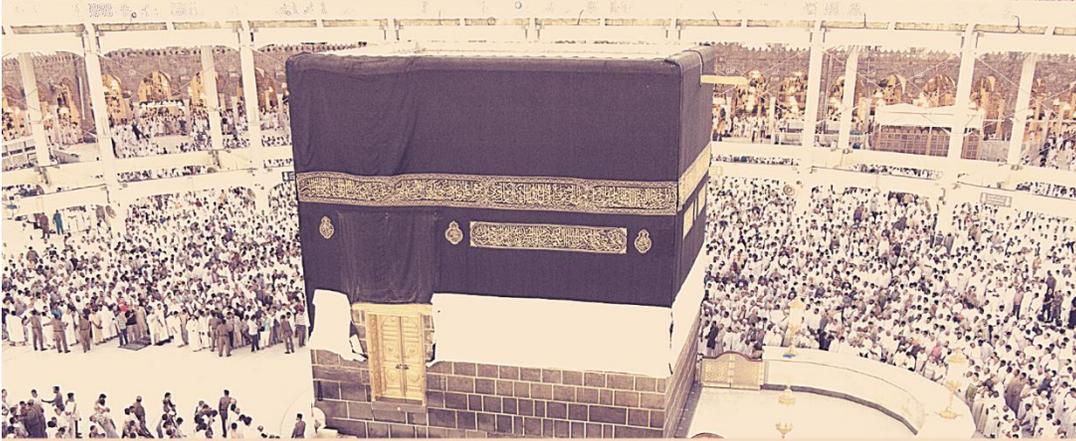


PROPHETS OF ISLAM SERIES



THE BIOGRAPHY OF

ISMAIL

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ



SHAIKH MIR ASEDULLAH QUADRI

BIOGRAPHY OF ISMAIL (عليه السلام)

Written By

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Table of Contents

1. PROPHETS DO NOT LIE.....	1
2. HAJAR (عليها السلام) HAS A DEGREE OVER SARA (عليها السلام).....	3
3. THE BIRTH OF ISMAIL (عليه السلام).....	5
4. THE SACRIFICE OF ISMAIL (عليه السلام).....	8
5. CONSTRUCTION OF KA'BA	14
6. THE DEATH OF ISMAIL (عليه السلام).....	15



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

1. PROPHETS DO NOT LIE

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

It is in Hadith - Abu Huraira (رضي 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) 'I am sick.'
- (ii) (ii) He said, '(I have not done this but) the big idol has done it.'
- (iii) (iii) 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)

supplcated 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 Hajar (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 Hajar (عليها السلام) for service.'

(Abu Huraira رضى الله تعالى عنه) then addressed his listeners saying, 'that (Hajar عليها السلام) was your mother, O' Bani Ma-is-Sama (بني ماء) (the Arabs, the descendants of Ismail عليه السلام), the son of Hajar (عليها السلام). **(Bukhari, Muslim, and others)**

The 3 statements mentioned by the Hadith have been discussed in detail in the [biography of Ibrahim \(عليه السلام\)](#) under chapter titled '**Prophets do not lie**'. We have described here the third statement because it is relevant with the biography of Ismail (عليه السلام).

It looks like the narration is related by the Sahabi as the Hadith does not say that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said this. The first two statements of the Hadith are mentioned in the Quran while the third statement is not mentioned. The third statement 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, the 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 Hajar (عليها السلام) as her maid servant from that tyrant. All these are conflicting and contradictory stories that do not appeal to the reasonable mind.

Genesis is the first book of old Hebrew Bible or **old Testament**. These books have been altered again and again over the period of centuries. This is the reason, no two versions match with each other. There are many disrespectful statements about many prophets in these books. The story that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) lied, as mentioned in the Genesis, is

self-contradictory. Also, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) going to Egypt from Palestine and then coming back to Palestine is also not proved from any source other than the Genesis. It is more likely that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) married Hajar (عليها السلام) in Palestine as he did not have children from Sara (عليها السلام).

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 (رضي الله تعالى عنه) in his Tafseer al-Kabir. Someone mentioned before Imam Abu Hanifa (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that it is in Hadith that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said 3 lies. The Imam said, no. A narrator (in the chain) of the Hadith has told one lie.

