

# Ibrahim (Abraham, pbuh), Part 1

This week, we will start talking about the Prophet and Messenger of God Ibrahim (Abraham), peace be upon him (pbuh). He's a pivotal figure in monotheistic traditions and particularly significant in Islam. His story contains profound lessons about faith, sacrifice, and moral courage. His willingness to question the status quo, his unwavering belief in the oneness of God despite tremendous opposition, and his readiness to submit completely to divine will make him an exemplary figure.

The story of Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) is one of the longest narratives in the Qur'an, second only to the story of Prophet Musa (Moses, pbuh). Interestingly, the life story of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is not narrated in the Qur'an in the same way. This raises an important question: If the Qur'an were not a divine revelation and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were its author, why did he not include his own story?

The answer is that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was already well known to his people before receiving the divine message. His companions — those who believed in him during his lifetime — had witnessed his character, his life, and the unfolding of his mission firsthand while living alongside him.

Ibrahim's (Abraham, pbuh) story is significant because Jews, Christians, and Muslims all claim to

follow him. Additionally, the story of Ibrahim (pbuh) in the Qur'an differs in many aspects from that found in the Torah and the Gospels. The Qur'an says, **"O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Why do you dispute about Ibrahim (Abraham), while the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) were not revealed till after him? Have you then no sense?"** [Qur'an 3: 65].

Ibrahim's story begins with him reflecting on the idols worshiped by his people. He was troubled by the notion that his community, including his family, prayed to entities that could neither confer good nor cause harm. Ibrahim (pbuh) employed his reasoning and logic to evaluate their beliefs. And no, he was not a philosopher; he was simply a human reasoning with his intellect.

At an early age, Ibrahim (Abraham) began to question the religious practices of his community. Though the Qur'an does not specify his exact age during these events, it describes how he challenged the fundamental assumption that humans should worship statues and idols. At first, Ibrahim (pbuh) tested these idols, not because he doubted that they could be true Gods, but to make sure his decision that they are not true gods. An imperative point in his story. The Qur'an tells us that Ibrahim, a descendant of Nuh (Noah, pbuh) and a follower of the true message: **"And of his (Noah)**



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HATIM HEGAB

kind was Ibrahim (Abraham). When he came to his Lord with a sound heart." [Qur'an 37: 83-84]. In chapter 37, the Quran records the details of his call: **"When he said to his father and his people, 'What are you worshipping? Is it falsified gods, instead of Allah, that you want? What is your opinion about the Lord of the Worlds?'"** [Qur'an 37: 85-86]. Another point that set Ibrahim (Abraham) in a category by himself. He is occupied with the idea of the true Creator who created all this world and the universe shown above his head.

Ibrahim (pbuh), from my point of view, was the first recorded human being to use reasoning to reach Allah (pronounced with an emphatic "I" is the name of God in both Arabic and Aramaic), not only that but he also used experiments, another profoundly important point in his story. The Qur'an says: **"Then he took a glance at the stars."** [Qur'an 37: 88]. Why did he take this glance? Some scholars say, "It is because his people worshiped stars and planets and made statues for them," but I believe he was waiting for that certain day of the year when they have their major cele-

bration outside the city.

Ibrahim (pbuh) have a plan. The verses that follow the previous one are why I believe this explanation. The Qur'an continues: **"And said, 'I am sick.' But they turned their backs on him and went away. Then he turned to their gods and said, 'Will you not eat? What is wrong with you that you do not speak?'"** [Qur'an 37: 89-92]. He waited for this day to test these gods and to prove a point to his people. The Qur'an continues: **"Then he turned on them, striking with the right hand."** [Qur'an 37: 93]. This was the test! If the god can't defend themselves, how do their worshipers expect them to be of any help to them? Worse, how do their worshipers expect them to protect or defend them at times of need?

In another place in the Qur'an, Allah The Almighty reveals the discussion between Ibrahim and his people before he decided his plan and put it into action. Allah The Almighty reveals: **"And We gave Abraham his sound judgment formerly, and We knew him well. When he said to his father and his people, 'What are these statues to which you are devoted?'"** [Qur'an 21:51-52]

The response Ibrahim received was strikingly simple, yet deeply troubling. The Qur'an records: **"They said, 'We found our forefathers worshipping them.'"** [Qur'an 21:53].

This answer reveals a profound human tendency:

the inclination to follow inherited traditions without critical examination. Rather than engaging with facts and truth, Ibrahim's people chose the comfort of ancestral practices, perhaps out of fear of independent thought or the responsibility it entails. What's particularly striking is that people would gamble their eternal existence on unexamined beliefs. For those who believe in accountability and life after death, it seems remarkably incautious to base one's eternal destiny on inherited practices rather than making a thoughtful, calculated decision for oneself. Ibrahim's questioning exemplifies the Qur'anic emphasis on rational faith — belief founded not merely on tradition but on thoughtful consideration of divine signs and messages. Ibrahim's answer was, as revealed in the Qur'an: **"He said, 'You and your forefathers have obviously been astray'"** [Qur'an 21: 54]. What an answer!

Ibrahim (pbuh) asked a profound and thought-provoking question — one that should have stirred deep reflection. Yet, his people responded with an answer that revealed their indifference. In reply, Ibrahim (pbuh) stated plainly that both they and their forefathers were mistaken — clear and direct. Had they truly believed in what they worshiped, they would have either argued with evidence or asked him for proof. Instead, the Qur'an records their

answer: **"They said, 'Did you come to us with the truth, or are you playing?'"** [Qur'an 21: 55]. This is another example showing that people often argue not to seek the truth but to convince themselves they aren't wrong — especially when the one challenging them is younger. Ego also plays a significant role; many refuse to accept a more logical argument simply because they don't want the other person to 'win.' In response to this, Ibrahim (pbuh) said: **"He said, 'Your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He who originated them, and I bear witness to that.'" [Quran 21: 56].**

Ibrahim (pbuh) knew with certainty that Allah is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. But how did he come to this knowledge? Did he receive divine revelation, or was he taught the message passed down from Nuh (Noah, pbuh)? The Qur'an provides answers to these questions.

Ibrahim then set his plan into motion when he said: **"By Allah, I will have a plan for your statues after you have gone away. So he reduced them into pieces, except for their biggest, so that they may return to it."** [Quran 21: 57-58]. When his people came back from their big day (of celebration), they went to their temple to thank their gods and found that they were all turned into shreds.

Author: [hatim.hegab@gmail.com](mailto:hatim.hegab@gmail.com)

Information: <https://icstillwater.org>