Allah wishes, you will find me to be patient.'

فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ (103)

So when they had both surrendered to Allah's will and he had laid him down on his forehead

وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَن يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ (104)

We called out to him, 'O Ibrāhīm!

قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا ۚ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ (105)

You have fulfilled your vision! Thus, do We reward the virtuous!

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What does 'going to my Lord' mean? What journey is this?
(Journey towards what God likes. To be as close to Him as possible and fulfill duties to Him.)
- 2) Which other Prophet prayed for a child and was given one? (Prophet Zakariyā, 3:38)
- 3) How would a virtuous child help in the journey towards God?
- 4) What would have the father and son felt when the dream was discussed? What do their words reflect?
- 5) What is the true meaning of submission?

Commentary

Prophet Ibrāhīm decides to migrate from Babel to Syria to continue his mission to preach the Oneness of God. He was leaving a land polluted with disbelief and polytheism for a land that was more pure and which did not have a King who declared himself to be god. It was also a journey undertaken to fulfill the duty of prophet hood to a people who would be more receptive. Thus, the Hijrā was towards God, towards a life that would be in the way of God. The Prophet's migration from Makkah to Madinah was also known as a 'Journey towards Allah'.

Prophet Ibrāhīm asks for a child who would follow his path and continue his mission after his death. The word 'salih' covers virtuous aspects of character that make a human being perfect. It is the goal of believers to be from the salihīn, and many du'as reflect this.

Allah answers his prayer. In verse 101 Allah gives him good news of three things;

- 1) birth of a child
- 2) growth of the child to be a youth (the word Ghulām)
- 3) a child having the qualities of patience and forbearance

'Hilm' is the quality of not rushing to an action before its time despite having the ability to do it, to not rush to retaliate or punish someone. It also means to have a big heart and be able to control your impulses. It is one of the qualities of Allah. The word 'Halīm' has come 15 times in the Quran, mostly for Allah except for a verse that describes Prophet Shu'ayb and verses for Prophet Ibrāhīm and his son. A 'ghulām' is at the stage between a young child and a youth.

History says that Ismāil was only nine when his father Ibrāhīm saw in a dream that he sacrificed his only son to please Allah. On seeing the same dream on three consecutive nights, he told Ismail about it. Ismāil replied that it must be a test from Allah to test their wills, and he was willing to be sacrificed in the way of Allah. Ibrāhīm took his son Ismail to Mina, laid him on the ground. The Archangel Jibrīl then appeared and announced that the test of their ultimate submission to Allah was complete.

Dr. Ali Shari'ati writes about this incident;

Your dear son, the fruit of your life, your joy, your reason for being, the meaning of your existence, your son, no, your Ismāil . . . offer him as a sacrifice! . . . Oh "obedient" one and "Servant" of God! This is what God wants from you. This is the "call of your faith" "the spirit of your message". This is your responsibility.

Ibrāhīm had two alternatives - either to follow the cry of his heart and "save" Ismail or to follow the order of God and "sacrifice" him! He had to choose one! "Love" and "truth" were struggling inside him (love which was his life and truth which was his faith)! Had Allah asked for his own life, it would have been much easier! Ibrahim gave his life for the cause of Allah and this was why he felt "obedient" to God.

In Mina, in a quiet corner, Ibrāhīm talked to his son! The father gray-haired and bearded, lived a century, while Ismāil was just growing into a young man. The sky of the Arabian peninsula, no, the

world, could not tolerate such a sight! History had never before recorded a similar dialogue between a father and a son. No one had ever thought of this conversation, a very friendly, but fearful one!

At first, Ibrāhīm was unable to open his mouth to repeat the story to his son - "I am here to sacrifice you with my hands". Finally, he put himself in God's trust and said, "Ismā'īl, I had a dream I was slaughtering you"! He said these words quickly so he would not hear them himself. Then he remained silent. Fearful and pale, he could not bear looking into Ismā'īl's eyes. Ismā'īl realized what his father was going through and he tried to console him. He said, "Father be obedient and do not hesitate to fulfill the order of Almighty God. You will find that I am also obedient and with God's help can tolerate it".

(<https://www.al-islam.org/hajj-pilgrimage-dr-ali-shariati>)

Cross reference verses

Prophet Ibrāhīm's Du'a to be with the virtuous – 26:83

Prophet Ibrāhīm is also given good news of another Ishāq who would be from the salihīn – 37:112

Migration towards Allah – 29:26

Other Resources

Migrating towards God

<https://www.academyofislam.com/reflection-no-607-on-q-2926-migration-towards-god/>

Hilm – Forbearance

[http://en.wikishia.net/view/Hilm_\(forbearance\)](http://en.wikishia.net/view/Hilm_(forbearance))