

## Section 15

### Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 124

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

**124. "And (remember) when his Lord tested Abraham with words (of command) which he fulfilled. He said: 'Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind.' (Abraham) pleaded: 'And of my offspring (as well)?', He, (Allah) said: 'My covenant does not include the unjust'."**

#### Imamat, the Climax of Abraham's (as) Honour

From this verse on, the topics of discussion are Abraham (as), the honourable prophet of *Allah* and the hero of Monotheism, the structure of the Ka'bah, the sacred site of worship, and the importance of this great monotheistic center. These subjects are referred to in the next eighteen verses. Three main ideas were the objectives of these verses:

The first aim was that they might provide people with the necessary preparation for the change of the direction of the Qiblah and to inform Muslims that the Ka'bah is a legacy of Abraham (as), the idol-breaker. If pagans and idol-worshippers used it as an idol temple, it was only temporarily and it did not decrease the glorious high rank of the Ka'bah at all.

The second goal was to address the problem of the Jews and Christians who were claiming to be the heirs of Abraham (as) and his religion. These verses, reflecting back on the numerous former verses about the Jews, clarify how very unfamiliar they were with the creed of Abraham (as).

The third purpose was that Arab pagans believed in a special incessant ancestral link between them and Abraham (as). They, too, had to be made to understand that their belief systems and codes of behavior had no similarity with that of Abraham (as), the iconoclastic prophet.

In this verse, at first, it says:

***"And (remember) when his Lord tested Abraham with words (of command) which he fulfilled..."***

Yes, this verse speaks about the important occurrences in Abraham's life, i.e. his great tests and how he passed them successfully, which illustrates his high rank and superior personality and manifests the worthiness of his being.

When Abraham (as) passed these trials successfully, *Allah* saw fit to give him a gift as a prize. Therefore, addressing him:

***"...He said: "Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind..."***

In order that this Divine gift would continue in his seed, and prophethood and 'Imamat' would not come to an end with his death:

***"...(Abraham) pleaded: 'And of my offspring?'"***

The answer to this question was:

***"...He (Allah) said: 'My covenant does not include the unjust'."***

That is, I accepted your plea, but only for those of your offspring who are doers of righteous deeds and are pure and sinless i.e. those who are worthy of this rank.

### **Explanation: What does 'words' mean?**

Studying the verses of the Qur'an and noting the great and important deeds that Abraham (as) fulfilled and, hence, being appointed to the position of Imamat by *Allah*, leads us to the conclusion that the term / kalim-at / meaning 'words', or the Divine commandments by which Abraham (as) was tried, were not those of the usual sort.

It clearly indicates that the tests were not connected with matters of ordinary reasoning or faith.

They can never be considered ordinary tests. The purpose of the 'words' was a series of heavy, hard, laborious, grave duties which were given to Abraham, the sincere pure prophet (as), and he was the only one who had the qualifications to successfully complete them. Some of those commandments were such is the followings:

One trial was concerning the steadfastness of his faith in *Allah*. Abraham (as) was commanded through a vision in a dream to slay his son Ishmael. When he awoke, he unhesitatingly acted as he was bidden, (37: 105-108).

This indicates that Abraham (as) already knew that he was *Allah's* prophet and what he saw in the vision

was no other than *Allah's* command. With such a certainty in his mind, he was willing to do, by *Allah's* command, something that no other loving or sensible father possibly could slay his own son.

In another incident, *by Allah's* command, he took and left his wife and his infant son to an area of dry land, where no food and water or any inhabitants could be found.

He also stood against the idol-worshippers of Babylon and very bravely defended Monotheism in his historical trial after he had broken their idols. He miraculously held firm in faith and patience when he was thrown into the midst of fire.

Recalcitrating, he emigrated from the land of idol-worshippers, and went to a faraway region in order to proclaim his prophecy.

He did many things similar to those mentioned above and each of those trials was, indeed, heavy and difficult for a man to undertake, but he, with the power of Faith, was able to perform them successfully thereby proving himself worthy of the position of 'Imamat', Divine leadership.

