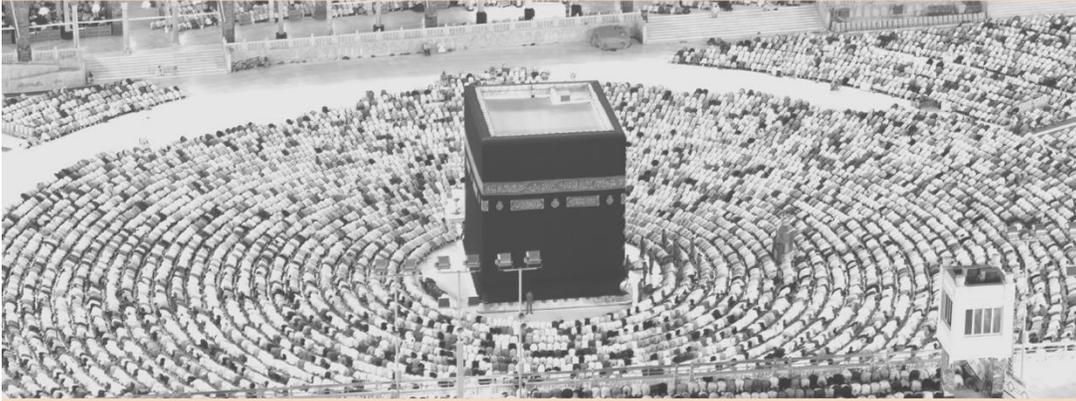


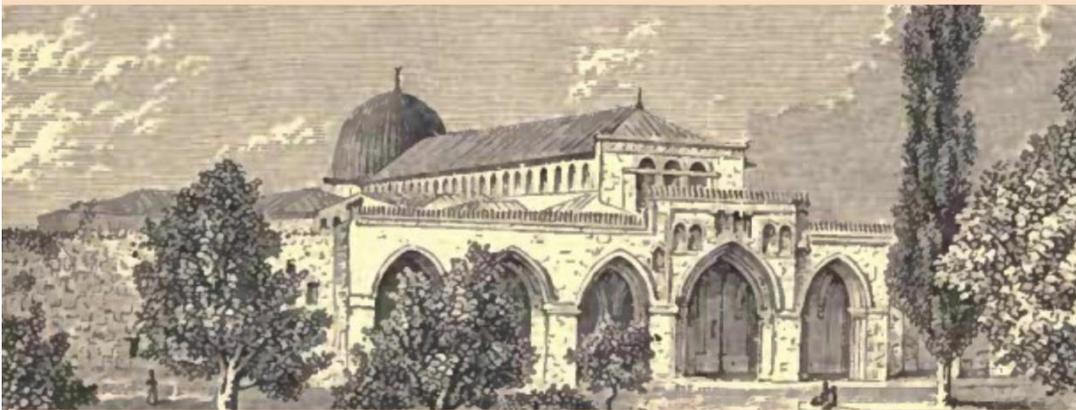
PROPHETS OF ISLAM SERIES



THE BIOGRAPHY OF

IBRAHIM

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ



SHAIKH MIR ASEDULLAH QUADRI

THE BIOGRAPHY OF IBRAHIM (عليه السلام)

Written By

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PROPHET IBRAHIM'S (عليه السلام) FATHER

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على
سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

Some people have misunderstood Quranic verses as regards to the name of the father of Ibrahim (عليه السلام). I have explained this issue in the light of Quran and Ahadith.

It is in Quran - أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ - [Nay! were you witness when death visited Yaqoub (عليه السلام), when he said to his sons, 'what will you serve (worship) after me? They said, we will serve (worship) your God and the God of your fathers; Ibrahim (عليه السلام) and Ismail (عليه السلام) and Ishaq (عليه السلام); one God only, and to Him do we submit.] (Al-Baqara - 133).

In the above verse, the sons of Yaqoub (عليه السلام) are referring to, both Ishaq (عليه السلام) and Ismail (عليه السلام), as their fathers (آبَائِكُمْ). Ishaq (عليه السلام) is their grandfather, and Ismail (عليه السلام) is the brother of Ishaq (عليه السلام). Thus, it is proved that the word (أبي) is used in Quran for both biological father, and brother of father.

Arabic word (أبي) is commonly used for (i) biological father, (ii) 'stepfather', and (iii) 'brother of father'. Like in Indian Subcontinent, many children call their father Papa. And they call, elder brother of their father, Abbu, Bade Papa, etc. Similarly, in English language, people use 'father' to denote different relationships; like 'father figure', 'father of nation', 'god father', 'grandfather', etc.

