

Section 3: Abraham Preaches Unity of Allah

Surah Maryam – Verse 41

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا

41. “And mention Abraham in the Book; verily he was a truthful man, a prophet.”

The Arabic term /siddiq/ is applied for both the person who verifies the truth very much, and the person whose all words and deeds are based upon truthfulness. Such a person acts according to what he says, and speaks according to what he acts.

This holy verse uncovers a part of the life of the hero of Monotheism, Abraham the Friend of God, and emphasizes that the invitation of this great prophet, as that of other Divine prophets, has begun from the point of Monotheism.

The verse implies that Abraham should be mentioned in this Book, the Qur'an, because he was a man of truth and an attester of the Divine teachings and commandments. He was a prophet of Allah, too.

The verse says:

“And mention Abraham in the Book; verily he was a truthful man, a prophet.”

In fact, this meaning is the most evident epithet of the godly prophets and the bringers of the Divine revelations that they do convey the command of Allah to the servants of God completely.

Surah Maryam – Verse 42

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا

42. “When he said to his father: ‘O my father! Why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees, nor does avail you in aught?’”

When Abraham was preaching as a prophet, his father had died, and the man whom has been introduced in the Qur’an as his father was his guardian, his uncle’Azar, or his mother’s husband.¹

Some Islamic traditions also denote that Abraham’s father was a monotheist, and the objective meaning of the Qur’anic word /’ab/, here, is his uncle. In Arabic language the term /’ab/ has a vast meaning. It is also applied for the teacher, the trainee, and even for the father-in-law.

There is also a tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

“I and Ali are the fathers of this Ummah (Muslim community).”

Then, the verse points to the debate of Abraham and his father,’Azar. (Father here is referred to the uncle).

It says:

“When he said to his father: ‘O my father! Why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees, nor does avail you in aught?’”

This short and expressive statement is one of the best evidences of the negation of polytheism and idolatry. One of the man’s motives alongside knowing Allah is the motive of benefit and loss. Abraham says to’Azar why he relies on a deity which neither removes a difficulty from him, nor it is able to hear and see.

Explanations

1. The disputations of Abraham and his uncle are worthy of mentioning and magnifying.

“When he said...”

2. In ‘forbidding of wrong’, you should begin from your own kin.

(...O my father...)

3. There is no age limitation for forbidding of wrong. (A son can forbid the grand members of the family from doing evils, but he must observe their respect and protect it.)

4. Perfection of persons does not always relate to their age. Sometimes it happens that the child of a

family understand the facts better than the elders of that family.

5. In forbidding of wrong, it is better to begin from the creedal indecencies. (Unfortunately we are often busy in the ethical and social vices).

6. The path of truth should not be sacrificed for affections. Relationship ought not to hinder the act of forbidding of wrong.

Surah Maryam – Verses 43 – 44

يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا

يَا أَبَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا

43. “O’ my father! There has come unto me of knowledge which has not come unto you, so follow me, I will guide you on a right path.”

44. “O’ my father! Serve not Satan. Verily Satan is disobedient unto the Beneficent (Allah).”

After that, Abraham (as) invites’Azar, with a clear logic in order that he follows him (as) in that matter.

He (as) says:

“O my father! There has come unto me of knowledge which has not come unto you, so follow me, I will guide you on a right path.”

That is, I have got a lot of knowledge by means of revelation, and I can say with certainty that I will not go on a wrong way, so I will never invite you unto a wrong way. I desire your felicity and your happiness, then accept my invitation to become prosperous, and, by paving this straight path, to reach the ideal destination.

Then, in the next verse, Abraham combines this positive aspect with the negative aspect, and the consequences that the opposition with this invitation produces, and says:

“O’ my father! Serve not Satan. Verily Satan is disobedient unto the Beneficent (Allah).”

The objective meaning of “**Serve not Satan**” is the same as obeying and following Satan which causes man to become its servant and slave.

Of course, it is evident that the purpose of service, here, is not a service in the sense of prostration,

prayer, and fasting performed for Satan, but it is in the sense of obeying and following the command of Satan which itself is counted a kind of service.