Imam Razi's 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 Hanifa (رضي الله تعالى عنه), the Hadith that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said 3 lies is clouded in uncertainty.

2. HAJAR (عليها السلام) HAS A DEGREE OVER SARA (عليها السلام)

It is an established fact that Hajar (عليها السلام) was the second wife of Ibrahim (عليه السلام). He married her because he did not have children from his first wife Sara (عليها السلام) for many years.

It is generally claimed that Hajar (عليها السلام) was the maid of Sara (عليها السلام). This story is based on conflicting statements found in old Hebrew Bible or **old Testament**. I have proved that this story is not based on facts and is self-contradictory.

Based on these stories, Jews, Christians, and some followers of Muslim sects claim that Ismail (عليه السلام) was the son of a concubine named Hajar (عليها السلام). This is a gross misrepresentation of facts. The story, as described in the Old Testament, that Ibrahim

(عليه السلام) went to Egypt from Palestine and then came back to Palestine is also not based on facts and is self-contradictory.

The fact that Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) married Hajar (عليها السلام) in Palestine, is accepted by everyone. However, there is no authentic proof that she was a maid of Sara (عليها السلام).

Both Sara (عليها السلام) and Hajar (عليها السلام) are equals because they are the wives of Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام). **However, Hajar (عليها السلام) has a degree over Sara (عليها السلام)** because she is the ancestor of Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). She was buried close by Ka'ba. Some people say her grave is in Hateem area along with the grave of Ismail (عليه السلام). Her action of walking/running between Safa and Marwa are declared by Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) as His signs (شعائر الله) and every Muslim who goes to Hajj and Umra is required to repeat that to keep her memory alive in their hearts till the day of Resurrection. Ka'ba was built by her husband and her son and Zam Zam is her gift to humanity. Very few women can be compared with her towering personality in the history of mankind.

(i) It is in Hadith - Abu Nuaimi writes in Dala'il al-Nabuwwa, with the chain of Ibn Abbas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, 'Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) continued to transfer me from the loins of the pure to the wombs of the pure, clean and mannered. No two groups have appeared except I was the best of the two.'

(ii) It is in Hadith - 'Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) descend from the best men (and women) of each century.' **(Bukhari)**

(iii) It is in Hadith - Ibn Abbas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) narrated, (Allah said) 'I transferred you from the generation of one prophet to the generation of another prophet. If a father had two sons, the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) descended from the one that had the Prophet-hood'. **(Mawahib al-Ladunniyyah by Qastallani)**

(iv) It is in Hadith - The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, 'none of my grandparents committed fornication. I descend from the best fathers and clean mothers. If one of my grandfathers had two sons, I descended from the better one.' **(Mawahib al-Ladunniyyah by Qastallani)**

- (iv) **It is in Hadith** - The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, 'all of my ancestors beginning from Adam (عليه السلام) were married couples. I am the best of you in terms of ancestors. (Daylami).

3. THE BIRTH OF ISMAIL (عليه السلام)

Brief History

After the miracle of a massive fire turning into a Garden, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) had become immensely popular among his people. Everyone was talking about how the fire turned into a garden. Despite this, only two people accepted Islam. One was Sayyeda Sara (عليها السلام) and Prophet Ibrahim married her. The other was Loot (عليه السلام) who was a distant nephew of Ibrahim (عليه السلام). The wife of Loot (عليه السلام) did not accept Islam.

After Ibrahim (عليه السلام) married Sara (عليها السلام), several years passed and they did not have children. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) found himself alone among his people as 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) فَاَمَّنْ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ] (عليه السلام) was the one who believed in him and (Ibrahim عليه السلام) 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) and his wife travelled together to Canaan (Syria) where Ibrahim and Loot (عليهم السلام) separated and took different routes as per Allah's (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) command.

From Canaan, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) traveled to Palestine where he lived for some years. It is more likely that he married Hajar (عليها السلام) in Palestine as he did not have children from Sara (عليها السلام). Thus, Hajar (عليها السلام) was the second wife, relatively younger than Sarah (عليها السلام).

