

Submissive Youth in the Story of Sacrifices

One of the rituals in the coming days ordained by the Exalted Allah is the ritual of sacrifices. Pilgrims have headed for the Holy House of Allah, the station of Ibrahim, but on the other hand, the Exalted Allah bestowed on the Islamic Ummah this great ritual that, in its symbolism and meaning, it represents great connotations. It is not mere practices intended for presenting food and drink. It is rather commemoration and reminding.

As is the case when the Exalted Allah immortalized the pilgrimage rituals by what Hajar, mother of Isma'il, and the father of her son, Ibrahim did, the ritual of sacrifices is commemoration of too many meanings, both Isma'il and his father participated in. We have frequently talked about the behavior of Ibrahim (PBUH) whenever we mentioned this ritual, but today, I want to refer to the youth for whom this sacrifice was a redemption. He is the one who is referred to by the Exalted Allah in the following verse:

"And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice" (As Saffat, 107). This youth participated in this great incident whose symbolism and memory the Exalted Allah immortalized. But in the ritual of sacrifice there might be clearer and more profound meanings, because this submissive youth is referred to by the Exalted Allah in the third person "and We ransomed him". He said: "We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice", thus sacrifice was presented.

The sacrifices that the Exalted Allah made redemption of Isma'il (PBUH) makes us reconsider a serious issue and a crucial matter that we all need. It is building up youth. What

we have frequently heard about in this story is not only an incidental incident that is worthy of glorification and attention of the hearts. In addition, it indicates a great significance. How could this youth attain this result? Aren't there any preludes to be followed as good examples? Aren't there causes out of which we can deduce lessons if we want to prepare and build up the youth?

The one who reviews the biography of Isma'il (PBUH) since he was a child till he became a young man can find many Qur'anic verses that tell in details what should draw a great deal of our attention.

Let me summarize the issue in headlines while I read the verses:

In these headlines, there is preparation that precede the existence of the submissive youth to Allah. In comparison, the state of today's youth has become deplorable because this preparation is missing today, and the youth are living in a state of loss. They are attracted by contradictory and opposed powers towards which the youth feel perplexed, which to choose and what result of their choice will be!

In the headlines of preparation, there are the following:

1-Clean environment in behavior and belief in which this sapling is planted. The Holy Qur'an tells about Isma'il's father, Ibrahim (PBUTH): "Remember Abraham said: O my Lord make this city one of peace and security: and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols" (Ibrahim, 35).

Ibrahim (PBUH) said this when he put the mother and her baby in a barren valley. He turned to Allah supplicating Him to make his child be reared in a clean environment, because when the town is safe on the behavioral level, its environment will be clean. It will be a place where there is no deception, nor stealing nor killing or aggression. Security

of a place is not achieved unless there is cleanliness in behavior, but when behavior is defiled, security will be confused. Security and confusion are never joined together, as they are contradictory matters.

He said: "and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols". Al Khalil (the Most Intimate Slave) of Ar Rahman (the Most Merciful) would not demand an unclean environment for his son on the behavioral level, and the title that lies in the depth is: turning to other than Allah.

There should be sincere honest turning to Allah alone taking into consideration that other than Allah is a mere weak slave, that other than Allah is a mere tool in the hands of Allah, the Powerful, and that everything you turn to with the belief that it can cause you harm or benefit is a mere idol, for not all idols are made of stone. How many the people are who make their whims their idols! How many the people are who make their wealth their idol! How many the people are who make their lust their idol! How many the people are who make people in authority their idols!

Accordingly, this should be the headline in preparation:

If you want to produce a youth that is submissive to Allah, definitely, a clean environment in behavior and belief should exist.

2-There should be clarity of affiliation to the sound method without fogginess or vagueness. Today, the affiliation of most people cannot be known. They try intentionally to conceal their affiliation.

Thus when our Master Ibrahim (PBUH) put his son in that valley at the Holy House, he said:

" O my Lord they have indeed led astray many among mankind; he then who follows my {ways} is of me, and he

that disobeys me, but thou art indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Ibrahim, 36).

"Who follows me", i.e., who follows the straight Islamic way, clean behavior, and affiliation to the Exalted Allah.