### Eligibility for Imamat

Precisely speaking, it is understood from the above mentioned verse that the position and rank of Imamat which was bestowed upon Abraham (as), only after successfully enduring those frequent difficult trials, was above and beyond the rank of prophethood.

The primary sense of meaning of the term / imam / is that of being foremost, but it also has other different meanings including:

- A) Leadership in the worldly social affairs of people, (as the Sunnite school of thought believes).
- B) Authority over the religious affairs of people in this world (as some others of them have interpreted).
- C) Responsibility of bringing religious duties into action, whether it is through the establishment of government in its vast meaning or performing the commandments and ordinances of *Allah*, and the execution of social justice along with the training of souls, both outwardly and inwardly.

The rank of Imamat is higher than the rank of prophethood, because prophethood and messengership is only a matter of receiving some commandments from *Allah* and preaching them as glad tidings and warnings.

All of these are true in the case of Imamat, in addition to practicing the Divine ordinances and training the souls of individuals, outwardly and inwardly. (It is clear, of course, that many of the prophets had had the rank of Imamat, too.)

Imamat, in fact, is the position of presenting the aims of religion practically, and guidance is 'attaining the

ideal' not merely 'showing the way'.

Besides that, Imamatus includes 'Divine Guidance', too. It means the innate quality of the Imam's spiritual influence and the attracting glow of his pureness encompassing, deeply touching, and truly affecting the realm of receptive people's hearts which results in their spiritual guidance.

From this point of view, an Imam is just like the sun that, with its life-giving light, fosters and gives vitality to all living creatures. The function of an Imam in spiritual aspects is the same as the physical function of the sun.

The Holy Qur'an says:

***"He it is Who sends blessings on you, as do His angels, that He may bring you out from the depths of Darkness into Light: and He is Full of Mercy to the Believers ", ( Surah Al-Ahzab. No. 33 verse 43).***

It is well understood from this verse that the special mercies of *Allah* and the hidden aid given by His angels can lead the believers and those who trust in Him to come out from 'darkness' into 'light'.

This is also true about an Imam. The innate authority of an Imam and the great prophets (as) who had also possessed the rank of Imamatus as well as their vicegerents, had a deep effect on receptive individuals by which they could train them and therefore bring them from the depths of ignorance and error into the light of guidance.

There is no doubt that the purpose of Imamatus in this verse is the third meaning, because it is understood from many of the verses of the Qur'an that the concept of 'guidance' lies within the meaning of Imamatus, as **Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32. verse 24** says:

***"And We appointed, from among them, leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have Faith in Our Signs."***

This guidance does not mean merely 'showing the way', because, in principle, Abraham (as) had the rank of prophethood and Messengership for giving guidance in the sense of 'showing the way' before becoming an Imam.

However, the Qur'an clearly attests to this fact that Imamatus was bestowed on Abraham (as) when he persevered with patience in tolerating the difficulties which he encountered as he paved the path of certitude alongside his Faith, and passed his various great tests successfully. This rank was above and beyond the rank of guidance with the meaning of preaching glad tidings and warning people.

Therefore, guidance within the concept of Imamatus is nothing save 'attaining the ideal', cherishing the soul of religion and bringing forth training programmes for the individuals who are prepared to grasp them.

This meaning is cited in an expressive tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as) which says:

*"Verily, Allah, the Blessed, the Sublime, took Abraham (as) as His slave before He took him as a prophet. And verily Allah took him as His prophet before He took him as a messenger.*

*And Allah took him as His messenger before He made him a confident (khalil). Allah took him as a confident before He appointed him as an Imam. When He had brought all these things together in him: He (Allah) said: 'Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind'."*

The Imam (as) continued: *"Since this was something very great in the eyes of Abraham, he said: 'And of my offspring (as well)?' He (Allah) said: 'My covenant does not include the unjust'."*

The Imam (as) concluded: *"A stupid person cannot be the Imam of the pious."* <sup>1</sup> This means that only those seed of Abraham (as) who were pure and infallible were worthy of being Imam.

## **Prophethood, Messengership, Imamat and their Differences**

As it is understood from the verses of the Qur'an and various ideas existing in traditions and Islamic literature, those who were commissioned by *Allah* had different ranks.

