

Section 3: The Great Sacrifice Shifted

Surah As-Saffat – Verses 75–79

وَلَقَدْ نَادَانَا نُوحٌ فَلَنِعْمَ الْمُجِيبُونَ

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ

وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ

سَلَامٌ عَلَى نُوحٍ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ

75. “And indeed Noah did call upon Us, and the most excellent answerer (of prayer are We).”

76. “And We delivered him and his people from the great distress,”

77. “And We made (only) his progeny the survivors.”

78. “And We perpetuated to him (praise) among the later generations.”

79. “Peace be on Noah among the nations.”

If a person calls Allah sincerely, his supplication will be accepted and answered.

From here on, the story life of three great prophets, which was secretly pointed out in the former verses, begins. At first, Noah, the chief of the Divine prophets, and the first arch-prophet, is referred to and, before anything else, his pungent prayer, when he became disappointed from the guidance of his people, is pointed out.

It says:

“And indeed Noah did call upon Us, and the most excellent answerer (of prayer are We).”

This call may point to the same thing which is mentioned in Surah Noah:

“And Noah said: ‘O’ my Lord! Leave not of the unbelievers, a single one on the earth!”

“For, if You do not leave (any of) them, they will but mislead Your devotees, and they will breed none but wicked ungrateful ones.”¹

Or it is the prayer which he asked Allah before embarking on the Ark.

He said:

“...‘My Lord! Cause me to land with a blessed landing, for You are the Best to cause to land’.”²

Or it is the prayer which is mentioned in Surah Al-Qamar, No. 54, verse 10, saying:

“Then he called on his Lord: ‘I am one overcome; do You then help (me)!”

Of course, there is no problem that the verse under discussion might be a hint to all of these prayers and Allah answered them all in the best way.

So, in the next verse, it immediately says:

“And We delivered him and his people from the great distress,”

According to Raqib in Mufradat, the Arabic term ***/karb/*** means ‘a severe grief’.

Which grief has been this great grief that troubled Noah seriously? It may refer to the mockeries of the proud faithless people, and their oral hurts, such as their violation and affront to him and his followers. Or it may refer to the consecutive denials of this obstinate nation.

They hurt this patient Divine prophet, Noah, and acted so impolitely unto him and said that he was mad, that as the Qur’an says:

“He (Noah) said: ‘My Lord help me against what they belie’.”³

However, a group of these unwholesome events and harsh sarcasms presses his heart violently until when the flood came, and Allah delivered him from the grip of that cruel nation and that great distress.

Some of the commentators have said that the probable purpose of the Qur'anic phrase *lkarbin 'azim/* has been that very Flood in which none delivered except Noah and his followers, but this meaning seems improbable.

Then, in the next verse, it adds:

“And We made (only his progeny the survivors.”

Are really all the human beings, who are living on the earth at the present time, from among the progeny of Noah? And does the above verse say the same meaning? Or did great group of prophets, saints, and righteous ones remain from his seed, though all human beings are not from his seed?

Some of the great commentators have said that all the members of humankind after Noah have come into being from his generation and, just now, all people are the Children of Noah.

A great deal of the historians have cited that there have remained three sons from Noah, by the names of: Sam, Ham, and Yafith, and all the present nations living on the earth terminate to them. The races of Arab, Persian, and Roman are called Semitic (races).

The Turkish race and another group of people are considered as the progeny of Yafith. The races in Sudan, India, Nubia, Ethiopia, Qibt, and Barbary are counted as the progeny of Ham.

The discussion is not upon this matter that, for example, this race is from which son of Noah, because there are many different ideas delivered by the commentators and historians upon this subject. The discussion is upon this matter that do all the human races terminate to these three ones?

This question arises here that: did not some other believers embark in the Ark with Noah? Then, what fate did they have? Did they all pass away without having any offspring after them? Or, if they had some children, would they be girls who married with Noah's sons?

This problem is not so clear from the point of history, but it can be understood from Some Islamic narrations that, in relation with the hints in the verses of the Qur'an, there remained some children from them on the earth and there exist some people from those children, too.

Upon the explanation of the above holy verse, there is a tradition recorded in the Commentary of Ali-ibn-'Ibrahim narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said:

“The purpose of Allah from the verse saying:

‘And We made (only) his progeny the survivors’”

is that the Truth, prophethood, the (heavenly) Book, and Faith remained in the progeny of Noah, but the entire people who are living on the earth from the children of Adam are not from the offspring of Noah (as), because Allah, the Exalted, says in His Book:

‘... We said: ‘Embark therein, of each kind a pair and your family (a part from your wife and a son) except for those against whom the Word has already passed – and whoever believed. And there believed not with him but a few.’⁴

And also He, the Almighty, (addressing the Children of Israel,) says:

‘(O’ you!) the offspring of those whom We embarked along with Noah (on the Ark)....’⁵⁶

And thus, whatever is known about the whole races on the earth terminating to the Noah’s sons is not fixed.

