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**The Comparative Textual Study of the “Abraham story”  
in the Bible and the Quran**

**Amira Elias**

**A Thesis  
in  
The Department  
of  
Theological Studies**

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Masters in Arts at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
March 2000**



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**Canada**



**Concordia University  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
Department of Theological Studies**

**The Comparative Study of the “Abraham Story” in the Bible and the Quran**

**M.A. Thesis  
Thesis supervisor: Professor Sean McEvenue  
Presented by Amira Elias**

**Key words for the above thesis:**

**Abraham, Bible, Christianity, Islam, Quran, and Religion.**

## **Abstract**

This study is based on a quest for the unity of faith. The paradigm of unity is derived from a comparative textual study and the correlation between the Bible and the Quran. The cross-referencing of the relevant verses of the 'Abraham story' in two columns is to visually show their shared plot and at the same time the striking differences in their content.

The thesis will discuss the common theological themes in each episode while it will examine the differences in the stories in reference to form, structure and style. This will include analysis of the message in both texts related through the 'Abraham story'. The two scriptures have common prophets and figures, yet Abraham holds a special significance since he is considered, in Christianity, the father of the patriarchs, and in Islam, the founder of a monotheistic community on earth. And since Abraham holds a symbolic implication for both faiths, looking at his story would create a context in which to compare the two scriptures. The ambition of this study is to initiate a first step in starting a future project that will compare both texts fully, with the aim of creating a cooperative and mutually respectful discourse between the two communities.

Endeavors, such as this will help future generations to better understand the relationship between the Bible and the Quran. These kinds of references will be indispensable to future researchers in the fields of comparative religion, theology, anthropology and sociology. These textual compilations will offer easy and direct access to both scriptures whenever there is a need for religious referencing. It will also provide a detailed concordance of a particular subject in both texts. If this approach becomes a trend in religious communication, it would replace the old paradigm of cultural competition and hostility. The older approach in reviewing the other's scripture has been rooted in political rivalry, which manifests itself through religious competition.

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## **The Comparative Textual Study of the 'Abraham Story' in the Bible and the Quran**

Unity of faith is the paradigm of this work, the correlation between the two texts is thus the aim of this comparative work. Both texts present the story as God's acts in the history of humanity and His guaranteed salvation and blessings to those who submit to His divine Will. And the people's conscious awareness that God's sovereignty is their ultimate goal.

The Old Testament, collected by the Israelites from oral traditions and fragments of ancient documents, was written about one thousand years after the Abraham story. The Israelites, in the writing of the Abraham story (from different source documents and woven together in one form as it stands today in Genesis), were interested in recording their own sacred history and their relation to Yahweh and His intervention in their lives. Their focus in the story of the Patriarchs thus was on their genealogy, historical places, and their daily life events. God's entry into history was made the center of their belief. This was expressed through various expressions of the hope of salvation and "the close association of the hope with the ideas of covenant and election"<sup>1</sup>.

While the Quran, declaring itself as a Book of guidance to humanity at large,<sup>2</sup> confirmed the Divine origin of the previous Sacred books,<sup>3</sup> its focus in telling the

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<sup>1</sup> Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*. P. 490

<sup>2</sup> "Verily this [the Quran] is surely a Message to (all) the Worlds" (Quran 81:27).  
"Verily We have revealed The Book to thee in Truth, for (instructing) all people" (Quran 39:41)

<sup>3</sup> "It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in Truth, The Book [the Quran] confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Torah [the Law of Moses] and the Injeel [the Gospel of Jesus] before this, as a guide to all people, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong)" (Quran 3:3)

Abraham story was theological and not historical. The names of many Messengers are inscribed in the records of many nations and many tongues and forms in which their message was delivered, according to the needs of the times and the understanding of the people. "And manifold were the lives of the Messengers, and manifold also was the response of their people; but they all witnessed to the One Truth: Of God's Unity, Might, Grace and Love."<sup>4</sup> The Quranic verses speak of the righteous striving to reach His Grace. the motive for their righteous deeds is seeking the glory of God, to lead the righteous to their noblest destiny with God's eternal unity and harmony. "The righteous persevere patiently in righteousness, seeking the countenance of their Lord" (Quran 13:22), and (2:272). God's Mercy and Grace are vast and all-embracing (Quran 6:147). He also said "My Mercy extends to all things" (Quran 7:156): His Grace is universal and all-pervasive. In the conception of the Hereafter and its Bliss for those who follow the true laws of their being as created by God and as explained by Revelation "He is the Lord of Bounties unbounded" (Quran 3:74). In describing spiritual matters the Quran uses varied imagery which are really beyond description in words except by such imagery "Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them-as a reward for their (good) deeds" (Quran 32:17).

While the Israelite hope remained loyal to this earth, according to Eichrodt, "It was too full-blooded and alive to find fulfilment in a realm of spirits; what it wanted was a renewal of bodily existence. ... in the view of this marked insistence that the salvation was something concrete and earthly it is of great importance that at the same time the

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<sup>4</sup> Abdullah Y. Ali, *The Holy Quran, Text, Translation and Commentary*. Introduction, page 3

*supramundane character of the messianic kingdom was also constantly borne in mind”<sup>5</sup>*

According to the Israelites it is not those in whom power is vested here below who decide the character of the coming kingdom. It comes with the authority of a supramundane, divine reality, leaving human conceptions and calculations trailing far behind.

Reading the different perspectives and points of emphasis of the Bible and the Quran concurrently will enrich our understanding of the Abraham story and the ultimate meaning behind its telling in our Sacred books. Lack of understanding and ignorance about the 'other', as we have seen in history, usually cause fear, intolerance, prejudgment, discrimination, narrow-mindedness, prejudice, and racism, all which lead to hatred, conflict and wars. What starts as misunderstanding develops into an established discourse of superiority.

Over the centuries Islam's authenticity and its scripture have been questioned by the Judeo-Christian World. This thesis' intention is to refute prejudicial and negative thinking that have maligned Islam. The work is done in good faith to build bridges between Christians and Muslims. Common grounds will be reached when future minds can meet in their love for God, and humanity.

This work, therefore, is attempting to create a common reference for both Christians and Muslims. For Christians, it is hoped to help them overcome the doubt surrounding the Quran's authenticity by, at least, seeing it as another source document illuminating the Biblical text, rather than as a jumbled variation, as it has often been viewed. The compilation of the relevant Quranic verses will facilitate future comparative

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<sup>5</sup> Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*. P. 491

studies, since the Abraham story, in the Quran, is not told as narratives in one place, neither chronologically, nor in a historical order. They are referred to as part of Quranic moral preaching. This work will also help Muslims to confirm practically what the Quran states about the Bible (Torah and the Gospel) as having a divine origin. The Quran, is believed by Muslims to be the word of God- in the literal sense. It is eternal, inalterable and the direct revelation of God. It was a dictated piecemeal by Angel Gabriel from an archetype in heaven<sup>6</sup>. Muhammad was authorized by God to challenge his critics to produce even one comparable chapter (Sura): “ Or do they say, “He forged it?” Say: “Bring then a Sura like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides God, if it be you speak the truth!” (Quran 10:38). The challenge -as expected- was never successfully defied.

M. Marmaduke Pickthall, an Englishman translator of the Quran, assures his readers in the forward that not only should the Quran not be translated but it is held, cannot be. And that his translation “is not the Glorious Koran, that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy. Especially when chanted, does this holy book seem to exercise by virtue of its rhythm, rhyme and rhetoric a quasi-hypnotic effect upon its hearers.”

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<sup>6</sup> “Gabriel- he brings down the (Revelation) to thy heart by God's will, a confirmation of what went before, and guidance and glad tidings for those who believe” (Quran 2:97)

“it is no less than inspiration sent down to him (Muhammad) He was taught by one mighty in power, endued with wisdom for he appeared (in stately form) while he was in the highest part of the horizon then he approached and came closer....(the Prophet's mind) and heart in no way falsified that which he saw. Will ye then dispute with him concerning what he saw? For indeed he saw him a second descent, near the Lote - tree beyond which none may pass ...for truly did he see of the Signs of his Lord , the greatest ” Quran (53: 4-19)

“Pickthall, Mohammad Marmaduke. The Meaning of the Glorious Koran, An explanatory translation.



Here Islam does not differ in principle from Judaism, which by its ritual gave its adherents a spiritual and cultural unity, or from Roman Catholicism, which through Latin has given its members a cultural heritage of lasting value.

According to McEvenue, the Bible, “is surely a literary work, even if it is not fiction, or purely literary in a modern sense.”<sup>7</sup> The Bible is a theological-historical statement about the intervention of God in human history.

The Quran, according to Muslims, after its direct revelation to Muhammad, over a period of twenty three years, was recorded by a number of Prophet Muhammad’s scribes, word for word as it had been revealed. The scribes wrote the verses on different mediums such as palm leaves, pieces of wood, parchment or leather, flat stones and shoulder blades etc. But the most significant medium, in an oral culture, was memorization. Arabs of the time had developed high linguistic and specific cognitive skills needed for a culture immersed in poetry. Hence, several hundred companions learned the verses by heart and tried to live by its teachings.

A comparative textual study of the language of the two texts, in this work, was only possible through the English translation of both texts. Arabic was the language in which the Quran was revealed. The research in this thesis was done with the original Arabic version and the English translation of Yusuf Ali as the main source, supplemented by the English translation of M. Pickthall. In addition, a close observation of original Arabic was undertaken to maintain a close translation of the original Arabic meaning.

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<sup>7</sup> Sean McEvenue, *Interpreting the Pentateuch*. Page 3

The Bible was originally collected in Hebrew, then translated to Greek. This thesis used the English translation of the New Revised Standard Version and, occasionally, referred to the New Jerusalem Version for clarity of meaning.

Given the different languages of the original texts, we can not make an accurate language comparison of the two texts. Moreover the style of the original Arabic form of the Quran as has been noted is untranslatable for its poetic and special rhythm and rhyme in each of its 114 Suras.<sup>8</sup> "A.L.R. These are the Symbols (or verses) of the Perspicuous Book. We have sent it down as an Arabic Qu-ran, in order that you may learn wisdom." (Quran 12:1-2) "Had We sent this as a Qu-ran (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said:" Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! (A Book) not in Arabic and (a Messenger) an Arab?"(Quran 41:44) .

Prophet Muhammad was accused of copying the Bible, or that he was taught the Biblical stories by a non-Arab priest. Although "Muhammad had no access to the Hebrew scriptures, as there was no Arabic translation of them in existence in his time."<sup>9</sup> The Quran, itself, also answers in defiance to any such allegation by saying : "We know indeed that they say, 'It is a man that teaches him.' The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear" (Quran 16:103).

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<sup>8</sup> "And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sura like thereto, and call your witnesses or helpers (If there are any) besides God, if your doubts are true. But if you cannot- And surely you cannot then fear the fire whose fuel is people and stones which is prepared for thosewho reject faith." (Quran 2:23) Other verses (10 :38, 11:13, 17:87)

<sup>9</sup> Ida J. Glaser, *Quranic challenges for Genesis*, Journal for the study of the Old Testament. Issue 75 1997. Page 5.

**Method of research:** The study will focus on the text only of the specific verses of the Abraham story in both scriptures as they stand today. The discussion will be derived from the texts at all times except in the discussion of Hagar. Hadith was brought in (Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim) as Extra-Quranic literature because of lack of information on Hagar in the Quran. This method of relying on the text only is hoped to be a more reliable source than the extra-literature written about both texts, especially in Islam, where scholars disagree on authenticity and reliability of certain Hadiths.

The narrative order of Genesis will be followed in comparing the way the Abraham story unfolds in the two sacred texts. Then relevant parallel Quranic verses will be selected and pieced together and placed across the Biblical verses side by side in two columns in a cross-reference style. These Biblical and Quranic verses then are grouped together according to subject. They are given common headings or titles for the points of discussion created to connect the two texts. Creating common points of discussion and cross-referencing the repetitious verses in parallel is a demanding task. At the surface, it is deceptive. One sees parallels in the basic characters in both texts. Yet, finding the corresponding details of the sub-stories do not yield easily to the reader of both texts, given their theological differences, themes, and points of emphasis, in each of the episodes. In order to find if both texts have an underlying common message I had to create general headings, under which I could place the different details. This method of headings made it possible for me to examine the texts and look at the common message, for I would have otherwise been lost in the details, which are sometimes completely unrelated. This method provided a way of reaching beyond the examples and specific

stories. For example, I created the heading “Dispute”, under which I could group all the events of dispute Abraham faced within the story in each text, even though they were very different events. None of the Dispute events related in one text were mentioned in the other. Yet by placing them under dispute I could relate to the significance of these events and their theological implications. And by creating the title “A father-son bonding” I could place the event of Abraham and Ishmael circumcised across “Abraham and Ismael build the Ka’ba”. Thus by creating this title one can understand the underlying message which is: both father and son joined in their submission to God. Their submission to God was what bonded them together, in building the Ka’ba or implementing the sign of the covenant “circumcision”.

**The underlying message of each text is the core of this thesis. Therefore, all the stories, themes and details are looked at from a bird’s eye view to locate the common values in the landscape of sacred texts.**

The message and the basic apprehension of faith in the Old Testament were preserved in its final form despite the additions and the process of collecting, combining and structuring the rewriting of its text. The intention, in this research, is to show the interconnectedness of both texts through characters, places, events and beliefs. These provide many points of agreement between Christianity and Islam: one God, the creator of the world, a belief in the necessity for faith, a future life of rewards and punishments; the immortality of soul; the common use of Old and the New Testament.

Most of the Old Testament characters found in the Quran are referred to in the Pentateuch. But biblical Prophets such as Amos, Jeremiah and Isaiah are not mentioned

in the Quran. However, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, Moses, Joseph, Jonah, Elijah are considered prophets in the Quran.

Their stories, as well as those of creation, the flood, the destruction of Sodom, are told didactically in the Quran, to teach a lesson and promote understanding.

Abraham is mentioned in the Quran over one hundred and seventy times in twenty-five chapters (Suras). Sura 14 bears his name in Arabic "Ibrahim. Sura 10 bears the name of Jonah, "Yunus" and Sura 12 bears the name and story of Joseph "Yusuf". Abraham, Jonah and Joseph are considered prophets, among many others in the Quran. The Quran also refers as prophets, Jesus, John the Baptist and Zakaria from the New Testament figures. Sura 3 bears the family name of the blessed Virgin Mary, "Aal-Imran" family of Imran. Sura 19 bears her name "Maryam". The Gospel of Jesus is referred to as "Injil" in the Quran in Sura 3:3.

### **Unity of Faith**

Although political forces will always create schisms and divisions, an attempt must be made repeatedly to find the right words and the most effective means of communication. An effort to find the common conjunctions of the three monotheistic religions will demonstrate the unity of faith, which links all these religions to One God. God promises Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen.12.13).

God honored Abraham by giving him the title (Khalilu Allah) God's friend, and thus Abraham's faith is praised in the Quran: "Who is better in religion than he who surrenders his purpose to God while doing good and following the tradition of Abraham,

the upright? God (Himself) chose Abraham for friend." (Quran 4:125). God refers to Abraham as 'God's friend', in the Bible as well, "But you, Israel, my servant. Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend" (Isaiah 41:8).

Abraham's faith and spiritual enlightenment is the main theme of the various verses throughout the Quran.<sup>10</sup> Abraham initiates his own search for the True God in his contemplation. The Quran tells of his disputes against idolatry. We also read about the story of Abraham and his plan to attack the idols, which he eventually breaks to prove his point. This enrages his people and they decide, in defense of their gods, to punish him by putting him to death by fire. God saves Abraham and gets him out of the fire unharmed.

Thus, Abraham is portrayed in the Quran as one who has found the Truth, the True God, without whose Will nothing can happen. And now Abraham is ready to receive his mission as the fountainhead of prophets in his old age.

"The heart of the scriptures is a covenant that God makes with the human race. This covenant is reported as an historical matter and the relationship of God to his people is charted down throughout the ages." <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Abraham is mentioned in 25 chapters of the Quran:

(Ch.2:124,125,126,127,128,129,130,131,132,133,134, 136, 140, 258, 260), (Ch.3:33, 65, 68, 84,95,97), (Ch. 4:54,125,163), (Ch.6:74,75,83,161), (ch. 9:70,114), (Ch.11:61,74,76), (Ch.12:6,38), (Ch. 14:35,36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41), (Ch.15:51, 52, 53 54, 55, 56, 57), (Ch. 16:120,121, 122, 123), (Ch.19: 41,42, 43, 44, 45,46,47,48, 49,50, 58), (Ch. 21: 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73), (Ch. 22: 26,43,78), (Ch. 26:70,71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89), (Ch. 29: 16, 17, 18, 31, 32), (Ch.33:7), (Ch. 37: 83-113), (Ch.38:45), (Ch.42:13), (Ch.43: 26-29), (Ch.51:24-37), (Ch.53:37-42), (Ch.57:26), (Ch.60:4), (Ch.87:19).

<sup>11</sup> Akenson, *Surpassing Wonder*. Page 8

**The Lord Promises Abraham, “I shall make you a great nation.”(Gen. 12:2)**

**And in the Quran, “I will make thee a leader to the nations.” (Quran 2:124)**

Chapter 12 of Genesis marks a change in God's dealing with the human race. God chose Abraham, who lived in the city of Ur in Chaldea, and designated him and his offspring as his special people. God would make himself known through them. Abram's name was changed to Abraham (Gen. 17:5) and he was instructed to journey to a land, which would later be revealed to him. That land was Palestine, which God would give to Abraham and his children forever (Gen. 15:18-21). Abraham and his descendants- Isaac, Jacob and Joseph- lived as nomads, much as Bedouins of today. Their homes were tents. The sense of family was strong, with the oldest living male member serving as patriarchal leader and family priest. For a long time it seemed that Abraham would die without a son- in spite of God's promise. But in their old age Abraham and Sarah miraculously had a son- Isaac. Isaac's son Jacob continued the family with twelve sons, men who became the heads of the tribes of Israel. The family stayed in Palestine until a famine drove them to Egypt. There is no reference all through the Bible to Abraham's contemplation about God or his disputation with his people against idolatry.<sup>12</sup> Abraham earns God's favor, according to the Biblical text, because of his faith and obedience to God's Command when asked to leave his country and people. The reward for his belief is the Promised Land and the numerous descendants (Gen. 15:6).

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<sup>12</sup> Although there is no reference of Abraham's preaching his people against idols all through the Bible, (O.T. and N.T.), we find in the book of Genesis his grandson Jacob reprimanding them, “Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, ‘Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your clothes’” (Gen. 35:2)

### **1)Abraham's genealogy in the Bible**

Abraham was born when his father was seventy (Gen. 11:26). The genealogy of Abraham's family is given, in (Gen. 10: 1), tracing Abraham back to Shem, one of Noah's three sons. According to the Bible, Abraham's place of birth was in the city of Ur; ( in southern part of ancient Babylonia, modern Iraq): "And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees." (Gen. 11:28).