"He then who follows my {ways} is of me", and I am of him. Didn't the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said in the Prophetic Hadith: "Husein is of me , and I am of him"?

Why didn't he say that for Abi Lahab?

Was family relationship enough for affiliation?

It is also said in the Prophetic Hadith: "All the kinship of Muhammad are pious", that is, the one who belongs to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) in body not in soul is not worthy of being a relative of him.

"He who follows my {ways}", means whoever follows my clean behavior and the straight Islamic way in which one turns to Allah "is of me".

The politeness of Al Kalil made him say: "and he that disobeys me, but thou art indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful", i.e. 'it is none of my business. I only announce affiliation to the pious, and the pious to me'.

Consequently, in this method, clear affiliation appears without harming the others' feelings. It is an Ibrahimian method that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) followed. When the Angel of the mountains asked the Prophet (PBUH) to swoop Al Akhshabain (two mountains near Ta'if) down upon them, he said: "No, may Allah produce from their loins progeny that profess that there is one God".

It is he (PBUH) who said to his enemies: "Go, you are free".

3-The influence of the mosque in educating the youth: This is referred to in the following verse:

" O our Lord I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a

valley without cultivation, by thy Sacred house; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular prayer" (Ibrahim, 37). No good is hoped for from the youth who is not related to the mosque, because the mosque cleans the inner heart and soul of the youth. It purifies his soul and softens his spirit. If we prepare the youth who would be able to build the country and civilization without being related to the mosque, we will be building castles in the air.

The Exalted Allah said: "by thy Sacred house". Isma'il (PBUH) lived close to the House of Allah (the mosque), so it is not so astonishing to find him behave in such a way.

4-The influence of social intercourse away from isolation and seclusion: The Exalted Allah said:

"so fill the hearts to some among men with love towards them" (Ibrahim, 37). The isolated secluded youth, the one who neither has social intercourse, nor does he communicate with people, or react with them will have incomplete personality.

In reality, we have met a lot of people who have childish personality because they were unsociable when they were children. It is necessary for man to communicate with people, for the Exalted Allah created man a sociable creature.

Thus, the Exalted Allah inspired Al Khalil to announce this call so that his son would not live alone and secluded without having intercourse with other people. In addition, he called people to be with Isma'il because social intercourse helps in building personality.

5-The influence of economic development should not be disregarded as, in the following verse, the Exalted Allah declares that economy is the cause of support:

"To those weak of understanding make not over your

property, which Allah hath made a means of support for you, but feed and clothe them therewith, and speak to them words of kindness and justice" (An Nisa', 5).

This idea is indicated in Al Khalil's statement after he put his son in that barren valley: "and feed them with fruits so that they may give thanks".

In building the personality of the youth, the above mentioned matter should be taken into consideration. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said that the best Dinar is that which is spent on one's children, that is when it is employed in teaching the child so that he has a well-built personality, not only on clothes and food. It will be spent on building humanity with all its sublime meanings.

"so that they may give thanks" (Ibrahim, 37), i.e., so that they may use this subsistence in what the Exalted Allah likes and what may make Him be satisfied. Ingratitude is when one spends money on something that implies disobedience of the Exalted Allah's orders.

6-The influence of the type of the parents' direction and will. Telling about Al Khalil, the Exalted Allah said: "He said: I will go to my Lord he will surely guide me" (As Safat, 99).

Turning to other than the Exalted Allah on the part of the parents will have a bad influence on the child's personality. Moses (PBUH) was the product of his mother, and Isma'il was the product of his mother and father. His father turned to Allah, not to any other object, and so did his mother with all her heart. This type of direction and intention will inevitably be reflected on the children and the offspring.

7-The influence of supplication: Before the birth of Isma'il, and Isaac, Khalil Ar Hahman invoked the Exalted Allah saying: "O my Lord grant me a righteous {son}" (As Safat, 100). He did not ask his Lord to grant him a child just for

becoming a father. He rather invoked Allah to give him a good son.

Do you remember what Noah (PBUH) said to his Lord: "And Noah called upon his Lord, and said: 'O my Lord surely my son is of my family and thy promise is true, and thou art the (Hud, 45).justest of judges' "

The Exalted Allah said: "O Noah he is not of thy family: for his conduct is unrighteous. So ask not of me that of which thou hast no knowledge I give thee counsel, lest thou act like the ignorant" (Hud, 46).

