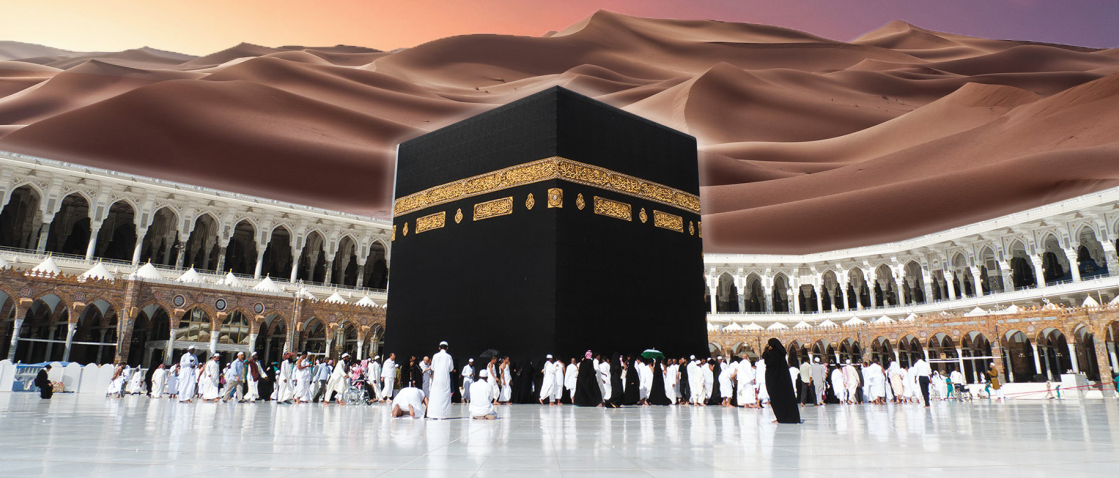




THE LIFE OF Prophet Ibraheem

(blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)



The Life of Prophet Ibraheem (alahi-salaam)

In a few days' time people millions of people will participate in the world's largest gathering, the gathering of Hajj. As we know the rites of Hajj are many; the tawaaf, drinking of zaman, the Sa'ee, standing on Arafah, and the sacrifice on Eid. When we look at the rites of Hajj, we see that many are related to the life of the noble Prophet Ibraheem (as).

The life of Prophet Ibraheem was a life of submission and tests. By reading about his life we see how he fought against shirk, how he treated his family with kindness, (his father, wife, children), his trials and sacrifice, his migration with his family, and his high status in the Hereafter.

After his people tried to burn Ibraheem (as) in the fire, and Allah saved him, Ibrahim (as) asked Allah for righteous offspring. When Ibraheem (as) was 86 years old Allah answered his du'a and granted him Isma'eel. But shortly after his birth, Allah commanded Prophet Ibraheem (as) to leave his wife Hajrah and their new born son, Isma'eel, alone in an un-inhabited, barren valley. So Ibraheem (as) asked his wife, Hajrah to prepare for a long journey. They walked through cultivated land, deserts and mountains, until they reached the desert of the Arabian peninsula and came to a valley having no fruit, no trees, no food and no water; the valley had no sign of life

Ibraheem (as) brought his wife and her son Isma'eel while she was suckling him, to a place near the Ka'bah under a tree on the spot of Zamzam, at the highest place in the mosque. During those days there was nobody in Makkah, nor was there any water. He made them sit there, placed near them a leather bag containing some dates and a small water-skin containing some water, and then set out homeward. Isma'eel's mother followed him saying, "O Ibraheem! Where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything?" She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her". "Then she asked him, "Has Allah ordered you to do this?" He replied, "Yes."

This is the single word he spoke, nothing else, no elaboration as to why he was leaving them there. This noble believing woman's response to this was: "Then He will not neglect us." Hajar (as) made her full tawakkul (trust and reliance) in Allah. And whoever trusts in Allah, then Allah suffices him. When he reached al-Thaniyyah, where they could not see him, he faced the Ka'bah, and raising both hands, prayed to Allaah in the following words: "O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House in order, O our Lord, that they may perform As-Salaah. So fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks" [Ibraheem 14:37].