### **1)Abraham has no genealogy in the Quran**

Since the focus of the Abraham story in the Quran is theological and not historical the genealogy of Abraham's family is not mentioned in the Quran nor does the Quran mention any city names in reference to Abraham's hometown; Ur, Haran or Canaan. The death of Abraham's father or his age are not mentioned either. Islamic tradition though points to the Chaldeans in Ur as his place in early life. Yusuf Ali, the Muslim Quranic commentator, writes: "Now comes the story of Abraham. He lived among the Chaldeans, who had great knowledge of the stars and heavenly bodies."<sup>13</sup>

**The comparative study shows that because the Bible is presenting the Abraham story under the guise of being historical, it starts with his genealogy and ends with his death giving the number of years he lived. While there is no mention of any of the above in the Quran as it presents Abraham's religion and not his genealogy. Muslims confirm his genealogy, birth place and starting point being from Ur in ancient Babylon, as stated in the Bible.**

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<sup>13</sup> Yusuf Ali, Commentary on the Quran, p. 309.



## **2) Bible- Abraham's migration from Ur: Family migration with father Terah.**

According to the Bible, Abraham's father, Terah, had left Ur of the Chaldeans to migrate to the land of Canaan but had settled in the vicinity of Haran in Upper Mesopotamia. Abraham after his father's death, migrated from Haran to Canaan. (Gen. 11:27). The migration from Ur, his birth place, according to (Gen. 11:31), happened because "Terah took Abram and Lot and Sarai his daughter-in law ...and they went together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there. The days of Terah were two hundred and fifty years; and Terah died in Haran."

## **2) Quran- Abraham's migration from Ur: Theological arguments with Father (Azar) who casts Abraham out.**

Abraham's father is referred to by different names in each of the two texts, with different implications. Abraham was the son of Terah, however, Terah was probably better known by his surname Adhar (Azar). This could explain the reason for the different names given to Abraham's father's in each of the two texts. Terah in the Biblical text, Adhar (Azar), in the Quranic text by his tribal name.

The Quran does not mention any family migration of Abraham with father. However, the Quran speaks of Abraham's spiritual enlightenment, resulting in a series of theological disputes with his father, a pagan whose profession was idol carving. "Abraham said to his father Azar: "Takest thou idols for gods? For I see thee and thy people in manifest error." (Quran 6:74). This kind of argument and dispute often occurs in the (Quran chs.9:114 and 19: 42-49).

Abraham's arguments offend his father Azar, who casts Abraham out of the house. "Dost thou hate my gods, O Abraham? If thou forbear not, I will indeed stone thee: Now get away from me for a good long while!"(Quran 19:46). But Abraham does not give up on convincing his father. He keeps on preaching against idol worship: "O my father Why worship that which heareth not and seeth not, and can profit thee nothing? O my father! To me hath come knowledge, which hath not reached thee; so follow me: I will guide thee to a way that is even and straight. O my father I serve not Satan: for Satan is a rebel against (God) most Gracious. O my father! I fear lest a penalty afflict thee from (God) most Gracious, so that thou become to Satan a friend." (Quran 19: 42-45).

**The comparative study shows that a different portrayal of Abraham's father is presented in each text. In the Bible, there is no theological debate between Abraham and his father. Abraham's father is mentioned in reference to family genealogy and migration along with Abraham and the family. While in the Quran, the argument against idol worship is the central theme of the Abraham-father story. Abraham's arguments offend his father who casts him out of the house. After he breaks the idols, his town people build a fire to burn him in protest of what Abraham afflicted on their gods. Abraham, in the Quran not paralleled in the Bible, was fighting against blindly following the practices of the ancestors without using one's intellect. At the time of the revelation of these verses, Muhammad himself was facing the same problem where his most opponents were his own uncles, and even his protector Abu Talib died without having acknowledged Islam. He had to struggle with the opposition of his clan and tribe against deeply ingrained Arab tribal traditionalism.**

### **3) Abraham's Migration from Ur in the Bible: unto a Promised Land that God will reveal.**

Although both scriptures agree that Abraham left his hometown, each text gives a different explanation for his departure. The Bible in (Gen. 11:31) depicts the departure as a family migration, emphasizing its peaceful nature. "Terah took his son Abraham along with his wife, and Lot peacefully and made them leave."

This peaceful family migration is further explained in the book, *The History of Israel and Judah*: "Abraham's father had left Ur of the Chaldees to migrate to the land of Canaan but had settled in the vicinity of Haran in upper Mesopotamia. After his father's death, Abraham himself migrated from Haran to Canaan. There he lived as a "sojourner" in the land; that is, he maintained his life-style as a tent dweller and resisted integration into the indigenous village-agricultural society of the land. God promised Abraham that someday the whole land would belong to his descendants and that his descendants would be great in number. Eventually Abraham made permanent camp near Hebron and became the father of two sons."<sup>14</sup>

A different reason is conveyed, in (Gen. 12:1), God's intervention in Abraham's move. This implies that it could not have been a family migration but a command from the Lord, who asks Abram to "Leave your country, your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."

These two different Biblical scenarios are given to why Abraham left Ur, in

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<sup>14</sup> M. Miller & Hays, A History of ancient Israel and Judah. Page 55

Genesis 11:31, and 12:1. The two versions of whether Abraham left Ur with his father or because of him deliver contradictory explanations. The version(11:31) not only contradicts the Quranic version but also the Biblical version in (Gen. 12:1). But the version of (Gen.12:1) is consistent with the Quranic version (Quran 21:71), which mentions that God guided them to the Blessed Land. This version also gives Abraham the merit of obedience to God's command in leaving everything behind: his country, relatives and father for the sake of God, which is the central theme to the Abraham story in the Quran but not in the Bible. <sup>15</sup>

### **3) Abraham's Migration in the Quran: His religion causes his persecution- God saves him from fire and guides him to the blessed Land.**

The Quran depicts a dramatic circumstance for Abraham's departure and gives a theological reason for his withdrawal. Abraham leaves his country and family after the event of his people's attempt to burn him in fire.

Abraham leaves his hometown because of his own search for the truth. Abraham disputes with his father and his people about idol worship. In his progressive contemplation about the creation, and his search for the True God (Quran 6:75-80). Abraham lived among the Chaldeans, who had great knowledge of the stars and heavenly bodies. But Abraham through his self-transcendence was able to move beyond the physical world to see the spiritual world. His ancestral idols meant nothing to him. That

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<sup>15</sup> Mcevenue, in his personal communication, commented on this by writing that there is no contradiction, "Terah's family migrate to Padam Aran, and start to live there. At that point Abram received a special command from God to go on alone." The contradiction I think is that the second version does not say leave Padam Aran but your country, which is demands a greater sacrifice from Abraham. The relationship of Abraham with his father in the Bible is that they migrate together while in the Quran his father casts him out because of his arguments against idol worship.

was Abraham's first step in reaching out to God, thus God raised him many degrees higher. Abraham rejected the false gods; thus God showed him with certitude the spiritual glories behind the magnificent powers and laws of the physical universe.

“ For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to God” (Quran 6:79).

**There is no mention in the Bible of Abraham's spiritual contemplation and inner struggle about God, or his theological disputation with his people. Hence there is no mention also of the fire built to burn Abraham.** In comparing the two Biblical versions for Abraham's departure with the Quranic version, we find that the latter story (Gen.12: 1) corresponds with the Quranic version. God guides Abraham and his nephew Lot, in the Quran, to the blessed Land, “Then We delivered him and Lot (And directed them) to the Land which We have blessed for the nations”(Quran 21:71). Moreover, the version of Genesis 12:1 coincides with the theology of the Old Testament. This version has a significant implication since it gives Abraham the credit of responding to God's command. It emphasizes Abraham's faith and submission to God. Abraham leaves everything behind and responds to God's call. Abraham responds to God's call without knowing where he is going. The land of Canaan is not mentioned in this version, nor why should Abraham leave only that it will be revealed to him later. Therefore the Priestly version given in (Gen.11: 31), where Abraham leaves along with his father to go to the land of Canaan negates all merits of Abraham's faith and trust in God. While (Gen. 12:1) coincides with the Quranic text. Moreover the Quran gives details and explanations surrounding the circumstance of Abraham's pressing need for departure.

**The comparative textual study shows that there is a connection between the two texts in spite of the different details of the story telling. Abraham makes a decision to submit to God's will. He is not worried about the outcome of this decision. God will protect and guide those who submit their will to Him and God will never abandon His people.**

#### **4) Dispute *after* migration in the Bible**

**According to the Biblical text there are three events of disputes within the Abraham story: a) Dispute between Abraham's herdsmen and those of Lot, b) The war with the kings, and c) The conflict between Sarah and Hagar.**

The first conflict is between Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's over land. "The Land was not sufficient to accommodate them both at once, for they had too many possessions to be able to live together. *Dispute* broke out between the herdsmen of Abraham's livestock and those of Lot." (Gen. 13: 6-7), The New Jerusalem version.

"The land could not support both of them living together; for their possessions were so great that they could not live together, and there was *strife* between the herders of Abram's livestock and the herders of Lot's livestock." (Gen. 13: 6-7) N.R.S. Version.

In the first dispute Abraham gives a peaceful solution to the problem by saying to his nephew, Lot: "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herders and my herders; for we are kindred. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me." (Gen. 13:8-9)

This peaceful solution they follow and each moves his tent and settles away from the other to avoid conflict and friction between their herders: "thus they separated from

each other. Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the Plain and moved his tent as far as Sodom." (Gen. 13:11-12).

**Abraham faces another kind of confrontation in the Biblical text:**

**b)The event of the war with the kings**

The second confrontational event between Abraham and the people living around him is introduced in ch.14 after reading a detailed description and a long list of kings' names who go to war against each other. Abraham decides to take action against the enemy, only to defend his nephew, Lot, when he hears that his nephew was taken captive. He leads three hundred- eighteen of his trained men, born in his house, and goes in their pursuit as far as Dan. King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim, who wages war against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinhab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the King of Bela. Four kings against five join forces (according to the text vs 9) in the Valley of Siddim (the Dead Sea). And because the enemy took all the goods and provisions of Sodom and Gomorrah, they also took Lot, the son of Abraham's brother who lived in Sodom. Abraham divides his forces against them by night, and pursues them to Hobah, north of Damascus.<sup>16</sup> Thus, we find that Abraham, in the Biblical text, is not presented as the initiator of any argument or fight with any one.

The above two examples support that he was not of a quarrelsome character

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<sup>16</sup> According to the New Jerusalem Bible, chapter 14,"does not belong to any of the three great sources of Genesis. Its importance is diversely assessed: some arguing for its antiquity on syntactical grounds and the authenticity of the names Arioch and Tidal; others regarding it as a late imitation of the antique, since the names of the four kings of the East cannot be identified with known personalities and it is historically impossible..." Page 33

throughout Genesis. Although, he is portrayed in this chapter as a militant combative man, who acts as a commander of over three hundred of his men and goes in the pursuit of the kings but only to save his nephew and the goods.

**The third event of conflict that Abraham faces is the conflict between his wife Sarah and her Egyptian slave-girl, Hagar over childbearing.**

He, once more, takes the peaceful way out by removing Hagar and the infant away from the scene of conflict as Sarah asks him to and God hearkens to her voice.

(This will be discussed in the Abraham-Hagar story, no. 12.)

#### **4b) Abraham departs**

According to the Biblical text, Abraham migrates from Ur with his father and wife (in Genesis 11:31), and in the second version (in Genesis 12: 1) God commands him to leave. Abraham leaves in obedience to God's Command out of faith.

**Abraham, in both texts, is blessed for his obedience to God's command to leave. In the Bible it is counted for him as Righteousness (Gen.15: 6).**

And thus God will make of Abraham a great nation and a blessing for all those who bless Abraham. They will gain God's blessings through Abraham. This means that those who follow Abraham's faith will earn God's blessings, and God will curse the one who curses Abraham. "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Personal responsibility is pointed out here, in the plural reference for the blessing and singular for cursing. Both texts refer to this personal responsibility, a cardinal feature of Islam. The Quran states that on the Day of Judgment each soul would have to answer for its own



deeds: it can not claim merit from others, nor be answered for the crimes or sins of others (Quran 2:134). **Thus Abraham's personal decision of obedience to God is expressed through the Abraham story.**

**In the Quran, he makes a decision to depart to protect his religion- to withdraw from those who worship false gods. God then guides Abraham and his nephew Lot to the blessed Land (Quran 21:71), (See no. 3 Abraham's migration from Ur).**

#### **4c) Dispute *before* migration in the Quran**

**In the Quranic text, Abraham engages in several debates or disputes over the worship of false gods, he argues with his father, people and with the king. None of the above three Biblical confrontational circumstances are mentioned in the Quran (The strife between the herders, the war with kings, the conflict between Sarah and Hagar). Abraham's frequent debates with his people are against their religion and their idol worship. These heated debates offend not only his father but also his whole town, especially after he tries visually to prove his point about the powerlessness of their gods and the uselessness of their idol worship. Abraham, in the Quran, argues: "but your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who created them; and I am of those who testify unto that" (Quran 21:56). In the Quran, Abraham resorts to physical demonstration after strenuous reasoning and debate with his people.**

**4c) Attacking tradition: destroys idols: The people of Abraham's town plan an outing to celebrate a religious day. Abraham declines to join them saying that he is not feeling well, (psychologically, sick at heart at their idolatry). When he is left alone in their temple, he breaks all the idols, sparing one. His people come back to see their idols**

fragmented to pieces, the people are outraged at the destruction of their gods and bring him in for interrogation. To make a point Abraham sarcastically suggests to them to ask the largest idol, the one he is left intact with the ax hanging from its hand to tell them who broke all the idols, since the big god is assumed to be in charge of protecting the smaller gods. His people turn to themselves in shame and say you know they can not speak or protect themselves! Abraham says then how do you expect them to protect you or hear you when you call on them?

In their pride they refuse to admit their perversion, they resort to violence when they can no longer reason. Abraham's people decide to collectively build a fire and burn Abraham. God in His Mercy does not abandon Abraham, who has faith in His power. God orders the fire to be cool on Abraham. Thus the fire loses its quality of burning and God saves Abraham from the fire unharmed: "We said: O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham, And they wished to set a snare for him, but We made them the greater losers. And We rescued him and Lot (and brought them) to the land which We have blessed for (all) peoples." (Quran 21.69-72)

After saving Abraham God guides him and Lot to the Blessed Land (Quran 21:71).

There are many other confrontational dialogues of Abraham in the Quranic text, in various chapters in which Abraham argues with his father and townsfolk about idol worship. Abraham, through his own initiative and contemplation, concludes that these carved idols which are being worshiped by his father and people cannot possibly have the power of creation, nor the ability to benefit themselves or others. Yet the argument given back to Abraham is always: "*But we found our fathers worshiping thus*" (Quran 26:74).

**Abraham's debates with his people about worshiping other gods imply that we are given intellect of our own to reflect on life and make our own decisions. This intellect can lead us to the truth according to Abraham's method in the Quran. We will be misled if we did not utilize our God-given faculties. If we were to follow our past ancestors without thinking on our own, we would be abandoning our intellect.**

**The presentation of the 'Abraham story' in the Quran creates a shift in the method of reaching truth or God for that matter. The story, thus, is about an ideological battle between two ways of thinking: A young man with rational/ speculative/ pragmatic thinking and a society that subscribes to its traditions and the wisdom and practices of its ancestors.**

There is no mention of any theological dispute between Abraham and his people in the Biblical text thus there is no mention of his idol-breaking or the fire.

**In terms of "Abraham and confrontation" we find that each text portrays Abraham's personality and behavior in contrast to the other.**

In the Biblical text, he is not an antagonistic, controversial person or one who looks for fights, on the contrary he peacefully tries to solve conflict- arising situations, by changing the scene. Except for the Kings' story where he is a militant combative leader, in the Bible he is defensive and never offensive.

In the Quran, on the other hand, he persistently debates with his father, people, and king against their idol worship. When they persist in their rejection to see the truth Abraham takes an offensive action against their so-called gods that they are devoted to.

**The comparative textual study shows that in spite of the different**

**presentations, we can still find the connection between the two texts in the praise of Abraham's faith and his surrender to God's will. In the Bible, "So Abram went, as the Lord had told him" (Gen. 12:4).**

Abraham surrenders to God's command asking him to leave everything behind. Abraham, in the Quran, directs himself (spiritually) and physically by going where God directs him to go. He leaves for God's sake (to protect his religion). He leaves his father's house and his people to detach himself from the worship of their false gods. As he argues: "O my father! To me has come knowledge which has not reached thee: So follow me: I will guide thee to a Way that is even and straight"(Quran 19:43).

**5) Abraham is blessed: By God (see previous point Abraham departs).**

God elects Abraham and blesses him, according to both texts, however in the Biblical text, besides God blessing Abraham he is also blessed (in chapter 14) by king Salem who is a priest. The word "blessed" implies fertility and abundance and increase in everything. The Quran shares this definition except the Bible focuses on the blessing being in the number of Abraham's descendants being as many as the stars or the grains of the sand.

Besides God's blessing Abraham, in the Bible, is blessed by King Melchizedek of Salem, a priest of God: "*Blessed be Abram by God Most high, Maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemy into your hand!*" (Gen.14: 19). Abraham submits to the benediction of King Melchizedek, of Salem, and gives the king a tenth of the booty of the war. According to Von Rad, "this implies the recognition of a propriety claim, a sovereign right. Such positive, tolerant evaluation of a Canaanite cult

outside Israel is unparalleled in the Old Testament. Above all, Abraham's homage to a heathen servant of the cult is quite unusual from the standpoint of the Old Testament faith in Yahweh" (Von Rad 175). This "God most high" is not Yahweh the God of Abraham, yet Abraham accepts the blessing of Melchizedek, King of Salem (Jerusalem), as Von Rad explains that "The divinity referred to here is probably the "Baal of heaven," known particularly in Phoenicia but also far abroad. The "highest God" was the monarchic head of a pantheon whose diversity we have only learned to know from the mythological texts found in Ras Shemra" Von Rad continues: "What is most strange, is that our narrative perceived in the cult of this god something related to the cult of Yahweh. Indeed Abraham's oath, to Yahweh, "God Most High" (v.22), seems to presuppose an identification of Yahweh with the "highest God" (Von Rad 174-175).

According to the commentary of The New Jerusalem Bible, on chapter 14 of Genesis, this chapter does not belong to any of the three document sources of Genesis, (The Yahwist, Elohist and Priestly documents), also the authenticity of the names of the kings, historically, is impossible to be identified with any known personalities. According to Von Rad, the story is intended to situate Abraham in world history and add military glory to his other attributes.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore it is important to note that there was a special interest for the inclusion of this whole chapter into the Old Testament. Since it does not belong to any of the

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<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that this was most of what Von Rad thought fifty years ago which has been repudiated by subsequent scholars who have worked out new hypotheses. And that the sources of the Pentateuch are historical hypothesis. McEvenue in his 1999 article "Scholarship's impenetrable wall" explains that "The historical-critical method, though still an absolutely required step in the discipline of interpretation, no longer defines biblical interpretation."

source documents. Theologically it contradicts Abraham's loyalty to Yahweh. We could look for other reasons for the existence of such scenes as for Abraham "bowing before the one who is holding the place for the future anointed one", as Von Rad reasons: " for the later Israelites and Judeans have every reason to submit to Yahweh's anointed and to give him the tenth." (175-176)

Although this passage is part of the Biblical text as stands today, it is a late literary product. Von Rad confirms this: "As the whole narrative now stands, in view of many traces of an artificially archaizing erudition, one must consider it a rather late literary product, in spite of the great antiquity of isolated traditional elements. One such artificial element is the designation of Abraham as a "Hebrew" (Von Rad 174).