See how the Holy Qur'an emphasizes righteousness, and how Khalil Ar Rahman supplicated his lord saying: "O my Lord grant me a righteous {son}" (As Safat, 100). The good news came to be "So We gave him the good news of a boy ready to suffer and forbear" (As Safat,101). Thus, our Exalted Allah gave him the good news of having Isma'il (PBUH). The Exalted Allah did not only give him the good tidings of having a boy. The boy would also be righteous, that is, this child would be characterized by good manners according to the concept demanded by the Exalted Allah, for forbearance is one of the characteristics of righteousness.

After preparation, trial followed: "Then, when {the son} reached {the age of} {serious} work with him", i.e., when Isma'il became young and strong enough to be able to do as his father did, and that his work would seem as his father's, "he said: O my son I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice". Trial usually comes after long preparation, for trial without preparation is worthless. It is like taking an exam without studying and without assiduous learning. Trial came after Isma'il became a young man with strong

muscles, and after he had graduated from the mosque and had social intercourse, and his affiliation became clear. Trial came after preparation that lasted the time of his childhood and part of his youth.

"Then, when {the son} reached {the age of} {serious} work with him, he said: O my son I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice". Usually, Prophets' dreams are inspiration from the Exalted Allah and an obligatory order that should not have any analogy.

Then he said: "now see what is thy view" (As Safat, 102), i.e., 'I see that you should be slaughtered. Oh youth, what do you see concerning that?

Did this strong youth run away and say: 'No, I want to worship Allah at the Sacred House, and I want to perform more prayer and remember Allah more and more?'

He faced a very difficult situation that souls cannot usually bear. It is the Exalted Allah's order to make him be slaughtered.

'I see the order of Allah. What would you do in response to the order of Allah? will you obey it?'

'I see that I should obey the order of Allah. Oh youth, what do you see concerning this matter?'

Herein appears the result of the test. I want every Muslim who considers himself a good Muslim and an obedient believer to the order of Allah to listen to this lesson.

Oh youth, how many times do you face such trials?

Oh youth, certainly you must have heard the Exalted Allah say: "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze (An Nur, 30) that is something far less than slaughtering.

You must have heard the Exalted Allah say: "Nor come nigh

to adultery" (Al Isra', 32).

You must have heard the Exalted Allah say: "O my Lord! advance me in knowledge" (Taha, 114).

You must have heard the Exalted Allah say: "Read! In the name of thy Lord" (Al 'Alaq, 1).

You must have heard the Exalted Allah say: "Therefore stand firm {in the straight path} as thou art commended" (Hud, 112).

This is the order of Allah. Oh youth, see how you respond? Your Imam is the young Isma'il. In case the order of slaughtering were directed to you, and before you there were many other orders less severe than slaughtering, would you follow your Imam Isma'il, or would you follow your devil and your self?

See how you should respond to the order of Allah?

Whenever you hear an order directed to you in the Holy Qur'an, remember this youth, Isma'il.

Would that we looked for the behavior of the youth in the Holy Qur'an to see how the chaste Moses made the cattle of the two girls drink from the well.

Would that we read the biography of the young Joseph who said: "Allah forbid truly {thy husband} is my Lord" (Yusef, 23).

Would that we had a long pause taking into consideration the biography of the young Isma'il to be acquainted with his attitude towards his slaughtering. The Exalted Allah ordained to make this trial common in which there was the passion of fatherhood joined with that of the mature youth whose education and preparation were of the best.

The Holy Qur'an portrays this scene in this verse saying: "{the son} said: (addressing Ibrahim using the most intimate names, i.e., father) "O my father Do as thou art commanded".

In this concern, I'd like to address the fathers saying: Do as you are commanded... . Do not give orders, but do as you are commanded... .

When will the fathers be commanded by Allah, not be commanding?

When shall we find father and mother commanded not commanding?

When shall we get rid of arrogance and self-conceit?

When will the father prefer the command of the Exalted Allah and His Messenger to his own command when it contradicts his own whim?

Isma'il did not obey the command of his father. He rather obeyed the command of Allah Who commanded his father as well. Consequently, he said: "O my father Do as thou art commanded".