In the Next verse, the Qur’an says:

“And We perpetuated to him (praise) among the later generations.”

Noah is known as a steadfast, brave, patient, sympathetic, and kind prophet, and he is called ‘the chief of the Divine prophets’.

Noah’s life story is usually the example of persistence and perseverance, and his manner and program is as a sample for all those who pave the path of Truth against the hard hindrances of the enemies.

In the last verse of this group of verses, the Qur’an says:

“Peace be on Noah among the nations.”

What an honour is higher than this that Allah, the Exalted, sends greeting to him? It is a greeting that remains in the world among the nations of the world and will be stretched until the Hereafter. Allah’s greeting is accompanied with the beautiful praise and good mention of the servants of Allah.

It is interesting that there is hardly a greeting in the Qur’an about anyone as vast as this one, specially that the Qur’anic word *‘alamin’ (nations)*, which is in plural form and with the Arabic signs (of definite article).

It contains such a vast meaning that it may envelop not only all human beings but also the whole angels and those who are in the entire Universe.

Surah As-Saffat – Verses 80–82

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ

80. "Verily thus do We recompense the doers of good."

81. "Verily he was (one) of Our faithful servants."

82. "Then We drowned the others."

The reward of Allah for the righteous ones is a course and an Allah's way of treatment, not a temporary event and an eventual happening.

Therefore, in this holy verse the Qur'an clearly says:

"Verily thus do We recompense the doers of good."

That is why, when there comes a Divine chastisement in the world, only believers and the righteous ones may be delivered and the others will be punished whether they are disbelievers or inattentive.

And in the next holy verse, concerning Noah (as), it says:

"Verily he was (one) of Our faithful servants."

In fact, the rank of servitude and submission as well as Faith accompanied with kindness and benevolence, which have been referred to in the recent two verses, are the main evidence of the grace of Allah unto Noah and delivering him from the great grief, and the greeting of Allah unto him.

If this program is followed by others, too, they will be inside the same mercy and grace that Noah (as) was in, since the criterions of Allah's graces are unchangeable and they have not a personal and private aspect.

In the third verse, through a short and awakening sentence, the Qur'an states the fate of that unjust, vicious, and anonymous nation, where it says:

"Then We drowned the others."

There came a flood from the sky, water gushed out from the earth, and all over the sphere of the earth

turned to a rough ocean. It ruined the castles of the tyrant ones, and their corps remained floating over the face of water.

It is interesting that He states His favours unto Noah in several verses, but He mentions the chastisement of that rebellious people through a short sentence heedlessly and contemptuously, because the rank of stating the honours and victories of the believers, and the aid of Allah unto them, is the rank of explanation, while the rank of stating the circumstance of the disobedient ones is the rank of heedlessness.

Surah As-Saffat – Verses 83-84

وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ

إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

83. “And verily Abraham was of his persuasion.”

84. “When he came unto his Lord with a sound (pure) heart.”

We ought to purify inside of ourselves at first, and then we may try to purify the society. The necessary condition of the success of the religious leaders is to have a sound pure heart.

In these verses a considerable part of the life story of 'Ibrahim, the iconoclastic hero (as), together with some parts of the adventurous history of Noah (as) are referred to.

Here, at first it begins with the event of Abraham's idol-breaking and the harsh reaction of the idolaters against him, and in another part, it speaks about the greatest scene of Abraham's self-sacrifice, sacrificing his son. This part of the event has exclusively been mentioned only in this section of the Qur'an.

The first verse relates the event of Abraham with the event of Noah as this:

“And verily Abraham was of his persuasion.”

Abraham paved the same way of Unity and Justice, the same path of piety and sincerity that Noah paved, since all divine prophets were the preachers of the same school and the teachers of the same university, and every one of them continued and completed the program of the previous one.

What an interesting meaning this is! Abraham was one of the followers of Noah! Though there was a

long time between them, (according to some commentators, about (600 years), but we know that time has not any effect on the relation of religious schools.

In the second verse, it says remember the time:

“When he came unto his Lord with a sound (pure) heart.”

The commentators of the Qur’an have delivered different meanings for the Qur’anic term /qalb/ (heart), each of which refers to one of the dimensions of it: a heart which is free from polytheism; the sincere heart which is far from sins, grudges, and hypocrisies; a heart empty of the love of the world, because the love of the world is the source of faults, and, finally, a heart which contains nothing but Allah.

The fact is that the Qur’anic term /salim/ is derived from /salamat/ (health), and when healthy is propounded in its absolute state, it envelops health from all kinds of ethical and creedal sicknesses.

Concerning the hypocrites, the Qur’an implies that there is a disease in their hearts and, as the result of their obstinacy and sins, Allah will increase this sickness:

“In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease...”⁷

Imam Sadiq (as) has stated the best commentary on the Qur’anic phrase /qalbin salim/ where he says: “A sound heart is the one which meets his Lord while there is none in it except Him.”⁸

This clear commentary is conclusive of all aforementioned qualities.