#### **5) Abraham is Blessed: By God's promise of a Garden of Bliss to the righteous**

In the Quranic text, (26:87-97), Abraham was shown clearly the distinction between the False and the True. After praying to God for the forgiveness of his father, he wants his own soul to be enlightened with divine wisdom, and his heart and life filled with righteousness. His wish extends beyond his own self to future generations. He wishes to attain the goal of the righteous, the Garden of the Bliss of the Divine Continence. Abraham wants his father and relatives to share in his spiritual joy, so that he can proudly see all whom he can reach, in an honorable station, not with disgrace on the Day of Judgment.

**The comparative textual study between the two passages of Abraham blessings (of king Melchizedek in the Biblical text (Gen.14: 17-21) and Abraham's own prayer, in the Quranic text (26:87-97), to attain righteousness), is neither on the same plane nor it is**

textually matched, since as we had discussed above, the source of chapter 14 is uncertain and the intention behind the inclusion of the passage of Abraham's benediction by the king is thus unfounded.

Theologically, if this passage were to be taken into account, as an authentic document, will lead us to think that Abraham succumbed to the idolatry of the people around him and even joined into its promotion by bowing down to it and accepting the benediction of a Pagan. In the Quranic text, the fight against idolatry and joining other gods with God or Yahweh is the main theme of the Abraham story. Abraham is described as a Prophet himself in both texts, (Gen. 20:7 and Quran 19:41) which makes the king in need to ask Abraham's blessings.

#### **6) Abraham builds an Altar**

**Bible-** The word 'altar' first appears in the Biblical text, in reference to Noah, after the flood, the waters were dried up from the earth ..... ". Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground ..." (Gen. 8:20).

And in chapter 12 God asks Abraham to leave his country to the land that He will show him, Abraham went as the Lord had told him. Abraham moved his tent from one place to another, as a nomad and when they came to the land of Canaan, "the Lord appeared to him and said: "To your offspring I will give this land." Abraham built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him" (Gen. 12:7). "And invoked the name of the Lord" (Gen. 12:8). Abraham went to Egypt in (Gen. 12:10-17), and on his way back

he stopped once more at "the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place where he had made an altar at the first" (Gen. 13:3-5).

And Abraham "moved his tent, and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the Lord" (Gen. 13: 18).

The last time the word 'altar' appears in reference to Abraham is when the command comes to sacrifice his son, Isaac "When they came to the place that God had shown him. Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order" (Gen. 22:9). After Abraham's death the word 'altar' appears in reference to Isaac with the same story as Abraham's: God appears to Isaac, blesses him and assures him of numerous offspring, "So he built an altar there, called on the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there" (Gen. 26:25).

Reading the Biblical text, one gets a glimpse of Abraham in his constant movements calling on God wherever he settled. He camps in cities such as Shechem, oak of Moreh, the hill country with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east . . . , and on the way to and from Egypt. Thus, Abraham remembered his Lord Yahweh and invoked His name while "At that time the Canaanites were in the Land" (Gen. 12:6).

But Abraham does not engage in any preaching of his faith with the Canaanites, according to the Biblical text and to Von Rad who says: "he once more builds an altar and calls "on the name of" Yahweh. That does not mean, as the ancients and even Luther thought, that he preached to the heathen, but rather that in the cult he called on the God who was revealed with his name" (Von Rad, 157).

The portrayal of Abraham as one who keeps his religion to himself, in the Bible, is contradictory to the Quranic perspective of Abraham. (See Abraham's religion).



In a cross-reference to the Biblical 'altar', we find Becca or (Ka'ba or the House of God) in the Quranic text: "The first Sanctuary appointed for people was that at Becca, full of blessing and of guidance for the Worlds. Wherein are plain memorials (of guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever enters it attains security; pilgrimage to the House thereto is a duty people owe to God, those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, God stands not in need of any of His creatures" (Quran 3.:96-97).

"And (remember) when We gave the site to Abraham, of the (Sacred) House, saying: "Associate not anything (in worship) with me; and sanctify My House for those who compass it round, (thereof) and those who stand up and those who bow and prostrate themselves (therein in prayer)" (Quran 22.26).

The word 'Becca' according to Yusuf Ali's commentary on the Quran, is the same as Mecca, he says" perhaps an older name. The foundation of the Ka'ba goes back to Abraham, but there are place associations in the sacred territory with the names of Adam and Eve, e.g., at Arafat, the Mount of Mercy, which commemorates the reunion of Adam and eve after their wanderings" (Y. Ali, 147).

The visit to this Sacred House called "Ka'ba", which Abraham built, is declared, in the Quran a duty on all believers at least once in their lifetime for those who can afford it. Pilgrimage (Hajj) to this place is one of the five pillars of Islam. Muslims feel that what compels their hearts to the present day to go to Mecca for Hajj (pilgrimage at the tenth month of the lunar year) or Umra (visitation through the year) is God's answer to Abraham's prayer (Quran 14:37). Thus, the Ka'ba, the Sacred House of God, (the place

where Hagar had ran between the two hills and the House which Abraham built with Ismael), is found crowded all year round, day and night by pilgrims from around the world. All this to commemorate their faith in response to God's call and in memory of Abraham and his family.

**The comparative textual study shows** that in reference to Abraham building altars to worship God, we find that each text refers to different locations in Abraham's journeys. Abraham built many altars in the land of Canaan, but according to the Biblical text these were not assigned to be a place of assembly for future generations.

The House which Abraham built in Mecca, is found in the Quranic text, designated as such a place, mentioned in several verses, ( 2: 125-134), (3:96-97), (22:26-39). Also "We made the House a place of assembly for people, and a place of security; And take the Station of Abraham as a place of prayer . . ." (Quran 2:125). It is evident that Abraham indeed did remember his Lord all through his journeys, starting from Ur, to Haran, and later in the desert [Mecca] where he left Hagar and Ismael, so in each of the places he stepped his foot on he left his legacy and to his descendants a place to remember him by and to follow his religion.

## **7) Abraham's Religion**

### **Bible- "Shall keep the way of the Lord"**

The theological message through the portrayal of Abraham in the Bible and the Quran is the same. But in the Old Testament, the possession of the land of Canaan and the numerous descendants were the promise to the patriarchs. Abraham was chosen by God to preach to his household, descendants and people. This is found in both texts.

In the Bible: "For I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice" and if this righteousness was done, then Abraham would be rewarded: "So that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him" (Gen. 18:19).

Abraham was chosen by God also in the Quran: "God did choose the family of Abraham above all people. . ." (Quran 3:33), and "Who is better in religion than he who surrenders his purpose to God while doing good and following the tradition of Abraham, the upright? God (Himself) chose Abraham for friend" (Quran 4:125), and "Abraham was indeed a model, devoutly obedient to God, and true in faith, and he joined no gods with God: He showed his gratitude for the favors of God, Who chose him, and guided him to a Straight Way" (Quran 16:120-121).

**But, in the Biblical text, there is no trace of any of Abraham's preaching his children or household to keep the way of the Lord within the 'Abraham story'.**

Instead, we find frequent mentions of Abraham's rewards in terms of descendants and land and only a glimpse of his call and mission. That is why it is essential to read both texts in order to acquire a broader concept of the Abraham story by combining the two perspectives. The reader will not only get a fuller understanding of the meaning of the story but certain verses will gain new meanings in projecting the central theme and message of the story telling. Thus we read in the Bible " that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18:19 ). The process and method of this teaching is only found in the Quranic text. Only in the Quran we find that Abraham did indeed teach his children the right religion and did indeed engage in

theological debates against idolatry. According to the Quran, the chain of prophets from Abraham's descendants continued the same message after Abraham. Jacob at his death bed also charged his children to keep the way of the Lord (Quran 2: 133). Thus Abraham indeed deserved the rank of righteousness with God for his work, mentioned in the Bible: "by doing righteousness and justice" (Gen. 18:19) and rightly was he to be rewarded in this life and the afterlife. And whosoever follows Abraham's religion will be blessed as God has promised, "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Abraham's faith and unquestioning obedience and submission to God is thus revealed by a closer look into the Abraham's story in Genesis. In the Bible Abraham does as he is commanded by Yahweh, he is an obedient servant of the Lord, he does what he is asked to do without questioning the reason behind the command.

However, Abraham, in the Bible, is frequently reminded of the reward, in terms of Possessions, Land and numerous descendants who are promised to be as many as the stars, if he can count them! Abraham is presented as one who is annoyed with God when he receives yet another promise that the land will be given to him and his descendants, thus he objects saying "what use are your gifts; as I am going on my way childless? Since you have given me no offspring!" (Gen.15: 1-4).

The Quran warns against the love of accumulating wealth and sons: "Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world; but the things that endure, "good deeds", are best in the sight of thy Lord as rewards" (Quran 18:46).

Therefore, the Quran has no mention of any wealth that Abraham possessed

during his life time. Instead we have Abraham's diligent praying to God: "Our Lord! And make us submissive to Thy will and of our seed a nation submissive unto Thee, and show us our places for the celebration of (due) rites and turn unto us (in Mercy). For Thou, only Thou, art the relenting, the Merciful. Our Lord! And send amongst them an Apostle of their own, who shall rehearse Thy Signs, and instruct them in the Scripture and Wisdom, and sanctify them. For Thou art the Mighty, the Wise" (Quran 2:128).

Comparing the mode Abraham addresses God in the above two examples one will notice the striking difference in each text's presentation of Abraham. In the Quran he speaks to God with humility asking for :Guidance to be more submissive, to show him the right way to worship (due rites). While in the Bible Abraham questions God's gifts by saying: what use are your gifts since you have given me no children? (Gen. 15:2)

The Quran sets Abraham's faith as an example for the believers saying "And who forsaketh the religion of Abraham save him who befooleth himself? Verily We chose him in the world, and in the Hereafter he is among the righteous. When his Lord said unto him: Surrender! He said: I have surrendered to the Lord of the Worlds" (Quran 2:130-131).

### **Three key words in understanding the Abraham story in Genesis:**

#### **Seed, Land and Covenant**

##### **a) The word 'Seed'**

The first time Abraham is introduced in the text is in reference to childbearing; his own birth: "Terah begot Abram" or as it is introduced "Now these are the descendants of Terah...." (Gen.11:26).

The introduction of Sarai for the first time after the migration, also is in reference to childbearing "Sarai was barren. she had no child" (Gen. 11:30). Abraham is rewarded by countless descendants when God commands Abraham "get out of thy country" in (Gen. 12:1), Abraham obeys leaving his family and country behind without asking any questions. His immediate reward is also in terms of multiplying his seed. God will make him a great nation, and reward him by giving him many children. (Gen. 12:1-3). This is mentioned again in (Gen. 12:7) he is told "to your offspring I will give this land". After Abraham's "return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him" (Gen. 14:17), the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision telling him: "Your reward shall be very great" (Gen. 15: 1). According to the Biblical text, the only thing Abraham knew as a reward from the Lord was children! Therefore he asks: "what will you give me, for I continue childless..." (Gen. 15:2), and his doubt or displeasure is demonstrated again by repeating it in the next verse: "You have given me no offspring" (Gen. 15:3).<sup>18</sup> But the word of the Lord came to him: "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them so shall your descendants be" (Gen. 15: 5). Here Abraham is relieved and "he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6).

Von Rad comments on the importance of verse 15:6 and its theological implications by pointing out that: "The narrator leaves the stargazing man, and turns to the reader, to whom he communicates theological opinions of great theological

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<sup>18</sup> The repetition of the same statement in two verses could be the result of the Yahwist and the Elohist narratives put together. (Source: The commentary of The New Jerusalem Bible, p.33)

compactness, without describing the actual occurrence upon which these opinions are founded, either in the case of Abraham or in the case of Yahweh" (Von Rad, 179).

**b) The second central key word in the Abraham's story is 'Land':**

**Abraham is rewarded for righteousness by giving him land to inherit.**

Emphasis on land appears as the story starts with Abraham's place of birth and migration "and Haran died in the land of his birth in Ur of the Chaldeans" (Genesis 11:28). Then "They went forth...from Ur...into the land of Canaan...and unto Haran and dwelt there...and Terah died in Haran"( Gen. 11:31-32). God orders Abraham to leave his country (land) and "Unto a land that I will show thee"( Gen. 12:1). "Abraham departed, as the Lord spoken to him [in obedience] and he departed out of Haran" (Genesis 12:4). "Unto the land of Canaan" (Gen.12: 5). "Passed through the land unto a place of Shechem, unto plain of Moreh and Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12:6). Abraham separates from his nephew Lot over strife between their herdsmen **over land**, and as "Abraham settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the Plain...as far as Sodom" (Gen. 13:12). The Lord said to Abraham, " Raise your eyes now, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever" (Gen. 13:14-15).

When the Lord reminds Abraham, "I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess" (Gen. 15:7), Abraham wonders: "how am I to know that I shall possess it?" (Gen. 15:8). Abraham performs the ritual of offering the animals in sacrifice to the Lord, as the Lord had asked him to do. And a deep sleep fell

upon him: "The Lord said to Abram, "Know this for certain that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs" (Gen. 15:13), after the smoking fire consumes the offering, as a sign of God's acceptance of the offering; on that day the Lord makes a covenant with Abram, saying, "to your descendants I give this land...." (Gen. 15:18). (Yet the text presents the predicament and paradox by introducing Sarai as one who "bore him no children..." (Gen. 16:1). And thus starts the Sarah-Hagar saga.)

**c)The third central key word in the Abraham's story is the word 'covenant' (See God's covenant with Abraham no. 9).**

God enters into a covenant with Abraham to ensure him of the possession of "land: "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, To your descendants I give this land" (Gen. 15:18) God demands of Abraham to leave his country in (Gen. 12:1-2): Abraham's reward for obedience is that land will be given to his offspring.

**In the following verse we find the connection between these three key words: Seed, land and altar: "Unto thy seed I will give this land and there he built an altar'" (Gen. 12:7) Altar also refers to religion, worship and covenant. The location of the land of the altar is described in (Genesis 12:8, 9). In (Gen. 12:10), there is a "Famine in the land" and Abraham moves to Egypt. When Sarah dies Abraham purchases a land to bury her (Genesis 23). Abraham himself later was buried there (Gen. 25:9) and Rebekah and Leah (Gen. 49:31) and his son Jacob (Gen. 50:13).**

"The importance of Land to the Exiles, the tradition is interested in Abraham's purchase of land in Hebron to bury Sarah in (Gen. 23) This is important for the exiles: their ancestor bought a piece of land and is buried in it (25.9), so they have a right to this



Land!"<sup>19</sup>

## **7) Abraham's religion and idol worship**

Preaching against idol worship is the focal point of the Abraham story in the Quran. Yet there is no reference to the practice in any of the verses within the 'Abraham story' in the Biblical text. However, mention of idols and admonition against their worship is found in various verses among the five books of the Pentateuch. We read about Yahweh giving clear instructions to the Israelites for the entry into Canaan reminding them to obey, saying: "You shall not bow down to their gods, or worship them, or follow their practices, but you shall utterly demolish them and break their pillars in pieces. You shall worship the Lord your God, and I will bless your bread and your water; and I will take sickness away from among you" (Ex. 23:24-25), "You shall not make gods of silver alongside me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold"(Ex. 20:23), "You shall tear down their altars, break their pillars , and cut down their sacred poles [cultic stones], for you shall worship no other god, because the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God"(Ex. 34:13-14). And "You shall not make cast idols" (Ex. 34:17). This same tone is found in the Book of Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

Idols are also mentioned within the Book of Genesis itself in reference to Rachel, Laban and Jacob. In Genesis (31:19): "Rachel in the meanwhile had appropriated the household idols belonging to her father". " Now Rachel had taken the household idols and put them inside a camel cushion, and was sitting on them. Laban went through everything in the tent but found nothing.. . . Laban searched but did not find the idols"

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<sup>19</sup> Charpentier, How to read the Old Testament. Page 71

(Gen. 31:34). Also in (Gen. 35:2) we find Jacob asking his household and all who were with him to, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves". We learn from (Gen. 31:30, 35), that Abraham indeed lived among such people and dealt with others who worshiped other gods. In the commentary on verse 31:35, in N. J Bible, we find that: "in ancient times the gods of each contracting party were invoked as witnesses to a treaty". Yet there is no trace of Abraham entering into any kind of religious debate against idol worship.

Akenson in his book "Surpassing Wonder" not only refers this idol worship to the Canaanites but he writes that, "there were many other gods that the Chosen People worshiped at various moments in their history. Modern scholars use the term "syncretism" to describe moments of polytheism in the Chosen People's history. (1King 18:17-40, where Baal went in test strength with Yahweh). Akenson confirms that "The writer-editor knows of these and of several other gods that the Chosen People worshiped at one time or another, but does not permit the unthinkable thought: that Yahweh and Judah could have lost and that multiple gods could have prevailed."(Akenson 56)

Therefore it seems that, the ancients, at one point knew of Abraham's preaching to his people against idol worship, but since there no trace is left of his preaching in the source documents, they find it hard to believe he did.

Abraham's preaching, as we had discussed above, is the central theme of the Abraham story in the Quran.

Abraham in the Quran does what God instructed the Israelites to do in the book of Exodus before entering into Canaan: "You shall not bow down to their gods or worship

them or follow their practices, but you shall utterly demolish them and break their pillars in pieces" ( Ex. 23: 24). <sup>20</sup>And in Deut. 7:5: "this is how you must deal with them: break down their alters, smash their pillars, hew down their sacred poles, and burn their idols with fire."

**7) Abraham's Religion in the Quran is referred to as one who was not of the idolaters, Joined no gods with God.**

According to the Quran, "Abraham was a nation obedient to God, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters; thankful for His bounties; He chose him and He guided him unto a straight path. And We gave him good in the world, and in the Hereafter he is among the righteous. And afterward We inspired thee (Muhammad, saying): Follow the religion of Abraham, as one by nature upright. He was not of the idolaters" (Quran 16:120-123).

Furthermore, Abraham is described in the Quran as righteous, a model for believers, a pattern, an example to reflect on, devoutly obedient to God. Pure and true in faith. Thus the central theme of the Abraham story in the Quranic text is Abraham's faith and his debates with his people against idol worship. He engages in many theological disputes with his people. Abraham as a young man goes through inner struggle in search of the True God. He contemplates and ponders over the stars, and speculates, whether any of these marvelous heavenly bodies could really be his god!