It is in Quran - وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ أَرَزَرْتُنَّ إِذْ أَنْتَ تَتَّخِذُ أَصْنَامًا آلِهَةً إِنِّي أَرَاكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ [And when Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said to his father, Azar, 'do you take idols for gods? Surely, I see you and your people in manifest error] (Al-Anaam - 74).

The literal meanings of this verse that comes to a reader's mind are, 'Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said to his father whose name was Azar. But as per the rules of laconic usage, descriptive linguistics and rhetoric, this is a wrong understanding because it is mentioned that 'Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said to his father, Azar', which denotes different meanings.

Like, no one says, 'my father, Husain, is arriving'. We only say, 'my father is arriving'.

If we talk of a relationship and a name at the same time, people will understand that there is more than one person associated with that relationship. If Azar were the biological father of Ibrahim (عليه السلام), it would have been enough to say, 'he said to his father'. But the Quranic verse emphasizes 'Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said to his father, Azar'. This shows that Azar was not biological father of Ibrahim (عليه السلام).

It is in Quran - وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَّهَا إِثْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَأَ مِنْهُ إِنََّّ [Ibrahim (عليه السلام) would not have asked forgiveness for his father but for a promise he made to him, and when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), he renounced him. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was tender hearted and forbearing.] **(At-Tauba -114)**.

Read the above verse carefully; it says 'Ibrahim (عليه السلام) would not have asked forgiveness for his father but for a promise he made to him'.

Remember, we do not pray for our parents because we make a promise to them. We do it as mandatory and obligatory on us. We might make a promise to our relatives that we will do dua for them in a specific issue or a specific service rendered by them. Thus, the verse shows the relationship of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) with Azar, was not that of son and biological father, rather it was the relationship between two relatives. He asked for forgiveness for (his uncle) Azar because he promised him once. But when Ibrahim (عليه السلام) realized that he was an Idol worshiper and the enemy of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), he renounced him.

It is in Hadith - Anas Ibn Malik (رضي الله تعالى عنه) narrates that one day, Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) stood on the pulpit and informed (sahabah) the names of his ancestors (as follows).

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said: Ana, Mohammad Ibn Abdullah, bin Abdul Muttalib, bin Hashim, bin Abd Manaf, bin Qusa'i, bin Kilab, bin Murra, bin Ka'b, binLu'ayy, bin Ghalib, bin Fihir, bin Malik, bin an-Nadr, binKinanah, bin Khuzaimah, bin Mudrikah, bin Elias, binMudar, bin Nizar, bin Ma'ad, bin Adnan, bin Udad, binAsha'b, bin Saleh, bin Salooq, bin Hameesa, bin Nabad, bin Khizaar, bin Ismail (عليه السلام), bin Ibrahim (عليه السلام), bin Tariq.

[References - (i) Baihaqi, (ii) Hakim, (iii) Ahmed, (iv) Ibn Kathir in Bidaya wan Nihaya and (v) Ibn Asakir.]

It is clear from the above Hadith that the father of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was Tariq, a Momin, while his uncle Azar was an Idol worshiper.

It is in Quran - رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ [O our Lord! grant me protection and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass!] **(Ibrahim - 41)**.

In the above verse, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) is praying for protection for himself, both his parents (who were Momineen) and general believers on the Day of Judgment. This Quranic verse shows Azar, who was an Idol worshiper, was not the father of Ibrahim (عليه السلام).

Ibn Jarir al-Tabari in his Tafsir and History book has mentioned that - Azar was not the father of Ibrahim (عليه السلام). (History of Tabari, Vol. 1, Page 119. and Tafsir-e-Tabari by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Vol. 7, page 158).

Ibn Kathir has written in al-Bidaya wan Nihaya - Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was the son of Tariq. When Tareq was 75 years old, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was born to him. (al-Bidaya wan Nihaya, vol 1, page 139)

Hadhrat Mohammad Abdul Qadeer Siddiqui (رحمته الله عليه) has written in his Tafseer-e-Siddiqui that Azar was the brother of the father of Ibrahim (عليه السلام). (Tafseer-e-Siddiqui)

PROPHET IBRAHIM'S (عليه السلام) EARLY LIFE

There are differences of opinion as to the place of birth of Ibrahim (عليه السلام). Some people say that he was born in Babylon and later migrated to Ur. Some say that he may have spent his childhood in Ur around 2000 BC. Those days the cities of Babylon and Ur were about 100 Kilometers apart and a part of the great Kingdom of Mesopotamia (which consisted of present-day Iraq, Kuwait, the eastern parts of Syria, Southeastern Turkey, and regions along the Turkish-Syrian and Iran-Iraq borders).



