

Prophet Ibrahim - 'Ever Inclined to God'

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History has seen many successful people, from leaders to conquerors of large territories to the ones making ground breaking discoveries and inventions to the ones who have reached out to masses through their intellectual abilities. If we carefully examine their lives we find one thing in common i.e. all of them were focused on their aim. All other aspects of their lives were secondary to their goal. As a person of faith I believe when the focus of a person is God and His Unity then such a person cannot be removed from the pages of history and is bound to impact hearts.

Whenever God's Unity or Tauhid, as it is called in Arabic, is mentioned, Prophet Ibrahim (on whom be peace) is bound to be mentioned. Prophet Ibrahim or Abraham is accepted and held in high esteem in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The firm belief of a single All-Powerful Creator was engraved on his heart which made him fearless and brave. Even the strongest opposition, tribulation or trial could not shake his resolve. This is the reason why Prophet Ibrahim (on whom be peace) has set such a high standard of sacrifice for God's cause in the well-known account of his willingness to sacrifice his beloved son for God. The focus of his life was Allah the Exalted!

Though Prophet Ibrahim (on whom be peace) has been mentioned in other Scriptures, the Holy Qur'an being the final and glorious Word of Allah takes the lead by awarding this Prophet of God with a very meaningful attribute. The word 'hanif'

(فِي ح) has been used for Prophet Ibrahim (on whom be peace) in the Holy Qur'an. I found six verses in total wherein Allah mentions this word as an attribute of Prophet Ibrahim (on whom be peace).

Consider the following verses with English translation where the word hanif has been translated as one who is 'ever inclined to God':

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا
قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

And they say, 'Be ye Jews or Christians that you may be rightly guided.' Say: 'Nay, follow ye the religion of Abraham who was ever inclined to God; he was not of those who set up gods with God.' (2:136)

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ
كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was ever inclined to God and obedient to Him, and he was not of those who associate gods with God. (3:68)

and

قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Say, 'Allah has spoken the truth: follow, therefore, the religion of Abraham, *who was ever inclined to God*; and he was not of those who associate gods with *God*. (3:96)

As every word of the Holy Qur'an is significant and as His Holiness Mirza Bashir-ud-din Mahmood Ahmad, second Caliph of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) emphasized that we must ponder over words and their sequence also, that is why a specific word is used instead of another word. When I started exploring the word hanif I found out for myself that the life of Prophet Ibrahim (on whom be peace) was indeed a living example of this attribute referred to him. The way he was ready to be thrown into fire or leave his hometown and his father but not let go of his faith in the Oneness of God tells us why he actually was ever inclined to God.

The word hanif can also mean upright, one with pure faith, the focused. A Quranic dictionary^[i] gives the following meanings for the Arabic root word for hanif:

“One on the right path; one who adheres firmly to Islam; one who is of religion of

Abraham; who believes in One God; one inclining to or having a right state or tendency; one who turns or inclines from error to guidance”

This word hanif is also included in the niyyah, a brief Quranic prayer which Muslims say before offering Salat (Holy Qur'an 6:80) and it is interesting to note that this verse is also a statement of Prophet Ibrahim (on whom be peace).

So the word hanif refers to one who gets rid of other distractions and sticks steadfastly to one well-chosen direction. That is what Allah demands from us when He asks us to be one of the followers of Prophet Ibrahim (on whom be peace). At this point we must question ourselves that when life presents us with fire, as it did Prophet Ibrahim (Holy Qur'an 21:69), wherein we have to throw our soul and let go of our desires; do we have a faith strong enough to make us fall into it fearlessly? What is our focus in life? Is our focus this world? Or are we striving for Divine love? Are we ready to prove ourselves in tough situations that all we need is God's love? This is only possible when the fire of Allah's love being kindled within the heart is stronger than fires of worldly ambitions! Let's fall into the fire of God's love like Prophet Ibrahim (on whom be peace) did and see how it turns into flowers!

REFERENCE:

[i] Dictionary of The Holy Qur'an By: Malik Ghulam Farid M.A. (2009) page 206.