Again, in another authentic tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) he said:

“Whoever has a truthful intention is the possessor of a sound heart, because the soundness of the heart from polytheism and doubt, purifies the intention for Allah in all affairs.”⁹

This is sufficient about the importance of the sound heart that the Qur’an counts it as the capital of safety in Hereafter, as in Surah As-Shu’ara, No. 26, verses 88 and 89 from the tongue of this very prophet, Abraham (as), we recite:

“The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail,” “Except for him who comes to Allah with a pure heart.”

In a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) we recite he said:

“The heart is the sanctuary of Allah; do settle no one in the sanctuary of Allah, except Him.”

Surah As-Saffat – Verses 85–87

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ

أَتُنْفِكُوا إِلَهاتِ دُونِ اللَّهِ تُرِيدُونَ

فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

85. “When he said to his father and his people: ‘What is it that you worship?’”

86. “Is it a falsehood – gods other than Allah that you desire?”

87. “What is then your idea about the Lord of the Worlds?”

In invitation to Monotheism, clarity, explicitness, bravery, inattentiveness to the tribal and genealogical considerations, are the sings of a firm Faith. In this regard, Abraham condemned the creed of the father.

Yes, Abraham was ordered to struggle against idolatry with a sound pure heart, a pure spirit, a strong will, and a firm decision.

He began from his father (uncle) and his own relatives, as the Qur’an says:

“When he said to his father and his people: ‘What is it that you worship?’”

Is it not a pity that man, with his natural honour and his good intellect, stands in front of some worthless pieces of stone and wood and bows? Where is your wisdom?

Then, in the next holy verse, the Qur’an completed this meaning, which was a clear contempt, with another sentence, saying:

“Is it a falsehood – gods other than Allah that you desire?”

Regarding to the fact that the Arabic term *’ifk* means a great lie or the ugliest lies the decisiveness of Abraham’s talk about the idols will become more clear.

He concluded his speech in this regard with another severe sentence, and said:

“What is then your idea about the Lord of the Worlds?”

You consume His sustenance, His merits have surrounded your selves thoroughly, yet you have worshipped some worthless things instead of Him, and yet do you expect Him to have mercy on you, and that He would not give you retribution with a terrible chastisement? What a great mistake, and what

a dangerous aberration you have!

The application of the Qur'anic phrase /rabb-il-'alamin/ (the Lord of the worlds) points to this fact that the whole universe is being managed under the Lordship of Allah, but you have left Him and attached to some conjectures and illusions which have no source of effect.

Surah As-Saffat – Verses 88-92

فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ

فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ

فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ

فَرَاحَ إِلَىٰ آلِهِمْ سَهْوًا مُّكَذِّبِينَ

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ

88. "Then he glanced, casting glance at the stars,"

89. "Then he said: 'Verily I am sick (and I cannot participate in your festival).'"

90. "So they went away from him, turning back."

91. "Then he turned unto their gods secretly and (mockingly) said: 'Why do you not eat?'"

92. "What is the matter with you that you do not speak?"

The logic of Divine prophets is negation of idolatry, and it is very clear, natural, and rational.

History and commentary books indicate that every year the idolaters of Babylon had some special festival ceremonies when they used to cook and prepare some food, in idol temple, and put them there imagining that the foods would become blessed.

Then they went out from the city and returned back in the evening when they went into their idol temple

in order to worship and to eat food.

That day, the city became empty of people, and it was a good opportunity for Abraham to break idols. It was an opportunity for which Abraham was waiting for a long time and he did not like to lose it easily.

So, at night, when he was invited to participate in their ceremonies, the verse says:

“Then he glanced, casting glance at the stars,”

“Then he said: ‘Verily I am sick (and I cannot participate in your festival).’”

And in this way, Abraham (as) excused himself, and the verse says:

“So they went away from him, turning back.”

Here, there come forth two questions:

The first: Why did Abraham look at stars? What was his aim of this glance?

The second is that whether he was really sick when he said:

‘Verily I am sick’?

And What ailment did he have?

The answer to the first question: Regarding to the beliefs of the people of Babylon, and their customs, its answer is clear, because they had some studies in astronomy, and even it is said that their idols were in the shape of stars, and they respected them because they were the symbols of stars.

Beside their astrologic information, of course, there were also many superstitions in this field current among them, including that they believed stars were effective in their fates, and asked goodness and blessing from them. They reasoned their situation for the future events.

In order to make them convenient, according to their custom, Abraham (as) cast a glance to the stars in the sky in order that they thought he had foresighted his sickness by studying the situations of the stars, and they might be convinced, some of the great commentators have also offered this probability that he wanted to find out exactly the time of his sickness from the movement of the stars; because there was a kind of sickness, like fever, which came to him between some particular points of time.

But, regarding to the condition of the thoughts of the people of Babylon, the first probable is more fitting.