The Sumerians, Assyrians and Babylonians dominated Mesopotamia from the beginning of written history (3100 BC) who followed polytheistic religions. However, there were a few people who followed the religions of their earlier prophets. During the lifetime of Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام), the King of Mesopotamia was Nimrood, who called himself god.

Prophet Ibrahim's (عليه السلام) parents were believers but they died during his early childhood. After the death of his father, he came under the guardianship of his uncle Azar (younger brother of his father). Azar was a famous idol-sculptor in the town then. He used to make idols of their deities and sell them in the market.

There used to be a big temple, named Ziggurat, in the town where Ibrahim (عليه السلام) lived where scores of big and small idols were kept. Sometimes, his uncle Azar used to take him to this temple along with him. In the middle of the temple there was a niche accommodating the biggest idol of all. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) greatly despised the sight of these idols since childhood.



The ruins of Great Ziggurat of Ur (temple) in present day Iraq. This may have been the largest temple in Ur in which Ibrahim (عليه السلام) broke the idols.

As Prophet Ibrahim's (عليه السلام) parents were believers, he inherited a natural disposition to feel bad about human beings worshipping idols made by their own hands. As a child, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) used to watch his uncle Azar sculpting idols from stones/mud and wood. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) used to ask his uncle why these idols cannot move on their own. Why are they not able to talk to people? When no convincing and logical answers were provided by his uncle, his disbelief in idol worship grew stronger. He often came into conflict with his uncle and other elders of the tribe for disgracing the gods which were worshiped by them.

During annual festivals, the people used to visit temples and place offerings of food and gold before the idols. Ur's most prominent temple was the Great Ziggurat, the ruins of which are available in Iraq. During these festivals, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) would ask people why are you worshipping these idols? Can they hear your call? People would reply by saying that it was the way their forefathers.

One day Ibrahim (عليه السلام) told his uncle, no more can I live with you or your idols and left his uncle's house. He started living alone and made a living by working.

THE SIMILARITIES OF CHILDHOOD BETWEEN PROPHET MOHAMMAD (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) AND IBRAHIM (عليه السلام)

Ibrahim (عليه السلام) could not learn from his parents as they died in his infancy and he was brought up by an uncle (brother of his father) whose family was idol worshipers. The same thing happened with Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), whose parents were believers, but they died in his childhood while most of his family members were involved in idol worship. However, his uncle Abu Talib (رضى الله تعالى عنه), under whose guardianship he grew up, was a believer, who could see the spark of prophet-hood in his little nephew right from his childhood and respected him as such. Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم)'s uncle Abu Talib (رضى الله تعالى عنه) stood by his nephew during all the persecution and social boycott and loved him more than his own children till his death.

Prophets are awarded with highest degree of virtuous attributes right from their birth. No Prophet in the history of mankind ever worshiped anyone other than Allah. Their natural disposition is completely different from normal sinful human beings. They are teachers of humanity and they grow up under the watchful eyes of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), who teaches them directly and indirectly right from their childhood. Their lives are made an exemplary model for their people.

It is in Quran اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ [Allah knows it well who is capable for Apostleship.] (Al-An'aam - 124).

It is in Quran - إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ [Indeed Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was an Umma (Community in himself), extremely obedient to Allah, turning away from all falsehood and (his noble attributes were) not like those who associate partners with Allah.] (An-Nahl - 120)

PROPHET IBRAHIM (عليه السلام) AS AN ADULT

As years passed and Ibrahim (عليه السلام) turned into a young man, his conviction against man-made idols (Gods) grew stronger.

One night, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) hiked up to a mountain top and leaned against a rock. He looked up to the sky and saw a shining star and said to himself, 'could this be my Lord as claimed by some people in the township? But, when the star disappeared, he said, if it were my creator, it would never disappear. Then he saw the bright moon and said to himself, is this my Lord as claimed by some people in the township? When the moon disappeared into the morning light, he said, it cannot be my creator. If it was my creator, it should be present all the time. He saw the sun rising over the horizon and said to himself, could this be my creator as this is the biggest and brightest? But when the sun also disappeared into dusk, he said, O my people! I am free from all that you join as partners with Allah. I have turned my face towards Allah who created the heavens and the earth and never shall I associate partners with Allah. My Lord is the creator of the heavens and the earth and everything in between. He has the power to make the stars rise and set'.