But as Abraham watches each heavenly body disappear (stars, moon and the sun)

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<sup>20</sup> Although there is no mention of Abraham's preaching against idol worship, there are many Biblical verses against idol worship: Gen. 31:30, 32, Gen. 35:2, 4, Ex. 18:11, 20:3, 20:23, 22:28, 23:13, 23:24, 32:33, 32:1,4,7-8, 31, 34:13, 15, 16, 17. Deut. 7:5, 7:25, 11:34, 28:17-18, Lev. 26:30.

he figures that these temporary things could not be his God. His God must be much greater. "Thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty: ...And when it set he exclaimed: O my people! I am indeed free from all that you associate (with Him). I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not of the idolaters. His people argued with him. He said: Dispute you with me concerning God when He hath guided me? I fear not at all that which you set up beside Him unless my Lord willeth ought. My Lord includeth all things in His knowledge.... Those who believe and obscure not their belief by wrongdoing, theirs is safety; and they are rightly guided. That is Our argument. We gave it unto Abraham against his folk. We raise unto degrees of wisdom whom We will. Indeed thy Lord is Wise, Aware"(Quran 6:75- 83).

#### **7) Abraham's religion- another theological argument: with the king**

**Quran-** Abraham's argument with king Nimrud in the Quran, is about the power of causing life and death: The king says to Abraham, "You claim your God gives life and causes death? Well so do I. Abraham tells the king, 'my God brings the sun from the East bring it from the West.' The king is dumfounded." "Hast thou not turned thy vision to one who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because God had granted him power? Abraham said; "My Lord is He who giveth life and death." He said:" "I give life and death." Said Abraham:" But it is God that causeth the sun to rise from the East; do thou then cause it to rise from the West?" Thus was he confounded who (in arrogance) rejected Faith. Nor doth God give guidance to a people unjust" (Quran 2:258).

**Bible-** In the Bible the name Nimrud is mentioned in (Gen. 10: 8) as a great

warrior and a mighty hunter in the eyes of Yahweh. The mainstays of his empire were Babel, Erech and Accad, and he built Nineveh.

No theological message is attached to king Nimrud in the Biblical text- there is no argument between him and Abraham about God.

The New Jerusalem Bible commentary refers to Nimrud as "A character of popular story (v. 9 records a proverb) derived from a Mesopotamian hero of uncertain identity. Accad: a town situated near the site of Babylon. The name is here used to indicate the southern region of lower Mesopotamia as opposed to the land of Sumer which lies further south; more commonly it indicates the language and Semitic population of the southern region as distinct from Sumerians....."<sup>21</sup>

The name Nimrud is mentioned in the Bible under the heading of 'The peopling of the earth', listing the genealogy of Noah's descendants. According to this list; king Nimrud is one of Noah's sons, "Cush fathered Nimrud, who was the first potentate on earth" (Gen. 10:8).

#### **7) Abraham's Religion: Conclusion to the identity of King Nimrud**

The vicinity of king Nimrud (the southern region of Mesopotamia, located today in modern Iraq) according to the Biblical text and the commentary, leads us to believe he might have been the same king who is mentioned in the (Quran 2:258) as the king who argues with Abraham about his powers to cause life and death, and thinks of himself as powerful as God, since he is in power to give orders to kill whomever he wishes or spare their lives.

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<sup>21</sup> The New Jerusalem Bible, Commentary on Gen. 10:8. Page 29

The point illustrated in the Quran in this Abraham- king story, is the pride of power, and the *impotence* of human power as against God's power, According to Yusuf Ali in his commentary on the Quran. The historical birth place of Abraham was in southern part of Iraq- Babylonia as it was the original home of Abraham (Ur of the Chaldeans). He writes about this verse that, "Science can do many wonderful things: it could then; it can now. But the mystery of life baffled science then. As it continues to baffle science now, after many centuries of progress. Abraham had faith, and referred back everything to the true Cause of Causes. A skeptical ruler might jestingly say: 'I have the power of life and death.' A man of science might say: We have investigated the laws of life and death." Different kinds of powers lie in the hands of kings and men of knowledge. The claim in both cases is true in a very limited sense. Abraham confounded the claimer by going back to fundamentals. " If you had the ultimate power, why could you not make the sun rise from the West?" (Page 104).

Thus the Quran instructs believers to follow Abraham's religion if they are to be guided: "Say: As for me, my Lord hath guided me unto a straight path, a right religion, the community of Abraham, the true in faith, who was no idolater. Say: My worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the Worlds. He hath no partner. This am I commanded, and I am first of those who surrender (unto Him)" (Quran 6.161-6.163).

Abraham's itinerary is connected to his religion, in both texts: Abraham departs from his locality three major movements but in each text with notable differences.

**In the Biblical text he journeys through different places in a direction which God**

will reveal to him (at this point in history neither he nor the narrator know yet the future of the Israelites in the final destination in the Promised Land). In the Biblical text, Abraham's first departure was from Ur with his father, Terah, his nephew, Lot and his wife, Sarai (Gen. 11:31). Thus the first move is narrated as a family migration.

But Abraham was given the order by the Lord (in Genesis 12:1) to a destination which God will reveal to him: "Now the Lord said to Abram, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." This Abraham obeys (Genesis 12:4). Thus the move comes as a command from God: "Leave your country", which he obeys with submission and obedience with no arguments. Abraham continues his journey from Haran after his father's death. He takes with him "his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the Land of Canaan" (Gen. 12: 5).

Abraham continues his journey and "passes through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh." (Gen. 12:6). And 'moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel ... And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb" (Gen. 12:8-9).

**In the Quranic text,** there are no city names for Abraham's whereabouts at this time of his life. As discussed above Abraham's first departure from his hometown was over theological debates. He leaves as a result of extensive discourse between him and his father, his people and the king. Abraham lived among the Chaldeans who worshiped heavenly bodies and carved idols to represent their gods. He looked at life with a serious eye, but his people took it light-heatedly.

Abraham was devoted to truth, and they cared more for ancestral custom. In the conflict he seemed to be in their power. When they could no longer argue with him there remained nothing but the argument of violence, which they proceeded to exercise, being the party in power. "Then they sought a stratagem against him; but We made them the ones that lost most"(Quran 21: 70). "But we saved him and Lot (and directed them) to the land which We have blessed for the nations." (Quran 21:71).

**In the Biblical text Abraham's second departure was to Egypt because of "a famine in the land" (Gen. 12:10). But "when Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful....they praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house" (Gen. 12:14).**

Pharaoh gave Sarai back when he realized she was not Abraham's sister, as he had asked her to say, and Pharaoh's men "set him on the way, with his wife and all that he had" (Gen. 12:20). And Abram went up from Egypt, ..Into the Negeb" (Gen. 13:1).

"He journeyed on by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place where he had made an altar at first" (Gen. 13:3).

**The Quranic text is silent about Abraham's journey to Egypt and there is no mention of his encounter with Pharaoh about Sara. Although the name 'Pharaoh' is mentioned several times in connection with Moses (Quran 7:103-105) but there is no mention of Pharaoh in connection with Abraham in the Quran.<sup>22</sup>**

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<sup>22</sup> According to McEwen, in his book *Interpreting the Pentateuch*, The Elohist wrote a parallel story applying the tale to Abimelech. This story at an oral stage had been told about Abimelech at Gerar and Isaac.. Page 93.



**In the Biblical text the third time Abraham leaves is because Sarah asks him to take away Hagar and the child, and God hearkens to her voice. Thus God commands Abraham to do as she says and to fulfil her request.**

In the Quran there is no mention of Sarah asking Abraham to take Hagar and her child away. However, the Quran mentions Abraham's prayer for his family which he left in an uncultivated land and he asks for the place to be fruitful and that some people's hearts in love may be led to them. (Quran 14:37)

**Thus the comparative study of both texts shows that Abraham's moves, in both texts, were in compliance with God's commands, yet each text presents these moves under completely different circumstances.**

#### **7) Abraham's Religion: God's arguments with Jews and Christians re-Abraham:**

Abraham was chosen, in this comparative study because he is the "father of believers" to all three monotheistic religions. In the Quran one reads of Abraham's faith as the one who named the believers as Muslims [surrender to God's Will]in (Quran 22: 78). Muslims attach themselves to Abraham as the followers of his religion. "Surely only those who follow Abraham are entitled to claim a relationship with him. Now this Prophet and the believers (with him); And God is the Protecting Guardian of those who have faith" (Quran 3:68).

This attachment to Abraham by means of following Abraham's religion, was confirmed by Jesus when the Jews said to him: "Our father is Abraham" Jesus said to them: "If you are Abraham's children, do as Abraham did" (John 8:39)

The argument in the Quran addressing the Jews and Christians who claim

Abraham to be a Jew or a Christian is that: "Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian; he was true in faith, and bowed his will to God's, and he joined no gods with God." (Quran 3:67). The Quran refers to Abraham's true faith before the established institutions of Judaism or Christianity; Abraham lived before their religious systems emerged.<sup>23</sup>

#### **8) Abraham's dialogue with God**

Abraham's peculiar style of dialogue with God, in each of the two texts, is clearly detected here. The passage is a typical example of the different portrayal of Abraham's character, and the different ways Abraham relates to God in each text.

**In the Quran** God asks him to bow down in submission and Abraham without hesitation submits in humility and obedience. He is asked to submit without immediate reward or promise, Abraham submits out of his own faith and trust in God. Thus he is rightly described as a model. On the other hand, **in the Biblical text** although God informs Abraham of a great reward for no merit yet earned, still Abraham questions this reward. God shows Abraham the stars to demonstrate the number of the descendants he will have. God also points out the land Abraham will possess, Abraham still asks how am

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<sup>23</sup> According to Muslims, Muhammad is foretold in Deut. 18:18; "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet who shall speak to them everything that I command." the Quran revealed to Muhammad, has the formula "In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful" at the beginning of each Sura (except Sura 9, addressed to the unbelievers denying them God's Mercy).

And the rise of the Arab nation is foretold in Isaiah 42.11, "Let the desert and its towns lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits" for Kedar was a son of Ismael and the name is used for the Arab nation: in the New Testament as it now exists. Muhammad is foretold in the Gospel of St. John, Xiv 16: "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever." And in Xv.26, "When the Advocates comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf." And xvi.7 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you." The future Advocate or Comforter cannot be the Holy Spirit as understood by Christians, because the Holy Spirit already was present, helping and guiding Jesus. (Source: Yusuf Ali, page 144)

I to know that I shall possess it?

According to Von Rad, Chapter 15 of Genesis is a very difficult chapter for the source analysis of the text: "There are too many contradictions in the chapter for one to think of it as an organic narrative unit (v.5, night, v.12, evening, v6, Abraham's faith, v.8, his doubt which God helps to dispel with a real guarantee, etc.)" (Von Rad 177)

Abraham in chapter 15:2 is portrayed as a skeptic who doubts God's word which comes to him in a vision giving him support and confidence saying: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great"(Gen.15: 1). Yet Abraham questions this reward, in v.2, he thinks how could he be rewarded since: "I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

The same tone of questioning and doubting is repeated in v. 3 but in another form. (The repetition could point to the joining or interweaving of the Yahwist and the Elohist documents together without having to sacrifice any of the two documents). Abraham is reassured, when God takes him out and shows him the stars and tells him: "If you are able to number them, so shall your descendants be." v.5. This comforts Abraham. The narrator comments on this, in v. 6, by saying: "and he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness." Again in v. 8, Abraham starts his doubts when God tells him: "give you this land to possess" Abraham asks: " But... how am I to know that I shall possess it?"

## **8) Abraham's dialogue with God in the Bible**

### **The Story of animals: A Covenant**

Abraham's faith in Yahweh is tested here, (Gen. 15:6-9), as there is a delay in the

fulfillment of the promise. When Yahweh tells him: "Look up at the sky and count the stars if you can. Just so will your descendants be ...I am Yahweh ..to give you this country as your possession." But Abraham needed some assurance: "How can I know that I shall possess it?" Then God asks Abraham in a vision to bring a heifer, goat, ram and the Birds (turtledove and a pigeon) to show Abraham that God will give him the land, (the covenant) and after Abraham to his countless descendants: "To your descendants I give this country, from the river of Egypt to the great River, the River Euphrates..."

This, Abraham believed as an act of faith since he had no children yet. According to the Bible God did fulfil His promise to Abraham by giving the land to his descendants (Gen 15:18). In the Biblical text (Gen. 15:6-9), Abraham performs the ritual of cutting the animals in half as a sign to enter into a covenant with God. This was an ancient custom of treaties between two contracting parties, with the implication that the destiny of the one who breaks the contract should be as the animals; cut in half. But this is not explained in the passage itself, nor it is alluded to for the reader of the Biblical text. The text does not provide the reason why God asks Abraham to bring the animals after Abraham asks God to be assured of possessing the land, "how am I to know that I shall possess it? Instead God asks Abraham to bring the animals, which Abraham brings and cuts each in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. "And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abraham drove them away" (Gen. 15:9-11).

#### **8) Quran- Story of animals: "How thou give life to the dead."**

There is a corresponding story about the birds in the Quran but with major theological difference in its message. The proposition of cutting the birds in half and placing their

parts on top of each hill then calling them back together, in the Quran, is to reinforce Abraham's belief in resurrection and life after death: "Behold! Abraham said: My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead." He said: "Dost thou not then believe?" He said: "Yea! But to satisfy my own understanding" He said: "Take four birds; tame them to turn to thee; put a portion of them on every hill, and call to them, they will come to thee. (Flying) with speed. Then know that God is Exalted in Power, Wise" (Quran 2:260). The story is told to emphasize belief in the resurrection, and life after death, which is an essential part of Islamic belief. God shows Abraham here how all creatures will obey His call at the Resurrection by returning to God. To confirm belief in resurrection the Quran gives another verse as an introduction to Abraham's question about assurance of how God gives life to the dead in the preceding verse.

Abraham, in the Bible: "did not cut the birds in two" (Gen. 15: 10). While in the Quranic text the birds are all that he tames to come back to him and none of the other animals are mentioned. The lesson God teaches Abraham in the Quran is how people respond to his Call on the judgment Day. In the Quran, God directs Abraham to place the birds on the top of hills (Four hills may refer to the four directions of the earth) and by calling them back to himself in the Name of God, it demonstrates to Abraham people's resurrection after death in respond to their Creator's Call. A different theological message is communicated in each of the two passages.

The Biblical text does not indicate to the reader the reason behind the cutting of the animals. However, the reason is explained in the commentary on the Bible and it is

common knowledge of the community who know this as an ancient tribal custom.<sup>24</sup>

While in the Quran Abraham asks God, how He gives life to the dead? The concept of resurrection is introduced by another verse giving the example of the man who passes by a town which has fallen into utter ruin, the man wonders how shall God give this town life after its death? God causes the man to die for one hundred years then brings him back to life. When the man awakes he thinks that he must have fallen asleep for a part of the day, God points out to him that he was dead for one hundred years and was brought back to life. Let him look at his donkey who turned into bones while God kept his food fresh with no sign of age. God then covers the bones with flesh to make this a lesson to all people that "God is able to do all things" (Quran 2:259).

The comparative textual study shows that although the external plot of the animal story looks similar to the random reader of the two scriptures, the implications of the two passages are remarkably different. In one text it answers Abraham's question about assurance of possessions and in the other assurance of resurrection. What is important is that the animals are used as clarification or tools to demonstrate to Abraham the answer to his question of how something is done. In the Bible Abraham is asking God, "How will I know I will possess it?"

In the Quran "How will you bring the dead to life?"

#### **9) God's Covenant with Abraham**

**Bible-** "The scriptures, both Hebrew and Christian, announce themselves as being works

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<sup>24</sup> "An ancient conventional ritual (Jr 34:18): the contracting parties passed between the parts of the slaughtered animals and called down on themselves the fate of the victim, should they violate the agreement." commentary on Gen 15: 17 , The New Jerusalem Bible. Page 35

of history. The heart of the scriptures is a covenant that God makes with the human race. This covenant is reported as an historical matter and the relationship of God to his people is charted down throughout the ages.”<sup>25</sup>

In the Biblical text the word 'covenant' appears first in Genesis 6:18, where God makes a covenant with Noah, "For my part I am going to send the flood ....to destroy all living things having the breath of life under heaven ;....But with you I shall establish my covenant". And in (Genesis 9: 9), : "God spoke as follows to Noah and his sons, "I am now establishing my covenant with you and with your descendants to come, and with every living creature that was with you, birds, cattle...everything that came out of the ark, every living thing on earth." And in (Genesis 9: 13): "I now set my bow in the clouds and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth." In (Genesis 9:15): "And never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all living things" And from Noah's sons the whole earth was peopled, according to (Genesis 9:19).

So the covenant with Noah, the sign of which is the rainbow, involved the whole creation. The covenant with Abraham is introduced in Genesis, the sign of which is circumcision, was to be limited to his descendants only, (Gen.17: 11) God enters into a covenant with Abraham: "I will make my covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly" (Gen. 17:2).

According to (Gen. 17:5), God changes Abraham's name from 'Abram' to 'Abraham' as a consequence of the covenant and 'Sarai' to 'Sarah'. There is no reference in the Quran to Abraham's change of name as a sign of covenant. It seems that this change of name was

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<sup>25</sup> Akenson, Surpassing Wonder. Page 8

the work of later Biblical redactor as Von Rad explains in his commentary on Genesis.<sup>26</sup>

God's covenant is not only with Abraham but also with all his descendants and accordingly the giving of land as well is to his descendants. This appears earlier in ch. 15. after Abraham's performance of the animal- offering ritual, which God accepts by having it consumed by fire. The Lord on that day made a covenant with Abraham saying "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of Kenites, the Kenizzites, ..." (Gen. 15:18).

Thus Abraham's call and God's promise of salvation is universal, as the Yahwist shows, and goes beyond the Israelites in contrast to the Priestly interest whose "Theological interest is much more in the inner circle of Israel's cultic regulations" (Von Rad 195).

The covenant with Moses was to be confined to Israel alone and entailed corresponding obligations: fidelity to the Law, (Ex. 19:5; 24:7-8), and to Sabbath observance in particular (Ex. 31:16-17).<sup>27</sup>

The covenant with Jesus according to the Jerusalem brotherhood led by James remained faithful to the Jewish Law, 15:1,5; 21:20 seq.; but the Hellenists, for whom Stephen acted as spokesman, wanted to break away from Temple worship. In Luke's account, Peter, but even more so Paul, gets the principle of salvation through faith in Christ recognized at the council of Jerusalem. This dispenses the gentiles from the need

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<sup>26</sup> "The word of the covenant has been given . . . it describes the divine promise further by combining a change of name with the making of the covenant . . ." and Von Rad continues, "Originally only the Priestly tradition contained this change in the name. But in weaving together the sources, the redactor found it necessary to change every Jehovistic mention of "Abraham" before ch.17 into "Abram." Rad explains that "Abraham" linguistically is nothing else than a Lengthening" of the simpler "Abram" which means "my father [the god] is exalted" (Von Rad 194).