Some other commentators have also said that perhaps his glance to the sky was, in fact, a glance of study in the secrets of the creation, though they considered his glance as the glance of an astronomer who wanted to foresight the future events by the situations of the stars.

Concerning the second question, there have been delivered numerous answers, including that he was

really sick, although if he had been safe either, he would not have participated in the ceremonies of the festival of idols.

But his sickness was a good excuse for his absence in that festival and utilizing the golden opportunity for breaking the idols, and there is no evidence for us to say he equivocated, because equivocation is not suitable for prophets.

Some others have said that Abraham had not really a bodily ailment, but as the result of the wrong actions of those people and their infidelity, polytheism, injustice, and corruption, his soul was sick. Thus, he stated a fact though they thought differently and considered him bodily sick.

So, in the fourth holy verse the Qur'an implies that only Abraham remained in the city and the idolaters, leaving the city empty, went outside of it.

Abraham cast a glance around him, there appeared a light of happiness in his eyes, because the moments, he had been waiting for from a long time ago, had come. He thought he should begin fighting against idols lonely and strike a hard blow on their bodies, a strike that might shake the minds of the idolaters and awaken them from their sleep.

The Qur'an says:

“Then he turned unto their gods secretly and (mockingly) said: ‘Why do you not eat?’”

Abraham implicitly said to the idols that their worshippers had prepared those sweet, various, delicious and colourful foods:

“Why do you not eat?”

Then, in the next verse he, addressing the idols, tells them why they do not speak, as if they were dumb.

The above verse says:

“What is the matter with you that you do not speak?”

In this way, Abraham mocked all their superstitious beliefs. No doubt he knew well that the idols did neither speak nor eat food and they were not anything but some inanimate beings. He wanted, in fact, to give the reason of his breaking idols in this beautiful and tender form.

Surah As-Saffat – Verses 93–94

فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا بِالْيَمِينِ

فَأَقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَزْفُونَ

93. "Then he turned against them in secret, striking (them) with the right hand."

94. "So they (people) advanced towards him hastening."

There are some stages in the act of 'forbid from doing evil', if the first stage, which is speaking, did not affect, the second stage would be the practical action. According to this verse, Abraham decided to begin the action. He took the axe in his hand and moved it with strength and intentionally struck a severe stroke on their bodies.

The verse says:

"Then he turned against them in secret, striking (them) with the right hand."

The objective meaning of the Arabic word *lyamin/* is really here 'right hand' that man often does his most actions with it, or it ironically means 'power' and 'force', (both of the meanings can also be used).

However, before soon, he made that beautiful furnished idol temple as a terrible ruined place. The idols were totally turned into pieces, and each of them, with broken hands and feet, was fallen in a corner, and, verily, they got a state of sad, grievous, and heart-rending scenery for the idol-worshippers.

Abraham did what he should do, and silently, and calmly he came out from the idol temple and went toward his home, while he was preparing himself for the future events.

He knew that he had created a great explosion not only in the city but also throughout the country, Babylon, the news of which would be heard later. Because of anger he began walking since he was alone in the midst of that tempest! But he had Allah with him and that very One was enough for him.

And, the next holy verse implicitly denotes that the idol worshippers returned to the city and went into the idol temple. They encountered a horrible view and astonished, as if they had been fixed there as statues.

They could not think for some moments and were gazing, looking at those ruined scattered idols. They saw that the idols, which they imagined as the shelter of their day of wander, were defenceless over there.

Then their amazing motionless state changed into the state of shouting, crying, and roaring.

They protested saying:

"Who has done this? Which unjust one has committed it?"

And before long, they remembered that there was a young theistic man in that city by the name of

Abraham, who mocked idols and had threatened that he had designed a dangerous plan for their idols. They thought it might be his action.

The verse says:

“So they (people) advanced towards him hastening.”

The Arabic term */yaziffun/* is derived from */zaf/* which has originally been applied for the blow of the wind, and fast motion of the ostrich, which is a mixture of walking and flying. Then this word has ironically been used in the sense of taking bride toward the house of bridegroom.

However, the purpose is that the idolaters came hastily toward Abraham. (The rest of the event will be mentioned through later verses.)

Surah As-Saffat – Verses 95-98

قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُيُوتًا فَأَلْقُوهُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ

فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ

95. “He said: ‘Do you worship what you (yourselves) hew out?’”

96. “While Allah has created you and what you make.”

97. “They said: ‘Build for him a furnace, then cast him into the burning fire.’”

98. “So they desired a plot against him, but We made them lower ones.”

Everything in the world must be devoted to Monotheism and Monotheistic thought. Imam Hussayn (as) is sacrificed in order that false deity might no dominate over people. All the troubles, and even the souls of the Divine prophets, were devoted for Monotheism. Here Abraham risked and did a dangerous action in order to root out idolatry.

At last, after the event of breaking idols, Abraham was taken to the court with the same accusation.

Abraham was inquired, and he was ordered to explain who accomplished the horrible event of the idol temple.