It is in Quran - وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ - فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا سَاقِطًا هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أُجِبُّ الْإِفْلِينَ - فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَنْ لَمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ - فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازِعَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ - إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ [Thus We showed to Ibrahim (عليه السلام) the visible and invisible world of the heavens and the earth, that he could be among those who have certainty of believe. So, when the night became dark upon him, he saw a star; he said (is) it my Lord (as the people portray it)? Then when it set, he said, 'I do not like the things that set.'

Then when he saw the moon shining, he said, (is) it my Lord (as the people portray it). Then when it set, he said, 'If my Lord had not guided me, I too would be one of these people who have gone astray. Then when he saw the sun shining brightly, he said, (is) this my Lord (as the people claim it to be). This is the biggest of them all; then when it set, he said, 'O' people! I do not have any relation with whatever you ascribe as partners (to Him). Indeed, I have turned my face toward He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not of those who associate others with Allah.] (Al-An'aam - 75-79)

With the knowledge gained by the bestowal of Allah, Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) started debating with the people in town. He explained to them that the celestial bodies are not deities and partners with Allah. Those are all created by Allah and are controlled by Him to serve the people. They appear for a period of time and then disappear. However, Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) does not lose sight of anything, and nothing can be hidden from Him. He is everlasting and is present all the time. There is no god but Allah.

It is in Quran - وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحَاجُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ ۗ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا ۗ وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ۗ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ - وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُم بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا ۚ فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ ۗ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ - الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ - وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ ۗ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَّن نَّشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ [And his people argued with him. He said, 'do you argue with me concerning Allah while He has guided me? And I fear not what you associate with Him. (And I will not be harmed) unless my Lord wills it to happen. My Lord encompasses all the things in knowledge; then will you not reflect? And how should I fear what you associate while you do not fear that you have associated with Allah that for which He has not sent down to you any authority? So which of the two parties has more right to security, if you should know? Those who believed and did not mix it with injustice (disbelief), the refuge is only for them, and only they are on guidance. And this is Our argument, which We gave Ibrahim (عليه السلام) against his people; We raise to high ranks whomever We will; indeed, your Lord is Wise, All Knowing.] (Al-An'aam - 80-83)

As the debates grew heated, Ibrahim's (عليه السلام) conflict with the people who worshiped idols also grew. When Ibrahim (عليه السلام) told them that they and their forefathers have been in error by worshiping these bodies, it aroused anger in his tribe against him. He started receiving threats to his life from the rich and the influential in the town. On the forefront of the opposition was his uncle Azar who threatened to stone him to death.

Once Ibrahim (عليه السلام) prayed to Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), show to him how he brings the dead to life.

It is in Quran - وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ ۖ قَالَ أُولَٰئِكَ تُؤْمِنُ ۖ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي ۖ قَالَ فِخْذُ أَرْبَعَةٍ مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا ۚ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ [And when Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said, 'My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead?' Allah said, 'What! Do you not believe?' Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said, 'I do (believe), but in order to (see it from my eyes) and to make sure to my heart. Allah said, 'take four birds and tame them to become familiar with you (as pets),

then (cut them into pieces and) place a part of each of them on separate hills, then call them; they will come flying towards you. Know that Allah is Almighty, All wise.] (Al-Baqara - 260)

From the above verse, it is known that there are 3 states of certitude (certainty - يقين) in knowledge, as follows.

(i) 'Certitude of knowing' (علم اليقين)

Like we know that fire burns, this is 'certitude of knowing' (علم اليقين).

(ii) 'Certitude of Seeing' (عين اليقين)

Suppose we have seen someone's finger burning in fire, this is 'Certitude of Seeing' (عين اليقين).

(iii) 'Certitude of Realizing' (حق اليقين)

Suppose our finger was burnt accidentally, this is 'Certitude of Realizing' (حق اليقين).

In the above verse, Apostle Ibrahim (عليه السلام) says that he believes that Allah (عز وجل) can bring the dead to life. But he wanted to witness it from his own eyes so that he gets the realization ['Certitude of Realizing' (حق اليقين)]. On this request, Allah (عز وجل) commanded him to tame 4 birds over a period, then cut them into pieces, mix all those pieces together, and put 4 parts on top of 4 nearby hill tops. He came down and called the birds as he used to call them earlier. He saw all four birds came to him flying from the hill tops.