<sup>27</sup> New Jerusalem Bible, commentary on Gen. 9:9 , d, p.27



to be circumcised and from obeying the whole Law of Moses. As it is still true, however, that this salvation comes from Israel, Luke records how Paul always preached to the Jews first, and turned to the gentiles only after his fellow- Jews had rejected him, 13:5e.<sup>28</sup>

Paul reasons that Jews will no longer have an advantage over Gentiles as inheritors of God's Grace. Through God's promise to Abraham and Sarah all are called, including those outside the law, to inherit the promise of God's love (Rom.4:13-16).

**9) Quran- The covenant with Muhammad, according to the Quran, is to go back to the covenant with Abraham, his purity of Faith; the "Father of believers".**

Thus, in the Quran, God directs Muhammad: "They say: "Become Jews or Christians if you would be guided (to salvation),"Say thou: Nay! (I would rather) the religion of Abraham the True, he joined no gods with God. Say: 'We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes. And that given to Moses, Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: And we bow to God (in Islam).'" (Quran 2:135-136). "So if they believe as you believe, they are indeed on the right path; but if they turn away, it is they who are in schism; but God will suffice thee against them, And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing" (Quran 2:137). "(Our Religion is) the Baptism of God: and who can baptize better than God? And it is He Whom we worship" (Quran 2:138). According to the Quran, God took a Covenant of all the Prophets, this kind of general Covenant is mentioned in (Quran 33:7) where Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus are mentioned as prophets who enter into a covenant with God to guard the Truth.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid. Page 1797

Also in verse 81-82 of Chapter 3, "Behold! God took The Covenant of the Prophets, saying: 'I give you a Book and Wisdom; then comes to you an Apostle, confirming what is with you; do you believe in him and render him help," God said: "Do you agree, and take this covenant as binding on you?" They said: "We agree." He said, "Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses. If any turn back after this, they are perverted transgressors."

God reminds the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) that they are bound by their own oaths, sworn solemnly in the presence of their prophets: "And remember We took your Covenant and We raised above you (the Towering height) of Mount (Sinai): (saying): "Hold firmly to what We have given you and bring (ever) to remembrance what is therein: Perchance you may fear God" (Quran 2:63) "But you turned back thereafter: had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of God to you, you had surely been among the lost" (Quran 2:64). God assures Jews and Christians in the preceding verse of the Quran of their safety. He tells them that: "Those who believe, and those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians, any who believe in God and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve" (Quran 2:62).

#### **10a) Abraham's attributes: Righteous**

**Bible-** Abraham earned the honor of being righteous in the sight of God, according to the Biblical text, because he believed in the Lord, when God : "brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then God said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed the Lord; and the Lord counted it

to him as Righteousness” (Gen. 15:5-6).

According to the Quran, God chose Abraham and gave him good in this world and in the Hereafter to be among the Righteous (Quran 16: 122) and Abraham was in the rank of the Righteous (Quran 2:130). Abraham earned this honor, according to the Quran, because: “When his Lord said unto him: "Surrender! He said: "I have surrendered to the Lord of the Worlds.” (Quran 2:131).

#### **10b) Abraham's attributes: Abraham a prophet**

A prophet is one who is chosen by God to be the mediator between God and people, he is the one who receives God’s revelation, and he is the one who brings the concerns of people in supplication before God. (Gen. 20:7, 17; Ex.15:20; 20:19; Num., ch.11; 12:6ff.; 21:7) (Von Rad 26).

Abraham is announced as a Prophet, according to the Biblical text, in the dream of the king who takes Sarah when Abraham and Sarah go to Egypt after a famine. Then “God came to Abimelech [ king of Gerar] in a dream by night, and said to him, “You are about to die because of the woman you have taken; for she is a married woman.” (Gen. 20:3). “Then God said to him in the dream, . . . I did not let you touch her. Now then return the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and her, know that you shall surely die, you and all that are yours” (Gen. 20: 6-7).

#### **10b) Abraham's attributes: Abraham a prophet**

**Quran-** A prophet, *nabi*, in the Quran, is as in the Bible, the one who is chosen by God to be the mediator between God and people, and he receives inspiration. Some of those prophets, according to the Quran, in addition to being prophets are also described as a

*rasul*, an apostle in that he has a Book of Revelation, and an organized Community, for which he institutes laws (Yusuf Ali 778). Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad are described as both Prophets and Apostles.

Abraham is pointed out to be a Prophet in the Quran among other prophets in chapter 19, Sura Maryam. The Sura starts with the statement: "This is a recital of the Mercy of thy Lord..." The Sura mentions thus Zakariya's prayer for offspring: "One that will truly represent me, and represent the posterity of Jacob; and make him, O my Lord one with whom Thou art Well-pleased" (Quran 19:6). The story of Mary, mother of Jesus is told, and for Jesus: "We wish to appoint him as a Sign unto people and a Mercy from Us" (Quran 19: 21).

Abraham is mentioned when God directs Muhammad in the Quran, "Also mention in the Scripture of Abraham. For he was a man of Truth, a Prophet" (Quran 19:41). Moses, is announced as a prophet: "Also mention in the Book (the story of) Moses: for he was specially chosen, and he was an apostle and a Prophet" (Quran 19: 51). Also mentioned as Prophets Aaron, Ismael and Idris. Thus the Quran refers to them all: "Those were some of the Prophets on whom God did bestow His Grace, of the posterity of Adam. And of those whom We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the posterity of Abraham and Israel-of those whom We guided and chose" (Quran 19:58).

#### **10c) Abraham's attributes: Blameless (Gen. 17:1)**

God appears to Abraham, to announce: "I am God Almighty;" and asks Abraham to, "Walk before me and be blameless" (Gen.17:1), when God makes His demand of Abraham to walk before Him and be Blameless, He reminds Abraham that He is God the

Almighty, in order to be in complete surrender to God the Almighty. And as in (Deut. 18:3): "You must remain completely loyal to the Lord your God." This demand of complete surrender and loyalty is in order for Abraham to be qualified to have the honor to enter into a covenant with God.

The word 'covenant' is emphasized in chapter 17. In this chapter alone it is repeated 13 times which is more than any other chapter in the book of Genesis. While in the previous 17 chapters of Genesis the word covenant is mentioned only 9 times. The word covenant appears in connection to Noah where God makes a covenant with every living creature. The word covenant appears only 4 times more after chapter 17. In which God does not take part in the covenant making. It appears twice in a covenant between Abraham and king Abimelech and twice again between Isaac and king Abimelech. This makes the reader aware of the significance of the repetition of the word 'covenant' in this chapter. God demands of Abraham to walk before Him and be blameless, because of the responsibility of the covenant- making between God and Abraham. The demand of Abraham to be in charge of carrying it out to his children and household as he is told that he will be the ancestor of a multitude of nations.

#### **10c) Abraham's attributes: Upright**

Abraham is described in the Quran as a model to be followed by future generations. He was obedient to God and by nature upright (Haneef, in Arabic) and not of the Idolaters. Thus God instructs Muhammad in the Quran to: " follow the religion of Abraham, as one by nature upright. He was not of Idolaters." (Quran 16:120-123).

### **11) Abraham & the Stars in the Bible (Gen. 13:14-16, 15:5)**

God brought Abraham outside, according to the Biblical text, and asked him to look toward heaven and count the stars, if Abraham could count them, thus will be the number of his descendants. Therefore the numerous stars acted as an indication to the numerous descendants that God shall give to Abraham (Gen. 15:5). In an earlier passage God had again asked Abraham to lift up his eyes and look this time at the four directions of the earth to know that: All the land which thou see, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever." (Gen. 13:14-15 ). The number of descendants in this other passage is indicated by: " as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." (Gen. 13:16)

The point made in both passages is that God will reward Abraham by giving him numerous offspring that will fill the earth. This according to the comprehension of ancient people was probably the greatest reward to be given to any mortal who knew of nothing greater than having many children. This meant, no doubt, for the Israelites status and power for a man to be the head of such large household. We find this in Gen. Chapter 14, where Abraham takes three hundred and eighteen men born in his household to organize and command to go in the pursuits of kings to bring back his nephew Lot. And the importance of children is again evident in the Old Testament in the Abraham-Hagar story how the subject of childbearing is the central theme in the conflict and rivalry between Sarah and Hagar.

### **11) Abraham & the Stars in the Quran( 6:75-79)**

Abraham in the Quran ponders over the heavenly stars in contemplation.

Abraham considers the possibility of heavenly stars being the Creator of heaven and earth because his people used to worship the stars as their gods. But Abraham did not follow the "Religion of the fathers" blindly. Abraham through his own efforts and desire to know the truth, speculated upon the possibility of each of the heavenly bodies being the source of creation, the stars, the moon, and the sun. But when each proved to be a temporary created being Abraham then was convinced that his God must be Greater, thus he finally discovered the truth, he found his True God.

**The comparative study shows that the Abraham-stars scene in each text is told with a different perspective and approach. In the Bible the stars were used as an indication to the number of the numerous descendants that God would give Abraham. In the Quran, the stars were Signs to contemplate upon and to lead to the Creator. For Abraham the stars were an indication to his people's false religion, and Abraham's speculation and reasoning about the truth of such a belief.**

## **12) Abraham and Hagar in the Bible**

Hagar is introduced in the book of Genesis as Sarah's Egyptian slave-girl (Gen.16:1-15). Abraham was eighty-five years old when Sarah, the mistress, gave her own slave-girl, Hagar, to Abraham to have a child. Hagar then conceived Ishmael. It was an acceptable ancient custom for a woman, who could not bear children, to use her slave girl as a surrogate mother. We see this, explained within the text itself, when Sarah tells Abraham: "You see that the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her" (Gen.16:2). But Hagar, according to (Gen.16:4), looked with contempt upon her mistress after she conceived, and Sarah

dealt with her harshly. So Hagar ran away from her (Gen. 16:6).<sup>29</sup> The story of Hagar in the wilderness is retold in (Gen. 21:8-20).

The story of Hagar running away from Sarah is also alluded to in the Islamic tradition by Ibn Katheer,<sup>30</sup> who mentions the chain of narrators telling the story ending at Ibn Abbas. The Hadeeth reads: "The first woman to use "al-mantiq" the waistband, was the mother of Ismael. She dragged her waistband on the ground, in the desert, to erase her foot traces from Sarah. After Ismael had been born, Abraham, then, brought her and her son Ismael when she was nursing him."

The story continues in the Bible about Hagar running out of water in (Gen. 21:15): "When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the shrubs. Then she went, and sat her down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bow shot; for she said, "Do not let me look on the death of the child. And as she sat she lifted up her voice, and wept" (Gen. 21:16).

However, in the Islamic version, unlike the Biblical depiction, Hagar did not resign to crying, which probably is the narrator's dramatization of a helpless woman. Hagar, instead, in the Islamic tradition, used her intellect and had hope in God's Mercy. She took action. Ibn Katheer writes in the commentary on the Quran that Hagar ran up a hill in search for either water or a caravan. Ibn Katheer traces the chain of narrators of

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<sup>29</sup> Verses 1-6, according to von Rad, "are quite theologically reflective and derive from a period when matters of faith were a problem. Verses 7-18 are very ancient tradition from the patriarchal period itself" He also writes that, "Without doubt the two parts are completely different as regards both their origin and their literary nature" (Von Rad 185).

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Katheer, Arabic commentary on the Quran, vol. 1. Page 176  
Ibn Katheer, the classic Quran exegete refers the source of the story back to the sayings of Prophet Muhammad collected in The authentic Prophetic Hadith collections of *Sahih Bukhari*. (The source of the story of Hagar is mentioned in *Sahih Bukhari* on page 450, tradition no.1351).



Hagar's story to Ibn Abbas who heard Prophet Muhammad mention Hagar running between the Safa and Marwa hills in search of water seven times. The Prophet is also reported saying: "That is the reason why people pace between them [during pilgrimage]."

God spoke to Hagar according to the Biblical text directly or through the angel: "The angel of the Lord said to her: "The Lord has given heed to your affliction" (Gen. 16:11). This dialogue with the angel develops further in (Gen. 16:13), "So she named the Lord who spoke to her, "You are El roi" For she said, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?" <sup>31</sup>

Hagar's surprise of remaining alive after seeing God is similar to another episode in Genesis, to Jacob's surprise, "For I have seen God face to face and yet my life is preserved" (Gen. 32:30).

God not only heard Hagar's affliction, as the angel told her, but He spoke to her and she was in shock wondering how she could remain alive after seeing God! <sup>32</sup>

Hagar's encounter with God is repeated in (Gen. 21: 17 ): "God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven...". Such a dialogue in the Biblical text is in recognition of Hagar's individual spirituality and faith in God.

Hagar's encounter with God is an honor not only to Hagar but also to women at

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<sup>31</sup> "The Old Testament has a sophisticated understanding about revelation: Hagar sees an angel (=messenger), but since the messenger speaks the speech of God, it is like seeing God." (McEvenue).

<sup>32</sup> Von Rad writes that according to the common Israelite conception, to see God meant death (Ex. 33.20; Judg. 6.22f.;13.22). (Page 318). Von Rad also writes that this narrative goes back to a very ancient period, in this case, to pre-Israelite period. The Israelites found such a narrative about the nocturnal attack of a god on a man and then related the story to Jacob.

Von Rad is amazed that later Israel found this "imaginative material, which derived from the crude, heathen past, completely suitable to represent Yahweh's work with Israel's ancestor." (von Rad, p.319)

## **NOTE TO USERS**

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large, as it raises Hagar to the rank of saints and prophets.

## **12) Abraham and Hagar in the Quran**

There is no direct mention of the Hagar-Ismael story in the Quran. The focus of the Abraham story in the Quran is Abraham's faith and submission to God's Will. The command to leave Ishmael, and Hagar in the wilderness, according to the Quran, is yet another trial by God to Abraham (in Surat Ibarhim, ch. 14 and 2:124). Abraham obeys God and then prays: "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 so fill some hearts among people with love towards them, and provide sustenance of fruits so that they may give thanks" (Quran 14:37). Abraham addresses God, in humility, and does not blame God for leaving his own child and the mother. He takes personal responsibility by saying 'I made', meaning that it was his decision to obey God in leaving them.

Although Hagar is not mentioned by name in the Quran, however, the audience was accustomed to conceiving of the female in relation to her male relatives, so that they would have "heard" Hagar and recalled her story at the mention of Abraham, even though she was not directly mentioned. The verse in the Quran implementing the ritual of Sa'y is a tribute to her faith. "Behold! Safa and Marwa are among the Symbols of God. So for those who visit The House in the Season or at other times, should compass them round" (Quran 2:158). The ritual which involves the pacing between the two hills of Safa and Marwa during pilgrimage in Mecca. This ritual was inspired by Hagar's search for water

between these two hills and her remarkable trust in God.<sup>33</sup> The ritual alludes to the belief that God will never abandon his people (He did not abandon Hagar and her infant). The Islamic tradition adds to Genesis 21:15 that she does not resign to crying, she never gives up her hope in God's Mercy. In the Bible, Hagar's running is away from Sarah (Gen. 16:8). In the Quran, Hagar's act of searching for water is acknowledged as her individual act of faith. It is integrated into the religious rituals incumbent on future generations to perform during their pilgrimage in Mecca.

In the Quran most female characters are referred to through males, a cultural idiosyncrasy of pre-Islamic Arabia, except for Mary, the mother of Jesus who holds the highest rank among women of all nations, according to the Quran. This is explained by the modern Quranic exegete Amina Wadud in her book, *Woman in The Quran*.<sup>33</sup> She writes that the Quran refers to women through the possessive construction containing one of the Arabic words for wife: *imra'ah* (woman), *nisa'* (women), or *zawj* (spouse, or mate), added to the name of a particular male. Thus we find examples such as: *imra'ah et Imran*, (woman of Imran) , *zawj Lot*, (wife of Lot), or *zawj Adam*, (the mate of Adam.) Others like Um Musa, (mother of Moses), Ukht Harun, (sister of Aaron).. etc... Sarah is mentioned as "*wa imra'ah tuhu*" meaning "and his wife". The Quran refers to her as Abraham's wife. But Hagar is not mentioned by name, nor in association to a male

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33 Yusuf Ali, in his commentary on Hagar's patience in the Quran, writes: "The virtue of patient perseverance in faith leads to the mention of two symbolic monuments of that virtue. These are the two little hills of Safa and Marwa, now absorbed in the city of Mecca, and close to the well of Zamzam. Hagar, mother of the infant Ismail, prayed for water in the parched desert found her prayer answered and saw the ZamZam spring" Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran, Text, Translation and Commentary*. Page 62, note 160.  
 33 Amina Wadud-Muhsin, *Quran And-Woman*, p.32. Amina Wadud writes that the reason for this usage of the cultural idiosyncrasy for women, "demonstrates respect for women". This explanation I find is a contradictory since she adds "all women are never called by name, except for Mary".

character in the Quran.

However, Hagar, not only is recognized by name in the Bible, moreover, she is honored by God speaking to her directly and hearing her affliction. The Bible gives Hagar the rank of a Prophet or at least of a saint when the text quotes her dialogue with the angel of the Lord in (Gen. 16:7). This honor, in the Bible, corresponds to the implementation of the ritual of 'Sa'y' in the Quran. Hagar is brought up to the rank of Moses, because according to both texts God spoke directly only to Moses (Exod 3:1-6, Quran 20:10-48). In the Bible God also gives Hagar a promise of many descendants, in the same manner as he did with Abraham. The angel of Yahweh said to her: "I Shall make your descendants too numerous to be counted" (Gen. 16:10). However, in the Quran, there is no promise of numerous descendants directed to Hagar or Ismael. The only promise of descendants to Ismael is in reference to him being a follower of Abraham's religion<sup>34</sup>

### **13) Covenant with Abraham's Seed in the Bible<sup>35</sup>**

**13a) To be God to you (Gen. 17:7), 13b) To give the land of Canaan for perpetual**

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<sup>34</sup> Ismael is mentioned, in the Quran, along with Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, those who follow the revelation that was sent to their father Abraham. Quran 2:133, 136, 140, 3:84, 4:163. Ismael among those who were guided whom the Book was given: Quran 6:83-86.

<sup>35</sup> It should be noted that my method of study of the Abraham story is to follow the narrative order of Genesis, here in ch. 17, the part of "I will be your God" is mentioned. But Prof. McEvenue in his personal communication remarks: "that this statement is almost always coupled with "and you will be my people" and this double phrase occurs very frequently in the O.T.- and that these are not to be isolated from the other even if in 17:7, only the first is there. The covenant with Abraham is based on Gen. 15, and it has three parts: 1)I will be your God, 2)you will have this land, and 3) your seed will be a large nation. Gen. 17 (written centuries later) is a special study of this basic covenant, and it is about turning the practice of circumcision into a religious ritual." (McEvenue)

However, because this study's focus is on the Abraham story as told in Genesis, and the covenant is mentioned in ch. 15, and 17, the part McEvenue is mentioning is not in the text under study.

holding (Gen. 17:8), **13c**) Every male shall be circumcised (Gen 17: 10).