There is some confusion among scholars as to who was elder among Ibrahim (عليه السلام) sons. It is generally believed that Ismail (عليه السلام) was elder to Ishaq (عليه السلام). As per

our understanding based on Quran and Sunnah, it is more likely that Ishaq (عليه السلام) was elder brother of Ismail (عليه السلام). Our understanding is based on the following facts.

It is in Quran - رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ [(Ibrahim عليه السلام prayed) My Lord, bless me with a **righteous** son.] (**As-Saaffaat - 101**)

Probably this supplication was done when Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) did not have children even after his second marriage in Palestine. His supplication was answered, and he was given good news of a **righteous** son who would also be a prophet.

It is in Quran - وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ [We had given him the good news of Ishaq (عليه السلام) a prophet, and one of the **righteous**.] (**As-Saaffaat - 112**)

The above good news was confirmed by the angels who visited Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) when he was in Palestine.

It is in Quran - هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ - إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ - قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ - فَرَاغَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ - فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ - فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَحَفْظْ وَبَشِّرُوهُ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ [Has the story of the honored guests (angels) of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) reached you? ' When they came to him, and said, 'peace be on you!' He answered, 'peace be on you,' and said, 'You are people unknown to me.' Then he went (inside the house) to his family, and brought back a (roasted) calf, and placed it in front of them, asking, 'will you not eat?' When he saw them not eating, he became afraid of them. They said, 'Have no fear,' and they gave him good news of a son (Ishaq عليه السلام to be born to him who would be) endowed with **knowledge**.] (**Adh-Dhariyaat - 24-28**)

Soon, Sarah (عليها السلام) gave birth to Ishaq (عليه السلام). At that time, it is believed that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was 86 years old.

As has been the practice of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), when someone prays for something, He provides him more than what he has asked for. Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) asked for a righteous son, and Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) gave him a righteous and knowledgeable son as well as a righteous and forbearing son and both will be rewarded with prophet-hood.

It is in Quran - **فَبَشِّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ** [Ibrahim عليه السلام was given the good news of (a second son Ismail - عليه السلام) who would be **forbearing**.] **(As-Saaffaat - 102)**

This was an indication that Hadhrat Ismail (عليه السلام) would be put to many trials right from his childhood, along with his father and he would prove to be **forbearing** in all of them and will come out of these trials with flying colors.

When Hajar (عليها السلام) gave birth to Ismail (عليه السلام), Ibrahim (عليه السلام) is believed to be 99 years old. Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) is from the descendants of Ismail (عليه السلام). This way, Prophet Ishaq (عليه السلام) was 13 years older than Ismail (عليه السلام).

We also know from the Quran that the child to be sacrificed was Ismail (عليه السلام), as Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), when giving the glad tidings of the birth of Ishaq (عليه السلام) to Ibrahim (عليه السلام) and Sara (عليها السلام) also gave the glad tidings of a grandson Yaqoob (عليه السلام) (the son of Ishaq - عليه السلام).

If the dream of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was for the sacrifice of Ishaq (عليه السلام), as claimed by some people, then it would not have remained a trial for Ibrahim (عليه السلام) as he was already informed that Ishaq (عليه السلام) was to live and will have a son Yaqoob (عليه السلام) in future. Therefore, the trial of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was for the small child Ismail (عليه السلام) who was **forbearing**.

After the birth of Ishaq (عليه السلام), it is more likely that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) had moved out of Palestine and was living in Yathrib (Madina) and Ismail (عليه السلام) was born in Yathrib (Madina).

Ibrahim (عليه السلام), along with son Ishaq (عليه السلام) and wife Sara (عليها السلام) lived in Yathrib for many years until his death and most likely his grave is within the Green Dome of Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). It is also possible that Prophet Ishaq (عليه السلام) was married in Yathrib and his son Yaqoob (عليه السلام) was also born in Yathrib where he spent many years before their family migrated to Palestine. Our understanding is based on the fact that Yathrib consisted of a large number of Jews till the time of Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) whose ancestors may have been the followers of Ishaq (عليه السلام) and Yaqoob (عليه السلام) and Bakka (Makka) was inhabited by the followers of Ismail (عليه السلام) till the time of Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم).