Certain special annual feasts were celebrated by the people in the town. When one such celebration approached, people started making arrangement for the big celebration on the other bank of the river. It was a time for a great celebration by the people which would be attended by everyone in town. People dressed up in luxurious garments and started to go to the place of celebration. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was not well that day and excused himself from the people. After some-time he came out of the house and saw the streets empty. An idea occurred to him. He went out of his home and saw the big temple was unattended as the priests had also gone to attend the festival. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) took a sharp axe, entered the temple and approached one of the idols and addressed him saying, 'the food in front of you is getting cold. Why don't you eat?' The statue kept silent. Then he asked several idols the same question but did not get any reply. Then with his axe he broke them all, except the biggest one around whose neck he hung the axe.

It is in Quran - [فَرَاغَ إِلَى آلِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ - مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ - فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا بِالْيَمِينِ] Thereupon he (entered their temple and) approached their idols, and said, 'Will you not eat (of the offerings put before you)? 'What is wrong with you that you don't utter a word?' Then he turned and struck them with his right arm (holding the axe, breaking them all except the one big one).] (As-Saaffaat - 91-93)

When the people returned from the festival, they were shocked to see their gods broken into pieces, lying scattered all over the temple. They started guessing as to who could do this to their gods? Then some people said, 'we heard a young man named Ibrahim (عليه السلام) talking against idols.' Thus, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was brought to testify. When the judges inquired if indeed it was him who had done this, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said, probably the biggest idol did it since it was around his neck that the axe was hanging. Then Ibrahim (عليه السلام) asked them to ask these broken idols who had done this to them. Thus, he made it clear that their idols could not speak.

But their passion of idol worship and their arrogance overtook them. They said, you Ibrahim (عليه السلام) know well that they cannot speak. Then Ibrahim (عليه السلام) told them, why do you worship something which can neither speak nor harm you?

PROPHETS DO NOT LIE

It is in Quran - قَالَوا مَنْ فَعَلَ هَذَا بِالْهَيْتِنَا إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ - قَالَوا سَمِعْنَا فَنَّى يَذْكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبرَاهِيمُ - قَالَوا - قَالَوا بِهِ عَلَى أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُونَ - قَالَوا أَأَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ هَذَا بِالْهَيْتِنَا يَا إِبرَاهِيمُ - قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا فَاسْأَلُوهُمْ [(They said) 'who has done all this to our gods?' they exclaimed. 'Indeed, he is one of the worst wrongdoers!' Some said, 'we heard a young man, called Ibrahim (عليه السلام), speaking (ill) of them (idols).' They said, 'then bring him before the people, so that they may see him and bear witness against him!' (When Ibrahim (عليه السلام) came, they said) did you do this to our gods, O' Ibrahim (عليه السلام).! He said, 'Rather the biggest (Idol) of them may have done it. Ask them if they can speak.'] **(Al-Anbiya - 59-63)**

Some people wrongly consider that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) lied to the Idol worshipers. This is not a correct understanding. As a matter of fact, it was a mercy of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) on the idol worshipers to provide them an opportunity to understand the facts using a demonstration such as this. Their conscience was hit by this action. They were made to realize that the Idol worship they were doing was useless and wrong.

It is in Quran - وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِ عَالِمِينَ - [And indeed, We had granted Ibrahim (عليه السلام) sound judgment early on, for We knew him well (as he was our chosen Apostle).] **(Al-Anbiya - 51)**

Prophets are innocent. Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) protects them from any kind of apparent or hidden wrongdoing. Therefore, among their actions and sayings if something looks not based on facts to the general people, it is a wisdom on their part for the greater good of humanity.

Prophets do not act on their own, whatever they do or say is the revelation that comes to them from Allah.

It is in Quran - وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ - إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ - [The Prophet ﷺ does not speak out of desire. It is the revelation that is coming to him.] **(An-Najm - 3-4)**

It is in Hadith - Qatadah reported, I said, 'Ummul Momineen, tell me about the character of the Apostle of Allah, (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم)'. Ummul Momineen Aisha (رضى الله تعالى عنها) said, 'Have you not read the Quran?' I said, 'Of course!' Ummul Momineen Aisha (رضى الله تعالى عنها) said, 'Verily, the character of the Prophet of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) was the Quran.' **(Muslim)**.

A Hadith is mentioned in some books of Ahadith that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) told 3 lies during his lifetime.

