

Significance of Prophet Abraham in World Scriptures

of Hebrew, Christian, Muslim and Hindu Religions

The reader is forewarned that certain parts of this article may be considered as slightly graphic, as those parts explain for clarity, the actual ritualistic practices within paganism, regarding human sacrifice. These are almost unbelievable historical facts of common practice, which happened many thousands of years ago.

Many times when any topic under discussion concerns Prophet Abraham, most people immediately relate Prophet Abraham to that incident, when he almost sacrificed his first-born son. Rarely do people analyse the absolute greatness of this prophet, as the Father of Humanity. This article goes deeper in appreciating that Prophet Abraham was the first prophet who pioneered the modern day concept of One God; and to do this he walked out on his sire¹ after destroying all the idols, save one the chief idol and placed the axe next to the chief idol; Prophet Abraham wilfully left the chief idol intact to bear witness and to explain who destroyed the colony of idols in the pagan temple. His sire (who was also head priest over the idols)² told Prophet Abraham not to be stupid, because the chief idol was a man-made, lifeless and powerless cold statue, sculptured out of stone; and that the idol could not see, hear, speak, feel or taste or have the powers of discretion to bear witness. Of course, Prophet Abraham told his sire not to worship such useless, powerless and defenceless idols. Thereafter he fought many skirmishes with so many of the idol worshipping communities, and he was also banished from his town of usual residence. The angry idol-worshippers even tried to burn Prophet Abraham alive but all failed. Notwithstanding all difficulties against him, Prophet Abraham upheld his belief and principles of One God and that there had to be a Single Supreme Creator, who was definitely the All-Powerful and the All-Knower and Who did not need anybody's assistance for His survival.

The first Divine Inspiration, which came to Prophet Abraham through the medium of a dream, was really a compliance test of Prophet Abraham, for his allegiance to Allah in his determined readiness and in carrying out the human sacrifice, by slaughtering his only child; and quite obviously, he knew it also meant death of his only child. Human sacrificing (of own children) was brought to a final closure when Allah stopped Prophet Abraham from sacrificing his first-born son (and his only child) Ishmael; and that was after Ishmael was blind-folded and placed on the altar; and Prophet Abraham was ready to deliver the fast stroke of slaughter with a very sharp knife. Allah then commanded Prophet Abraham to stop and not to slaughter Ishmael, but substitute him for the ritual of sacrificial slaughter, with the best fattened lamb in the paddock close by. Prophet Abraham most obediently followed that directive. That story is well-known, but we must understand Prophet Abraham better!

Allah then decreed by Divine Order in His prophetic revelation, from that moment and onwards forever, human sacrifice of children ceased absolutely, and the object to be sacrificed was transferred to those animal quadrupeds, permissible for consumption by all Muslims. Animal sacrifice is still symbolically performed by all Muslims (called *Eid-ul-Adzah*). Prophet Abraham was then rewarded for his total allegiance to Allah and he was regarded to be the Patriarch or Father of all Nations. This same event has been systematically captured in the Torah (Hebrews), the Bible (Christians) and the Holy Qur'an (Muslims) and it is explained to some detail in later paragraphs.

The Hebrew Scriptures list 47 prophets with Prophet Abraham at No 1. Christian Scriptures list 90 prophets with Prophet Abraham at No 40. Muslim Scripture (Holy Qur'an) lists 25 prophets with Prophet Abraham at No 6. All three scriptures narrate the same human sacrifice, as a historical event.

¹ His sire was his paternal uncle and guardian as his father passed away when Abraham was still a child.

² Abraham's sire (uncle) was also head priest at the pagan temple, which held a colony of idols for idol-worshipping. Each pagan temple held 365 idols, of which 364 were smaller ones and the biggest idol was the chief idol. It was the normal worshipping practice in Babylonia many thousands of years ago.

This historical event became a very important milestone, particularly in the history of Islam and becomes the cause and remembrance purpose of all Muslims' greatest festival of *Eid-ul-Adzah* (it is also variously called *Bakr-Eid*, etc). Islam is the only religion in this world, which has dedicated remembrance of this event, both as a compulsory religious festival and as a compulsory ritual in the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. An expanded explanation on this aspect is given in later paragraphs.