Isma'eel's mother went on suckling her baby son and drinking from the water she had. When the water in the water-skin had all been used up, she became thirsty and her son also became thirsty. She started looking at her son tossing in agony. She left him, for she could not endure looking at him, and found that the mountain of al-Safa was the nearest mountain to her on that land. She stood on it and started looking at the valley keenly so that she might see somebody, but she could not see anybody. She made a long du'a on al-Safa. Then she descended from al-Safa and when she reached the valley, she tucked up her robe and ran in the valley like a person in distress and trouble, till she crossed the valley and reached al-Marwa where she stood and started looking, expecting to see somebody, but she could not see anybody. She repeated the running between al-Safa and al-Marwa seven times. Every time she descended from one of these two mountains, she said to herself; let me go and check on the child. She went and found him making the noise of a dying person. She could not endure watching him die and said: Let me go and look, I might find someone. This is the source of the tradition of the walking between al-Safa and al-Marwa. Allah tests people with hardship but he does not abandon them. Haajar was in extreme distress, and she made sincere du'a to Allah. Allah heard her du'a and granted her wish in a way that she did not expect.

When she reached al-Marwa for the last time she heard a voice and she told herself to be quiet and listen attentively. She heard the voice again and said, "O (whoever you may be)! You have made me hear your voice; have you got something to help me?" And she saw an angel at the place of Zamzam, digging the earth with his heel (or his wing), till water flowed from that place. With her hands she started to make something like a basin around it, and started filling her water-skin with water, and the water started flowing out after she had scooped some of it. The angel Jibreel must have appeared in human form otherwise he would have terrified her.

Isma'eel's mother was sitting near the water. They asked her, 'Do you allow us to stay with you?' She replied, 'Yes, but you will have no right to possess the water.' They agreed to that." Isma'eel's mother was pleased with the whole situation as she used to love to enjoy the company of the people. So they settled there, and later on they sent for their families who came and settled with them so that some families became permanent residents there. Isma'eel grew up and learnt Arabic from them and his virtues caused them to love and admire him. When he reached the age of puberty, they married him to a woman from their tribe. Eventually Isma'eel's mother died.

The story of the sacrifice

Ibraheem used to visit his family every now and then. He would travel from Sham to Makkah on the Buraaq. He would go to Makkah in the morning and take his afternoon nap in Sham. Allah azza wa jal describes his next trial and test. Prophet Ibraheem had faced many tests, but now was the greatest test of all. Allah says: "And, when he (his son) was old enough to walk with him, he said: 'O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you, so look what you think!' He said: 'O my father! Do that which you are commanded, Insha Allah, you shall find me of the patient'" (As-Saffat 37:102).

And we know that the dreams of the prophets are true, so as soon as he had seen this dream, he knew it was revelation from Allah. What can we gain from this? We know that Ibraheem had a deep longing for a righteous son, and Allah gave him one – and yet, just as that son begins to grow into a young man, Ibraheem is asked to give him up. He is confronted with the trial of actually separating himself permanently from his beloved son. About this Allah says "Verily, that indeed was a manifest trial." (As-Saffat 37:106). But Prophet Ibraheem did not question the order of Allah, nor did he try to find an excuse not to carry it out (compare that to ourselves today when we are asked to fulfill an obligation that involves hardship). The reaction of his son, Ismaeel, represented the ultimate in obedience to both Allah and then also to his father: "O my father! Do that which you are commanded, Insha Allah, you shall find me of the patient". The possibility of disobeying Allah simply did not exist.

So both father and son proceeded to Mount Thabir near Mecca. Allah says: "Then, when they had both submitted themselves (to the Will of Allaah), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead ." Ibraheem (as) put him face down. He wanted to slaughter him from behind so that he would not see his face at the time of slaughter. The verse "They both submitted themselves" means that Ibraheem said Bismillaahi'r-Rahmaan ir-Raheem and then said Allaahu Akbar, and his son said La ilaaha illallaah, because he was about to die.