The Holy Qur'an has explained this event in Surah Al-Anbiya', No. 21, and, in the verses under discussion, it suffices to one sensitive point of it which is the last statement of Abraham with them about the falsehood of idolatry.

The verse says:

“He said: ‘Do you worship what you (yourselves) hew out?’”

Does any wise man worship his own handicraft? Does any intellectual person knee before his own created thing? Which intellect and logic have given you such a permission?

In the next verse, the Qur'an implies that the heavens and the earth all are created by Allah and the entire time and place belong to him. Such a Creator must be worshipped.

The verse says:

“While Allah has created you and what you make.”

This is a very strong proof. They had no response to give against it.

Oppressors and tyrants have never been familiar with logic and reasoning. It was for the same reason that the evident and strong argumentation of Abraham (as) did not affect on the hearts of the cruel rulers of Babylon, though it awakened a group of the oppressed people of the time.

But, the proud tyrants, who found out the advance of this Monotheistic logic as a barrier for their own benefits, came in with the logic of force, weapon, and fire: a logic except which they understood nothing.

They relied on their own power and, the verse says:

“They said: ‘Build for him a furnace, then cast him into the burning fire’.”

It is understood from his meaning that, at first it was ordered that a large place with four walls to be built. Then inside of it some fire was made ready. Perhaps for the purpose that not only they could control the fire from scattering and from probable dangers, but also they might practically prepare a hell fire by which Abraham threatened the idolaters.

It is true that for burning a man like Abraham only a small load of wood was enough, but in order to quench the fire of their hearts resulted by breaking the idols and so to speak, to take their vengeance in utmost level, and, by the way, to give a glory and greatness to the idols in order that their lost honour

might be returned, and also to use severity upon all their opponents so that that event would not happen again in the history of Babylon, they prepared that vast, huge fire.

(Be careful that the Arabic word */jahim/* philologically means: ‘Some fires which are heaped up with together.’)

Some commentators have rendered the Qur’anic word */bunyan/* here into catapult (mangonel), which was a means of throwing heavy things from a distance. But most of the commentators have chosen the first interpretation.

The fourth holy verse, in a condensed and interesting conclusion, states the end of this event as follows:

“So they desired a plot against him, but We made them lower ones.”

The Arabic word */kayd/* means any ‘thinking of a mean’ whether it is in a correct way or a wrong one, though it is often used for an evil aspect; and regarding to the form of the word here as an indefinite article which indicates to greatness and importance, it refers to the vast plot that they had designed for the annihilation of Abraham and wiping out the effects of his oral and practical propagation.

Yes, Allah set them the lower ones, and set Abraham in a ‘high rank’, like his logic which had superiority.

In the event of burning and fire, Allah gave him superiority, too, and caused his powerful enemies to be low. He made the fire cold and safe for him, and without that even his hair burnt, he came out safely from that huge heap of fire.

One day He delivers Noah from being drowned, and on the other day He delivers Abraham from being burnt, in order to make it clear that both water and fire obey His command and whatever Allah says to do they do accordingly.

Surah As-Saffat – Verses 99–102

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ

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

99. **“And he said: ‘Verily, I am going unto my Lord, He will guide me’.”**

100. **“My Lord! Grant me a righteous (son)!”**

101. **“So We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing boy,”**

102. **“And when he (the son) reached (the age of working) with him he said: ‘O my son! Verily I see in a dream that I shall sacrifice you. Now see what is your view. He said: ‘O’ my father! Do what you are commanded; you will find me, Allah willing, of the patient ones’.”**

A righteous son is one of the Divine remittals, and one of prophets’ supplications is for it, and he is the best helper along side the path of the movement of the family toward Allah.

The former verses indicated that, after fulfilling his duty of prophecy in Babylon, Abraham emigrated from that place. His first beseech from Allah was that He would give him a righteous son, because he had had no child until that day.

The first verse of the verses under discussion talks about the acceptance of this prayer of Abraham.

It says:

“And he said: ‘Verily, I am going unto my Lord, He will guide me’.”

“My Lord! Grant me a righteous (son)!”

“So We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing boy,”

In fact, there are three glad tidings in this sentence: the glad tiding of a son, the glad tiding of reaching the son to the age of adolescence, and the glad tiding of the good quality of being for bearing.

Upon the commentary of the Arabic word */halim/* it is said that he is the one who does not haste in any action before its proper time, while he has its ability; and does not haste in the retribution of the guilty. He has a great spirit, and can control his emotions.

Raqib in Mufradat says that: the term */hilm/* means: forbearing at the time of commotion of anger, and since this status originates from wisdom, it has sometimes been used in the sense of intellect, too, else the real meaning of */hilm/* is the same thing which was said at the beginning.

By the way, it is understood from this quality that Allah has given the glad tiding of the existence of this son until he reaches an age that he can be qualified by ‘forbearing’. As we will recite in the following verses, he proved the rank of his being forbearing at the time of the event of ‘sacrifice’. Also, Abraham showed his being forbearing both at that time and at the time of the fire accident.