Paganism also had a place in world history and perhaps paganism was at its peak performance, about the same period when Prophet Abraham was around. It is timely and prudent to clarify that before Prophet Abraham, human sacrificing of own children by slaughtering, was ritually practised in many parts of the world to appease the gods. The extent of this barbaric pagan practice is debated by many scholars today, especially when discovering archaeological remains of children's bodies preserved in earthenware jars in ancient temples, and in caves, especially and mostly amongst the Phoenicians and other followers of the Canaanite religion, such as Assyrians, Babylonians and Egyptians. The communities in those days believed in a multitude of gods, and idol-worshipping was also practised as naturally as carrying out household chores. An average pagan temple in those days had 365 idols, an idol for each day of the year for worship, with the largest idol always regarded as the chief idol. A common purpose behind human sacrifice was the belief to sustain the universe by spilling and offering of fresh and warm human blood to the pagan god, named Moloch³.

The ultimate sacrifice was to slaughter the first-born male in the family and the blood was spilled into a thurible (e.g. like an incense thurible censer), shaped like a vase and made of gold or silver, with two chains attached to it. The chain was used to suspend and to gently sway this thurible from side to side like a pendulum. It also had a special small chamber to hold burning incense. The fresh human blood was burnt over charcoal and the main reason of burning the incense, was to give out a pleasant smell with lots of smoke, and which also suppressed the smell of burning human blood. Obviously, the slaughtered child's mother would be shrieking with grief, and the incense was intended to console her grief, that the child's soul would elevate to the god Moloch, just as the smoke was rising upwards. Records of Phoenician paintings (murals) and drawings show the mother shrieking and tearing her clothes apart, as her first-born son was slaughtered before her very eyes.

Most people are conversantly aware that Prophet Abraham has been mentioned several times in the mainstream scriptures of Hebrew, Christian and Islam communities; but most people are also less aware that Prophet Abraham is also a prominent figure in Hindu Scriptures, but with a slight variation in the spelling of his name. All other historical features are almost blueprint accurate.

Amongst our Hindu friends, Brahma or *Brahamaji* is regarded as the father of mankind. He was none else but Prophet Abraham. The details are expanded later in the paragraphs. This article commences with recognition of the significance of Prophet Abraham, with prominent attributes of Prophet Abraham in Islam and the Holy Qur'an.

One of the many admirably beautiful features about Islam and its unique independence is that Muslims are not restricted from reading and researching into other religions' scriptures – as may be the case with some other religious groups. The Holy Qur'an imposes upon Muslims to read and gain wider knowledge, as stipulated at 96: 1-8, as –

1. *“Read in the name of thy Lord Who creates –*
2. *Creates man from a clot,*
3. *Read and thy Lord is most Generous,*
4. *Who taught by the pen,*
5. *Taught man what he knew not.*
6. *Nay, man is surely inordinate,*
7. *Because he looks upon himself as self-sufficient.*
8. *Surely to thy Lord is the return.”*

³ Moloch (also spelt Molech) was a pagan god to whom children were offered in human sacrifice.

Although the above quoted verse is the very first revelation to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), (96: 1-8) and delivered to him by Archangel Gabriel, it is not limited in its application to its historical significance only; but allows all Muslims to probe into and read about other faiths, so that Muslims may compare their religion against others; and so most objectively understand the beauty, admirable magnificence and the sheer greatness of Islam and its illuminating scripture, the Holy Qur'an. The rest of verses 96:9-19 were delivered to him later, but regrouped as whole of Chapter 96, when the Holy Qur'an was being finally assembled by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Islam, the world's final revealed religion and its Holy Qur'an, the final revealed scripture, makes very clear that Allah has sent His prophets as Messengers and as Ambassadors to every nation. This point is made clear in the Holy Qur'an at 35:24, as *"Surely We have sent thee with the Truth as a bearer of good news and a warner. And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them."* This is again stressed at 16:36, as *"And certainly We raised in every nation a messenger, saying: Serve Allah and shun the devil. Then of them was he whom Allah guided, and of them was he whose remaining in error was justly due. So travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejecters."* This is reiterated at 4:164 -165, as *"164. 'And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to thee before and messengers We have not mentioned to thee. And to Moses Allah addressed His word, speaking (to him)'—" 165. 'Messengers, bearers of good news and warners, so that the people may have no plea against Allah after the (coming of) messengers. And Allah is ever Mighty, Wise.'"*

