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# Section 6: Abraham's Prayer

## Surah 'Ibrahim – Verse 35

وإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ ءَامِناً وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَن نَّعْبُدَ الاَصْنَامَ

***35. "And (remember) when Abraham said: 'My Lord, make this city secure and distance me and my children from worshipping the idols'."***

This verse and the following verses exhibit a profile and the content of the prayers of 'Ibrahim (as) which reflect his burning desire for Allah and his greatness in spirit and, perhaps, this is the reason why this Surah has been named Surah 'Ibrahim.

'Ibrahim (as) prayed for Mecca on two occasions: The first instance was when he settled Ishmael and Hajar there and asked Allah to make that city secure.1

The verse says:

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

The second occasion that he prayed for Mecca was when a multitude of people came to Mecca to settle down there. 'Ibrahim (as) prayed saying:

***"...'My Lord, make this a secure City..."***2

**Question:** Are all of the people of the generation of 'Ibrahim monotheists because of this prayer?

**Answer:** Prayers present one factor and the will of the children provides another factor. Let us not forget the story of Noah's son.

**Question:** How is it that ‘Ibrahim (a. s.) recalled Mecca as a town while he refers to it in the following verses “as a valley without cultivation?’3

**Answer:** The state of township of Mecca returns to the time when the tribes arrived in that region, in which case the prayer also relates to that time, or we might say that if a region is aRidand without cultivation, this would not make it incompatible with becoming a township. At the present moment, Mecca is also in a region which is arid in general.

**Question:** Notwithstanding the fact that Abraham (as) was a champion of monotheism, why is it that he prayed to Allah to distance him from paganism? The verse in this regard continues saying:

***“…and distance me and my children from worshipping the idols.”***

**Answer:** The Prophet of Islam (S) also was constantly having his steps in the Straight Path and was heading in the straightforward direction. Nonetheless, he used to say in every prayer:

***“Guide us (O’ Lord) on the Straight Path.”***

That is, if one is even sure that he is heading in the right direction, he must be scared of the dangers of deviation either and must seek Allah’s assistance.

The objective in mind of ‘to make security’ is a law which guarantees the security of Mecca, and not to the matter that Mecca has always been safe and secure throughout its history. For, Mecca has been repeatedly invaded by hostile forces and immense blood has been shed there.

The Prophet of Islam (S) and his companions were also tortured there, and Imam Hussayn (as) abandoned the Hajj rituals because of lack of security of Mecca. Nevertheless, the Divine law has designated it as a safe and secure region.

## Surah ‘Ibrahim – Verse 36

رَبِّ إِنَّهُنَّ أَضْلَلْنَ كَثِيراً مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَن تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

***36. “My Lord, verily, they (idols) have misled many of the people. Then, whoever follows me, he is definitely of me, and whoever disobeys me; then verily you are Forgiving, Merciful.”***

**Question:** How is it that the idols, which are statues of stone and wood, can mislead man?

**Answer:** Firstly, the idols are not always inanimate objects. Sometimes, men and those who are despots

also become idols. Secondly, sometimes ignorance of a people causes stone and wood to be turned into valuable and precious commodities. Thirdly, the issue of the art involved in the jewelry, which was carried along with the idols, was attractive.

If we interpret this noble verse along with the previous one, we obtain desirable conclusions, for we had it in the previous verse that ‘Ibrahim (as) said:

***“My Lord! … distance me and my children from worshipping the idols”.***

In this verse he says:

***“…whoever follows me, he is definitely of me…”***

Therefore, all the monotheists of the world are the scholastic children of ‘Ibrahim by ideology.

The Qur’an says:

***“…The faith of your father, ‘Ibrahim…”*** 4

And as the blissful Prophet (S) said:

*“Ali and I are the fathers of this Ummah.”*

However, if a pagan is even the son of a prophet, he will also be addressed:

***“…O’ Noah! Verily he is not of your family…”***5

Hadrat Ali (as) remarks:

*“Verily, the friend of Muhammad (S) is he who obeys Allah though he may be distanced by his blood. And verily the foe of Muhammad is he who disobeys Allah though he might be near to him (S) by his blood.”* 6

Incidentally, there is a scholastic and an ideological relationship between the celestial leaders and the faithful people. It is for this reason that the prophets (as) were even compassionate with their own opponents and they never disappointed them.

## Surah ‘Ibrahim – Verse 37

رَبَّنَآ إِنِّي أَسْكَنتُ مِن ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِندَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُم مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ

***37. "Our Lord! Verily I have settled (a part) of my offspring in a valley without cultivation near Your Sacred House, in order, Our Lord! that they may establish prayer; therefore, make the hearts of some people yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits so that they may be grateful."***

When Allah bestowed Ishmael to Abraham in his old age, He commanded him to settle that child with his mother in Mecca. Abraham obeyed the Divine order and then he prayed for them.

Some Islamic quotations denote that Imam Baqir (as) said:

*"We are the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Messenger of Allah (S) and the remaining descendents of Abraham. That is why the people's hearts are inclined towards us."*

Then, he recited this verse:

***"Our Lord! Verily I have settled (a part) of my offspring in a valley without cultivation..."***

The Ka'bah was located in a desert with no water and vegetation so that the people might be tried by it. As Hadrat-i-Ali (as) declared in the sermon of Ghasiyah:

*"If the Ka'bah were situated in a place with a good climate, the people would not go on a pilgrimage toward it for the sake of Allah."*

The call and prayers of the prophets (as) are accepted.