4. THE SACRIFICE OF ISMAIL (عليه السلام)

Within a few months from the birth of Ismail (عليه السلام), Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) commanded Ibrahim (عليه السلام) to take Hajar (عليها السلام) and newly born son Ismail (عليه السلام) to a barren valley, Bakka (Makka).

Why was this command given? When we ponder over it, seeking the assistance of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and His Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), it comes to our mind that Prophet Ismail (عليه السلام) was the great grandfather of Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) and son of Ibrahim (عليه السلام). Therefore, he was an exemplary model for humanity. Like his father, he was an icon of forbearance and Tawakkal.

With the unmatched unequivocal trust in Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), Ibrahim (عليه السلام) asked his wife, Hajar (عليها السلام) to prepare for the long journey from Yathrib to Bakka.

What might have been the state of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) when he was traveling with his wife and son? We can imagine the feelings of a father who was 99 years old and his son was barely a few months old, to leave the mother and feeding son in an isolated place without any assistance or provision of food.

Hadhrat Ibrahim (عليه السلام) had a special distinction in acquiescence and willful acceptance (تسليم و رضا). He underwent many tests and trials since his childhood and came out with flying colors. He resisted idol worship and was undeterred when Nimrood threw him in the blazing fire.

They traveled over 500 kilometers through lands, deserts, and mountains, until they reached the valley of Bakka which did not have any sign of life or water.

The details of this journey and the incidents during the journey are mentioned in Authentic books of Ahadith, like Bukhari and others. We have provided these incidents briefly, below which are based on Ahadith.

When they reached Bakka, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) asked Hajar (عليها السلام) to sit under a tree. Placed near them a leather bag containing some dates, and a small water-skin containing some water. Then as per the command of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), he started walking back home to Yathrib without looking back at them. All this while, Sayyeda Hajar (عليها السلام) was unaware as to what was going on. As an obedient wife of an Apostle, she

was following his instructions. But when Ibrahim (عليه السلام) left her under the tree along with her infant son, and started walking back home, she ran towards him asking where he was going leaving them alone in a barren valley. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was not supposed to tell her anything by the command of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). So, he kept quiet and continued walking. She continued running after him asking the same question again and again. She was the pious wife of a Prophet and had full understanding of the way of life of a Prophet. When she did not get any reply from him, she asked him, is he doing this as per the command of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). On this Ibrahim (عليه السلام) replied, yes. When she heard that, she stopped, did not say anything, and bade him goodbye saying, 'if it is the command of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), surely, He will protect me and my son'. She did not look at Ibrahim (عليه السلام) after that and came back under the shade of the tree and sat, resting herself against the tree. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) heart was crying, tears were flowing from his eyes, his steps were heavy as he returned.

It is in Hadith - Prophet Mohammad's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) infant son Ibrahim (رضى الله تعالى عنه) was in his last breaths and the eyes of the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) started shedding tears. Abdur Rahman bin Auf (رضى الله تعالى عنه) said, 'O Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), even you are weeping'. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, 'O Ibn Auf (رضى الله تعالى عنه), this is mercy'. Then he wept more and said, 'the eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord. 'O Ibrahim (رضى الله تعالى عنه), indeed, we are grieved by your separation'. **(Bukhari)**

Whatever was his state, Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) did not let his fatherly affection overcome him and followed the instructions of his Lord in total obedience. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) knew that this was the permanent settlement of his beloved wife and son, away from him, so he prayed raising his hand for their wellbeing from a place where he could not be seen by his wife Hajar (عليها السلام).

It is in Quran - رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ [I have settled some of my children, O Lord, in a barren valley near Your sacred House so that, O our Lord, they may be constant in devotion. So, put in the hearts of men some kindness for them, and provide fruits for them so that they may be grateful.] **(Ibrahim - 37).**

After Ibrahim (عليه السلام) left, Hajar (عليها السلام), went on feeding Ismail (عليه السلام) and drinking from the water (she had). When the water in the water-skin had all been used up, she grew thirsty and so did her child. She started looking at him (Ismail - عليه السلام) in agony and a time came when the infant grated his legs for want of milk and water as the milk had dried in view of her not eating or drinking. She could not endure looking at him. She looked around and found that the mountain of Safa was the nearest hill to her on that land. Leaving her child, she went to the top of the hill, and started looking at the valley to find someone for help. She did not find anyone. Then she descended from Safa and when she reached the valley, she tucked up her robe and ran in the valley because, when she was down in the valley, she was unable to see her son who was left alone. She crossed the valley and reached the Marwa hill where she stood and looked around, expecting to see someone, but to no avail. She repeated that (running between Safa and Marwa) seven times.