The meaning of ‘worship, or service’ is so vast that it encompasses even the listening to the sayings of a person with the intention of acting accordingly, and also putting the rule of a person to order, is counted a kind of worshipping him.

It has been narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

*“He who listens to a speaker (willingly), he has worshipped him. Then, if the speaker speaks from the side of Allah, the one has worshipped Allah, and if the speaker speaks from the side of Iblis, the one has worshipped Iblis.”*²

However, Abraham wants to teach this fact to his father (uncle) that no one can live without having a path, a policy. It may be either the path of Allah and the straight way, or the path of Satan, the disobedient, the astray. In this course, man should think correctly, take a decision for himself, and, far from bigotries and blindly followings, choose his good and benefit.

Surah Maryam – Verse 45

يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا

45. “O my father! I fear lest a chastisement afflict you from the Beneficent (Allah) so that you become a friend to Satan.”

Through this holy verses once more Abraham attracts the attention of ‘Azar to the evil sequels of polytheism and idolatry, when he says:

“O my father! I fear lest a chastisement afflict you from the Beneficent (Allah) so that you become a friend to Satan.”

The statement of Abraham, here, before his uncle, ‘Azar, is very attractive. On one side, he frequently addresses him with the phrase: ‘**O my father**’ which is a sign of respect and courtesy. On the other side, the holy phrase ‘**I fear lest a chastisement afflict you...**’ indicates that Abraham is worried that any disquiet reaches ‘Azar.

And on the third side, the phrase ‘**a chastisement afflict you from the Beneficent (Allah)**’ points to this matter that due to his polytheism and idolatry, ‘Azar’s state has reached a point that Allah, whose general compassion has encompassed everybody, becomes angry with him and punishes him.

'Azar has to note what a horrible thing he does! And, on the fourth said, his deed is an action of which is to go under the shade of the friendship of Satan.

Note

1. Allah (s.w.t.) says:

“And as for those who belie Our Signs, chastisement shall afflict them for what they were transgressing.”³

2. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“...and We seized those who were unjust with a dreadful punishment for the transgressions they used to commit.”⁴

3. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Whoever causes the most grievous torture for people in this life, he will have the most grievous punishment with Allah on the Day of Hereafter.”⁵

Surah Maryam – Verse 46

قَالَ أَرَأَيْبُ أَنْتَ عَنْ ءَالِهَتِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ لَئِنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ وَاهْجُرْنِي مَلِيًّا

46. “He said: ‘Do you dislike my gods O’ Abraham? If you do not desist, I will certainly stone you. Be gone from me for a long time’.”

In the former verses, the logical words of Abraham (as) alongside the guidance of 'Azar which were mixed with a particular compassion and kindness, were referred to. Now, the turn is for the answers of 'Azar to those words, so that, by comparing them both, the fact may become manifest.

The Qur'an implies that, not only the sympathetic and helpful statements of Abraham did not affect on 'Azar's heart, but also, by hearing them, he became very angry and said to Abraham whether he hated his gods.

“He said: ‘Do you dislike my gods O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will certainly stone you. Be gone from me for a long time’.”

It is interesting that, firstly, 'Azar was not even willing to hear the denial upon the idols, or to utter any opposition and ill-speaking against them, but he only said:

“Do you dislike my gods?”

lest the idols be aspersed. Secondly, when 'Azar wanted to threaten Abraham, he threatened him to stoning, and he emphasized on his action by the word '***certainly***'; and we know that stoning is one of the worst kind of slaying. Thirdly, he did not suffice to this conditioned threat, but, at the same time, he considered Abraham as an unbearable being when he told him:

‘Be gone from me for a long time’.

This is a very aspersive meaning that sometimes some angry persons use against their opponents.

The Arabic term /maliyya/ is derived from /'imla'/ in the sense of 'to respite a long time'.

Surah Maryam – Verse 47

قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا

47. “He said: ‘Peace be upon you: I will ask my Lord to forgive you: for verily He is ever affectionate to me’.”

The word /haqq/ is applied for the person who regards the complete goodness and benevolence unto another person;⁶ and sometimes it is used in the sense of 'a scholar'.

In these verses, the spiritual conditions of a believer and those of a disbeliever are clearly seen in their disputes.