According to Islamic history and its scriptures, there were over 124,000 prophets⁴ who graced mankind as Messengers and Ambassadors of the Most High – ever since Allah created this planet. The first prophet was Adam and the final prophet who sealed off arrival of any other prophet was Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), under Divine Order also sealed off any other new scripture with the final revealed scripture of the Holy Qur'an. Prophet Abraham was the Father of Nations and the apex to the Semitic lines of religious Messengers. It is essential to stress the meaning of the name, Abraham; and why Allah changed it from Abram to Abraham. In the Hebrew language 'Ab' means father and 'raham' means multitude. This translates to the same meaning that Abraham was the Father of Nations. In the Arabic language, the meanings are very similar as in Hebrew. Hence there is no longer need to repeat that analysis. It is essential to review history from its chronological sequence.

There is needed to take a peep at Judaism in a nutshell. The history of Judaism begins with Prophet Abram (in Hebrew). His father was Terach from the city of Ur and his mother was Amathlaah from the city of Cutha in Mesopotamia. *(In the Holy Qur'an, his father's name is given as Aazar, HQ 6:75).* Abram preached about Allah as the One Supreme Being and Abram was the first person who fought many times with pagans in propagating the One God concept. He was survived for the same concept and leadership by his second son Isaac. Isaac also had a son named Jacob and who was later anointed as "Israel." Jacob had twelve sons whom later founded the twelve tribes of Israel, after Prophet Moses led them out of bondage from Egypt. The Hebrew (Jews) scriptures, which mention Prophet Abraham several times are called the Tanakh and which comprises of: (written *Sefer Torah* Scrolls (*teachings of first five books of Moses* called the Pentateuch), *Nevi'im* (*Hebrew prophets*) and *Ketuvim* (writings in 12 books mainly the Psalms and Proverbs) *Talmud* (*Oral Torah*), and *Midrash* (*Sets of writings to interpret gaps with opinions within the Tanakh*) are the main religious scriptures of the descendants of the Hebrew communities.

According to Judaism, Prophet Abraham was born and taken the name of Abram in the city of Ur in Babylonia. Abram's father was Terach, a merchant dealer in idols and the temple priest. Abram did not believe and accept his family's belief in idols but held high his belief and principles that there was a Single Supreme Creator (Allah) who managed and controlled the entire universe system. Abram descended from Eber, which was located on the opposite side of River Euphrates from Ur.

⁴ Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) statement in Hadith No 21257 in *Musnad Ibn Hanbal*

After smashing to ruins 364 out of 365 idols in his family's temple, and leaving the largest and chief idol to be held accountable, Abram left his family to wander in the desert and living a nomadic life, but worshiping One God all the time. Allah spoke to Abram and rewarded him for his allegiance for belief and preaching One God: by changing his name from Abram to Abraham, meaning the Father of Humanity.

After several decades when Prophet Abraham was over 90 years old, he married Sarah who was over 80 years old; but Sarah could not conceive because of both their advanced ages. Prophet Abraham later married Hagar and she bore him a son, named as Ishmael. Both Hagar and her son Ishmael were very meek and gentle and very obedient to Prophet Abraham, whereas Sarah was very corrosive, aggressive and spiteful against Hagar and her son Ishmael. Consequently, Sarah who was barren engineered a scheme, whereby Hagar and her new baby Ishmael were abandoned in the wilderness of Arabia, at a particular location then, and which is now Mecca. Hagar was desperate and ran up and down the two hills in that location called *Al-Safa* and *Al-Marwah*, searching for water for her baby Ishmael, who was left lying in the fiercely scorching Arabian Desert sun. The baby Ishmael was left in the sun and on the hot desert sands, crying away and desperately waving his limbs about. The spot where the baby Ishmael's heels were digging into the hot sand suddenly became damp and then wet. Soon after, water began oozing out of the hot sand and that water developed into a mineral water spring. Hagar quenched her thirst and her baby's thirst from that mineral water spring. Passing camel caravans stopped by to fill their jars with water and in exchange gave food and clothing to Hagar and her baby Ishmael. They remained there for nearly 12 years until when Prophet Abraham returned to collect them and took them back to his home. It was then that Allah again rewarded Prophet Abraham and his 90+ aged first wife Sarah finally conceived.