It is in Hadith - Abu Huraira (رضى الله تعالى عنه) narrated that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) did not tell a lie except on three occasion. Twice for the Sake of Allah when he said, 'I am sick,' and he said, '(I have not done this but) the big idol has done it.' The (third was) that while Ibrahim (عليه السلام) and (his wife) Sarah (عليها السلام) were going (on a journey) they passed by (the territory of) a tyrant. Someone said to the tyrant, 'This man (Ibrahim - عليه السلام) is accompanied by a very charming lady.' So, he sent for Ibrahim (عليه السلام) and asked him about Sarah (عليها السلام) saying, 'Who is this lady?' Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said, 'She is my sister.' Ibrahim (عليه السلام) went to Sarah (عليها السلام) and said, 'O Sarah (عليها السلام)! there are no believers on the surface of the earth except you and I. This man asked me about you, and I have told him that you are my sister, so don't contradict my statement.' The tyrant then called Sarah (عليها السلام) and when she went to him, he tried to take hold of her with his hand, but (his hand got stiff and) he was confounded. He asked Sarah (عليها السلام). 'Pray to Allah for me, and I shall not harm you.' So, Sarah (عليها السلام) supplicated to Allah to cure him and he got cured. He tried to take hold of her for the second time, but his hand got more stiffer than before and was more confounded. He again requested Sarah (عليها السلام), 'Pray to Allah for me', and I will not harm you.' Sarah (عليها السلام) supplicated to Allah again and he became alright. 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 Hajira (عليها السلام) as a girl servant to Sarah (عليها السلام). Sarah (عليها السلام) came back (to Ibrahim (عليه السلام) while he was praying. Ibrahim (عليه السلام), gesturing with his hand, asked, 'What has happened?' She replied, 'Allah has spoiled the evil plot of the infidel and gave me Hajira (عليها السلام) for service.' (Abu Huraira (رضى الله تعالى عنه) then addressed his listeners saying, 'That (Hajira (عليها السلام) was your mother, O' Bani Ma-is-Sama (بني ماء السماء) (the Arabs, the descendants of Ismail (عليه السلام), the son of Hajira (عليها السلام)). **(Bukhari, Muslim and others)**

It is important to read the following Hadith, to understand this issue in its proper perspective.

It is in Hadith - Imam Razi reported a Hadith from Imam Abu Hanifa (رضى الله تعالى عنه) in his Tafseer al-Kabir. Someone mentioned before Imam Abu Hanifa (رضى الله تعالى عنه) that it is in Hadith that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said 3 lies. The Imam said, no. The narrator of the Hadith has told one lie. (This Hadith is also mentioned by Shaikh Mohammad Abdul Qadeer Siddiqui (رحمته الله عليه) in his Tafseer-e-Siddiqui, verse 63, Surah Al-Anbiya.)

In view of the observation of Imam-e-Azam Abu Hanifah (رضى الله تعالى عنه), the Hadith that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said 3 lies is clouded in uncertainty.

Let us discuss briefly the three statements mentioned in the Hadith.

(a) The first statement of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) to his idol worshiping people was, when they were going out of their town for some festival. He told them that he was not feeling well, and he stayed back.

It is in Quran - فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ [And (Ibrahim عليه السلام) said, 'Indeed, I am ill.'] (As-Saaffaat - 89)

As described above, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was not feeling well that day. In any case he was not inclined to join the people in their festivals as idol worship was done during those festivals. After some-time when Ibrahim (عليه السلام) came out of the house, he saw the streets empty. An idea occurred to his mind to explain people that idols cannot be their gods. He went out of his home and saw the big temple was unattended as the priests had also gone to attend the festival. Then he destroyed the idols in the temple.

(b) The second occasion was, when they came back and asked him as to who has broken the idols? His reply is described in (Verse 63, Al-Anbiya). 'He told them 'the biggest (Idol) may have done it. Ask them if they can speak.' This cannot be treated as a lie. It is an open criticism of the people so that they search their conscience and use their mind logically.

It is obvious that on both these occasions it was the mercy of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) for the people to explain them the facts in the manner they could fully understand.

(c) The third statement is not mentioned in the Quran. It is mentioned in the Bible that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) lied and declared his wife to be his sister (Genesis 12 : 12, 13, 18, 19). As per the Bible, this incident took place when Ibrahim (عليه السلام) went to Egypt. And according to Bible, the age of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) at that time was 75, and Sarah (عليها السلام) was more than 65 years old. In such a scenario, it cannot be that someone informed a tyrant that a youthful charming woman is accompanying Ibrahim (عليه السلام) and the tyrant calling them to his palace and Ibrahim (عليه السلام) stating them that Sara (عليها السلام) was his sister, and that Sara (عليها السلام) getting Hajira (عليها السلام) as her maid servant from that tyrant, all these are conflicting and contradictory stories that do not appeal to common logic.