1. Abraham speaks affectionately, while his uncle speaks roughly. Abraham addresses his uncle four times with the phrase “***O my father!***” but his idolatrous uncle, even once, did not call him ‘*O my son*'.

2. Abraham (as) speaks reasonably, while 'Azar speaks without reasonless.

Abraham says:

“Why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees...?”,⁷

but 'Azar says

“my gods”⁸

3. Abraham (as) speaks sympathetically, but 'Azar answers with threat.

4. Abraham (as) greets his uncle, but 'Azar orders him to get distance with him by saying:

“Be gone from me for a long time.”⁹

But, like all other divine prophets and leaders, Abraham controlled his nervousness and, in spite of 'Azar's intensive harshness, he, with utmost magnanimity, said:

“He said: ‘Peace be upon you...’

This salutation may be for farewell, by which and together with some other words, Abraham left 'Azar; or it may be a salutation which is said for the end of disputation.

Then Abraham added:

“...I will ask my Lord to forgive you: for verily He is ever affectionate to me’.

Abraham (as) asked forgiveness for his idolatrous uncle for the sake that he probabled that 'Azar would be guided, but, as soon as he became disappointed from his uncle's guidance, he repudiated him.

Surah Maryam – Verse 48

وَأَعْتَزِّلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُوا رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا

48. “And I will withdraw from you and what you call on besides Allah, and I will call upon my Lord: may be I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord.”

In this holy verse, Allah, the Exalted, states the words of Abraham (as) as follows:

“And I will withdraw from you and what you call on besides Allah, and I will call upon my Lord: may be I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord.”

This verse, in one side, indicates the courtesy of Abraham unto his uncle, 'Azar, that when he said:

“Be gone from me”,

Abraham accepted; and, on the other side, it defines his conclusiveness in his belief. Abraham impliedly says that his separation from him ('Azar) is not for the reason that he has renounced his firm belief in Monotheism, but it is for the lack of preparation in 'Azar unto accepting the truth.

However, Abraham announces that if he calls upon his Lord, He answers him, but how miserable they are that they call upon some more miserable ones than themselves who never answer their prayer, nor they even hear them.

Explanations

Those young people who live among some deluded families, should follow the line of Abraham:

1. Invitation together with courtesy:

“O my father.”

2. Sympathy accompanied with logic:

“Why do you worship”.

3. Warning followed by prayer:

“I fear...I will seek forgiveness for you”.

Greeting together with seeking forgiveness:

“Peace be upon you. I will ask my Lord to forgive you...”.

And, at the end, separation:

“I will withdraw from you...”.

4. Among the last stages of ‘forbidding from doing evils’ there is breaking a communication:

“And I will withdraw from you...”.

If we are not able to change the defective environment, at least, we must leave it.

5. One of the fundamental principals of the godly schools is repudiation from infidels, since repudiation is before mastership. At first, we must separate from infidelity, false deity, and corruption, then we may join the truth.

Surah Maryam – Verse 49

فَلَمَّا اَعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ اِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا

49. “So when he withdrew from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob and each (of them) We made a prophet.”

A godly action performed by a grandfather may bring the bounty of Allah for a generation.

Abraham (as) kept his word and persisted fully on his own promise with resistance. He was always the caller of Monotheism even though all the members of the heretic society of that time raised against him, but, finally, he did not remain alone.

A great many people became his followers during all centuries so that all the theists of the world are proud of him. The Qur'an implies when he withdrew from all the things they worshipped other than Allah, the Lord bestowed on him Isaac and after Isaac his son Jacob, each of whom were made a great prophet by Allah.

The verse says:

“So when he withdrew from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob and each (of them) We made a prophet.”

This great bounty was the fruit of that resistance which Abraham showed from himself in the way of struggling against idols and withdrawing from that false creed.

The Feature of Abraham

Abraham desisted from stars, moon, and sun, and won Allah's favour.