About 12-13 years later Sarah bore him his second son, he was named Isaac. It was then that Allah then conducted a compliance test with Prophet Abraham and directed him to sacrifice his elder son Ishmael by slaughtering him on an altar, which was the pagan customs of those days. For the interim, the matrix below analytically reflects the life of Prophet Abraham in the stated mainstream scriptures:

Significant Events in History	Hebrew Scriptures	Christian Scriptures	Islam (Muslim) Scriptures	Hindu Scriptures
Father of Prophet Abraham	Terach	Terach	Aazar	Unknown
Mother of Prophet Abraham	Amathlaah	Amathlaah	Amathlaah	Ammavaru
1 st Wife of Prophet Abraham	Sarah	Sarah	Saira	Saraswati
Nature of 1 st Wife	Aggressive/jealous	Aggressive/jealous	Aggressive/jealous	Aggressive/jealous
2 nd Wife of Prophet Abraham	Hagar	Hagar	Hazra	Parwati
Nature of 2 nd Wife	Meek and friendly	Meek and friendly	Meek and friendly	Meek and friendly
1 st child born from 2 nd Wife (Hagar)	Isaac	Isaac	Ishmael	Atharva
Child offered to be sacrificed	Isaac (he wasn't born)	Isaac (he wasn't born)	Ishmael (aged 12 yrs)	-
2 nd Child born	Ishmael	Ishmael	Isaac	Angiras
Main followers of Ishmael (Atharva)	-	-	All Muslims	Brahmin Hindus
Main followers of Isaac (Angiras)	Jews	Christians	-	Rest of Hindus Buddhists, Jains
Prophets mentioned in all their scriptures	47	90	25	All called gods
Final line Prophets as descended	Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi	John the Baptist. Jesus Christ (<i>but now taken as son of God</i>)	Muhammad (pbuh)	All called gods

It is in remembrance of the desperation and suffering that Hagar had to encounter as she panicked in running to and fro between the hills of *Al-Safa* and *Al-Marwah*, in searching for water for Ishmael, that all persons on pilgrimage to Mecca to perform Hajj are also required to ritually replicate those routes. The sacrifice of a quadruped as ordered by Allah to Prophet Abraham, substituting it for Ishmael is another essential ritual, which must be performed in addition to circling the Kaba as part of Hajj.

The above account about Prophet Abraham and his first wife Sarah, and his second wife Hagar and his two sons Ishmael (elder) and Isaac (younger) are generally the same (with marginal variations) in the scriptures of Hebrews, Christians and Muslims. Isaac had also taken after his mother of being corrosive, aggressive, jealous and spiteful. Hence the need to repeat those historical stories is not necessary. As already hinted above, Prophet Abraham is also prominently featured in the Hindu scriptures. The matrix above summarises the common similarities and slight dissimilarities amongst Hebrew, Christian, Muslim and Hindu scriptures.