It is interesting that the word /halim/ (forbearing) has been used fifteen times in the Qur'an, and is often used as an attribution for Allah, except in two cases which has been mentioned in the word of Allah as a quality for Abraham and his son, and in one occurrence it is a quality for Shu'ayb from the tongue of others.

As some commentators believe, the Arabic word *lqulam/ (boy)* is used for any child before reaching the age of adolescence, while some others have used it for the child who is more than ten years old and has not reached the age of puberty.

By the different meanings which have come in the Arabic language, it can be understood that *lqulam/* is an age between childhood and youth that is usually meant into adolescence.

Then, in the next verse, the Qur'an implies that at last according to the glad tiding of Allah, the promised son of Abraham was born, and enlightened the heart of the father who was waiting for a righteous son and was expectant for many years. This child passed his childhood and reached the age of adolescence.

Here, the Qur'an says:

“And when he (the son) reached (the age of working) with him...”

That is, he reached a stage in which he could work and struggle in the different affairs of life, accompanying his father and helping him.

Some commentators believe that the Qur'anic word /sa'y/ here means worship and working for Allah. This term, of course, has a vast meaning and encompasses this concept, too, but it is not restricted to it. And the application of the Arabic word *Ima'ahul (with him)* shows that its purpose is his assistance to the father in the affairs of life.

However, as some of the commentators have said, at that time his son was thirteen years old when Abraham sees a wonderful dream which denotes the beginning of another great trial in respect to this respectable prophet. In his dream he sees that he was ordered from the side of Allah to sacrifice his only son by his own hand and to cut his head.

Being very terrified, Abraham awoke. He knew that the prophets' dream was true and it was far from the Satanic temptations. Yet the same dream was repeated two times more, which was an emphasis on the necessity of that action as well as its urgency.

It is said that at the first time Abraham saw this dream in the night of 'Tarwiyah' (the eighth night of Zil-Hajjah), and on the night of 'Arafah and the night of Feast of Sacrifice (the ninth and tenth of Zil-Hajjah) the dream was repeated, so there remained no doubt for him that it was the decisive command of Allah.

Abraham, who had repeatedly become successful in the hard trials of Allah, this time again he must

obey the command of Allah, either, and kill the son for whom he waited for a lifetime and now he was a handsome adolescent by his own hand.

But, before anything else, he ought to make the son prepared for this action.

So, Abraham, addressing him, informed him as follows:

“...he said: ‘O my son! Verily I see in a dream that I shall sacrifice you. Now see what is your view...”

The son, who was as a copy of the father, the donator, and had learnt the lesson of patience and perseverance, and faith in his father’s school during his short lifetime, happily and eagerly accepted that Divine commandment, and explicitly and with conclusiveness, answered as follows:

“...He said: ‘O’ my father! Do what you are commanded; you will find me, Allah willing, of the patient ones’.”

How expressive and meaningful the sentences of the father and son are! And how many delicate things there are inside them!

From one side, the father suggests the subject of sacrifice to his thirteen-year-old son and asks his view about it. He considers independent personality and freedom of decision for him, because he does never intend to deceive his son and blindly invites him to this great field of trial.

He wishes that the son may also participate in this excellent struggle willingly and, like the father tastes the pleasure of submission and contentment.

On the other side, the son intends that the father would be firm in his decision, then he does not say ‘sacrifice me’, but he says:

‘Do what you are commanded’

and that he submits to His commandment.

The son specially addresses the father by the phrase: ***‘O my father!’*** in order to show that this subject does not decrease the least from the affection between father and son, since the commandment of Allah (s.w.t.) prevails over everything.

And, on the third side, he keeps the state of courtesy at the presence of Allah in the best form. He never relies on the power of his own faith, will, and decision, but he relies on the divine will and providence of Allah and, through this sentence, he seeks success, perseverance and steadfastness from Him.

And thus both father and son (as) pass completely and successfully the first stage of this great examination.

Surah As-Saffat – Verses 103–106

فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ

وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ

قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ

103. “So when they both submitted (to Our command) and he (Abraham) laid him (the son) prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice),”

104. “And We called out to him: ‘O Abraham!’”

105. “Indeed you have proved true the dream; verily thus do We reward the doers of good!”

106. “This is indeed the manifest trial.”

The commandments of Allah (s.w.t.) are sometimes for trial. Allah wanted that Abraham would detach his heart, not that the Ishmael’s blood might be shed.

In these holy verses, the Qur’an says:

“So when they both submitted (to Our command) and he (Abraham) laid him (the son) prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice),”

Again here the Qur’an explains shortly and lets the hearer pursue the story with the waves of his affections.