- A. Prophethood means the ability to receive revelation from *Allah*. Then, a prophet is one on whom the Divine revelation comes down and whatever he receives by revelation he delivers to people.
- B. Messengership means to preach the Divine revelation, to spread the ordinances of *Allah*, and to train the souls and minds of individuals through education and acknowledgement.

Therefore, a Messenger is he who is commissioned, by effort and endeavour and utilizing any acceptable and proper means available to him, to invite people unto *Allah* and His commandments in order to elicit an ideological, convictional, educational and mental transformation in them.

- C. Imamat, means to guide and lead people. In fact, an Imam is he who tries to execute, actually, *Allah's* ordinances by acquiring the power necessary to organize a godly government; and if he is not able to organize a formal government, he does his best in carrying out the ordinances of *Allah*, both personally and socially.

In other words, an Imam is commissioned to execute *Allah's* commandments and assure their performance, while a Messenger is commissioned to preach those commandments. Again, in other words, Messenger shows the path but an Imam, besides his other heavy responsibilities which were pointed out before, paves the path for 'attaining the ideal'.

Let it not remain unsaid that it is clear that many of the prophets, like the Prophet of Islam (S), were possessors of all three ranks. They had Divine revelation bestowed upon them. They preached the commandments of *Allah* and endeavoured in organizing godly governments for executing His

ordinances, while they were training the souls of people according to their own religions.

In brief, Imam is the essence of leadership in all aspects: materially and spiritually, physically and theologically, apparently and hiddenly. Imam is the chief of government as well as the leader of the society, a guide in religious affairs, and a teacher of ethics to train people both inwardly and outwardly.

It is the Imam who, with his mysterious spiritual strength, guides receptive persons forward along the path of inner development, instructs the ignorant ones with his ability and knowledge, and, by means of his government or other executive resources enforces the principles of Justice.

### Imamat, the Climactical Rank of Abraham (as)

In defining the reality of Imam, it was made clear that a person may become a prophet or a Messenger while he has not been appointed as an Imam. This position demands special eligibility in all aspects.

It is the same position that Abraham (as) attained after successfully passing many difficult tests and proving his genuine worthiness; this being the last step of his development to qualify for that rank.

Some may imagine that the qualifications of an Imam is only that a person 'be worthy and a model'. They do not consider the fact that this condition existed in Abraham from the very beginning of his prophethood.

Furthermore, not only Abraham, but also all prophets and Messengers, had had this epithet from the onset of their calling. It is for this reason that a prophet should be sinless since his deeds are considered as models.

Therefore, Abraham (as), who was a prophet and Messenger of *Allah*, was gifted the rank of Imam by *Allah* after he passed his trials successfully and proved that he was worthy of it.

### Who is Unjust?

The objective meaning of the Arabic word 'the unjust, mentioned in this verse: "***My covenant does not include the unjust***" is not only 'being unjust to others'.

But the term 'unjust' (in contrast with the philosophical meaning of 'justice' which means to set everything in its own proper place), here, is used with its broad sense of meaning. Thus, committing an 'unjust' act means that 'a person, an action, or a thing has been arranged in a situation which is not appropriate'.

Since the position of Imam and the outward and inward leadership of people is an extraordinarily splendid position with many responsibilities, the committing of the slightest sin or disobedience disqualifies a person from attaining this rank.

So, in the traditions of Ahlul Bayt (as) we see that, for proving the vicegerency of Hadrat Ali (as) immediately after the holy Prophet (S), they have quoted this very verse as justification, indicating that others had been idol-worshippers before Islam, in the age of ignorance, and the only person who did not prostrate before an idol, besides Prophet Muhammad (S), even for a moment was Ali ibn Abi Talib (as).