In equal merit, there is also need to take a peep at Hinduism in a nutshell. There are four mainstream scriptures in the Hindu religion and each has its administrative scope and purpose. They are in historical priority sequence of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and the Brahmanas Granth. Largely through ease of availability, the Puranas (in 18 volumes) are perhaps the most widely read of all Hindu scriptures. The Upanishads are considered next in superiority ranking to the Vedas but some Hindus feel the other way around, because of intrinsic commentary and texts within those scriptures. There are four mainstream Vedas: Sam, Rig, Yajur and Atharva. The Rig Veda has in its scope and content covering great events of the Babylonia and Egyptian eras, mentioning their kings and some of the great wars. The Atharva Veda (the 4th Veda) has significant mentioning of Brahma and it is variously referred to as "Brahma's Veda" because of its wide coverage on the then life and historical events of Brahma. It is also significant to note the link between the author of Atharva Veda (which means Divine Knowledge, and Brahma Vidya is another name of Atharva Veda), and the great Brahma. Atharva was the elder of the two sons of Brahma, the other younger son being Angiras. This Veda also mentions Manu of the "great flood era" and this of course refers to Noah of the "great flood era" as already well-known to Hebrews, Christians and Muslims in their respective scriptures. The Atharva Veda in its book "*Kuntap Sukt*" also mentions the future arrival of a great prophet (Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)). They described him as Mahma in the Atharva Veda, as Mahamad in the Puranas, and as Ahmad in the Sam Veda.

The widely referred to Brahmin community (priestly community) are claiming their direct descent from the line of Atharva.

Reverting to Brahma's second son Angiras, he had 51 children and the rest of all other Hindus are descent from Angiras; and Gautama Buddha is claimed to have also descended from line of Angiras.

It is recommended to take brief analysis of the four Vedas. They were authored in a manner which best suited the level of civilization and culture in India of that era. The Rig Veda has 10 mandalas and 1,028 *suktas* and 10,552 *mantaras*. The Atharva Veda has 20 *kandas* and 759 *suktas*. The Yajur Veda has 40 *Adiayes* and 1975 *mantaras*. The Sam Veda has 1875 *mantaras*.

Brahma and Abraham have identical meanings. In Sanskrit, Brahma is derived from '*brih*', which means to spread, flourish, and gain strength. So Brahma stands for one who spreads forth and gains strength. The implied meaning here is that Brahma became the Father of Nations. Although in the Hindu community there is another name for Brahma; it is '*Pariyapati*' which literally means Father of Nations in Sanskrit.

In the Hindu scriptures of Mundak Upanishad, it is stated that Brahma was one of the first of the Hindu gods. He taught his son Atharva, the Brahma Vidya or the Divine Scripture, which is the source of all knowledge in Hinduism. On a point of multi-ethnic and multi-religious connectivity, considering Judaism, Christianity and Islam, it is essential to draw precise parallels between Prophet Abraham's references recorded in the Middle East and Brahma's references recorded in the Indian subcontinent.

There are scripture records that Prophet Abraham lived a very long time. Brahma is also recorded as having lived a very long time. Both Brahma and Prophet Abraham had children born to them in advanced age. There is a pressing need to further expand on their parallels.

Prophet Abraham had two wives Sarah and Hagar from whom he had two sons Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was 12 years senior to Isaac. Scripture records from Hebrew, Christian and Islam all indicate conclusively; Ishmael was the only child when he was placed on the altar for sacrifice and at that time he was a young boy, 12 years old. Similarly, according to Gopath Bharamana, Brahamaji had two wives, Saraswati and Parwati. Brahamaji had two sons. They were Atharva (the elder) and then Angiras who was 12 years junior.

The Holy Qur'an reports on this incident at 14: 39-40, as— "39. *"Praise be to Allah, Who has given me, in old age, Ishmael and Isaac! Surely my Lord is the Hearer of prayer."* 40. *"My Lord, make me keep up prayer and from my offspring (too), our Lord, and accept my prayer."* All prophets had wives and children to continue God's intention of procreation. The Holy Qur'an states at 13: 38, as - *"And certainly We sent messengers before thee and appointed for them wives and children. And it is not in (the power of) a messenger to bring a sign except by Allah's permission. For every term there is an appointment."*

Islam also recognises the existence of Vedas having their connections to Brahma. According to Hindu history, Brahma was childless. Brahma prayed to God most earnestly for a child like him to continue his work for God. According to the Torah, Bible and Qur'an, Prophet Abraham was childless. Prophet Abraham prayed to God most earnestly for a child like him to continue his work for God. It is also stated in the Gopath Brahma that these two sons of Brahma were born as *"one of sweet water"* and the other of *"salty water."* Atharva was born of sweet water (meek) and Angiras was born of salty water (aggressive).

