

## The Seed of Abraham caused to grow in the wilderness

The Holy Prophet Abraham, at the command of God, had brought and left his wife Hagar with his baby son Ishmael, in the wilderness of the barren desert land of Arabia, at the spot now called MECCA. The post where Hagar and the Baby Ishmael were left was not only barren, sandy and uninhabited, but was also waterless. For miles together around the place there was no trace of water.

In short, when the poor mother wanted a little water for her Baby dying of thirst, she ran hither and thither in her agony of maternal love for her dying Baby. She ran from hillock to hillock, getting on the heights and throwing glances all around, searching for some trace of water, but all in vain. At last she sat down totally disappointed, only to witness the impending death of her child, when suddenly she noticed a miraculous fountain of fresh drinking water gushing out from under the heels of her Baby (Ishmael) as it struck its feet on the earth, in its struggle with the choking thirst. This fact has also been vouched by the Bible:–

**“And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.**

**And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off as it were a bowshot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept.**

**And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.**

**Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand for I will make him a great nation.**

**And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink”. (*Genesis 21: 15–19*)**

This miraculous spring, today is called the Zam Zam which is now surrounded by the great Mosque

around the Holy Ka'ba. This divinely created spring, generated from under the feet of Ishmael began giving fresh drinking water, not only to the poor mother and her baby son but also to the travelers and their caravans and through this providential facility, the spot developed into a habitation with its unique importance as the halting place for caravans from the various directions, as a junction of the routes to the various important centres of trade.

Hagar and Ishmael lived at the place, and when Abraham again visited them, Ishmael his son whom he had left in babyhood, to the care of God, was a grown-up young lad. Abraham, aided by his young son Ishmael raised up the walls of the ancient Prayer House which was founded since time immemorial, exclusively for worship to the only True God, which is now called the Holy Ka'ba to which Hajj (the pilgrimage) or a devoted visit has been enjoined by Islam on all its adherents. The same spring which gushed out from under the feet of Ishmael even today flows with greater force, more than sufficient to supply fresh drinking water to millions of visitors to the House of God raised by Abraham and Ishmael.

Abraham, while raising the walls of the Holy House prayed to God to accept it, saying:

***"And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House (Saying) Our Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Knowing.***

***"Our Lord! and make us both submissive (Muslims) to Thee and (raise) from our offsprings a nation submitting to Thee, and show us ways of devotion and turn to us (Merciful), surely Thou art the Oft Returning (to mercy), the Merciful:***

***"Our Lord! and raise up in them: an Apostle from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. (Holy Qur'an 2: 127-129)***

In response to the above prayers, God addressing Abraham said:

***"And when We made the house a resort for men, and a (place of) security, and: Appoint for yourselves a place of prayer on the standing place of Abraham.***

***And We enjoined Abraham and Ishmael, 'Purify My House for those who visit (it) and those who abide (in it) for devotion and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves. (Holy Qur'an 2: 125)***

## **Abraham tested with a sacrifice**

Abraham repeatedly had visions of slaying his son Ishmael. The Bible of the Christian Church also mentions this with the change of the name of the son from Ishmael to Isaac, which change is obviously a Jewish tampering of the original event to suit their selfish ends, to shift the great sacrifice to Isaac, the father of the Israelites. A vision to an apostle of God is deemed to be the Lord's directive to him, to act according to the directions given therein. Abraham related his vision to his son Ishmael saying:

***"O'Son! I see in vision that I slay thee." (Holy Qur'an 37:102)***

Ishmael, the dutiful son who was himself to be an apostle of God, submitted to his father saying:

***"O'Father! Act as thou hast been bidden (by the Lord) and thou wilt, if God Willeth, find me of the patient ones." (Holy Qur'an 37:102)***

Abraham told his wife, Hagar, the mother of Ishmael that he was taking his son to his friend; and equipping himself with a knife and a rope, left for an altar on a nearby mountain. Abraham laid down his son Ishmael and tied his hands and legs lest the boy should struggle while being slain, and blindfolded himself with a piece of cloth apprehending his failure due to his paternal love, to bear the sight of his son rolling in his own blood, and in compliance with the divine directive received through the dream, Abraham offering his son to God, passed the knife across, cutting the throat under it.

## **Abraham declared Truthful, but the Sacrifice, postponed**

As soon as Abraham was sure that he had slain his son under the knife, he immediately uncovered his eyes to pray to the Lord to accept his sacrifice, but to his great surprise, he found Ishmael standing aside and instead of Ishmael a ram lay slain. Any other father would have only rejoiced at the miraculous escape of his son, but Abraham with his wonderful love and devotion to the Lord and with his ideal submission to His Will, stood sorrowful and disappointed thinking that his offering was not accepted by the Lord, but a heavenly voice immediately consoled Abraham saying:

***"O'Abraham! of course thou hast faithfully fulfilled the dream, thou art of the truthful ones, but verily it is an open test, we have substituted it with a Greater Sacrifice. We have transferred it to later generations." (Holy Qur'an 37:105-108)***

The substitute-sacrifice destined to take place instead of the one offered by Abraham, has been called by God as an *Open Test* and a *Great Sacrifice* from which one naturally infers that the one to be sacrificed would be greater than Ishmael in his position with the Lord, and such a great sacrifice could naturally be offered by the one who would be superior to Abraham in his submission to God's Will.