Prophet Ibraheem passed the knife over his son's throat but a sheet of copper was placed between the knife and his throat. Then it was called out from Allah: "O Ibraheem! You have fulfilled the dream!" meaning, the purpose has been achieved, you have been tested and your willingness to obey Allah has been proven. "And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice". Allah ordered him to make an easy sacrifice; a fine white horned ram that had grazed in Paradise for forty years. Ibn Abbas narrates that when Prophet Ibraheem saw the ram, he left his son and started to chase it. At the site of the first stoning place in Mina he threw seven pebbles at the ram (to disable it). The ram then ran to the middle stoning place. There Ibraheem (as) threw

another seven pebbles. Then he chased it to the largest stoning place, where he threw another seven pebbles, and finally he brought it to the place of sacrifice (in Mina, where animals are sacrificed during Hajj) and slaughtered it (Ibn Katheer, Qasas al-Anbiya).

On the day of 'Eid al-Adha that we remember the sacrifice of Ibraheem (alayhi salaam), and we reflect on what made him to be the strongest of the believers, a close friend of Allah, someone whom Allah has blessed and a leader of all the nations that follow.

The building of the Ka'bah

After the incident of the sacrifice a number of years passed, and Ibraheem (as) had a second son, Ishaq. Prophet Ibraheem would regularly travel from Sham to visit his son, Isma'eel. He was now approximately 100 years old. He saw Isma'eel under a tree near zam-zam, sharpening his arrows. When he saw Ibraheem, he stood up to welcome him, and they greeted each other as a father does with his son and a son does with his father. Ibraheem (as) said, 'O Isma'eel! Allah has given me an order.' Isma'eel said, 'Do what your Lord has ordered you to do.' Ibraheem asked, 'Will you help me?' Isma'eel said, 'I will help you.' Ibraheem said, 'Allah has ordered me to build a house here,' pointing to a hillock higher than the land surrounding it.

The Prophet salallahu alaihi wa sallam said, "Then they raised the foundations of the House (i.e. the Ka'bah). Isma'eel brought the stones and Ibraheem was building, and when the walls became high, Isma'eel brought a stone (later known as the Maqam Ibraheem) and put it for Ibraheem who stood on it and carried on building, while Isma'eel was handing him the stones, and both of them were saying, 'Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us. Verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower' [al-Baqarah 2:127]. The Prophet (salallahu alaihi wa sallam) added, "Then both of them went on building and going round the Ka'ba saying: 'Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us. Verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower' [al-Baqarah 2:127] (al-Bukhaari).

Prophet Ibraheem's circling of the Ka'bah while he built it, gave rise to the ritual of tawaaf.

It must have taken days for the two noble Prophets to build the Ka'ba. Isma'eel would excavate stones from the surrounding mountains, shape them, and give them to his father, and Ibraheem (as) would place them.

Finally they completed the building of Ka'bah. In their time, the Ka'bah was rectangular in shape and was four and a half metres high. It contained two doors at the ground level but had no roof. Ibraheem (as) placed the Hajar al-Aswad (the black stone), which was sent down from heaven, at one of the corners of Ka'bah to mark the starting point of Tawaaf.

After building the Ka'bah, Jibreel taught him the rites of Hajj. His wife Sarah and his son Ishaaq also came from Jerusalem to perform Hajj. After this the Prophet Ibraheem returned to Sham where he eventually died.

After Ibraheem (as) built the Ka'bah, Allah ordered him to: "And proclaim to mankind the Hajj." [al-Hajj (22): 26] Meaning announce the pilgrimage to mankind and call them to perform pilgrimage to this House, which We have commanded you to build. Ibn Abbas narrates that: He stood on the maqam and announced, "O people, hajj has been enjoined on you". This reached all those who were in the backs of men, and the wombs of women.

When Allah ordered Prophet Ibraheem to leave his wife in a barren valley, an ignorant person would have objected to it. But we see the great good that came out of it. Allah protected his family, made their struggle a means of building the Ka'bah, establishing Hajj, and calling the people to it. The water of zam zam led to the establishing the city of Makkah. From the descendants of Ismaeel were the Quraysh, and from the Quraysh was the best of mankind, the seal of the Prophets, Muhammad salallahu alaihi wa sallam. He called the people to tawheed, and after his death his noble Companions spread Islam to the East and to the West, such that today, through their sacrifice, we are Muslims.

