

Lesson 1 - Prophet Ibrahim and Azar

Learning Objectives

- To understand that Prophet Ibrahim (as) was true monotheist
- To examine and draw lessons from the conversation Prophet Ibrahim has with his uncle

وَأذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا {41}

And mention Ibrahim in the Book; surely he was a truthful man, a prophet.

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 what neither hears nor sees, nor does it avail you in the least:

يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا {43}

O my father! truly the knowledge has come to me which has not come to you, therefore follow me, I will guide you on a right path:

يَا أَبَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا {44}

O my father! serve not the Shaitan, surely the Shaitan is disobedient to the Beneficent Allah:

يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا {45}

O my father! surely I fear that a punishment from the Beneficent Allah should afflict you so that you should be a friend of the Shaitan.

قَالَ أَرَأَيْبُ أَنْتَ عَنْ آهَتِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۚ لئنْ لَمْ تَنْتَه لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ ۚ وَاهْجُرْنِي

مَلِيًّا {46}

He said: Do you dislike my gods, O Ibrahim? If you do not desist I will certainly revile you, and leave me for a time.

قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ ۚ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا {47}

He said: Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; surely He is ever Affectionate to me:

وَأَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُو 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 unblest in calling upon my Lord.

Prophet Ibrahim was born in Syria at the time when Namrud was the king. Namrud was a proud man and forced the people to believe in him as their god. Since the people were idolaters, who already worshipped idols of wood and stone, they willingly accepted him as their god. After some time, Allah decided to send Prophet Ibrahim to these people so they may be guided.

A short while before Prophet Ibrahim was born, Namrud was told by his astrologers that a child would soon be born, who would stand against him and tell the people to stop worshipping idols. After that warning, Namrud ordered that all new born babies should be examined carefully to see if they showed any signs or miracles.

Prophet Ibrahim's mother had shown no signs of pregnancy when she carried him, so she knew that her baby was special. To protect him from Namrud's men, she hid the baby in a cave and returned to the town. Allah caused milk to flow from the fingers of Prophet Ibrahim and thus provided him with a source of food.

Prophet Ibrahim grew up outside the town for 13 years before his mother brought him to her home secretly. His father, Taraq, had already died, so he was adopted by Azar, his father's brother. Azar was a famous sculptor who used to make idols out of stone. His sons used to sell these idols to the people. Azar gave Prophet Ibrahim the same job as his sons.

Even in his young age, Prophet Ibrahim already believed in Allah and he hated idols. On the first day of his job, he tied a rope around some idols and dragged them through the dirt to the market-place. He then called to the people, "Come and buy these lifeless idols who can neither benefit nor harm anybody."

The people looked at the dirty idols and were angry at the disrespect that Prophet Ibrahim had shown to their gods. They complained to Azar and Prophet Ibrahim was not allowed to sell any more idols.

As time passed, Prophet Ibrahim tried to show the people the error of their ways. He first approached his uncle, who was like a father to him, and advised him to worship Allah and abandon the idols. The Holy Qur'an records his conversation with Azar in the above verses.

Prophet Ibrahim tries to convince his uncle but his uncle is not convinced. Although Prophet Ibrahim's invitation is very attractive. He addresses his uncle in most endearing way.. ***'O my father.*** He continued repeating this affectionate term four times even though not once, did his uncle not call him *'O my son'*. Prophet Ibrahim is worried for his uncle ***O my father! I fear lest a chastisement afflict you from the Beneficent (Allah) so that you become a friend to Satan.***"

Prophet Ibrahim uses kindness and compassion, he uses logic to try to guide his uncle but his uncle becomes angry and responds in anger, threatens him and tells Prophet Ibrahim to go away.

Prophet Ibrahim maintains the utmost respect with his uncle, he does not react negatively but rather says a prayer for him ***"He said: 'Peace be upon you: I will ask my Lord to forgive you: for verily He is ever affectionate to me'."***

Discussion Points

- Why do you think Prophet Ibrahim spoke to his uncle about the idols? Should we guide people older than us?
- What would you do if you got a job that involved something you hated? What if it was something that may compromise your Islamic values? Can you give an example?
- Prophet Ibrahim's uncle was in the wrong, so why was Prophet Ibrahim treating him with so much kindness?
- How do we react when our parents become angry with us?