

Prophet Ibrahim – Introduction

Prophet Ibrahim is the ancestor of many great Prophets of Islam. His descendants include Prophets Dawood, Sulayman, Musa, Yahya, Isa, (alaihimus salaam), and the holy Prophet Muhammad (s). He is known as the father of the monotheistic religions; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Prophet Ibrahim is known as Khalīlullāh – the friend of Allah. He was a true servant of Allah. His prayers and his sacrifices are treasured teachings for all believers.

Geography

Prophet Ibrahim was born in a place called Kutha. It is near Kufa in present day Iraq. Some historians mention it as the city of Ur in ancient Mesopotamia.

His birth

Namrud was the King of Mesopotamia during the time of Prophet Ibrahim. He was so intoxicated with his power that he thought he was god. His closest advisor was an astrologer and idol maker named Azar. He warned Namrud that according to the stars a child would be born soon who would bring an end to their religion and their civilization. Namrud ordered that families should be separated so that no baby would be born.

According to God's plan, Sarah, the wife of Azar's brother Terah gave birth to Prophet Ibrahim. Azar wanted to report the birth to Namrud but they convinced him not to. Instead they promised that they would leave the baby in a cave and let him fend for himself. Sarah smuggled him out of the city and took him to a cave. She kept him inside and sealed the entrance with rocks. Occasionally she would visit the cave to see her baby. By the miracle of Allah the baby survived and grew into a young boy. After some years Terah died and Sarah married Azar.

Prophet Ibrahim lived alone in the cave till he was about thirteen years old. He then escaped from the cave and went to the city. He finally reached the house of his mother. When Azar saw that Ibrahim was still alive he was shocked. He was afraid of the prophecy he had predicted but Sarah and Ibrahim convinced him to accept him and treat him as one of his sons. That is why Azar is referred to as 'father' by Prophet Ibrahim.

Quran on Prophet Ibrahim

The Quran praises Prophet Ibrahim in many verses. Some of these verses are;

- 1) Who has a better religion than him who submits his will to Allah, being virtuous, and follows the creed of Ibrahim, a Hanif? And Allah took Ibrahim for a dedicated friend. (Quran 4:125).

(Note: Hanif is a true believer, a monotheist. Sometimes translated as upright person. To be a Hanif is to be upright on a pure religion that is in line with the natural instinct)

- 2) And mention in the Book Ibrahim. Indeed, he was a truthful man and a Prophet. (Quran 19:41).
- 3) Say, ‘Indeed my Lord has guided me to a straight path, the upright religion, the creed of Ibrahim, a Hanif, and he was not one of the polytheists.’ (Quran 6:161).
- 4) Indeed Ibrahim was a nation [all by himself], obedient to Allah, a Hanif, and he was not a polytheist. Grateful for His blessings, He chose him and guided him to a straight path. We gave him good in this world, and in the Hereafter he will indeed be among the Righteous. Thereafter We revealed to you ‘Follow the creed of Ibrahim, a Hanif, who was not a polytheist. (Quran, 16:120-123)

The Spiritual father of the Muslim nation

Allah refers to Prophet Ibrahim as the father of Religion - *It is the faith of your father Ibrahim* (Quran 22:78). Commentators of the Holy Quran have given the following reasons why he is given this special status.

- 1) **Submission** – Prophet Ibrahim submitted wholly to God. According to ‘Allama Tabatabai he was the first person who was a true Muslim. He is often known as Hanīf – the obedient, upright and always inclining towards the truth (Q 2:135; 3:67, 95; 6:161 etc.) He accepted whatever God commanded, even if it meant sacrificing what he loved. Such is the attitude of one who is a true servant of God and knows that life is only a gift from God and is to be spent in His obedience and service. This concept of complete submission to the will of Almighty is the foundation of the faith of Islam.
- 2) **Shariah** – The shariah or code of conduct followed by the Muslims was first started by Prophet Ibrahim. Thus the origin of living according to the laws of God started with him. Those who follow it are from him.
- 3) **Respect** – Prophet Ibrahim deserves the respect of all Muslims just as a father deserves respect. A biological father is the root of all good that a person has. Imam Ali Zaynul Ābidīn (a) says in Risaātul Huqūq: *The right of your father is that you know that he is your root. Without him, you would not be. Whenever you see anything in yourself which pleases you, know that your father is the root of its blessing upon you.* Similarly the good that has been brought by the Holy Prophet (s) in the form of guidance for the Muslims has its roots in Prophet Ibrahim.

A Divine leader sent for guidance and assistance to stay on the right path is a spiritual father for those who follow him. He is concerned about them and wants what is best for them. That is why the Holy Prophet said; ‘I and Ali are the fathers of this Ummah’.

Sources:

Sh. Rizwan Arastu, *God's Emissaries: Adam to Jesus*
<https://www.academyofislam.com/resources/quran/quran-reflections/>