This was the time, the overwhelmed Mercy of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) covered her and her child from all corners and water started gushing from the ground where Ismail (عليه السلام) was laying. The water had the quality of quenching the thirst and hunger both.

When Hajar (عليها السلام) reached the Marwa (for the last time), she heard a voice in the quiet valley. She asked herself to be quiet and listened attentively. When she heard the voice again, she said loudly, whoever you are, you have made me hear your voice; have you got something to help me?' Then she saw Angel (Jibreel عليه السلام) at the place where her son was laying on the ground. The angel hit the earth with his heel and water flowed from it. She ran towards the water and her son. To preserve the water, she made a basin of sand around it. She said Zam Zam (stop stop) to the water so that it should not flow on the ground. The water stopped from overflowing and stayed within the basin made by her. She filled her water skin from that water and drank. It quenched both her thirst and hunger.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, may Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) bestow mercy on Ismail's (عليه) mother! Had she let the water overflow on the ground, it would have turned into a stream covering the entire world. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) added, her running between the Safa and Marwa hills, is the source of the tradition of the Sa'ee between Safa and Marwa during Hajj and Umra. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) further added, 'then she drank water and suckled her child. The Angel told her, 'don't be afraid, do not consider you are neglected. This is the place of the House of Allah on which House of Allah (Ka'ba) will be built by this boy and his father. Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) never neglects His people'.

It is reported that the traces of Ka'ba, built by Adam (عليه السلام) were visible at a high place resembling a hillock. She lived that way until some people from the tribe of Jurhum or a family from Jurhum passed by her and her child, as they were coming through the way of Ka'ba. They landed in the lower part of Makka where they saw a bird that had the habit of flying around water and not leaving it. They said, 'this bird must be flying around water, though we know that there is no water in this valley'. They sent one or two people from their Caravan, who discovered the source of water and returned to inform them of the water. So, they all came (towards the water)'. Ismail's (عليه السلام) mother was sitting near the water. They asked her, 'do you allow us to stay with you?' She replied, 'Yes, but you will have no right to possess the water.' They agreed to that. Ismail's (عليه السلام) mother was pleased as she would have the company of some people in the lonely valley. The people gradually settled there along with their families.

When Ismail (عليه السلام) was a little older, enough to talk and walk as a small child, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was commanded by Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) to visit them. He came to see them and stayed with them for some time. Probably, during this time, the episode of the sacrifice occurred.

It is in Quran - فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى ۗ قَالَ - يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ - فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ - وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ - [When he (son) was old enough to walk with him, he said, O' my son! indeed, I have seen in the dream that I am slaughtering you (as a sacrifice to Allah), so what do you think!' He said, 'O my father! Do what you are commanded (by Allah), you shall find me patient. Then when they submitted (to Allah's Will), and Ibrahim (عليه السلام) laid him on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out to Ibrahim (عليه السلام). You have already fulfilled (Our commandment of the) dream.' Indeed, this is how We reward the righteous. (As-Saaffaat 102-05)

When Ismail (عليه السلام) was placed on earth face down, in order that father's love do not overtake him, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) covered his eyes so that he did not see his son slaughtered. At that time, Jibreel (عليه السلام) came with a goat from the paradise and replaced Ismail (عليه السلام) with it and Ibrahim (عليه السلام) slaughtered it. When he took out the blind from his eyes, he saw his son standing by.