In furtherance of drawing parallels, Ishmael's mother Hagar was a meek, patient, friendly and forbearing woman whereas Sarah, the mother of Isaac was aggressive and sour-tempered. In Hindu scriptures Sarah is known as Saraswati and Hagar is known as Parwati. Parwati was a very meek and gentle lady whereas Saraswati was of short temper, aggressive and at times abrasive.

According to the Hindu, Hebrew, Christian and Muslim scriptures, Abraham (Brahma) had taken his wife Hagar (Parwati) and son Ishmael (Atharva) to a far away land and settled them there, near the ruins of the ancient house of worship (the Kaba in Mecca). When Prophet Abraham was going back leaving them both in this wilderness, Hagar asked him, *"Is it by Allah's commandment that thou art doing this?"* Prophet Abraham's reply was, *"Yes."* Then said Hagar, *"Allah will not leave us to perish."*

Prophet Abraham then said the following prayer as reported in the Holy Qur'an at 14: 35-37, as – "35. *"And when Abraham said: My Lord, make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols."* 36. *"My Lord, surely they have led many men astray. So whoever follows me, he is surely of me; and whoever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful."* 37. *"Our Lord, I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive of fruit near Thy Sacred House, our Lord, that they may keep up prayer; so make the hearts of some people yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits; haply they may be grateful."*

Prophet Abraham's prayer was answered soon afterwards. The Arabs' trading camel trains made Mecca a frequent stop over for water and soon that place developed into a city. The foundation to the successful establishment of Mecca was the work of pioneering Prophet Abraham and subsequent prophets took springboard advantage and developed the city to its glory.

The expressions of "sweet" and "salt" are deep-rooted parables seen in many scriptures. Sweet water and salt water mean the two great nations that developed downstream. They are the Ishmaelite and the Israelite. The parable of salty water is used in the Bible on several occasions. Their sacrificial

offerings were seasoned with salt. Even Jesus called his people as the salt of the earth. St. Paul did the same.

The Bible quotes in II Chronicles XIII, 5 – *“Ought ye not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever, even to him and his sons by a covenant of salt?”* These references show that salty water represents Isaac (Angiras) from which evolved Isaac’s progeny of the Israelites. This progeny includes the 12 tribes of Israel. The internationally famous book ‘Jesus in Heaven on Earth’ by Al-Haj Khwaja Nazir Ahmad in its incredible research scope proves that a part of Isaac’s progeny settled in the Sind and Kashmir provinces of the Indian subcontinent, following the great Exodus of Israelites from Egypt under Divine guidance and the leadership of Moses with his brother Aaron.

In similar analysis, sweet water is taken to mean Ishmael (Atharva) and his descendants as the entire Arab populace. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said that a true believer is always sweet-tempered.

The Eastern and the Western nations, the Semitic and the Aryan races or the Ishmaelite and the Israelite are the two ‘seas’ of sweet water and salty water flowing side by side. The Holy Qur’an states at 25: 53, as – *“And He it is Who has made the two seas to flow freely, the one sweet, very sweet, and the other saltish, bitter. And between the two He has made a barrier and inviolable obstruction.”*

This barrier and obstruction was removed by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who united mankind into a brotherhood by testifying to the truth of all preceding prophets and by making it obligatory on his followers by putting faith in them. The Israelites believed in only their own tribal prophets, the Aryans recognised only the truth of their own rishis, and, Jesus Christ came to collect the ‘lost sheep’ of Israel. Whereas - Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) came for the entire mankind and to unite all races of humanity.

The following extract is taken from the Bible, at Genesis 12: 2-3 – *“The Lord said unto Abraham... And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and curse him who curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”* The prophecy in the Bible implies the birth of a nation from the progeny of Prophet Abraham who will inherit blessings and the distinguishing mark of that people will be that they will always bless Prophet Abraham. Just as the Bible identifies the promised advent with the appellation of Prophet Abraham, so does the Rishi of Bhavishia Puran, with that of Brahma; and Zoroaster also promised to the same effect.