THE AFTERMATH OF BREAKING THE IDOLS

After the incident of breaking the idols, on the order of the King Nimrood, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was arrested and was sentenced to be burned alive in front of the people. Nimrood ordered a big pit full of fire to be built. It took people several days to collect the firewood for that purpose. They dug a deep and wide pit, filled it with firewood and ignited it. As the fire was massive, they brought a catapult to cast Ibrahim (عليه السلام) into the fire from a distance. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was made to stand on the catapult with his hands and feet tied. When the fire was ready with its flame reaching high in the air their chief priest gave his order to cast Ibrahim (عليه السلام) into the fire. People were watching from a distance because of the heat around the fire pit. At that time, Jibreel (عليه السلام) appeared and asked Ibrahim (عليه السلام), if he needs any assistance. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) replied, my Lord is aware of it. Then the catapult was shot, and Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was cast into the fire.

It is in Quran - [(And when they threw him in fire) We commanded, O' fire, be cool and peaceful for Ibrahim (عليه السلام). They intended to harm him, but We made them suffer the greatest loss.] (Al-Anbiya - 69-70)

The fire turned into a garden and Ibrahim (عليه السلام) found himself sitting in a cool breeze. There was no trace of fire in and around the pit. People watched this miracle occur in shock. When the King was informed about this miracle, he was furious as it was a direct threat to his status as the god and king of his people.

It is in Quran - أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أَحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ [Did you not see him (O' Prophet ﷺ) who argued with Ibrahim (عليه السلام) about his Lord because Allah had given him a kingdom? When Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said, 'My Lord is the giver of life and death,' he replied, 'I am (also) the giver of life and death.' And Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said, 'Allah makes the sun rise from the East; so, you make it rise from the West', and the infidel was dumbfounded. Allah does not guide who are unjust.] (Al-Baqara - 258)

The above verse refers to the debate between Hadhrat Ibrahim (عليه السلام) and King Nimrood who ruled a large Kingdom during Hadhrat Ibrahim's (عليه السلام) time.

There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to when this dialogue may have taken place. Some scholars say that this episode took place immediately after the incident of the fire. Some say that it occurred several years later when Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was already married to Sayyeda Sara (رضى الله تعالى عنها). There was a famine in the Kingdom, and people were made to visit the King for grains. Whoever accepted him as god was helped, and whoever rejected, was not. It is at this time that Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) also visited him but refused to accept him as god.

When Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was called into his audience he did not bow or prostrate to him. When the king asked him why, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) told him that he only prostrates in front of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). Nimrod asked him who is Allah? Ibrahim (عليه السلام) replied that Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) is the God who gives life and death. On this, Nimrod called two inmates of a prison and killed one and set free the other and claimed that 'I do the same thing'. On this Ibrahim (عليه السلام) told him that Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) makes the sun rise from the East. If he claims godhood, let him make it rise from the west. On this, Nimrod was speechless. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was not harmed by the king and he let him go.

PROPHET IBRAHIM (عليه السلام) TRAVELS TO PALESTINE

Ibrahim (عليه السلام) had become famous throughout the Kingdom after the miracle of fire turning into a garden. People talked about how he had been saved from the blazing fire. Several years passed and no one was willing to accept the message of Islam. Therefore, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) decided to migrate from that place.

It is in Quran - [Loot (عليه السلام) was the one who believed in him (Ibrahim عليه السلام) and said, I shall migrate to another land for the sake of my Lord. He is Almighty, All Wise.] **(Al-Ankaboot - 26)**

Ibrahim (عليه السلام), along with his wife Sayyeda Sara (رضى الله تعالى عنها) and Loot (عليه السلام), who was his distant nephew, travelled together to Canaan (Syria) where Ibrahim and Loot (عليه السلام) separated and took other routes as per Allah's (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) command.

From Canaan, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) travelled to Palestine and lived there for some years. In Palestine, he was visited by the angels who gave him the good tiding of son Ishaq and grandson Ya'qoob (عليه السلام).