What unjust act is greater than that a person performs idol-worshipping! Did Luqman not tell his son:

**"O my son? Join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing" (Surah Luqman No. 31, verse 13).**

Hisham-ibn-Salim, as an example, narrates from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who said:

*"Surely, Abraham was a prophet but he was not an Imam until when Allah said: 'Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind'.*

*Abraham pleaded: 'And of my offspring (as well)?' He (Allah) answered: 'My covenant does not include the unjust'. Those who have worshipped an idol, they will not be an Imam (leader)."* [2](#)

In another tradition, 'Abdillah-ibn-Mas'ud narrates from the holy Prophet (S) who said:

*"Allah told Abraham: 'I do not give you My covenant (of Imamah) for the unjust of your children.' Abraham said: 'Who are these unjust whom Your covenant does not include of my offspring?', Allah said: 'Whoever prostrated before an idol, leaving Me, I will never make him an Imam' and he is not worthy of being an Imam..."* [3](#)

## **An Imam, by Allah's Commission**

It is also understood from the current verse that an Imam (a sinless comprehensive leader of people) should be appointed by *Allah*. The reason is that: firstly, Imamah is a kind of covenant from *Allah* and it is evident that such a person should be ordained by Him, the One Who is the Maker of the covenant.

Secondly, the persons who have even tainted their lives with iniquity, even as small as a dark spot, whether it is against themselves or against others, or if there is a sign of idol-worshipping even for a short period of time in their lives, they are not eligible for Imamah. They should be perfectly sinless throughout their whole lives in order to become an Imam.

It is *Allah* who knows the hearts and minds of men and has given us criteria by which to evaluate them. This point will be discussed more comprehensively at a later time.

If we want to recognize the vicegerent of the Prophet (S), according to the above criterion, there would not be anyone save Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as).

It is noteworthy that the writer of Al-Manar narrates from Abu-Hanifah that he believed the government

of the time was exclusively suitable for the Alawites. That was why he approved rebellion against their ruling government (which was headed by Mansor of the Abbasides).

And it was also for the same reason that he did not agree, himself, to be in charge of the position of Supreme Court Judge in the government of the Abbasides.

Then, the writer of Al-Manar adds that the four kalifs of the Sunnite school of thought all did not agree with the governments of their time, whom they did not approve as worthy chiefs of the Muslims, because the governors were some cruel unjust ones. [4](#)

It is ironical that, in our time, some of the Sunnite scholars approve and support the tyrannical governments whose relations with the enemies of Islam are certain and definite, and their mischief and unjust acts are clear to all. But, this is insignificant compared to the fact that, they also consider them / 'ulul'amr / ' political and religious chieives' and / wajib ul 'ita'ah / 'necessary to be obeyed'.

## Two Questions

This fact should also be noted that the concept of Imamat does not necessarily mean that an Imam forcedly leads all people to the Truth; but it means that people having their own free will, together with their potential for receptiveness and their eligibility, can take advantage of and use the Imam's quality of effectiveness in outward and inward leadership in order to be guided.

It is just like we stated earlier, that the sun has been created to furnish light, heat and energy for all living creatures which have the potential to receive these bounties and are capable of development.

Another question that may be proposed is that according to the above it seems that every Imam previously must have been a prophet or a Messenger and then be appointed as an Imam, whereas the sinless vicegerents of the holy Prophet (S) were not in such a position.

As an answer, we say that it is not necessary that the Imam, himself, be previously a prophet or a Messenger and then reach that position.

When his predecessor had the rank of prophethood, Messengership and Imamat, (such as the Prophet of Islam (S)), the eligible vicegerent can continue executing the duties of Imamat as an Imam. This situation occurs when a new Messenger is not needed, like after the Prophet of Islam (S), who is the seal of the prophets.

In other words, if the process of receiving Divine revelation and communicating all the ordinance have been formerly performed and, only the stage of their execution remains, the true successors of the prophet can continue the prophet's line of execution, and it does not necessitate that he, himself, be a prophet or a Messenger.

## The Distinguished Personality of Abraham (as)

Abraham's (as) name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in 69 occurrences which are gathered in 25 Suras. In these verses, this great prophet (as), whose worthy epithets are mentioned therein, is highly praised and appreciated by *Allah* from all aspects. He was a prototype, an example, of a complete human being.

The supremeness of his knowledge about *Allah*, his clear logical statements against idol-worshippers, his intense efforts and endeavours in challenging with the tyrants of his time, his dedication and forbearance in obeying the commands of *Allah*, and his unique perseverance against the storms of adventures and grievous trials, are all good examples for Muslims, and those who pave the path towards Allah, to take and follow in their lives as their models.