What Abraham was demanded to enact was only a test:

1. To make it known to mankind the degree of Abraham's love of God, and his submission to God's Will.
2. To make Abraham himself aware that he was still lacking in resistance to witness the blood of his son when it had to flow in the fulfilment of the Will of the Lord.
3. To declare the ideal devotion of Abraham and his implicit submission to God, even to sacrifice his own son, when commanded by the Lord to do it.
4. To make it known to man that when it is demanded in obedience to God's command, man should

sacrifice even his own son.

5. To make the children of Adam (Man) know that in obedience to their parents, they must surrender themselves as Ishmael did.

6. To make it known to mankind that such an event is under the Divine Will and it is a Great Test which shall be enacted openly and it shall come to pass in the time to come, in the seed of Abraham.

Besides, the test, if it had to profit mankind, must be an open test? With its causes and events openly known, to earn the appreciation of its consequent effects. Abraham enacted the slaughter in obedience to God's command, but since the nature of the command was shrouded in a dream and every one could not know that the dream of an apostle of God is a revelation of God's Will, and with the ignorance of this mystic factor, people, instead of appreciating the unique submission of Abraham to the divine will of the Lord, would have condemned Abraham for having fanatically slaughtered his son, beguiled by his own fanciful interpretation of his dream. Thus if Abraham had in those circumstances been allowed to slaughter Ishmael, the value of the Great Sacrifice would have practically been wasted and its great purpose would not have been fully served.

Secondly, the object of the sacrifice was, to associate it with the life of the great Apostle, so that humanity in its sympathy towards the tragic event may give due admiration to the Apostle, but there, in this case, admiration would have gone only to Ishmael as being the victim of Abraham's personal interpretation of his dream, which the people could have mistaken to be fantastic, and Abraham would have been condemned for his conduct, which in fact was a unique instance of perfect submission to God's will.

And over and above the other reasons, the sacrifice, if it had been left to be enacted by Abraham, would have been a sheer waste, for no universal religion had yet been regulated and enforced for the human race as a whole, for mankind as a whole to be drawn to it, through its sympathy towards the event. Moses had yet to present the Ten Commandments and Jesus had to revive the teachings of Moses after they had been corrupted, and yet when the teachings of all the apostles from God got corrupted, Muhammad the Last Apostle of God, the *Maetrea* foretold by Buddha, the 'Comforter,' the 'Holy Ghost' and 'the Spirit of Truth' prophesied by Jesus, to abide with mankind forever, had yet to come.

And the Great Sacrifice was then to be offered for only then the human sympathy for the heart rending sufferings of the Great Divine and his faithful comrades would lead mankind as a whole towards the universal religion. Islam is the only divinely revealed and perfectly regulated code for human discipline cumulative of the teachings of all the apostles of God and which contains the Truth which was exposed piecemeal by the other prophets in different ages, to different people, in different languages.

The Greatest of the Sacrifices ever offered by any man would naturally be for the sake of a religion meant for the human race as a whole, and it could be offered by the one whose life would be, not for himself but for the fulfilment of the Mercy of the Lord unto the whole of Mankind.

## **The Failure of Judaism and Christianity**

The purely monotheistic faith preached and practised by the great Israelite prophets Moses and Jesus, had totally failed to exercise any more of its correct influence on the minds of the Jews and the Christians who had gradually sunk deep in all sorts of idolatrous beliefs and pagan practices. The followers of Jesus the most recent of the apostles of God, preceding the Holy Prophet Muhammad, had become polytheists in worshipping three gods instead of the One Whom they were commanded to serve:

**“Unto thee it was shown that thou mightiest know that Lord is God; there is none else besides Him.”**

**“I am the First and I am the Last and besides Me there is no God.” (Isaiah 44:6)**

**“Hear O’ Israel, the Lord thy God is One Lord.” (Deuteronomy 6:4)**

**“I am God, and there is none else; I am God, there is none like Me.” (Isaiah 46:9)**

**“I am the Lord that is My Name, and glory will not give to another, neither My praises to graven images...” (Isaiah 42:8)**

The New Testament:

**“And Jesus answered him, the First of all Commandments is, O’ Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord.” (Mark 12:29)**

**Then saith Jesus unto him, get thee hence Satan, for it is wrftten thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve. (Matthew 4: 10, Luke 4:8)**

**“.... .an idol is nothing in the world, and there is none other God but One.” (Corin 8:6)**

**“But to us there is but One God the Father.” (Corin 8:6)**

In spite of the definite Commandments from God conveyed to the people by the holy prophets Moses and Jesus, the Israelites and the Christians had started deifying their prophets and their saints, worshipping them. Among the Christians had sprung up schools worshipping the idols of Mary, Jesus and also the other saints of their own fancy. The Christians condemned the Israelites as being meaningless, in their faith and the Israelites criticised the Christians similarly in return, while both of them were on the wrong track diametrically opposed to what they had been preached by their respective teachers, Moses and Jesus.

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