Some commentators have said that the objective meaning of the Qur’anic phrase /tallahu lil jabin/10 was that Abraham put the forehead of Ishmael on the dust according to the son’s own suggestion, lest his eyes might see the son’s face and the fatherly affections would be excited and might hinder the fulfilment of the command of Allah/. 11

However, Abraham put the son’s face on the dust and moved the knife and, swiftly and powerfully, put it

on the child's throat, while his soul had been filled with excitement, and it was only the love of Allah which forwarded him undoubtedly alongside his way. But the sharp knife left the least effect on the smooth throat of his child.

Abraham was in full surprise. He tried again and used the knife, but for the second time it affected naught. Yes, Abraham, the friend, says: "*Cut it*", but Allah, the Majestic, says: "*Do not cut*"; and the knife obeyed only Allah's command.

In the next verse, the Qur'an with a short and expressive sentence, puts an end to all expectations and says:

"And We called out to him: 'O Abraham!'"

"Indeed you have proved true the dream; verily thus do We reward the doers of good!"

That is, We give them both the success of triumph in trial, and We do not let his beloved child be lost for him. Yes, he who submits thoroughly to Him and has one goodness in its highest degree will not have any recompense, but this.

Then, in the next verses it adds:

"This is indeed the manifest trial."

To sacrifice a child by his own hand, a young child who is worthy enough, for a father who has been expecting such a son, is not simple action.

How can he detach his heart from such a child? And more important than that without showing any frowning, but with the utmost submission and contentment, he hastens to fulfil this commandment. He accomplished all the primary affairs up to the last stage, so that he would not neglect anything from the point of psychological and practical preparations.

And more wonderful than that, there was the absolute submission of this lad before this command, who eagerly and with certainty of mind, by the grace of Allah and submitting to His will, hastened to receive the sacrifice.

Some Islamic narrations indicate when this action was done, Gabriel (surprisingly) shouted:

'Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar' (Allah is the greatest! Allah is the greatest).

And Abraham's son cried:

"There is no god but Allah. Allah is the greatest!"

And the devoted father, the hero, also said:

“Allah is the greatest and the praise belongs to Allah.”¹²

Surah As-Saffat – Verses 107-113

وَفَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ

سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

وَيَارَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحَاقَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ مُبِينٌ

107. “And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.”

108. “And We left (praise) for him among generations (to come) in later times.”

109. “Peace be on Abraham.”

110. “Thus do We recompense the doers of good,”

111. “Verily he was (one) of Our believing servants.”

112. “And We gave him the glad tidings of Isaac, a prophet among the righteous ones.”

113. “And We bestowed Our blessings on him and on Isaac, and of their offspring are the doers

of good, and (also) those who are clearly unjust to their own selves.”

The act of sacrifice is one of Abraham’s way of treatment. A sincere action turns to be a great current in the history, and every year hundreds of thousand sheep, cows, and camels are sacrificed in the altar of Ishmael in his remembrance.

This holy verse indicates that in order that Abraham would complete the program of his sacrifice at the presence of Allah and attain his wish, Allah sent a big sheep for him to sacrifice it instead of the child and that could be a manner left from Abraham for the coming generations in the rites of Hajj and the land of Muna, as the Qur’an says:

“And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.”

There are different ideas among the Islamic commentators concerning the greatness of this sacrifice and that from which point of view it was great: from the bodily and appearance point, or from this point that it became the ransom of Abraham’s child, or from the point that it was for the sake of Allah and in the path of Allah, or from this point that this sacrifice was sent for Abraham from the side of Allah?

But it does not matter that all these aspects can be found in the ‘great sacrifice’, and that it has greatness from different points of view.

One of the signs of the greatness of this sacrifice is that by the past of time every year its scope increases, and now more than one million sacrifices are ransomed each year, and its remembrance is kept alive.

The Arabic phrase ***ifadaynah*** is derived from /fada/ which originally means: ‘appointing something as alms and designed to avert evil from a person or something else. That is why the sum which is paid for manumission of a captive is called /fidyah/ (ransom). And also the atonement which some sick people pay instead of fasting is called by this name.

Upon the idea that how was this big sheep given to Abraham, many commentators believed that Gabriel brought it? Some believe that it came down from the sides of the hills of Muna, but whatever it was, it was done by the command of Allah and by His will.

The next holy verse implies that not only Allah praised the victory of Abraham in this great trial on that day, but also He made its remembrance eternal.

The verse says:

“And We left (praise) for him among generations (to come) in later times.”

Abraham (as) became an example for all the coming generations and as a paradigm for all the lovers of Allah, and Allah made his program eternal as a rite of Hajj during the future centuries until the end of the

world. He was the father of the great prophets, the father of the Ummah of Islam, and the father of the Prophet of Islam.

Then, in the third and fourth verses, the Qur'an says:

"Peace be on Abraham."

"Thus do We recompense the doers of good,"

It is a recompense as great as the world; a recompense eternal throughout the time; a recompense fit for the peace of Allah, the Almighty!

It is interesting that the sentence:

"Thus do We recompense the doers of Good"

one time has been mentioned here and another time in former verses. This repetition certainly contains a proper point.

