

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM (PART 2 OF 7): A CALL TO HIS PEOPLE

Rating: 4.6

Description: Abraham invites his father Azar (Terah or Terakh in the Bible) and nation to the Truth revealed to him from his Lord.

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Abraham and His Father

Like those around him, Abraham's father Azar (Terah or Terakh in the Bible), was an idol worshipper. Biblical tradition^[1] tells of him actually being a sculptor of them,^[2] hence Abraham's first call was directed to him. He addressed him with clear logic and sense, understood by a young man like himself as well as the wise.

"And mention in the Book (the Quran) Abraham, indeed he was a man of truth, a Prophet. When he said to his father: "O my father! Why do you worship that which hears not, sees not and cannot avail you in anything? O my father! Verily! There has come to me of knowledge that which came not unto you. So follow me. I will guide you to a Straight Path." (Quran 19:41-43)

The reply from his father was rejection, an obvious reply by any person challenged by another much younger than them, a challenge made against years of tradition and norm.

"He (the father) said: 'Do you reject my gods, O Abraham? If you do not stop, I will indeed stone you. So get away from me safely before I punish you.'" (Quran 19:46)

Abraham and His People

After incessant attempts in calling his father to leave the worship of false idols, Abraham turned to his people seeking to warn others, addressing them with the same simple logic.

"And recite to them the story of Abraham. When he said to his father and his people: "What do you worship?" They said: "We worship idols, and to them we are ever devoted." He said: "Do they hear you, when you call (on them)? Or do they benefit you

or do they harm (you)?" They said: "Nay, but we found our fathers doing so." He said: "Do you observe that which you have been worshipping, you and your ancient fathers? Verily! They are enemies to me, save the Lord of all that exists; Who has created me, and it is He Who guides me; And it is He Who feeds me and gives me to drink. And when I am ill, it is He who cures me; And Who will cause me to die, and then will bring me to life (again)." (Quran 26:69-81)

In furthering his call that the only deity which deserved worship was God, Almighty, he struck another example for his people to ponder. The Judeo-Christian tradition tells a similar story, but portrays it in the context of Abraham himself coming to the realization of God through the worship of these beings^[3], not of him using it as an example for his people. In the Quran, none of the Prophets are said to have associated others than God, even if they were uninformed of the correct way before they were commissioned as prophets. The Quran tells of Abraham:

"When the night grew dark upon him, he beheld a star, and said, 'This is my Lord!' But when it set, he said: 'I love not things that set.'" (Quran 6:76)

Abraham put forth to them the example of the stars, a creation truly incomprehensible to humans at time, seen as something greater than humanity, and many times having various powers attributed to them. But in the setting of the stars Abraham saw their inability to appear as they desired, but rather only at night.

He then struck the example of something even greater, a heavenly body more beautiful, larger, and that could appear at daytime as well!

"And when he saw the moon rising up, he exclaimed: 'This is my Lord.' But when it set, he said: 'Unless my Lord guides me, I surely shall become one of the folk who are astray.'" (Quran 6:77)

Then as his culminating example, he struck an example of something even bigger, one of the most powerful of creation, one without which life itself was an impossibility.

"And when he saw the sun rising, he cried: 'This is my Lord! This is greater!' But when the sun set, he said, 'O my people! Surely I am free from that which you associate with God. Verily, I have turned my face towards Him Who has created the heavens and the earth, away from idolatry, and I am not of those who associate others with God.'" (Quran 6:78-79)

Abraham proved to them that the Lord of the worlds was not to be found in the creations that their idols represented, but was, rather, the entity who created them and everything which they could see and perceive; that the Lord does not necessarily need to be seen in order to be worshipped. He is an All-Able Lord, not bound by limitations as the creations found in this world are. His message was simple:

***"Worship God, and keep your duty to Him; that is better for you if you did but know. You worship instead of God only idols, and you only invent a lie. Lo! Those whom you worship instead of God own no provision for you. So seek your provision from God, and worship Him, and give thanks to Him, (for) to Him you will be brought back."
(Quran 29:16-17)***

He openly questioned their adherence to mere traditions of their forefathers,

"He said: 'Verily you and your fathers were in plain error.'"

Abraham's path was to be filled with pain, hardship, trial, opposition, and heartache. His father and people rejected his message. His call fell on deaf ears; they would not reason. Instead, he was challenged and mocked,

"They said: 'Bring you to us the truth, or are you some jester?'"

In this stage in his life, Abraham, a young man with a prospective future, opposes his own family and nation in order to propagate a message of true monotheism, belief in the One True God, and rejection of all other false deities, whether they be stars and other celestial or earthly creations, or depictions of gods in the form of idols. He was rejected, outcaste and punished for this belief, but he stood firm against all evil, ready to face even more in the future.

"And (remember) when his (Abraham's) Lord tried Abraham with (various) commandments, to which he proved true..." (Quran 2:124)

Footnotes:

[1] Gen r. xxxviii, Tanna debe Eliyahu. li. 25.

[2] Abraham. Charles J. Mendelsohn, Kaufmann Kohler, Richard Gottheil, Crawford Howell Toy. The Jewish Encyclopedia (<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=360&letter=A#881>)

[3] *The Talmud: Selections*, H. Polano. (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/pol/index.htm>).

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