As the Qur'an says about Abraham (as), he was of the elect and good, [5](#) in the ranks of the Righteous, [6](#) a model, [7](#) a man of truth, [8](#) most tender-hearted, and forbearing. [9](#) Furthermore, he was incomparably, brave and extraordinarily generous as well.

*Allah* Willing, we will offer a more detailed explanation concerning this matter later when commenting on some of the verses of **Surah Ibrahim, No. 14**, especially the last part of the Surah.

## Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 125

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلِّينَ وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ

**125. "And (remember) when We made the House (the Ka'bah in Mecca) a resort and a secure sanctuary for the people, (saying): 'Take to yourselves Abraham's Station for a place of prayer'. And We enjoined Abraham and Ismail (saying): 'Sanctify My House for those who go around it, for those who abide in it and pay devotion, and to those who bow down and prostrate themselves'... "**

## The Magnificence of the Ka'bah

After explaining the high rank of Abraham (as) stated in the previous verse, the Qur'an, in this verse, directs attention towards the magnificence of the House, the Ka'bah in Mecca, which was built by Abraham and his son (as). It says:

**"And (remember) when We made the House (the Ka'bah in Mecca) a resort and a secure sanctuary for the people..."**

Since the term / maʿabah / originally based on / ʿaub /, means 'a place to which people return' or 'a place where people assemble', and the Ka'bah has been a center where monotheists gather every year,

then, by this assembly, believers, not only bodily but also spiritually, return to Divine Unity and to their intrinsic nature.

So, that may be why the term / maʿābah / (a resort, an abode, a house) has been used for this Sacred House.

And, since a man's house is the continuous returning site of its inhabitants who, after having completed their affairs, can experience rest and tranquility therein, there lies this sense of resting and tranquility in the meaning of the term / maʿābah /.

This emphasizes the concept of its next word / amnan / 'secure sanctuary' especially with the word 'people', which indicates that this secure center is a common refuge for all people of the world.

This is, in fact, the acceptance by *Allah* of one of the requests that Abraham (as) sought. (We will discuss this subject on page 300.)

Then, it adds:

***"...(saying): 'Take to yourselves Abraham's Station for a place of prayer.'..."***

The opinions of the commentators are divided as to what, Abraham's Station' is. Some of them have said that the whole Hajj is Abraham's Station. Some others have rendered it to / 'arafah / 'the Mount of Recognition', / mas'arul haram / 'Sacred Monument', and / jamarat / 'lapidations'; while others believe that the entire sacred premises of Mecca is considered the 'Station'.

But, as many Islamic narrations denote, and many of the commentators have said, too, the verse apparently refers to the very standing-place of Abraham which is located close to the Ka'bah where pilgrims offer their circumambulatory prayer after performing their ritual circumambulation of the Ka'bah. Thus, the purpose of the term / musalla /, mentioned in the verse, is 'the place of prayer', too.

Then, it refers to the covenant that He made with Abraham (as) and Ismail (as) about the purification of the Ka'bah, where it says:

***"...And We enjoined Abraham and Ismail (saying):  
'Sanctify My House for those who go around it, for those  
who abide in it and pay devotion,  
and to those who bow down and prostrate themselves'."***

What is the meaning of sanctification here? Some have said that the meaning of sanctification here is purification from the existence of idols.

Some others have said that the purpose is purification from outward dirt like blood and the contents of animals' stomachs which people sacrificed therein, because there were some ignorant persons who

thoughtlessly did such deeds as leaving these remains behind.

Furthermore, some believe that sanctification, here, means 'purity of intent' when building this House of Monotheism.

There is no reason for us to confine the meaning of sanctification here. Its purpose is purification of this 'House of Monotheism' from any dirt, physically and spiritually.

It is for this reason that in some traditions we read that this verse has been rendered into sanctification from pagans and in some others into washing and purifying the body from dirt.

### **Explanation: The Secure Refuge, its Social and Educational Effects**

According to the above verse, 'the House of Ka'bah' has been chosen and proclaimed as 'a secure refuge' by *Allah*. We know that there are resolute rules in Islam instructing every believer to avoid any quarrel, war, fight and bloodshed within the limits of this Holy land, Mecca.