It is in Quran - **إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ - وَفَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ** [Indeed, this was a big trial (for both son and his father). 'Thus, We offered in exchange (for his son) the great sacrifice (and made it one of the important rites of Hajj).]
(As-Saaffaat 106-07)

It is reported that Satan appeared to Ismail (عليه السلام) and Ibrahim (عليه السلام) at three places during their journey for sacrifice and told Ismail (عليه السلام) that his father is taking him to slaughter. They threw stones at him. These places are known as Jamaraat on which the people, while performing Hajj, throw stones as a remembrance of this episode.

After the episode of sacrifice, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was commanded to go back to Yathrib. So, he left. Several years passed like this. One day Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was sitting outside his tent, thinking of his son Ismail (عليه السلام) who was living in Makka with his mother. He also remembered the episode of sacrifice and Allah's (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) mercy. His eyes were filled with tears as he was reminded of little Ismail (عليه السلام).

Meanwhile, the child (Ismail - عليه السلام) grew and learned Arabic from the people of Jurhum who had inhabited Makka. They all loved him for his virtue, honesty, and behavior. When he reached the age of puberty, they married him to a woman from amongst them.

Years passed and Hajar (عليها السلام), the mother of Ismail (عليه السلام) died and Ismail (عليه السلام) lived with his wife in Makka.

On the commandment of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), Ibrahim (عليه السلام) visited Ismail (عليه السلام) again. He was informed about the death of Hajar (عليها السلام) from the wife of Ismail (عليه السلام). Ibrahim (عليه السلام) did not show his identity to the wife of Ismail (عليه السلام). Since Ismail (عليه السلام) was not home at that time, Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) asked his wife where has Ismail (عليه السلام) gone? She replied, 'he has gone in search of livelihood.' Then he asked her about their way of living and their condition. She replied, 'we are living in misery; we are living in hardship and destitution'. Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) wanted to stay to meet his son and live with him for some time, but he was commanded to leave Makka, without seeing Ismail (عليه السلام). So, he returned. Before returning, he told her, 'when your husband returns, convey my Salam to him and tell him to change the threshold of the gate (of his house). After saying this Ibrahim (عليه السلام) returned back (to Yathrib).'

When Ismail (عليه السلام) came, he seemed to have felt something unusual, so he asked his wife, 'has anyone visited you?' she replied, 'yes, an old man of such and such description came and asked me about you and I informed him, and he asked about our state of living and I told him that we were living in a hardship and poverty.' On that Ismail (عليه السلام) said, 'did he advise you anything?' She said, 'yes he told me to convey his Salam to you and to tell you to change the threshold of your gate.' Ismail (عليه السلام) said, 'he was my father and he has ordered me to divorce you. The reason was, she belonged to the family of a Prophet and was supposed to live in acquiescence and willful acceptance (تسليم و رضا), without complaining about anything. So, Ismail (عليه السلام) divorced her and married another woman from among the people of Jurhum.

Then Ibrahim (عليه السلام) stayed away from them for a period as long as Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) wished. Then he was commanded to visit his son again. So, he came to see him. This time also, Ismail's (عليه السلام) was not there at home. So, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) spoke to second wife and asked her about Ismail (عليه السلام). She said, 'he has gone in search of livelihood.' Ibrahim (عليه السلام) asked her, 'how are you living, asking her about their sustenance and living. She replied, 'we are fine and in good condition. Then she thanked Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) for his mercy on them. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said, 'what kind of food do you eat?' she said, 'meat.' He said, 'What do you drink?' She said, 'water.' He said, 'O Allah! Bless their meat and water.' It is reported that at that time, they did not have grain (at home), and if they had grain, he would have also supplicated Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) to bless it. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) wanted to stay and meet his son but was commanded to return without meeting him or without identifying who was he. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said to Ismail's (عليه السلام) wife, 'when your husband comes give my regards to him and tell him that he should keep firm the threshold of his gate.'

When Ismail (عليه السلام) came back in the evening, he asked his wife, 'did anyone call on you?' She replied, 'yes, a good-looking old man came to me.' So, she praised him and added, 'he asked about you and I informed him that we were in a good condition.' Ismail (عليه السلام) asked her, 'Did he give you any advice?' She said, 'yes, he told me to give his regards to you and suggested that you should keep firm the threshold of your gate.' On that Ismail (عليه السلام) said, 'he was my father, and you are the threshold of the gate. He has ordered me to keep you with me.'