The building of Ka'bah remained the same up till when the Quraysh rebuild the Ka'bah. (2600 years later) Narrated Aa'ishah, once Allah's Messenger (salallahu alaihi wa sallam) said to me: "Don't you see that when your people built the Ka'bah, they did not build it on all the foundations built by Ibraheem?" I said: "O Allah's Messenger! Why don't we rebuild it on the foundations of Ibraheem?" He said. "If it were not for the fact that your people have recently given up kufr (I would have done so)" [al-Bukharee].

Supplications of Ibraheem (alaihi as-salaam)

After the construction of Ka'bah, Ibraheem (as) invoked Allah to bless the city of Makkah and those who live therein and provide them with provisions: "My Lord! Make this city (Makkah) a place of security and provide its people with fruits...." [Baqarah (2): 126] And thus Allah respond

ed to the call of Ibraheem (as): “And (remember) when He made the House a place of resort for mankind and a place of safety.” [Baqarah (2): 125]

Ibraheem (alaihi as-salaam) also invoked Allah to: “Send amongst them (the people of Makkah) a Messenger of their own, who shall recite unto them Your verses and instruct them in the Book and al-Hikmah and sanctify them. Verily, You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.” [al-Baqarah (2): 129] and indeed Allah answered his invocation and sent Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam), who was born in Makkah and from where Islam spread throughout the world.

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THE DAY OF ARAFAH

(9th of Dhul-Hijjah)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

**“The best of du’aa’ is du’aa’ on the day of ‘Arafah
and the best that I and the Prophets before me said is**

‘Laa ilaaha illallaah wahdahu la shareeka lah,

lahu’l-mulku wa lahu’l-hamdu wa huwa ‘ala kulli shay’in qadeer

(There is none worthy of worship but Allaah alone, with no partner or associate;
His is the dominion, to Him belongs all praise and He has power over all things).

(Al-Tirmidhi)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“Fasting the day of `Arafah expiates the sins of two years: the past one and the coming one.”

(Muslim)



10 Deeds Over 10 Days MY TEN DAYS

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

"There are no days in which righteous deeds
are more beloved to Allaah than these ten days."

Al-Bukhaari, 2/457

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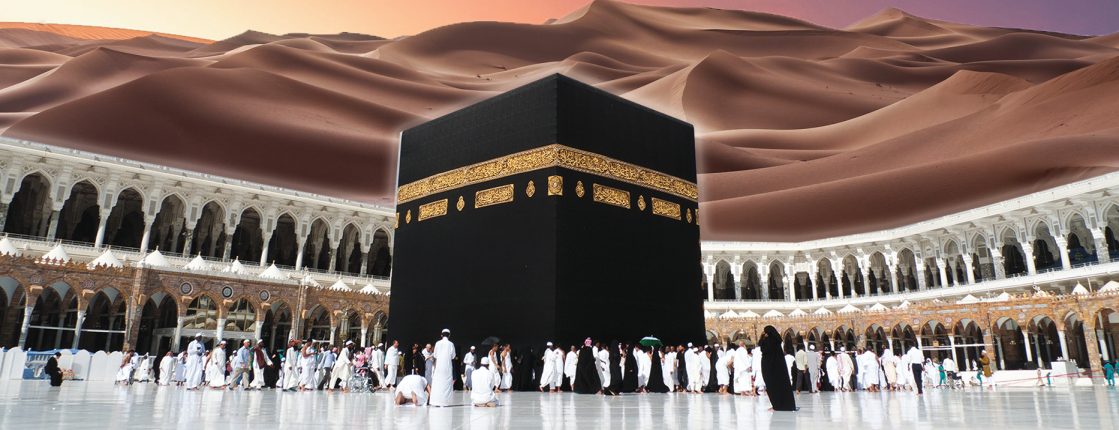
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