It is so that not only the members of humankind, regardless of nationality, race, gender, group, or condition, should be safe and secure there, but also animals and birds are protected there, in that nobody is allowed to hurt them.

In this world, where fighting and wars are always within the overall scene, the existence of such a peaceful center can function as a special helpful fortress within which the problems of many nations can be solved.

The security of this region lets different peoples, with all their differences and enmities that they may have, gather together therein, sitting, speaking, and solving their difficulties. Thus, one of the most important problems which usually exist, initiating face to face oral communications about dismissing or decreasing enmities between nations, can be solved.

It frequently happens that the two sides of a conflict or the opposing governments in the world are willing to put an end to their antagonism and have parley for this purpose, but they cannot find a secure and respectable place wherein both sides can feel free to speak therein peacefully and securely. This case has been anticipated in Islam, and Mecca is introduced as such a center.

Now that most of the Muslims of the world are unfortunately involved in some hostile conflicts, they can make use of this sacred secure land, and, under its banner of holiness and special spirituality which enlightens the hearts, begin speaking with each other to solve their problems.

### **Why the 'House ' of Ka'bah?**

In the above verse, the Ka'bah is referred to by the Lord as 'My House', while it is clear that neither is *Allah* bodily substance nor does He need a House. The purpose, here, is to honour and glorify the Ka'bah by stating its honour and lofty status, and, therefore, it is called / baytullah / 'the House of *Allah*'.

## Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 126

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

**126. "And (remember) when Abraham said: 'My Lord, make this a secure City and provide its people with fruits such of them that believe in Allah and the Last Day.' He said: 'And whoever disbelieves, I shall let him enjoy himself for a little while, then I shall drive him to the Punishment of Fire -and an evil destination it is! ' "**

### Abraham's (as) Petition to Allah!

In this verse Abraham (as) asks *Allah* two great requests in favour of the inhabitants of this Holy land, one of which was referred to in the previous verse. The Qur'an says:

**"And (remember) when Abraham said: 'My Lord, make this a secure City..."**

As it was pointed out in the previous verse, *Allah* accepted this invocation from Abraham (as) and set this Holy land as a secure center, both outward and inward security.

His second petition was thus:

**"...and provide its people with fruits such of them that believe in Allah and the Last Day.'..."**

It is interesting that Abraham (as) requested 'security' first, and then he asked for material gifts which itself is a reference to the fact that a safe and sound economic status is not possible unless there exists security in a town or country.

The opinions are divided amongst the commentators as to the meaning of the term 'fruits' here. On the whole, it seems that the word has a vast meaning, so broad that it includes any material bounty whether it is fruits or other nutritious substances, as well as spiritual bounties.

Concerning the meaning of this term in the above verse, Imam al-Sadiq (as) in a tradition has said: *"It is the fruits of hearts."* [10](#) This indicates that *Allah* attracts the attention and affection of human beings to the people of this Holy land.

This is also noteworthy, that Abraham (as) invokes this petition only for the believers in *Allah*, the only True God, and the Last Day, because he might have realized from the statement: **"My covenant does not include the unjust,"** cited in the former verse, the fact that some groups of his future offspring would follow the path of polytheism and injustice; then, to show reverence in a courteous manner, here, he did not include them in his petition.

However, *Allah's* answer to this invocation of Abraham (as) was:

***"...He said: 'And whoever disbelieves, I shall let him enjoy himself for a little while...'  
"...then I shall drive him to the Punishment of Fire - and an evil destination it is !"***

This is, in fact, the same ' General Mercy ' of *Allah* by which His unlimited bounties are available to all creatures so that good doers and evildoers equally enjoy from His vast bountiful Table in this world, but in the next world, where His ' Specific Mercy ' comes forth, wrongdoers will have no share of it and also they will have no way to rescue themselves.