Abraham in this verse says:

***"...and provide them with fruits..."***

In another verse Allah says:

***"...a safe, sacred territory to which fruits of every kind shall be drawn?..."***7

Imam Baqir (as) has stated:

*"Whatever fruits are found in the east or in the west of the world can be found in Mecca".*

However, Abraham (as) continued with his prayers and his invocation as follows:

***"Our Lord! Verily I have settled (a part) of my offspring in a valley without cultivation near Your Sacred House, in order, Our Lord! that they may establish prayer..."***

Afterwards, when Allah bestowed a son on Abraham from his female-slave, Hajar, and called him Isma'il, his first wife's jealousy, Sarah, was provoked and, she could not tolerate Hajar and her son. She asked Abraham to take that mother and child to another place, and Abraham submitted to this request

which was in accordance with Allah's command.

Ishmael and his mother, Hajar, were taken by him to the land of Mecca which was then an arid land, lacking everything in those days. He left them there and said Good-bye to them.

Then Abraham continued his prayer to Allah implying that: Now that they have settled down in this extremely hot desert for the respect of Your great house, persuade some people to pay attention to them heartily, and have affection for them.

Let them enjoy all kinds of fruits, whether material or spiritual, perhaps they might be grateful to you.

The verse continues saying:

***"…therefore, make the hearts of some people yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits so that they may be grateful."***

## Surah 'Ibrahim – Verse 38

رَبَّنَآ إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي وَمَا نُعْلِنُ وَمَا يَخْفَي عَلَي اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فِي السَّمَآءِ

***38. "Our Lord! Verily, You know whatever we hide and whatever we manifest, and nothing in the earth nor anything in the heaven is hidden from Allah."***

Now that everything is obvious for Allah (s.w.t.), and His knowledge encompasses everything and every affair of us, we, therefore, must not commit sin in His presence and not interfere in His creatures except with His satisfaction and His commands. We must remain sure that nothing will be hidden from Allah on the earth and in the skies.

The verse says:

***"Our Lord! Verily, You know whatever we hide and whatever we manifest, and nothing in the earth nor anything in the heaven is hidden from Allah."***

And Abraham invokes Allah declaring that once I am in distress for being parted from my son and wife, You know that well, and in case a drop of tears is shed from my eyes You notice.

And if at the time of my separation from my wife she tells me: "*Whom do you appoint as my guardian?*" You are aware of all these things, and the future of this land as well as the future of them, which are interwoven with one another, are all transparent and crystal clear before You and Your knowledge.

## Surah ‘Ibrahim – Verse 39

الْحَمْدُ للَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَي الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَآءِ

***39. “Praise be to Allah, Who has granted me in old age Ishmael and Isaac. Verily my Lord is the Hearer of the petition;”***

Ishmael and Isaac are among the specific blessings of Allah, for:

1– They were born because of the prayers of the prophet of Allah, ‘Ibrahim.

2– They were born during the old age of their father.

3– They were both righteous children.

4– They headed their following chain of prophets.

Incidentally, what is important is the issue of having righteous children, whether they are born by a female slave or else. (Ismael was born by a female slave and Ishaq was born by a free woman.)

At any rate, one’s children are gifts from Allah and nothing deters or serves as a hindrance for Allah’s Will and the Divine power; therefore, senility did not obstruct him from having children.

The verse says:

***“Praise be to Allah, Who has granted me in old age Ishmael and Isaac. Verily my Lord is the Hearer of the petition;”***

## Surah ‘Ibrahim – Verses 40 – 41

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلاَةِ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَآءِ

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

***40. “My Lord! Make me a performer of the prayer, and of my offspring (too): Our Lord! and accept my petition”***

***41. "Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents, and the believers on the Day when the reckoning shall come to pass."***

Through the verses which we have discussed so far in this Surah, Abraham (as) has seven wishes from Allah (s.w.t.).

They consist of: the security of Mecca, remaining distant from worshipping idols, winning the heart of the faithful with regard to his children and his school of thought, benefiting of his offspring from the fruits and the dividends, the success in keeping up his prayers, acceptance of his call and his prayers, and finally, forgiveness of himself, his parents and all the faithful.

The Arabic term /w alid/ refers to one's real father, but the term /'ab/ has a wider sense and refers also to other than father, such as uncle and one's father-in- law as well. As the parents of Abraham (as) were believers, therefore, Hadrat-i-'Ibrahim (as) prays for them in this verse.

The verse says:

***"My Lord! Make me a performer of the prayer, and of my offspring (too): Our Lord! and accept my petition"***

Nonetheless, in other verses where the Arabic word /'ab/ is employed the objective in mind is 'Ibrahim's uncle. Hadrat-i-'Ibrahim deplored and abhorred him for his paganism.

## Messages to Note

1- The repetition of the Qur'anic word /rabb/ at the beginning of the prayers of Abraham (as) is the sign of the impact of the acceptance of prayers, or it may also be regarded as one of the rituals belonging to it.

2- Establishing prayer is the center of Abraham's calls.

3- Keeping up prayers is a counterpart for leadership. Abraham employed the phrase /wa min [2]uriyyati/ (and of my offspring) on two occasions: One is when there was the issue involved as of the prayers of his generation, and the other one concerned with the leadership of his generation.

Here he (as) says:

***"Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents, and the believers on the Day when the reckoning shall come to pass."***

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1. The verse under discussion
2. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 126
3. The current Surah, verse 37

4. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 78
5. Surah H□d, No. 11, verse 46
6. Bih ar, vol. 67, P. 25
7. Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 57

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