### **The covenant**

According to Bible (N.J.V.), the covenant has to do with being fruitful, having seeds or descendants and given land. The word seed is repeated 64 times in Genesis, the word fruitful 14, other words such as offspring, (great) nation are also repeated, and the word 'land' 170 times. The Patriarchs' religion did not emphasize on rewards after death. The reward was having numerous descendants in this life, which implied continual existence through descendants.

The Quran, however, focused on Abraham's faith and his devotion in fulfilling God's Commands (Quran 6:89). (Although this is also the message within the Abraham story in the Old Testament, but not its focal point.<sup>36</sup> This is the difference in each text's presentation of the story and its different emphasis). Abraham's submission to God and his continuous struggle against idolatry are the central themes in the Quran. Abraham is portrayed as a role model, a leader for all nations because of his faith. The promise of his descendants is mentioned in the context of keeping the faith, and not in the significance of their number (Quran 2:124).

### **13a) To be God to you (Gen. 17:7).**

God's covenant with Abraham, "to be God to you," in the Bible, extends to Abraham's descendants. This promise, according to Von Rad, does not belong originally to the ancient patriarchal promise.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> (Gen. 22:1, 3) and the editorial edition of (Gen. 22:15-17).

<sup>37</sup> Rather, it is an antedating of the substance of the covenant at Sinai, for the two really old patriarchal promises are posterity and land (cf. the epilogue to ch. 15) (Von Rad 195).

**13b) To give the land of Canaan for perpetual holding (Gen. 17:8).**

In the Old Testament material substance is the reward of Yahweh to the Patriarchs.

Therefore Abraham is promised all the Land of Canaan to be given to him and after him to his offspring for perpetual holding.<sup>38</sup>

**13c) Sign of Covenant: Every male shall be circumcised (Gen 17: 10).**

Chapter 17 of the book of Genesis emphasizes on the covenant between Yahweh and Abraham. It begins by God's demand of Abraham to be "blameless" which relates to Abraham's loyalty to Yahweh alone and the sign of that covenant is the law of circumcision as a distinctive sign of the people of God. According to the Quran, the covenant does not involve circumcision, although, it is practiced by Muslims upon the recommendation of the Prophet in Islamic tradition.

**13) Covenant with Abraham's sons in the Quran**

**13a)** To bow thy will to Me (Quran 2:131). **13b)** God chosen for you true religion (Quran 2:132). **13c)** To believe in the revelation (Quran 2:136). **13d)** Not to conceal God's testimony (Quran 2:140).

The covenant with Abraham's sons in the Quran is to follow the religion of Abraham, that is to "bow thy will to Me" or to submit one's will to God (Quran 2:132). The term "Islam" is derived from the submission of one's will to God. Abraham was the role model in his complete submission to God: "And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain commands, which he fulfilled: He said: "I will make thee a

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<sup>38</sup> "The Priestly document could not leave the curiously broken relation of the patriarchs to the saving gift of the land (it was promised to them but not yet their possession) undefined theologically or conceptually; it calls it the land of your sojourning" ( Von Rad 195).

leader to the nations.” He pleaded: ‘And also leaders from my offspring!’ He answered: ‘But my covenant is not within the reach of the unjust.’” (Quran 2:124) The submission to God’s Will is the legacy that Abraham left to his children, according to the Quran: “And this is the legacy that Abraham left to his children, and so did Jacob ‘O my sons! God has chosen the Faith for you; then die not except in the faith of Islam (submission to God’s Will)’” (Quran 2:132). Jacob, on his deathbed, asked his sons: “What will you worship after me? They said: ‘We shall worship thy God and the God of thy fathers, of Abraham, Ismael, and Isaac, The One (True) God: To Him we bow (in Islam)’” (Quran 2:133). The declaration of this faith is not to be concealed, as it is the religion of God, which is: “The Baptism of God: and who can baptize better than God? And it is He whom We worship” (Quran 2:138). The question then is: “Who is more unjust than those who conceal the testimony they have from God?” (Quran 2: 140).

#### **14)Abraham's sons: Ishmael -Angel tells Hagar to name son Ishmael**

(Gen. 16:11-12). (See Abraham and Hagar no.12).

#### **14) Abraham in old age is grateful for his two sons Ishmael and Isaac (Quran 14:39).**

Abraham, in the Quran, praises God for granting him Ismael and Isaac. He prays: “Praise be to God, Who has Granted me in old age Ismael and Isaac: For truly my Lord is He, the Hearer of prayer.” (Quran 14:39). The above verse does not mention Abraham’s exact age at the birth of each son, but the biblical text provides this. According to (Gen. 21:5), Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born and 85, when Ishmael was conceived (Gen. 16:4). Abraham prays for both sons, Isaac and Ishmael. The younger son’s progeny developed the faith of Israel and after them the faith through Jesus. “The



elder son's progeny perfected the more universal faith of Islam [Submission to God], the Faith of Abraham the true" (Y.Ali, page 631).

**Points of comparison in Hagar-Ishmael story:**

Beer-lahai-roi, the spring of water in the wilderness, in the Bible, corresponds to the place called Becca in the Quran, where Abraham left Hagar and Ismael, the "uncultivated valley". However, the spring of water itself is not mentioned in the Quranic text, but has been referred to as Zamzam in the Islamic tradition.

The well, in (Gen. 16:14) is called Beer –lahai-roi ( Beer is a Semitic word for well), and the name of the boy to be born Ismael: (Isma'a-El ), Isma'a, is from the Arabic root verb sama'a, meaning 'to hear', in Arabic.<sup>39</sup> , also a Hebrew root for hear/obey.

'El' is a Hebrew word for God, which makes up for the name Ishmael in Hebrew and Ismael in Arabic, meaning 'God heard', as the angel told Hagar: "The Lord has given heed to your affliction." (Gen 16:11).

**15) Abraham's prayer for Ishmael in the Bible (Gen. 17:18, 20).**

"And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live in your sight!" (Gen. 17:18).

"As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation" (Gen. 17:20).

The context in which Abraham prays for Ishmael, in the Bible, is paradoxical in its placement within the passage by the Israelites as it shifts the focus and the blessing away from Isaac to Ishmael. Abraham's prayer for his son Ishmael comes after God tells

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8 (In ancient Hebrew there is no other single word to express the concept "obey") McEvenue

Abraham that He will bless Sarah and give her a son. Abraham in reverence falls on his face and laughs in delight. Abraham was amazed for the miraculous possibility of having another child in his old age, but he does not forget to ask God for his first born, Ishmael. "might live in your sight". Thus God reassures him that Ishmael will be blessed and moreover he will become numerous and a great nation.

**15) Abraham's prayer for Ismael in the Quran (Quran 14:35, 37, 38, 40, 2:126)**

Abraham's compassion for his son, Ismael, is portrayed in his prayer after he fulfills God's command and leaves Hagar and the child in an uncultivated valley. He prays to God: "My Lord, make this a region of peace, and bestow upon its people fruits – such of them as believe in God and the last Day..." Quran 2:126). When Abraham prays for his family, he prays for the place to become a city of peace, a sacred territory. Abraham's prayer for the city (Mecca) to become a city of peace has become the center for the religion of peace (Islam). The word peace in Arabic is Salam, which is the root for the word "Islam." The same root word is in the latter part of the name Jerusalem, the Jewish city of Peace. Jerusalem is referred to in Arabic as "Al-Quds", meaning the Sacred territory.

Abraham, in a different verse in the Quran, prays for his son and the region: "O my Lord! Make this city one of peace and security: And preserve me and my sons from worshiping idols." (Quran 14: 35). Abraham also prays for Hagar and her son: "O Lord! I have settled some of my posterity in an uncultivable valley near unto Thy holy House, our Lord! that they may establish proper worship; so fill the hearts of some among the people with love towards them, and provide them with fruits in order that they may be

thankful. Our Lord! Truly Thou knowest that which we hide and that which we proclaim. Nothing in the earth or in the heaven is hidden from Allah. Praise be to Allah Who hath given me, in my old age, Ishmael and Isaac! Lo! my Lord is indeed the Hearer of Prayer. My Lord! Make me to establish proper worship, and some of my posterity (also): our Lord! and accept my prayer. Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and believers on the day when the account is cast" (Quran 14:37).

Abraham, in the Quranic version, is distressed for Hagar and their son and he raises his hands in prayer for Divine care. Thus we find Abraham's compassion for his son and distress in both texts.

#### **16) Abraham's sons : A Father-son bonding in the Bible**

**Abraham and Ishmael are Circumcised on the same day (Gen. 17:23-27).**

Within the Abraham story, Abraham and his son Ishmael bond in their fulfillment of God's command in a father-son project performed on the same day. In the Bible, the implementation of the covenant was practiced immediately when Abraham took his son Ishmael and circumcised him. Abraham's immediate application of the sign of the covenant between God and his people, the circumcision of every male within Abraham's household was first practiced with his son Ishmael. Abraham then, "took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his household or bought with his money....and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him." (Gen. 17: 23). The Priestly passage mentions Ishmael's age at the time of circumcision was thirteen years old. The event of Abraham's circumcision on the same day with his son Ishmael then is repeated in verse 26: "That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised."

The Abraham story makes circumcision part of the primal covenant. "This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: every male among you shall be circumcised" (Gen. 17:10). "Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant" (Gen. 17:14). Akenson remarks that "this is not ambiguous. Male mutilation is part of the blood spilling required by the covenant. This is about mutilating, and thereby endangering, and thereby sacrificing the implement that permits the perpetuation of the Chosen People. It is a symbolic death yielded up to Yahweh."<sup>40</sup>

### **Abraham and Ismael's ages**

The calculation of Abraham and Ishmael's age does not add up accurately in the Biblical text, that is if we consider the text as one unit (and ignore the interwoven source documents, as referred to in the New Jerusalem Bible).<sup>41</sup> The reading of the text indicates that Abraham was seventy five years old when he first migrated from Haran, (Gen 12:4). Then "Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.... when Hagar conceived", (Gen.16:3). After ten years, he should have been eighty five years old, around the time Ismael was conceived. In chapter 21 verse 5, "he was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born". This makes Ismael 15 years old when Isaac was born. So the description given in ch. 21:9, that Sarah saw both sons playing together does not add up with the description of verse 21:14. In (Gen. 21:14) the narrator portrays Ismael as a little baby

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39 Akenson Page 58

40 According to the commentary in the N.J. Bible this story is an Elohist parallel to the Yahwistic narrative of ch. 16. Both are concerned with a well in the desert of Beersheba and explain the bonds of relationship between the Ismaelites and the Israelites descended from Isaac, but the circumstances of Hagar's dismissal and the attitude of all the persons involved are different." New Jerusalem Bible. Page 41

who is being carried over Hagar's shoulder along with the water and bread and sent away. If Ismael was 15 years old when Hagar was expelled then his mother could not have carried him over her shoulder as read in verse (21:14).

Regarding Ishmael's age when Sarah sends Hagar away; Von Rad blames the redactor, who pasted the different document pieces together overlooking age contradictions. von Rad says: "Doubtless the narrator considered Ishmael a small child whom Hagar had to carry, then put down, etc. By Priestly computation, however, Ishmael must have been sixteen or seventeen years old at this time (chs. 16.16; 21.5,P). At the price of a very difficult sentence stylistically the redactor altered the text of v. 14 without thereby removing the inconsistency"(Von Rad, p.228). <sup>42</sup>

The following possibility is worth reflecting on: that Sarah may have sent Hagar away after she had found out that Hagar conceived or right after Ishmael was born. To make it feasible to have Ishmael put on Hagar's shoulder and sent away. This possibility requires that we exclude the episode of Sarah's seeing Ishmael playing with Isaac, because this will not coincide with the other versions. There is no mention of Ishmael's birth, or his time of weaning in the Biblical text (Isaac's birth Gen. 21:8 ).

Another contradiction occurs in (Gen. 17:24 and 25) regarding the computation of Abraham and Ishmael's age. Abraham was ninety when he and his son were circumcised.

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41 Prof. McEvenue in a personal communication on the inconsistency in numbers in the biblical story about Ismael's age writes : "You make this point extremely well, but you do not contrast it with the Quran, or indicate the significance of it in any way. He adds that this miscalculation of Ismael's age is "one way of showing that the Bible is written as a compilation of diverse sources, with fidelity to the sources even when contradictions occur- whereas the Quran is written by a single divine author, and remains coherent. As a result, the Bible needs attentive interpretation, whereas the Quran can be read simply and directly for its literal meaning."

His son Ishmael was thirteen. This is contradictory to the fact that he was 85 when Hagar conceived (Gen. 16:4). If Abraham was ninety, then Ishmael should have been five years old and not thirteen as it is mentioned in (Gen. 17:24).

#### **16) Abraham's sons : A Father-son bonding in the Quran**

##### **Abraham and Ismael together build the Ka'ba (Quran 2:125, 27, 128)**

As discussed above in the Biblical text, Abraham bonded with his son Ishmael when they responded together to God's command in the implementation of the sign of the covenant by being circumcised on the same day. In parallel to this, in the Quran, Abraham bonds with his son Ismael in responding together to God's command but in a different way. God orders Abraham and Ismael to rebuild His sacred House in Mecca, "We made the House a place of assembly for people and a place of peace; and take you the station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We covenanted with Abraham and Ismael 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)" (Quran 2:125).

"Abraham and Ismael raised the foundations of the House (with this prayer): "Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: For Thou are the all- Hearing, The All Knowing" (Quran 2:127). They asked God together as they built the Ka'ba and raised the blocks up for its foundation, they prayed: "Make of us Muslims[Obedient to God], bowing to Thy (Will), and of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to Thy (Will); and show us our places for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn unto us (in Mercy); For Thou are the Oft-returning, Most Merciful" (Quran 2:128).

**The comparative study shows that Abraham bonded with his son Ishmael, in**

**their obedience to God's command. In the Bible, on the same day they were circumcised, and in the Quran together they rebuilt the Ka'ba, the Sacred House of God, as an act of worship.**

#### **17)Abraham's sons**

**Bible- Sarah is blessed by God and given a son (Gen. 17:15-21)**

**Quran- Sarah is blessed by God and given a son (Quran 11:73).**

Sarah is blessed by God and given a son in both texts. God Blesses Sarah, in the Bible, when He changes Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah. God, then, tells Abraham: " I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." (Gen. 17:16) And in gratitude to God Abraham falls on his face and laughs in joy. (Gen. 17: 17). Abraham in his amazement cannot apprehend the miracle of the situation. He asks how this could happen to a couple when he is a hundred years old and Sarah, his wife, is ninety. In the glory of the moment, Abraham does not forget to ask for Divine care for his son Ishmael. God assures him that the son, whom Sarah will bear and shall be named Isaac, is the one that God will establish His covenant with and not Ishmael. But God blesses Ishmael and promises to make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous and father of twelve princes. Moreover, God promises to make of Ishmael a great nation. (Gen. 17: 19-21). Sarah is not mentioned in the Quran by name, but there is a clear and direct reference to her as Abraham's wife (*wa-imra'tuhu*). God blesses Sarah in the Quran.

The angels greet her "O people of Abraham's household! Allah's Mercy and Blessings are upon you. Indeed God is worthy of all praise and Glory" (Quran 11:73b).

We know this greeting is meant for Sarah, the childless woman, because the woman in this verse responds with amusement to the Angels' good tidings about having a child at her age. In the Quran, "And his wife ((*wa-imra'atu*) was standing (There), and she laughed: But We gave her Glad tidings of Isaac, and after him, of Jacob. She said: Alas for me! Shall I bear a child, seeing I am an old woman, and my husband here is an old man? That would indeed be a wonderful thing! They said: "Dost thou wonder at God's decree?" (Quran 11: 71-73a).

### **Abraham and Sarah's beginnings in the Bible**

The Bible begins the Abraham story with the genealogy of Abraham's father and his brothers. Then the reader is introduced to Abraham. He is married to Sarai. They come from Ur of the Chaldeans, their native land but leave to go to the land of Canaan. The narrative does not refer to their life before that. In the Quran there are many verses about Abraham's life before he leaves his country.

The Bible introduces Sarah, by emphasizing that she is Barren. It repeats the statement "she has no child". She articulates her condition to her husband: "You see the Lord has prevented me from bearing children"(Gen 16: 2).

Motherhood was a decisive role to woman's status in the Bible. As the mention of offsprings and names of descendants are systematically mentioned through the Old Testament. "Give me children or I shall die" Rachel tells her husband Jacob "when she saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister" (Gen. 30:1).

However, Sarah is characterized, in the Bible, as a dynamic and influential woman who is in power and command. She is in charge of directing everything her way.



She makes all the decisions. She offers Abraham her slave-girl, Hagar, to give her a child through Hagar, thus Sarah orders Abraham “Go in my slave girl.”(Gen. 16:2)

Sarah and Hagar are rivals because one was barren while the other fertile. Sarah was hoping to be built up through Hagar. But after Hagar conceived, she acted strange and unreasonable. Hagar looked with contempt on her mistress, according to the narrative (Gen.16: 4). Sarah, on the other hand, was full of bitterness and jealousy and Hagar, the obedient servant of Sarah, turned against her mistress with contempt.

Sarah wanted to adopt Hagar's child as her own because being barren, according to their norms, was an unbearable humiliation. Sarah felt wronged and thus asked Abraham to take charge of the situation: “May the wrong done to me be on you. . . and may the Lord judge between you and me” (Gen.16: 5). Sarah's order of expelling Hagar and her child away is obeyed not only by Abraham but God Himself hearkens to her voice, and orders Abraham to do as Sarah says. Abraham reminds Sarah that Hagar is her slave and that: “Your slave is in your power; do to her as you please” (Gen. 16: 6). Abraham's suggestion is a kind of reverting Hagar to the status of being Sarah's slave instead of the anticipated freedom which Hagar could have had after giving birth to her master. Thus Abraham is acting legally to punish Hagar for her behavior with his wife.<sup>43</sup>

Sarah treats Hagar so harshly which makes Hagar flee from the face of her mistress. God finds Hagar in the wilderness crying and sends her back to Sarah. And

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42 Legally Hagar was subordinate to Sarah, thus by God ordering Abraham to hearken to Sarah's voice was in compliance with the law which was binding among the people of that time. However, the law was not divine law but the order to obey it was. The divine law comes to impose it upon its adherents as long as it is working for them. Justice comes from God when He intervenes in a way to balance any inequity done to less fortunate parties.

although God agrees with Sarah's demand of expelling Hagar, according to the Bible, God does not forget Abraham's feelings of distress in the middle of this dilemma. God knows that Abraham, no doubt, is attached to Ishmael, his new born baby at his old age. God, thus, comforts Abraham as well, after He asks him to hearken to Sarah's voice "Do whatever Sarah says, for Isaac is the one through whom your name will be carried on" (Gen. 21:12).