Thus the scriptures of the Aryans, Zoroasterians, Jews and the Christians uphold humanity in pointing out the above commonalty with Prophet Abraham. Compare the above parallels to the Holy Qur’an. It was Prophet Abraham who when settling Hagar and Ishmael near the Sacred House (Kaba) laid the foundation of the city there. At that time the area was unproductive of fruit and vegetables and therefore also devoid of primal necessities of life.

Prophet Abraham said the following as part of his prayer, given in the Holy Qur’an at 2: 128-129 –

“128. Our Lord, and make us both submissive to Thee, and (raise) from our offspring, a nation submissive to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully); surely Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.” *“129. Our Lord, and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy messages and teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them. Surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.”*

Islam, as a universal religion, requires the acceptance by Muslims of all prophets who were raised for the regeneration of men. Hence the denial of any one of the prophets mentioned in the Holy Qur’an takes a Muslim out of the categories of believers and places them amongst the unbelievers! Islam recognises and respects the historic existence of Brahma as a prophet of his time – in similar distinction as Prophet Abraham. Therefore, to make a clear distinction between Allah and His messengers implies to believe in one and not in the other. This is expounded in the Holy Qur’an and shows the two streams of people, of those who make distinction and those who do not, at 4: 150-152, as- *“150. “Those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers and desire to make a distinction between*

Allah and His messengers and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others; and desire to take a course in between” — 151. “These are truly disbelievers; and We have prepared for the disbelievers an abasing chastisement.” 152. “And those who believe in Allah and His messengers and make no distinction between any of them, to them He will grant their rewards. And Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.”

Prophets were raised among all nations. The Holy Qur’an testifies at 10:47, as- *“And for every nation there is a messenger. So when their messenger comes, the matter is decided between them with justice, and they are not wronged.”* This powerful statement is further strengthened with the quotation in the Holy Qur’an at 16: 36, as – *“And certainly We raised in every nation a messenger, saying: Serve Allah and shun the devil. Then of them was he whom Allah guided, and of them was he whose remaining in error was justly due. So travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejecters.”* The cosmopolitan nature of a Muslim’s belief is not limiting only to the prophets of Israel but imposes upon Muslims to believe in all prophets who appeared before Prophet Muhammad. The Holy Qur’an states at 2:136, as – *“Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit.”*

To further cement the Ordinance of the Holy Qur’an in acceptance of all previous prophets (previous to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)) by Muslims, a broad doctrine is given that a prophet was raised among every nation. It is reiterated that Islam states that God has sent over 124,000 prophets as His messengers to every nation in this world. No nation has been denied this Divine privilege. It is important to recognise and accept the raw fact that the Holy Qur’an was revealed over 1,500 years ago when many nations did not know that so many other nations existed around the globe! The Holy Qur’an states further on the issue at 35: 24, as – *“Surely We have sent thee with the Truth as a bearer of good news and a warner. And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them.”*

On the contrary, many prophets have served their tenure as Allah’s Messengers but have not been mentioned by names in the Holy Qur’an. This is because the Holy Qur’an is a religious scripture and the names mentioned are only as referrals to incidents or to exemplify an Ordinance action from God. The Holy Qur’an is not a Register of prophets’ names and dates. This is stated at 4:164, as – *“And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to thee before and messengers We have not mentioned to thee. And to Moses Allah addressed His word, speaking (to him).”*

It is noteworthy to underline a few points of differences between the major Abrahamic groups. Jesus belonged to the house of Jacob and was an Israelite and not an Ishmaelite. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was in direct line of descent from Ishmael. It is for this reason that Prophet Abraham has been described as the progenitor of Arabs. The Holy Qur’an records the prayer of Prophet Abraham given above at 2: 128-129, as – *“128. “Our Lord, and make us both submissive to Thee, and (raise) from our offspring, a nation submissive to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully); surely Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.” “129. “Our Lord, and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy messages and teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them. Surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.”*