It is in Quran - وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالِ سَلَامٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيذٍ - فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ نَكَرَ هُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمِ لُوطٍ - وَأَمْرُهُ فَائِمَةٌ فَضَجَّكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ - قَالَتْ يَا وَيْلَتَى أَأَلِدُ وَأَنَا عَجُوزٌ وَهَذَا بَعْلِي شَيْخًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ [And Our messengers (angels) came to Ibrahim (عليه السلام) with good news. They said, peace (be on you)! He answered, peace (be on you). And he hastened in bringing a roasted calf (for them to eat). But when he saw their hands not reaching for it (they were not inclined to eat), it was strange, and he felt apprehension from them. They said, 'fear not. We have been sent to the people of Loot (عليه السلام).! And his wife (Sara - عليها السلام) was standing (by), so she laughed when they were given the good news of (a son) Ishaq, and after Ishaq, of (a grandson) Yaqoob (عليه السلام). She said, 'Woe to me! Shall I give birth while I am an old woman and this, my

husband, is an old man? Indeed, this is an amazing thing'. They said, 'are you amazed at the decree of Allah? The mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you (and the) people of the house. Indeed, He is Praiseworthy and Honorable.'](Hood 69-73)

As has been described, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) had two wives, (i) Sarah (عليها السلام), and Hajar (Hajira - عليها السلام). Hajar (عليها السلام) was his second wife, relatively younger than Sarah (عليها السلام). Sarah (عليها السلام) gave birth to Ishaq (عليه السلام). Later, Hajar (عليها السلام) also gave birth to Ismail (عليه السلام). Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) is from the descendants of Ismail (عليه السلام).

The details about the sacrifice of Ibrahim and Ismail (عليهم السلام) and how Ibrahim and Ismail (عليه السلام) built the Ka'ba are covered in the biography of Ismail (عليه السلام).

THE HONORABLE PROPHET

Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) has mentioned in the Quran that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was provided with Suhuf (scrolls), however none of them have survived. Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was put to many trials and he came out successful in all of them. Ibrahim (عليهم السلام) along with Ismail (عليه السلام) re-established the Ka'ba. Similarly, the establishment of sanctuary of Al-Aqsa in the Old City of Jerusalem is also attributed to Ibrahim (عليه السلام). Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) referred to Ibrahim (عليه السلام) as His 'friend'. He was made an Imam of the nations and many Prophets came from his progeny.

It is in Quran - صُخْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى - [All this (teaching of the Quran) can be found in the earlier Scriptures (as well), in the scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa (عليهما السلام).] (Al-A'laa - 18-19)

It is in Quran - وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۗ وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا [And whose religion is better than one who submits his self to Allah and is pious and follows the religion of Ibrahim (عليه السلام), who was upright in faith? And Allah made Ibrahim (عليه السلام) His close friend.] (An-Nisa - 125)

It is in Quran - وَإِذْ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۗ قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي ۗ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ [And when Ibrahim's (عليه السلام) Lord tested him with certain commandments, which he fulfilled, He said, 'I will make you Imam of people.' Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said, 'And will You make Imama from my descendants too?' Allah answered, 'My pledge does not hold for those who do evil.'](Al-Baqara - 124)

Hadhrat Ibrahim (عليه السلام) has a special distinction in acquiescence and willful acceptance (تسليم) (و رضا). He underwent many tests and trials but came out with flying colors. He resisted idol worship from his childhood. He was undeterred when Nimrood threw him in the fire. Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) commanded, 'Ibrahim (عليه السلام), leave your infant child and his mother in desolate

wilderness where there is neither a man nor a trace of human being, no food and water'. 'Yes, my Lord' (came the answer). His child grew and attained grace and charm. Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) commanded, 'Ibrahim (عليه السلام) if you consider Me a friend, cut the throat of this child with a knife and sacrifice him. 'Yes, my Lord', was the answer from Ibrahim (عليه السلام). He came out successful in all his tests and he was rewarded with many bounties and Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) bestowed upon him many noble titles.

It is in Quran - وَأَتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا [And Allah took Ibrahim as friend.] (An-Nisa - 125)

It is in Quran - إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا [Ibrahim was indeed a model, a comprehensive leader.] (An-Nahl - 20)

When Ibrahim (عليه السلام) supplicated for his future generations, Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) granted his request and said that whoever is deserving, will surely be rewarded.

THE DEATH OF IBRAHIM (عليه السلام)

Ibrahim (عليه السلام) died when he was 175 years old. Some say that he was buried in Palestine. This may not be true. There is a strong likelihood that the family of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) and Sara (عليها السلام) lived in Yathrib (Madina) for several years and he died in Yathrib. Most likely, his grave is within the Green Dome of Prophet Mohammad (عليه السلام). Our understanding is based on the fact that Yathrib consisted of a large number of Jews whose ancestors may have been the followers of Ishaq (عليه السلام) while the descendants of Ismail (عليه السلام) lived in Makka.