He said:

“...I do not like the setting ones.”¹⁰

He (as) left his deviated uncle and, consequently, became the father of all people:

“...the faith of your father Abraham...”¹¹

His uncle was in ill terms with him by saying:

“Be gone from me for a long time”¹²,

but Allah favoured him because Abraham said:

“...for verily He is ever affectionate to me.”¹³

Abraham withdrew from them for the sake of Allah and said:

“I will withdraw from you”¹⁴,

then he became famous in the world:

“...and assigned unto them a high and true renown”.¹⁵

He run away from the temple of idols and he became the builder of the House of Monotheism:

“And (remember) when Abraham and Ishmael raised up the foundations of the House...”¹⁶.

He sacrificed his life in the path of Allah, and, as a result of it, the fire became safe and sound for him:

“We said: ‘O fire be a comfort and peace to Abraham’”¹⁷.

He prepared his son to be devoted as a sacrifice:

“...he threw him down upon his forehead”¹⁸,

and Allah ransomed him with a great sacrifice which later became obligatory in that place.

Abraham lived childless until nearly the end of his life but he was content with it, so prophethood was assigned in his progeny.

He built the Ka‘bah in the most deserted place, but it became the most attractive places all over the earth.

He was all alone in the desert when he called out, then there arrived answers from throughout the world:

“And proclaim among men the Pilgrimage.”¹⁹

He left out his thirsty little child there by the command of Allah, then the water of Zamzam gushed and flowed forever.

He greeted before the threat of his idolatrous uncle:

“He said: ‘Peace be upon you...’”²⁰

Then Allah sent greeting to him when He said:

“Peace be on Abraham”²¹

Abraham was a single person, but today all the heavenly schools relate themselves to Abraham, in a manner that some pagans, the Jews, and the Christians say that Abraham belongs to them.

The people of his time were his enemy, while Allah chose him as His friend.

The Qur’an says:

“And Allah took Abraham as a Friend.”²²

Surah Maryam – Verse 50

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا

50. “And We bestowed of Our Mercy on them, and assigned unto them a high and true renown.”

A righteous child is the reward of the godly efforts of the parents, and more important than that is the child’s spiritual rank.

When Abraham (as) withdrew from those arrogant idol worshippers and went toward the Holy Land, Allah bestowed on him Isaac as his son, and Jacob as his grandson, and He comforted him from the pain and of separation of his relatives by bestowing children on him and ornamenting them with the rank of prophethood.

Besides children and prophethood, Allah also bestowed on him some other bounties and caused them to be honoured among people so that their good names were mentioned respectfully by all people. The adherents of all religions love Abraham and his progeny so that they pray for them and consider them the followers of their own religion.

Some commentators say that the meaning of ‘high renown’ about them is that Muhammad (S) and his community continue mentioning their good name until the Day of Resurrection.²³

The application of /lisan/ in such contexts means a remembrance of a person mentioned among people; and when it is added with the term /sidq/ it means ‘a good remembrance and fame among people’; and when it is added with the term /‘aliyan/, which means ‘high, outstanding’, their concept is that a very good thought and remembrance of a person remains among people.

The verse says:

“And We bestowed of Our Mercy on them, and assigned unto them a high and true renown.”

Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) in a tradition says:

“A good renown for a person which Allah assigns for him among people is better than the (abundant) wealth which he consumes and devises”²⁴

In principle, apart from the spiritual aspects, sometimes, good fame among people can work as a great capital for a person and his children, the examples of which have been seen frequently in the society.

Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“When Allah loves a servant, He may inspire uprightness in him.”²⁵

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1. Al-Mizan, the Commentary
 2. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 115
 3. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 49
 4. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 165
 5. Nahj-ul-Fasahah, p. 59; & Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol.3, p. 500
 6. Lisan-ul-'Arab, an Arabic Dictionary
 7. The current Surah, verse 42
 8. The current Surah, verse 46
 9. Ibid
 10. Surah Al-'An'am, No.6, verse 76
 11. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 78
 12. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 46
 13. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 47
 14. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 48
 15. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 50
 16. Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 127
 17. Surah Al-'Anbiya, No. 21, verse 69
 18. Surah As-Saffat, No.37, verse 103
 19. Surah Al-Hajj
 20. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 47
 21. Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 109
 22. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 125
 23. Majma'-ul-Bayan
 24. Usul-i-Kafi, according to the record of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary, vol. 3, p.339.
 25. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 3, p. 161

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