The Holy Qur’an sends peace on Prophet Abraham and so did Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), in a prayer known as *Darud Ibrahim*. The Muslims say this prayer at least eleven times in their five daily prayers, in which Prophet Abraham and his descendants are blessed, all over the world! Ishmael and Isaac, being sons of the same father, Abraham, were brothers. The descendants of one would be the brethren of the progeny of the other. The term of their brethren has been applied to the progeny of Hagar and Ishmael. The Holy Qur’an says at 25: 1-2, as – *“1. “Blessed is He Who sent down the Discrimination upon His servant that he might be a warner to the nations”— 2. “He, Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and Who did not take to Himself a son, and Who has no associate in the kingdom, and Who created everything, then ordained for it a measure.”*

The Holy Qur'an also claims that it is but a reminder to all nations from the very beginning and was also meant for those who received the Books before the Holy Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an also says at 21: 107, as– *“And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to the nations.”*

And Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is commanded at 7: 158, as – *“Say: O mankind, surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him, Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. There is no god but He; He gives life and causes death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the Ummi Prophet who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may be guided aright.”*

Again, the message of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was meant for all because God's mercy encompasses all and because He is the Creator of all the worlds. Thus Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was a prophet for all nations and communities and had come to remove all barriers and limitations of nationality and colour. That Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) succeeded in his mission is testified by Islamic history and through to the present day. Prophet Abraham laid the foundation of the basic One God concept. Prophet Abraham must not get placed into shadows.

Prophet Abraham was a great prophet whose history and referrals are made 69 times in the Holy Qur'an. The importance of Prophet Abraham was due to his acceptance by all the different communities, especially those who resided in Arabia. They are mainly the Jews, the Christians and the idolaters (most of whom later converted to Islam). Prophet Abraham was thus in a way the link that united them, notwithstanding the divergence of their religious views. Prophet Abraham's religion was not the religion of any of them, notwithstanding the fact the righteousness of Prophet Abraham with those communities. The Holy Qur'an states at 3:67, as– *“Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian, but he was (an) upright (man), a Muslim; and he was not one of the polytheists.”*

The common existence between the three communities of Jews, Christians and Muslims is the belief in the existence of One Supreme God. Prophet Abraham appears in the Holy Qur'an as the most forceful preacher against idolatry and polytheism of every kind, and his zeal to rid humanity of superstitions and other false beliefs, gives present humanity a picture of what Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) experienced as difficulties during his lifetime in Arabia. However, Prophet Abraham went beyond preaching and destroyed hundreds of idols! Prophet Abraham's submission to God was so intense and perfect that, when he received the commandment from God to sacrifice his only son Ishmael, he did not hesitate to approach his son and tell of his intentions. However, after the test Prophet Abraham was commanded to substitute a ram for sacrifice instead of his son. It was only after this incident that Prophet Abraham received good news of having another child, Isaac. It was conventional in those days to sacrifice the first born male. Ishmael was 12 years senior to Isaac and the first born to Prophet Abraham's progeny from Hagar whereas Isaac was Prophet Abraham's second son but Sarah's first child. In the early stages of their life, Sarah was barren.

The above paragraph is proved correct with the quotation from the Holy Qur'an at 2:125, as – *“And when We made the House a resort for men and a (place of) security. And: Take ye the Place of Abraham for a place of prayer. And We enjoined Abraham and Ishmael, saying: Purify My House for those who visit (it) and those who abide (in it) for devotion and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves.”*

In conclusion, the above incident was exemplary; and from that moment onwards sacrifice of first-born male child has been completely prohibited and replaced by sacrifice of best quality healthy animals.

Prophet Abraham pioneered the concept of One God amongst the pagans, and if it had not been for Prophet Abraham for having done what he did, then all subsequent prophets who followed Prophet Abraham's contractual term on earth, would have had extreme difficulties in convincing the pagans to stop worshipping man-made and lifeless, worthless, and defenceless idols.

In giving this article its full potential, views and ideas were considered as assistance from internationally illustrious writers (all late) such as: Maulana Muhammad Ali; Maulana Sadr Ud Din; Al-Haj Khwaja Kamal Ud Din; Al-Haj Nazir Ahmad; Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarti and Maulana-Hafiz Sher Mohammad.

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