Its reason may be in this that in the first stage Allah verifies Abraham's victory in his great trial, and He approves his success. This is a great reward and recompense, and this was the most important glad tidings that Allah gave Abraham.

Then there is the subject of 'the great sacrifice' and that it and his name remained as ever lasting. And the greeting of Allah to him which is another great merit and Allah introduces it as the recompense of the righteous.

By the way, there are many authentic narrations stated in the commentary books such as Majma'-ul-Bayan and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn recorded under these verses which you can refer to.

The fifth verse says:

"Verily he was (one) of Our believing servants."

This sentence, in fact, is a witness upon what was said, and also stated this reality that if Abraham sincerely gave his entire entity and his dear son in a lump and sacrificed them in the path of his Lord, it was because of his deep faith and his promise. Yes, all of these have a wonderful manifestation.

However, this meaning expands and generalizes the act of Abraham, and separates it from a personal and private form, and shows that wherever there is faith, you can find donation, love self-sacrifice, and remittal.

Abraham liked whatever Allah liked, and he wanted the thing that Allah wanted; and every believer can be like that.

The sixth verse refers to another merit of Allah bestowed on Abraham.

It says:

“And We gave him the glad tidings of Isaac, a prophet among the righteous ones.”

Regarding to the holy verse saying:

“Verily thus do We recompense the doers of good”

which has been mentioned at the beginning of this event¹³, it is made clear that these two glad tidings relate to two children.

If the recent glad tidings according to the explicit mentioning of the verse under discussion relates to Isaac, then the Qur’anic holy phrase ***‘forbearing boy’***, the patient adolescence, surely refers to ’Isma’il, and those who urge to consider Isaac as ‘the sacrificed one’ have taken both verses referring to one thing, with this difference that they think of the first verses as the statement of the main glad tidings and the second verse as a glad tidings to the prophethood; but this meaning is very improbable, and the abovementioned verses clearly say that these two glad tidings relate to two offspring.

Moreover, the glad tidings of prophethood shows that Isaac should remain alive and perform the duties of prophethood, and this does not adopt to the subject of sacrifice.

It is interesting that here again we confront the greatness of the rank of the righteous, and for the qualification of Isaac it implies that he must become a prophet and become one of the righteous and how excellent is the rank of the righteous with Allah, the Almighty!

And in the seventh verse the words are about the blessing that Allah bestowed on Abraham and his son, Isaac.

It says:

“And We bestowed Our blessings on him and on Isaac...”

But there is not any explanation saying in which thing the blessing was given, and We know that when a verb is usually said absolutely and there is not any condition in it, has a general sense. Therefore, it concludes blessing in every thing: in lifetime and in living, in the coming generations, in history and school of thought, and in all things.

Here, it is clear that the verse under discussion points to prophethood, and all Divine blessings unto Abraham and Isaac (and their family). One of the blessings that Allah granted to Abraham and Isaac was this that all the Divine prophets of the Children of Israel came into being from the progeny of Isaac, while the great Prophet of Islam (S) was from the progeny of ’Isma’il.

But in order that there does not come forth an imagination that the existence of this blessing in the family of Abraham has the aspect of genealogy and race, but it is in relation with religion, school of thought, and faith, at the end of the verse it adds:

“...and of their offspring are the doers of good, and (also) those who are clearly unjust to their own selves.”

The Arabic term ***/muhsin/*** here means: a believer and the one who is obedient to Allah (s.w.t.); and what a kindness and goodness can be considered better than this!

The term ***/zalim/*** is in the sense of disbeliever and sinful, and the application of ***/linalfisihi/*** points to this fact that disbelief and sin are at the first degree of being unjust to oneself, a clear injustice.

And thus, the above verse answers to a group of the Jews and the Christians who boasted that they were from the progeny of the prophets, that only the relative relation is not an honour unless it comes under the shelter of mental and religious relation.

The reference of this statement is the tradition narrated from the holy Prophet (S) who, addressing Bani Hashim, said:

*“O Bani Hashim! Let it not be that on the Day of Hereafter people come to me with their deeds and you come with your relations and relatives, in a manner that they may have religious relation and you may have bodily relation.”*¹⁴

1. Surah Noah, No. 71, verses 26–27

2. Surah Al-Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 29

3. Surah Al-Mu'minun, No. 23, verse 26

4. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 40

5. Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 3

6. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 405; and Tafsir-us-Safi, following the verse

7. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 10

8. Al-Kafi, according to Tafsir-us-Safi under Surah As-Shu'ara', No. 26, verse 89.

9. Ibid

10. The Qur'anic word */tallahu/* is derived from */tal/* originally in the sense of a high place and the whole phrase means that he put one side of his face on the ground in a high place.

11. The Qur'anic word */tallahu/* is derived from */tal/* originally in the sense of 'a high place' and the whole phrase means that he put one side of his face on the ground in a large place.

12. The commentaries of Qurtabi, and Rauh-ul-Bayan.

13. verse 80

14. Rauh-ul-Bayan, Vol. 7, P. 479

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