5. CONSTRUCTION OF KA'BA

After his visit when Ibrahim (عليه السلام) met with the second wife of Ismail (عليه السلام), time passed and Ibrahim (عليه السلام) stayed away (in Yathrib) for a period as long as Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) wished. Then he was commanded to go and visit them again. So, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) came again to see Ismail (عليه السلام). This time, he saw Ismail (عليه السلام) under a tree near Zam Zam, sharpening his arrows. When he saw Ibrahim (عليه السلام), he rose to welcome him. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said, 'O Ismail (عليه السلام), Allah has given me an order.' Ismail (عليه السلام) said, 'do what the Lord has ordered you to do.' Ibrahim (عليه السلام) asked, 'will you help me?' Ismail (عليه السلام) said, 'I will help you.' Ibrahim (عليه السلام) said, 'Allah has ordered me to build a house here,' pointing to a hillock higher than the land surrounding it. We can imagine the age of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) at this time who was given the responsibility of construction of Ka'ba from his bare hands.

Then they raised the foundations of the House (the Ka'ba). Ismail (عليه السلام) brought the stones while Ibrahim (عليه السلام) built and when the walls became high, Ismail (عليه السلام) brought a stone and put it for Ibrahim (عليه السلام) who stood over it and carried on building. While Ismail (عليه السلام) was handing him the stones, both were supplicating - رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ [Our Lord! accept this service from us. Verily, You are the All Hearer, the All Knower.] (Al-Baqara -127).

It is in Quran - وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ [We showed Ibrahim the site of the House, saying, 'do not assign partners to Me. Purify My House for those who circumambulate around it, those who stand to pray, and those who bow and prostrate themselves.] (Al-Hajj - 26)

It is in Quran - رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ [Our Lord, make us devoted Muslims towards You; make our descendants also devoted Muslims towards You. Show us how to pray and accept our repentance. Certainly, You accept repentance and You are Most Merciful.] (Al-Baqara - 128)

It is in Quran - رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ ۗ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ [Our Lord, also send among them an Apostle from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Almighty, the Wise.]
(Al-Baqara - 129)

It is in Hadith - Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said 'the above verse (Al-Baqara - 129) was the supplication of Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) for me'. (Ahmad)

It is in Quran - وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنَا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنَّ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ [And We made the House a place of return and a sanctuary for people, saying, 'take the spot where Ibrahim (عليه السلام) stood as your place of prayer.' We commanded Ibrahim and Ismail (عليهم السلام), 'purify My House for those who walk round it, those who make it a retreat, and those who bow and prostrate.]
(Al-Baqara - 125)

In the above verse, Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) commands us to pray at the place where Ibrahim (عليه) stood while raising the wall of Ka'ba. The stone on which Ibrahim (عليه السلام) stood (maqam Ibrahim عليه السلام) is still preserved.

6. THE DEATH OF ISMAIL (عليه السلام)

Ibrahim and Ismail (عليهم السلام) rebuild Ka'ba and took care of its maintenance as well. Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) commanded them to purify the House (and its surroundings). Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) commanded Ibrahim and Ismail (عليهم السلام) to clean the place for everyone (i) who do Tawaaf, (ii) who take time to retreat, and (iii) who devote themselves for worship for a longer time in bowing and prostrating. It is obvious that Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) wanted to make Ka'ba a focal point and Qibla for all Muslims of the world.

After the building of Ka'ba, Ibrahim (عليه السلام), probably stayed in Makka for some time, then went back to Yathrib giving the responsibility of the maintenance of Ka'ba to Ismail (عليه السلام). Ismail (عليه السلام) was helped in this context by a family of his followers among the people of Jurhum. It is believed that the descendants of this family continued to serve Ka'ba ever since, till today.

When Ismail (عليه السلام) died when he was 136 years old. He was buried next to the grave of his mother Hajar (عليها السلام). Both these graves are believed to be close by Ka'ba in the Haram of Makka. Some people say that their graves are in Hateem area.

It is in Ahadith that Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) was the descendant of Khizaar bin Ismail (عليه السلام), who was not a prophet, but was most pious among the sons of Ismail (عليه السلام).