The Sarah-Hagar story is told in chapter 16, (Yahwist source ) and the Elohist source repeats the story but deviates from the parallel Yahwist version where the Hagar's story is re-told in detail (Gen. 21:9-21). However, the chapter opens with the news that the Lord kept His promise by visiting Sarah as He had said and Sarah conceives and thus Isaac's birth, circumcision, and weaning is mentioned (Gen. 21:1-9). According to von Rad, "all sources told of Isaac's birth, of course, and thus this section really lost its own literary unity in the final redaction of the Hexateuch, for obviously parts of all three documents are brought together here."<sup>44</sup>

**The comparative study shows that the Sarah-Hagar story is not mentioned in the Quran at all, therefore none of Sarah's jealousy or her obsession with the inheritance of her son Isaac.** <sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Von Rad, Genesis, A Commentary. Page 226

<sup>44</sup> To contrast the portrayal of Sarah in the biblical text with the Quranic attitude about life, possessions and inheritance one could see that the Biblical text implies that Sarah was worried that Ishmael would have a share in Abraham's inheritance. Thus she asks Abraham to take Hagar and her son away. But according to the Quranic view one would question if Sarah really would worry about material possessions and inheritance. As she is viewed as a pious woman who believed in God, and as Abraham's soul-mate. She would know that this life is a trial of faith, and that material possessions, wealth, and sons are temporary allurements of this world, as described in the Quran. That good deeds have a lasting value in the sight of God, they are the things that endure. She would know that her return is to God to rest with Him. As for land and its inheritance, as a believer she would know that the only land on earth she would possess in the end would be the piece of land where she would be buried.

## **Abraham and Sarah in the Quran**

Sarah is introduced in the Quran as Abraham's wife (*wa-imra'atu*). Her story is mentioned in (11: 71, 73, and 51:29-30), both chapters are in reference to the two angels bringing the good news of Isaac's birth to her and Abraham.

The Quran directs believers to love and respect Sarah as she receives God's blessings (11:73). The theological message of Abraham's faith in God, his spirituality and obedience to God's commands, is the focus of the story in the Quran and none of the details of the rivalry between those two highly respected women exists.

Since there is no mention of any such dispute in the Quran between Sarah and Hagar, thus these two women are admired as the revered mothers of the Prophets who are the descendants of Abraham's two wives.

Sarah, in the Quran, is not blamed for any cruelty towards Hagar. It was perfectly acceptable practice that Abraham married Hagar as his second wife, this was the custom. In the same way we find in the Bible in 1 Kings 11:3, that king Solomon: "Among his wives were seven hundred princesses and three hundred concubines."

It was God's command, not Sarah's to send Hagar away, according to the Quran. God commands Abraham in a vision to leave Hagar and the infant Ismael in the desert as a test of Abraham's faith. Abraham fulfills all the commands: "(Remember) when his Lord tried Abraham with (His) commands, and he fulfilled them." (Quran 2:124) This

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McEvenue in his personal communication adds to this contrast between biblical Sarah and Quran Sarah by saying that: "The Bible makes no attempt to portray its heroes as virtuous in a psychological sense: Abraham betrays his wife, Isaac is stupid, Jacob is a thief, Moses fails in faith, Peter denies Jesus etc. etc. Biblical Sarah is understood as an instrument for God's blessings; Quran Sarah is more: she is a role model as well.

Quranic version is in contradiction with the Yahwist version in (Gen.16:6) where Abraham says to Sarah: "Your slave girl is in your power; do to her as you please." But the Quranic version is harmonious to the Elohist version of the same story repeated in chapter (Gen. 21: 11-12a), where Abraham is compassionate and worried about Hagar and the child, "The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. And God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman . . ." However, the second part of the same verse 21:12b gives Sarah's request as the directive for Abraham's submission: "Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you."

After securing Isaac's place, the narrator gets back on track in coinciding with the Quran, in (Gen 21: 13), "As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring."

The theological message comes to light in the story of Abraham with Sarah and Hagar in the Quran. In their role in Abraham's life, the spiritual enlightenment during his life's journey, and the several trials that he had to go through. In all the trials Abraham fulfilled God's command; he was an obedient servant in his submission to God, an inspiration to all nations to follow. He was promised the leadership of the world, and a leader in religion.

The presence of Sarah and Hagar in the Quran, therefore, is limited within the Abraham story compared to their central roles in the Bible. In the Quran, Abraham and his faith are the central themes in the story where God tells us why Abraham deserved the reward and why God honored him by making him the leader of all nations. Nevertheless,

all three monotheistic religions regard Sarah and Hagar as key figures as the mothers of Abraham's two sons, the two brothers: Prophet Isaac, father of the Jews and Prophet Ismael father of the Muslims and Abraham as their common ancestor, the "Father of Believers."

#### **18) Abraham's sons**

**Bible- Both sons are promised to be great nations (Gen. 16:10, 17:16,20,21:13,18).**

**Quran- Both sons are given Scripture and guidance-Ishmael and Isaac as Prophets (Quran 19:54, 55. 6:84-90), (See Covenant with Abraham's sons).**

The presentation and reference to Abraham's two sons is in contrast to each other. This becomes quite visible when placed across each other in two columns. Each text's point of emphasis comes to light. The biblical emphasis is on the numerous descendants, thus it refers to them by becoming a great nation and blessed with many descendants. While in the Quran they are referred to as prophets who were given scripture and guidance. The contrast in these verses is consistent with the difference between the Bible and the Quran and their focus in telling the Abraham story: The focus of the Bible is the promise of many descendants and land, and the focus of the Quran is on Abraham's faith and spiritual education. This faith raised Abraham and his righteous sons many degrees above their contemporaries. Abraham thus was expected to use that knowledge and dignity for preaching the truth among his people:

"We gave to Abraham, the reasoning about Us, (to use) against his people: We raise whom We will, degree after degree: for thy Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge. We gave him Isaac and Jacob: All We guided ". The same passage in the Quran mentions

those whom God guided: Noah, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron, as those whom God will reward because they do good. Then Zakariya, John, Jesus and Elias, mentioned as righteous, Ismael, Elisha, Jonas and Lot to be given favor above the nations, and their progeny, “We chose them, and We guided them to a straight Way. This is the guidance of God: He gives the guidance to whom He pleases of his servants” But Gods warns even those that “If they were to join other gods with Him, all that they did would be vain for them (Quran 6:83- 88).

### **19 ) Angels visit Abraham and Sarah**

**Bible- Birth of Isaac: A covenant (Gen. 17:16, 21, 19).**

The news about the birth of Isaac is given to Abraham in (Gen 17:16) after changing of his and Sarai’ names, from Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah, “I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her” Abraham falls on his face (in delight and gratitude). Then in (Gen. 17:19) God names the son Isaac and says, “I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.” This covenant is distinguished in God’s choice of Isaac excluding Ismael from the covenant, as it is clarified to Abraham in God’s answer to him when he asks : “O that Ismael might live in your sight!” (Gen. 17:18), God’s answer is in the negative: “No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son” (Gen.17:19).

**Quran-Birth of Isaac: Good News (Quran 15:51-56).** (The story of the angels bringing the good news to Abraham and Sarah is told also in 11:71-76- See details in point of discussion no. 21).

## **20) Angels visit Abraham : A roasted calf and the visiting angels**

**Bible-** Three angels *eat* (Gen. 18:1-10)

**Quran-** Angels *do not eat* (Quran 11:69-70, 51:24-37).(This point is explained in no. 22).

## **21) Angels visit Abraham**

**Bible-** Abraham and Sarah *laugh* (Gen. 17:17, 18:12,15)

In the Bible Sarah laughs twice before and after Isaac's birth. The first time is when the two angels give her the good news to have a child, in (Genesis 18:12). This corresponds to some extent with the Quranic version ( Quran 11:71). In the Bible, Sarah denies that she laughed when God asks Abraham "Why did Sarah laugh, and say 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?" The narrator, in the Bible, comments that "she was afraid and God said, "Oh yes, you did laugh." (Gen. 18:15)

In the Quran there is no reference to Sarah denying that she laughed only her surprise of the wonder of the miracle as she was at an advanced age.

The second time (in the Bible) Sarah is happy to have a child at an old age. "And Sarah said: "God brought me joy and laughter " (Gen. 21:6).

The name given to the child (Isaac) also has the meaning of laughter both in Hebrew and Arabic. (The word Yadhak, Izhak, he laughs). And the name Sarah itself means happy in Arabic.

**Abraham also laughs, in the Bible,** out of joy and delight upon hearing the good news from God about having a son through Sarah. He laughs after his reverence to God and

gratitude in his gesture of bowing down to the ground (Gen. 17:17) “Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed.”

**21) Quran- Abraham wonders and Sarah laughs (Quran 11:71,72,73)**

Sarah is introduced in the Quran, at an old age, when the angels visit her tent, to give her and her husband the good news of a son, named Isaac. Sarah in her joy laughs: "There came Our messengers to Abraham with glad tidings. They said ‘Peace!’ He answered ‘Peace!’ and hastened to entertain them with a roasted calf. ....And his wife was standing (there), and she laughed: But We gave her glad tidings of Isaac, and after him , of Jacob"(Quran 11:71).

Motherhood in the Quran is not seen as woman's only role in life. Contrary to the biblical perspective which emphasizes on motherhood and childbearing in the Sarah-Hagar story. Sarah is introduced in the Bible as “Barren”. The Quran does not strictly delineate the roles of women and the roles of men to such an extent as to propose only a single possibility for each gender. Although she is the sole one who can produce children, it is not her only quality.

Amina Wadud, in her book *Quran and Women*, points out that a woman's child bearing ability should not imply that women can only be mothers. Therefore, a woman's entire upbringing should not be to cultivate devoted wives and ideal mothers, in preparation for this function.

There is no term in the Quran, which indicates that child bearing, is primary to a woman. No indication is given that mothering is her exclusive role. A woman is encouraged in life



to do as many good works as the man and to receive the same rewards and punishment.<sup>46</sup>

### **Abraham and Sarah go to Egypt**

Abraham goes to Egypt because of a famine, he asks Sarah to say she is his sister (Gen. 12:10-13 and Gen. 20:2). According to the Bible, Abraham's continual fear was that kings were going to fall in love with Sarah. Nothing is mentioned about Abraham's trip to Egypt in the Quran. Abraham, according to the Quran, would know that God would never abandon those who put their trust in Him. God saved Abraham from the burning fire unharmed! The Elohist in his rewriting of this story wanted to relay the same message about Abraham. That God would not abandon His people, He came to the rescue of Sarah. God sent a terrible disease on the King and the people of the palace, because he had taken Sarai (Gen. 12:17).<sup>47</sup>

**Abraham's wealth:** From Egypt, Abraham and Sarah go to the Southern part of Canaan. We are reminded of Abraham's wealth, "Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold"(Gen.13:2) Extended wealth and numerous cattle were the cause of quarrels between the herdsmen of Abraham and those of Lot's over land. Abraham suggests that they should separate..(Gen. 13:5-9). No dispute about land is mentioned anywhere in the Quran or the Islamic traditions. Wealth and land are not the focus of the Abraham story

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45 "And their Lord has accepted of them, and answered them;"Never will I permit to be lost the work of any of you, be you male or female: you are from each other: those who have left their homes, or been driven out from there, or undergone harm in My Cause, or fought or been slain, surely, I will blot out from them their iniquities and admit them into gardens with rivers flowing beneath: a reward from the Presence of God, and from His Presence is the best of rewards." (Quran 3:195)

46 According to McEvenue this incident of Abraham and Sarah in Egypt originally, at an oral stage, was about Isaac and Abimelech at Gerar and not Abraham: "The Yahwist retained this oral tradition (Gen. 26), and also wrote a parallel, applying the tale to Abraham and Egypt (Gen. 12). And now the Elohist has created a further parallel version, this time about Abraham at Gerar. He[the Elohist] wanted to retain the Yahwist text, but compensate for some of its implications." McEvenue, *Interpreting the Pentateuch*. Page 93.

or any of the stories told about other prophets in the Quran.

## **22) Angels bring news about Sodom**

**Bible- Angels bring news about Sodom (Gen. 18:16-23).**

**Quran- Angels bring news about township (Quran 29:31-32).**

The Abraham-Lot story, in the Bible, corresponds to a great deal with the Quranic version, with few points of differences, which will be mentioned as the story unfolds. Lot is connected with Abraham from the beginning of the story in both texts.

In the Bible, Lot's name appears alongside Abraham's when Abraham's genealogy is first introduced to the reader in (Gen 11:27). No genealogy is given in the Quran. However, Lot's name is mentioned when Abraham leaves his hometown after the fire incident.

"And We delivered him and Lot, and directed them to the land which We have blessed for the nations" (Quran. 21:71). Abraham and Lot are together in the beginning of the story in both texts.

**The second and third appearance of Lot with Abraham in the Biblical text is not shared with the Quran.** When "Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb" (Gen. 13:1). And Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold." (Gen.13:2). "And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them living together; for their possessions were so great that they could not live together, and there was strife between the herders of Abram's livestock and the herders of Lot's livestock" (Gen.13:5). Abraham suggests their separation to avoid shortage of land for the livestock. Lot chose the plain of Jordan and Abraham settled in the land of Canaan (Gen.13:8).

The narrator comments, at this point, about the people of Sodom and writes: "[they] were wicked, great sinners against the Lord" (Gen 13:13). Lot's captivity and rescue is mentioned in connection with Abraham in the next chapter: "When Abraham heard that his nephew had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan" (Gen. 14:14). Abraham was successful and "he brought back his nephew Lot with his goods and the women and the people" (Gen.14:16). The two incidents of the herders' strife and the war with kings are typical to the Bible. The Quran does not mention any of these events. When the angels came to give Abraham the Good News about Isaac, they told him about God's plan to destroy Sodom. This part of the story, to some extent, is the same in the Quran save the inner thoughts of God talking to Himself "Should I hide this from Abraham" in (Gen. 18:17). God, in the Quran, had already made a decision to destroy Sodom when Abraham tries to plead on their behalf in both texts.<sup>48</sup> In the Quran, God responds: "O Abraham! Seek not this. The decree of thy Lord has gone forth: for them there comes a penalty that cannot be turned back" (Quran 11:76). In the Bible, there is a difference in God's attitude. He had not made a decision regarding the town. He even wanted to verify the cry of the angels. "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know" (Gen. 18: 21).

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47 The power of intercession on behalf of their people is granted to Prophets through their prayer for the people according to both texts.

## **22) Angels bring news about township (Quran 29:31-32)**

In the Quran, unlike the Bible, only two angels came to visit Lot. According to the Bible, the angels came to Abraham, and "he saw three men standing in front of him, . . .

When he saw them, he bowed himself to the ground" (Gen. 18:2).

Moreover, in the Quran, God does not appear as He never does in the Quranic stories.

Thus, there are only two angels in the Quranic version whereas in the Biblical version the third man is God Himself, who joins the other two men in eating the meal,<sup>49</sup> which Abraham so faithfully prepares for his three guests. Meanwhile, Abraham stands by them under the tree while they eat (Gen. 18:8).

In the Bible, two angels went to visit Lot (the third one, who was God stayed behind with Abraham): "The men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Lord" (Gen. 18: 22). "The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground" (Gen.19:1). The two angels again ate when they visited Lot: "And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat" (Gen.19:3).

According to the Quran, on the other hand, the two angels did not touch the food. The verse starts with: "When Our Messengers came to Abraham . . . But when he saw

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48 According to McEvenue though "The third man is not God. All three men are messengers from God (= angels), and God is in their message. This is mystery in the form of story." Yet the text shows that there is a clear separation between the two angels and the Lord when they depart from Abraham "So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Lord." (Gen. 18:22)

their hands went not towards the (meal), he felt some mistrust of them, and conceived a fear of them, they said: Fear not We have been sent against the people of Lot" (Quran 11:70).

Abraham, in the Quran, initially did not know the identity of his guest. So, when he saw that they declined from eating the meal, which he served them, it sent vibes of fear into his "tender" heart. For Abraham, this was a sign of animosity towards him because to refuse the hospitality of a host, in the Eastern culture, has negative implications while to share a meal creates a kind of bonding and friendship.

In the Biblical text, bread, curds, and milk, are served in addition to the calf while, in the Quran, only the meat is mentioned.

### **23) Abraham pleads with God to avert the punishment from the people.**

Bible- (Gen. 18:22-33). Quran- (11:74-76)

God's hesitation, in the Bible, whether he should hide the news of Sodom's destruction from Abraham or not would appear out of place, unless we literally tune in with the Quranic theme which presents Abraham as a preacher. Abraham, in the Quran is presented as one who fights injustice and admonishes people against evil doings. God, in the Bible, confirms this point in the next verse. He says: "No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice" (Gen 18:19a). This statement coincides with the Quranic version because the reason would then be that Abraham, as a preacher, would be guiding them to righteousness and justice, and since the people of Sodom were wicked, and great sinners against the Lord (Gen.13:13), Abraham as a teacher would be in charge of

directing them against such sinning. Although this fact is manifested in God's statement about righteousness and justice, it is not articulated in any of the Biblical verses.

Abraham does not undertake or engage in any such theological dispute with his people.

**The similarity lies though, in both texts, in Abraham's attitude towards God's judgment to destroy Sodom. In both texts, he acts as a prophet who has the role of intercession between God and the people, he tries to plead with God to avert the punishment from the people. Yet, in each text he pleads to God with a noticeable difference in style and dialogue. In the Bible, Abraham bargains with the number of the few righteous remaining in Sodom. He intercedes to avert God's judgment of destruction. He starts with the number fifty: "suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it?" (Gen 18:24). This intercession goes on, in the Biblical text from (Gen. 18:24) to the end of the chapter. In verse 32, Abraham gradually brings the number down to ten righteous people. And God, in his ultimate Mercy, answers Abraham: "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." Abraham's intercession for the people of Lot is described in the Quran in one brief verse: "When fear had passed (from the mind of) Abraham and the glad tidings had reached him, he began to plead with Us for Lot's people" (Quran 11:74). The story continues in the Bible: "the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place" (Gen 18:33). The above verse alludes to restricting God to a space. (Found also in verse 22, Abraham remained standing before the Lord, after the men turned and went toward Sodom). God is presented, in the Bible, as sharing space with human beings.**

Anthropomorphism is contradictory to the Quranic view of God's transcendence beyond space and time. Nevertheless, anthropomorphism, is strange to the Bible as well. This strange kind of description of God's presence, according to von Rad when he describes this tradition (this passage) as "so strange and singular in the Old Testament that it must belong to the peculiarity of this tradition and this tradition only." He explains how "the Greek saga about the visit of the three gods, Zeus, Poseidon, and Hermes, with the childless Hyrieus in Boeotia" influenced this passage. Von Rad explains this passage by providing further examples of such sagas given by Gunkle.(von Rad, p. 200)

### **The term "Bow down"**

Abraham's bodily gesture of respect in bowing down to the ground to his guests is the same gesture Muslims perform in their prostration indicating reverence and humility to the Lord during their five daily prayers: "He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground" (Gen. 18:2).

Reading the Bible for the first time, this gesture of bowing down to the ground, is one of the first things that one can link with the Quran. One would be touched by the interconnectedness of the two texts and their shared faith and history. Was this gesture ever done in reverence to God in other places in the Bible?<sup>50</sup>

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49 According to the Quran, the gesture of bowing is in reverence to God only none other, while in the Bible, this was shown to people as well, it was an ancient custom of showing respect, only after the event of Islam, God prohibited bowing down to anything else. Thus we find Joseph's parents bowing down to him in the (Quran 12:100).