## **Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 127-129**

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

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

**127. "And (remember) when Abraham and Ismail raised up the foundations of the House; (saying): 'Our Lord,! Accept (this service) from us; for surely You are All-Hearing, Ali-Knowing'."**

**128. "'Our Lord, make us submissive (Muslims) to You, and of our progeny an Ummah (a nation) submissive to You, and show us our ways of worship, and turn to us (mercifully); for surely You are the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful'."**

**129. "'Our Lord, send amongst them an Apostle of their own who shall recite unto them Your revelations, teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them; for surely You are Almighty, All-Wise'."**

## **The Structure of the House of Ka'bah**

It is clearly understood from the numerous verses of the Qur'an, the Islamic traditions, and some historical records that the House of Ka'bah had been founded before Abraham (as) and that it had been established at the time of Adam (as).

**Surah Ibrahim. No. 14 verse 37** quoting from the tongue of Abraham (as), says:

***"Our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive (of fruit) near Your Sacred House..."***

This verse confirms that when Abraham (as) with his wife and his infant son Ismail arrived at the Holy land of Mecca, there was no sign of the Ka'bah seen therein, but he was guided there by Divine inspiration.

Another verse says:

***"The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka: full of blessing..."*** (Surah 'ALe-Imran. No. 3 verse 96).

It is certain that the worshipping of *Allah* and the structure of the center of adoration did not begin from the time of Abraham (as). It had started before that and was established at the time of Adam (as).

The idea mentioned in the verse under discussion indicates the same meaning, too. It says:

***"And (remember) when Abraham and Ismail raised up the foundations of the House; (saying): 'Our Lord, accept (this service) from us; for surely You are All-Hearing, All-Knowing'"***

This statement refers to the concept that the foundations of the Ka'bah had existed from before, and Abraham (as) and Ismail (as) raised them up.

Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) in one of his sermons known as Qasi'ah also says:

*"Do you not see that Allah, the Glorified, has tried all the people among those who came before, beginning with Adam, up to the last ones in this world with stones... He made those stones into His Sacred House... Then He commanded Adam and his sons to turn their attention towards it..."* [11](#)

In short, the verses of the Qur'an and the Islamic narrations confirm this historical fact that the House of Ka'bah was originally built by Adam (as). Then during the Flood at the time of Noah, it fell down. Then, later, it was rebuilt by the hands of Abraham (as) with the aid of his son Ismail (as).

The second of the above two verses attests to the fact that Abraham (as) and his son Ismail (as) sought from *Allah* five important invocations.

These prayers, which were offered when they were busy building the Ka'bah, are so exact and consistent with all the necessities of material and spiritual life, that they can lead man to the recognition of the magnificence of the souls of these two great Apostles of *Allah*.

At first, Abraham (as) prays:

***"Our Lord, make us submissive (Muslims) to You..."***

Then he invokes:

***"...and of our progeny an Ummah (a nation) submissive to You..."***

He continues saying: "...and show us our ways of worship..." (So that we can adore You in a way worthy of Your Highness).

After that, he (as) seeks Allah for repentance, thus:

**"...and turn to us (mercifully); for surely You are the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful". "**

\*\*\*\*\*

The fifth invocation, which was sought from Allah at the time of constructing the Holy Ka'bah by Abraham and Ismail (as), is this:

**" 'Our Lord, send amongst them an Apostle of their own..."**

**"...who shall recite unto them Your revelations, teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them..."**

**"...for surely You are Almighty, All-Wise."**

## **Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 130-132**

وَمَنْ يَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَوَصَّى بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

**130. "And who turns away from Abraham's creed but he who makes a fool of himself ? Indeed, We chose him in this world, and in the Hereafter surely he shall be among the righteous."**

**131. "When his Lord said to him, 'Submit', he said, 'I have submitted to the Lord of all worlds!'"**

**132. "And this did Abraham bequeath to his sons, and (so did) Jacob, 'My children, Allah has chosen for you the Faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims'."**

## **Abraham (as), a Human Prototype**

In the former verses, Abraham's personality was partly introduced. Some of his services and quite a few of his comprehensive invocations, which included material and spiritual aspects, were discussed.

From the totality of these words, it is concluded that this great Apostle can be a good model for all the truth-seekers throughout the world, and his school of thought can be an instruction guideline for all

human beings.