When the parents are committed to Shari'a (Islamic law) and oblige themselves with it, the son does the same, but when they want their children to obey them while they are disobedient to Shari'a, the son is allowed to treat them kindly and stay with them without disobeying the orders of the Exalted Allah.

"thou will find me, if Allah So wills, one practising Patience and constancy", i.e., I shall behave in a way that will satisfy Allah and you, because you want me to be righteous, and righteousness implies the meanings of patience, gratitude, forbearance and turning to Allah... .

Then the Exalted Allah said: "So when they had both submitted their wills {to Allah}". Notice how the Exalted Allah sheds the light on their hearts. The perfect fatherhood surrendered to Allah, so did the youth who had been trained to obey Allah. The tender father's heart surrendered to the command of Allah and preferred the command of Allah to

his own passion, so did the trained youth's heart that is directed to Allah.

It is the state of the heart's submissiveness: "But no, by the Lord, they can have no (real) Faith, until they make thee judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against thy decisions, but accept them with the An Nisa', 65).fullest conviction)

"So when they had both submitted their wills {to Allah}, and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead {for sacrifice}" (As Safat, 103). It is a state of achieving the order as much as one can. Tender fatherhood executed the order of Allah with strong determination. The statement "he had laid him prostrate" indicates executing the order with strong determination. The youth was excessively submissive to the command of Allah, so was the father in executing the command of Allah. This statement refers to the absence of any resistance on the part of Isma'il, for he did not resist nor did he refuse or hesitate to obey the order of Allah. The more his father laid him on the rock, the more submissive he became.

Then the Exalted Allah said: "We called out to him, O Abraham, Thou hast already fulfilled the vision thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For this was obviously a trial, and We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice" (As Safat, 104-107).

In these verses, there are two discourses, one for the reward of the father, and another for the son. As for the discourse to the father, the Exalted Allah said: "Thou hast already fulfilled the vision thus indeed do We reward those who do right" describing Ibrahim as righteous.

On the other hand, in the discourse to the youth who executed the command of Allah there is the reward of

redemption. How great it is for one to be redeemed by the Exalted Allah!

Oh people of redemption, when you attain the level of redemption you will find redemption in return for your sacrifice.

"and We ransomed him". This is a statement told only by a lover to his beloved, no one redeems anybody unless one is loving. Thus, the discourse of love was revealed: and We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice".

What happened after this trial?

There was preparation, then trial. What happened after trial?

The Holy House of Allah was built by both of them, Ibrahim and Isma'il, the father and the youth. Both succeeded in the test, so they became worthy of being honored to build the House of Allah. The Exalted Allah said:

"And remember Abraham and Isma`il raised the foundations of the House (with this prayer): "Our Lord! accept (this service) from us: for Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing" (Al Baqarah, 127).

The Exalted Allah honored them by making them build and purify His House. He said:

"And We covenanted with Abraham and Isma`il, that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in Prayer" (Al Baqarah, 125).

Concerning Isma'il who is our example, the Exalted Allah tells us about him while the latter was building His House.

He said:

"Also mention in the Book (the story of) Isma`il: He was (strictly) true to what he promised, and he was a messenger

(and) a prophet. He used to enjoin on his people Prayer and Charity (this is the way in which houses should be built), and he was most acceptable in the sight of his Lord" (Mariam, 54-55).

The one who passes the test will usually be nominated to build two types of life: abstract and corporeal.

This is the lesson.

Oh youth, if you are able to pass the test, you will be nominated to build up a civilization...to build up a family... a society, but if you fail in the test you will not be authorized to be builders.

Isma'il together with his father built the House of Allah. He also built his own house and his family.

Oh you youth, when you follow the footsteps of Isma'il at the time of Isma'il's Commemoration in sacrifices, do feel this meaning and remember it. Beware of understanding sacrifices to mean only food and drink. Remember its symbolism, and remember that it was redemption of Isma'il.

Once you pass the test, you will be able to begin building.

Our Ummah is in need for building, but where are the builders?

Our Ummah is falling behind... .

Our Ummah is full of confusion... .

Our Ummah is separated....

Oh youth who pass the test, where are you?

Allahum..., guide us to You favorably, and make us from those who listen to wisdom and follow the best of it.

I say my words and ask Allah's forgiveness.