Based on this very matter, in the first verse of the above verses, it says:

***"And who turns away from Abraham's creed but he who makes a fool of himself!..."***

Is this not foolishness that one forsakes such a pure brilliant creed and goes astray along the misleading paths of polytheism, blasphemy, and corruption? This is a religion which is appropriate for and coinciding with the soul and nature of man. It is a process that parallels wisdom and logic. This creed is beneficial for man both in the present world and the next world.

Then, it adds:

***"...Indeed, We chose him in this world, and in the Hereafter surely he will be among the righteous..."***

Yes, Abraham (as) is chosen by *Allah*, and he is among the ranks of the righteous and that is why he should be chosen as a model.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next verse, as an emphasis, refers to one of the other outstanding qualities which is, in fact, the origin of the rest of his qualities.

***"When his Lord said to him, 'Submit', he said, 'I have submitted to the Lord of all worlds'."***

Yes, it is when Abraham (as), that pure true believer and self-sacrificer, hearkens to the call of his innate nature that the Lord enjoins him 'Submit', and he submits himself totally to His command. Abraham (as) sees that the stars, the moon, and the sun, all in all, have precise settings.

Then he, with his mind and perception finds out that they are subject to the regulations of creation. Therefore, he proclaims that none of them can be his Lord, and he says:

***"For me, I have set my face firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall give partners to God." (Surah Al-An'am No. 6, verse 79)***

In fact, the first step to attaining worthiness for a person is through purity and sincerity, and it was owing to this same quality in Abraham (as) that he was able to submit exclusively to the command of *Allah*, therefore He was pleased with him and chose him, and for this same reason He selected him to introduce His religion.

The entirety of Abraham's (as) deeds, throughout his life, from beginning up to the end, were unique. One of his expressions of faith was through his challenge with idol worshippers and star worshippers.

Another was when, while in the midst of fire, he showed such strength of faith that his hostile enemy, Nimrod, was so affected by him that he unwillingly said: If a person wants to take a god, he should take one similar to the God of Abraham (as). [12](#)

Also, bringing his wife and suckling son to that hot dry land, i.e. the Holy land, building the House of Ka'bah, and taking his beloved son into the place of sacrifice, each was an example of the resoluteness of his manner.

\*\*\*\*\*

Abraham's (as) bequest to his children at the last moments of his life was also a model, as the last verse of the verses under discussion says:

***"And this did Abraham bequeath to his sons, and (so did) Jacob..."***

Each of them told their sons:

***"... 'My children, Allah has chosen for you the Faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims!'"***

It seems that the Qur'an by stating the bequest of Abraham (as) intends to reiterate the fact that you human beings are not only responsible for your children while they are with you but you are responsible for their futures, too. When you are on your deathbed, do not think of only your financial affairs and that of your children after your death; you had better think about their spiritual life, too.

Not only did Abraham (as) bequeath such a testament, but also his grandson, Jacob (as), imitated Abraham's same manner and at the last moments of his life enjoined his children to attain the secret of victory, success and happiness via this short phrase:

***'Submit to the Lord of the worlds!'***

The mentioning of Jacob from among all prophets, here in this verse, is perhaps with the aim of telling the Jews and Christians, who each in their own way used to join themselves to Jacob, that the blasphemous creeds which they followed and the lack of pure submission in the Truth that they showed by their actions, did not coincide with the manner of the one whom they joined themselves to.

[1.](#) Usul al-Kafi: vol. 1, chapter 2 concerning the degrees of the prophets (Nabiy), the Messengers (Rasul), and the Imams (as), p. 133

[2.](#) Usul al-Kafi: vol. 1, chapter: prophets and Messenger, Tradition 1.

[3.](#) Al-Amali; by Shaykh Tusi: published in 1414, pg 379

[4.](#) Al-Manar, vol. 1, pp. 457-458

[5.](#) Surah Sad, No.38, verse 47

[6.](#) Surah Nahl, No.16, verse 122

[7.](#) Ibid. verse 120

[8.](#) Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 41

[9.](#) Surah Al-Taubah, No.9, verse 114

[10.](#) Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 12, pp. 86 & 100

[11.](#) Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 192

[12.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 8, p. 368, narration 559

---

**Source URL:**

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-1/section-15#comment-0>