"And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth (Gen. 23:7). And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land." (Gen 23:12)

Abraham fell on his face in reverence to the Lord when God appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you . . then Abram bowed down with his face touching the ground: and God talked with him, saying,..." (Gen. 17:3). Abraham appreciated the greatness of the moment and in reverence he fell on his face.

**The act of bowing the face down to the ground or prostration which Abraham does twice in this significant chapter of the covenant between God and Abraham is a sign of submission to God according to Muslims. As they pray five times a day performing this act seventeen times a day as a sign of their submission to God.**

Again Abraham fell on his face in reverence to God when: "God said to Abraham after changing his name from Abram to Abraham... As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her . . Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed..." (Gen. 17:17).

"And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground" (Gen. 18:2).

Within the Abraham story, Lot also bowed down to the ground, when "the two angels came to Sodom in the evening and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground" (Gen. 19:1). "And the man bowed down his head, and worshiped the Lord" (Gen. 24:26).

"And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth" (Gen. 24:27). "And it came to pass, that,



when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshiped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth" (Gen. 24:52).

Therefore we find that the act of bowing down to the ground in reverence to God is found throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament alone, there are over thirty five references to bowing. For example, "When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise and bow down, all of them at the entrance of their tent. Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face as one speaks to a friend" (Exodus 33:10).

The Quran prohibits bowing down to anything other than God. We find the same principle reiterated in (Deuteronomy 5:6), "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me" and in (verse 9) the command is articulated that, "You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God . . ."

And in (Psalms 119:25), "Down in the dust I lie prostrate true to your word, revive me..." The meaning of the act of bowing down or prostration, in this verse (Psalms 119:25), is clear in the New Jerusalem version. However in the New Revised Standard version, the same verse misses the term "bow" down when translated into: "My soul clings to the dust revive me according to your word." In the Quran, the word prostration is used, in reference to the Abraham story in many places: (Quran 26:4, 2:125, 19:58, 22:26).

#### **24) Angels come to Lot in the Bible and in the Quran**

**(Note: The narration of the story of the angels who come to Lot is closely related in**

**both texts. Therefore their discussion here will be merged).**

In the Biblical text, Lot bowed down in a gesture of hospitality towards the two angels, assuming they were two male guests (Gen. 19:1). He asked them to come in and spend the night in his house and wash their feet, but they refused (Gen. 19:2). "And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat" (Gen. 19:3).

Lot, in the Quran, does not press upon them to stay. On the contrary, Lot gets stressed for them when they show up at his door, expecting to be followed by men from town. " he was grieved on their account and felt himself powerless (to protect) them. He said: "This is a distressful day" (Quran 11:77). "He said: 'Would that I had power to surpass you or that I could betake myself to some powerful support'" (Quran 11:80).

Lot's fear for his guests and anticipation of the reaction of his people were rightly founded because they did indeed come and surround his house asking him to hand them the two men, **according to both texts**. "And his people came rushing towards him, and they had been long in the habit of practicing abominations. . . he said: 'Is there not among you a single right minded man?" (Quran 11:78).

The episode of people rushing and surrounding Lot's house, found in the previous verses of the Quran, corresponds to the Biblical text. Upon the arrival of the two strangers, the town people came: "But before they lay, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:" (Gen 19:4) "And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them" (Gen 19:5 ).

**In the Quran,** Lot admonishes them and reminds them of other sins they are committing "For come ye not in unto males, and cut ye not the road (for travelers). and commit ye not abomination in your meetings ? But the answer of his folk was only that they said: Bring God's doom upon us if thou art a truth-teller!" (Quran 29.29) "He said: My Lord! Give me victory over folk who work corruption" (Quran 29.30).

**In both texts,** we find that Lot, in his hospitality, tries his utmost to protect these two young men from the homosexual men. In the Bible, he offers his unmarried two daughters instead: "Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof" (Gen. 19:8). Similarly, the Quran reads: "And his people came rushing towards him, and they had been long in the habit of practicing abominations, he said: "O my people! Here are my daughters: they are purer for you! Now fear God, and cover me not with shame about my guests! Is there not among you a single right minded man?" (Quran 11:78). "They said: 'Well does thou know we have no need of thy daughters; indeed thou knowest quite well what we want!" (Quran 11:79).

Lot's offer of his daughters was not what his people were after as they confessed. At this point, according to the Quran, the two men reveal their true identity to Lot. "He was troubled upon their account, for he could not protect them; but they said: Fear not, nor grieve! Lo! we are to deliver thee and thy household, (all) save thy wife, who is of those who stay behind" (Quran 29.33). God's punishment on these people came in two stages, according to both texts. First, they were made disoriented and started to move

around blindly in a frenzy. "By thy life, they moved blindly in the frenzy of approaching death" (Quran 15:72). "And they sought to snatch away his guests from him, but We blinded their eyes. . ." (Quran 54: 37).

**In the Bible**, the same sentiment is expressed: "But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut the door" (Gen. 19:10). "And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door" (Gen. 19:11).

In the Bible, the people, in their frustration, started attacking Lot verbally and reminded him that he was a foreigner to the land of Sodom and, because of this, they resent his admonishment and judgment on them. They said: "This fellow came here as an alien, and he would play the judge! Now will we deal worse with thee, than with them." . . and came near to break the door" (Gen. 19:9). **In the Quran**, the people expressed resentment and criticism towards Lot with sarcastic references, but in this case, to his moral attitude. They said: "Drive out the household of Lot from your city, for they are indeed folk who want to be clean and pure!" (Quran 27.56). (the style in which Lot is criticized by his people in the Bible is consistent with its attitude and emphasis on land and the theological and moral attitude of the Quran.)

After this, in the Quran, the angels direct Lot to leave the city early in the morning and for none of them to look back, "So travel with thy household in a portion of the night, and follow thou their backs. Let none of you turn round, but go whither ye are commanded. And We made plain the case to him, that the root of them (who did wrong) was to be cut at early morn" (Quran 15:65-66).

**The angels, in the Bible, did the same. They prepared Lot and his household to leave the city before the morning: "For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it" (Gen. 19:13). The Bible, however, has an additional reference to his sons- in law, who do not appear in the Quran: "And Lot went out, and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord is about to destroy this city. But he seemed to his sons-in law to be jesting"(Gen. 19:14). Lot's sons-in law are not mentioned in the Quran.**

**The events, in the Bible, involved the angels rushing Lot and his family out of town and taking them by the hand and getting them out before Yahweh's doom befell the city. In contrast to the Quran, the angels, in the Bible, took along his wife "seized him and his wife and his daughters by the hand . . ." (Gen. 19:16). In the Quran, the angels, in advance, told Lot: "but your wife (will remain behind), to her will happen what happens to the people . . ." (Quran 11: 81).**

**Yet in the Bible, Lot lingered, when they said: "Flee for your life, do not look back or stop . . .flee to the hills, or else you will be consumed." Lot chose another location. He said: "I can not flee to the hills, for fear the disaster will overtake me and I die. Look , that city is near enough to flee to . . let me escape there my life will be saved! He said to him, Very well, I grant you this favor too . . ." (Gen. 19:17-21). This passage has no parallel in the Quran.**

## **25) Angels bring news about Sodom**

**Bible-Take thy wife lest she be consumed (Gen.19:15-18).**

**Quran- Your wife will remain behind (Quran 29:33, 11:81,15:58, 59). (see no. 26)**

## **26)Angels visit Lot**

**Bible- Lot asks to flee to a closer city (Gen. 19:19).**

**Quran- Wife example to the unbelievers (Quran 66:10, 27:54-56).**

**She is a specimen of the unbelieving (Quran 15:60).**

**By cross-referencing the two texts, the difference between the presentation of Lot's wife in each text becomes visible at a glance. In the Biblical version the angels seem to be trying to advise Lot in order to save his wife: "Lest she be consumed", while in the Quran they tell Lot in advance of her doomed destiny. Furthermore she is set as an example of the unbelieving. The discussion of these two points (25, 26) will be Limited because of lack of space in this work. The topic of Lot's wife is discussed in the next point.**

## **27) God destroys the cities**

**Bible- But his wife looked back (Gen. 19:25-29).**

**Quran- Let none of you turn back (Quran 15:64-66, 15: 72).**

**God's judgment to destroy the city is explained in the Quran: "When our decree issued, We turned (the cities) upside down, and rained down on them brimstone hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer, Marked as from thy Lord: Nor are they ever far from those who do wrong" (Quran 11:82- 83). "But We saved him and his family, except his wife: Her We destined to be of those who lagged behind" (Quran 27: 57). "And We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone): and evil was the shower on those who were admonished (But heeded not)" (Quran 27:58). "The folk of Lot denied the**

And thus does the Bible describe Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction: "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city" (Gen. 19:15). "And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife. and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city" (Gen. 19:16). "And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (Gen. 19:17).

**There is a theological message in regard to the destiny of Lot's wife, according to the Quran. She was destroyed with the wicked people, not entirely because of a mere physical act of turning back, as it is stated in the Bible: "But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt" (Gen 19:26). Her mental and moral attitude, in the Quran, are what determine her end. The gesture of turning back given in the Bible is symbolic in terms of her disobedience to God's command who specifically gave directions not to look back. Lot's wife was not spared just because of her association to Lot. God determined her destiny according to her moral association with the wicked. Her marital association with Lot did not avail her in any way.**

**The destiny of Lot's wife, in both texts, stresses a unique evolution in the status of women. Instead of being classified according to the deeds and status of the men, a woman, in religious terms, became an individual who is judged according to her deeds and attitudes. The story of Lot's wife symbolizes the separate moral responsibility of the**

female. Ironically, therefore, the destruction of Lot's wife becomes a marker of female responsibility and therefor of her status beyond her association with the males of her household.

In the Quran, this evolution of female responsibility becomes established and articulated by either destroying or saving the woman based on her own actions and belief. Laila Ahmad discusses how, in both Christianity and Islam, such a shift to women's individual responsibility freed women from the confines of biological reproductive roles.<sup>51</sup> Woman, therefore, became a spiritual agent. In the case of Lot's wife, the woman chose to disobey God whereas Pharaoh's wife, in the Quran (66:11), was saved and rewarded despite her husband's arrogance and rejection of faith. In the Quran, the examples of Pharaoh's wife, Asia, and other women who were righteous, present women as spiritual equals to men. God counts Asia among those in heaven. She preserved her faith and humility, and was the one who saved the life of infant Moses<sup>52</sup> when his mother cast him into the river. "God sets forth, for an example to the unbelievers the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot: They were (respectively) under two of our righteous servants, but they were false to their (husbands), and they profited nothing before God on their

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<sup>50</sup> "Although the Christian church endorsed male dominance, the narratives of the female martyrs suggest that it nevertheless introduced ideas which opened new avenues of self-affirmation and independence to women and validated ways to resist the belief that women were defined by their biology and existed essentially to serve the function of reproduction....Thus Christianity... enabled women to claim spiritual and moral authority" Leila Ahmed, *Women and gender in Islam*. Page 22

"Egalitarianism is a consistent element of the ethical utterances of the Quran...Both Quranic and hadith passages imply an egalitarian view of human biology.. The passage [Quran 33:35] makes a clear statement about the absolute identity of the human moral condition and the common and identical spiritual and moral obligations placed on all individuals regardless of sex" Leila Ahmed. Page 63-65

<sup>51</sup> "Then the people of Pharaoh picked him up (from the river):. . . the wife of Pharaoh said: "Here is a joy of the eye, for me and for thee: slay him not . . ." (Quran 28: 9)



but they were false to their (husbands), and they profited nothing before God on their account, But were told: "Enter ye the fire along with (others) that enter! And God sets forth, as an example to those who believe, the wife of Pharaoh: Behold she said: O my Lord! Build for me, in nearness to Thee, a mansion in the Garden, and save me from Pharaoh and his doings, and save me from those that do wrong" (Quran 66:10-11).

## **28) Lot's daughters**

Bible- "Our father drink wine, and we lie with him" (Gen. 19:31-34).

Quran- "And Leave the mates your Lord Created?" (Quran 26:165-174).

The story of Lot's two daughters sleeping with their father, in the Bible, has no parallel in the Quran. According to the Bible, everyone was destroyed and Lot's firstborn daughter said: "there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father" (Gen. 19:31-32).

God protected Sarah from the king's sexual aggression, for the sake of Abraham, in the story of Sarah with the king (Pharaoh and Abimelech and also later with Rebekkah). Yet, God does nothing to protect Lot from his own daughters.

"Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day" (Gen.19:36-38).

There could be reasons behind the story of Lot's two daughters, other than what is provided in the text. In fact, von Rad doubts the authenticity of the story and explores

possible motives. He argues that such a tradition is “considered to be a product of popular political wit by which Israel tried to repay her occasionally powerful enemies, the Moabites and the Ammonites.” He explains how “such derogatory stories about their most disgraceful origin” could be used as tools of political propaganda.<sup>53</sup>

Von Rad, nevertheless, explores another probability. Even if such an event did occur, he questions why the daughters would, later on, announce such an act to others and why would the Moabites and Ammonites, the assumed descendants of the daughters hold on and preserve such a legend. Von Rad writes that “we should consider the section vs. 30-38 as an original Moabites tradition in which the wild determination of both ancestral mothers was glorified.” According to the story, Lot's daughters were not ashamed of the origin of their children, but rather proclaimed it openly and fixed it forever in their sons' names. Moreover, the sons who were born to such a bed “proudly proclaim[ed] the heroism of their mother and the purity of their blood: they were not begotten from foreign seed, but from father and daughter, purest thoroughbreds” (Gu.).”<sup>54</sup>

The Quran does not discuss the event of incest, nor alludes to it. This is due to the Quranic paradigm in presenting prophecy. All prophets are discussed in a serious, positive light. They are not presented as infallible beings, but incest, lying and drunkenness are not attributed to any of the prophets. According to the Quranic paradigm, the best of the prophets' deeds are provided as models of behavior. They are figures of guidance, and as such, narrative details or mistakes are not related in the Quranic text.

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52 Von Rad, *Genesis, a Commentary*. Page 218

53 Ibid. Page 219

This could be explained through the principle the Quran emphasizes: "Such are they from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and pass by their ill deeds" (Quran 46: 16). The Quran goes further and says: "God will replace their ill deeds with good and God is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Quran 25: 70). Some could argue that Biblical presentations of prophets are more human and easier to relate to while the Quran makes them ideal. Interestingly, all prophets, we are told in the Quran, should be respected equally. "We make no distinction between one and another of His Apostles" (Quran 2: 285). Similarly, in the Bible, one could argue that prophets are presented in the same light since the incest situation and the lying of Abraham are not because of character defects or immorality.<sup>55</sup>

### **30) Abraham's vision to sacrifice his son in the Bible**

According to Akenson, "the covenant with Yahweh, as defined under the Priestly system of Temple worship that the editor writer so convincingly chronicles, requires that blood be spilled. The covenant has to be both regularly and frequently reaffirmed by the ritual slaughter of various of the higher species. It is a blood covenant." Akenson remarks that "the killing of live things to propitiate a deity offends modern sensibilities, and we would like to ignore the details, if possible, or at least allegorize them. The scriptures, though, will not let us blur the focus. They provide very precise instructions, filling several biblical chapters, on how to dispatch ritually and dismember liturgically various living things. The opening of the Book of Leviticus serves as a fair example. Five species

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54 According to McEvenue, this incident of Abraham and Sarah in Egypt originally, at an oral stage, was about Isaac and Abimelech at Gerar and not Abraham" McEvenue, *Interpreting the Pentateuch*. Page 93. Thus Abraham did not really lie about Sarah being his sister.

sheep, goats, turtledove, and pigeons."<sup>56</sup>

"For a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it male without blemish. And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round upon the altar"(Lev.1:10).

### **30) Abraham's vision to sacrifice his son in the Quran**

In the Quran, on the other hand, God says:"It is not their meat nor their blood that reaches God. It is your piety that reaches him. He has made them (animals) subject to you, that you may glorify God for His guidance to you. And proclaim the Good News to all who do right" (Quran 22:37). Akenson writes that "the Hebrews were very frightened of the idea of child sacrifice and there are repeated prohibitions against it. This abhorred practice was associated with the gods of other nations. The king of Moab, for example, when the Israelites pressed him hard in battle, offered up his eldest son as a burnt sacrifice (II Kings 3:27). The biblical description of child sacrifice sometimes mention a specific alien deity to whom the offering is made: Molech (Lev.18:21;20:24) and Baal (Jer.19:5), although the actual deity is sometimes unnamed (Deut.12:31; Isa. 57:5)." Akenson argues that child sacrifice, in the Bible, is not denounced because it is intrinsically evil. He writes how there is no talk of the sanctity of human life, nor evil implied. Child sacrifice, in the Bible, he argues, is wrong because it is associated with the worship of false gods. Moreover, according to him, "this particular form of idolatry wastes Abraham's seed by cutting the lines of genealogical descent" (Akenson, p.60).

In Islam, It is not the meat nor the blood that reaches God. It is piety that reaches

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55 Donald H. Akenson, *Surpassing Wonder*, Inventing the covenant. Page 57

Him (Quran 22:37). The believer, through a disciplined spiritual practice, learns to be more loving and generous to one's fellow beings. Thus, when Muslims pray five times a day, it is to show their gratitude to the Giver of all things. If they master this showing of gratitude, they will be able to thank those with whom they interact in their daily lives. The prayer itself will not benefit God in any way. It does not add or diminish from God's Greatness. So the virtue in worship is to lead one to benefit others as well as one's own soul. The same goes for fasting. It is to feel the hunger of the poor. In Haj, the Islamic pilgrimage, one is asked to sacrifice an animal and share its meat with the poor, and to learn how to be gracious and humble in a very large gathering during pilgrimage in Mecca. It is, in a way, the annual international conference for those who share the same faith regardless of their social, political or race differences. God does accept the offering of our hearts, and as a symbol of such offer, some visible institution is necessary argues Yusuf Ali. He adds that by pronouncing God's name over the animal during sacrifice, the believer is reminded of the sanctity of life. Ali shows that because the greater part of the food (some theologians fix the proportion at three quarters or two thirds) is given as charity, sacrifice is a form of social benevolence. He argues against the idea of burnt offering as something appeasing to the Lord found in the Bible: "No one should suppose that meat or blood is acceptable to the One True God. It was a Pagan fancy that God could be appeased by blood sacrifice." (Y. Ali, p.861) "God does not delight in flesh or blood, (Quran 22:37) but a symbol of thanksgiving to God by sharing meat with fellow beings. In verse 34 of chapter 22 called (al-Haj) The Pilgrimage. God says: "To every people We did appoint rites (of sacrifice), that they might celebrate the name of God over

people We did appoint rites (of sacrifice), that they might celebrate the name of God over the sustenance He gave them from animals (fit for food). Thus your God is One God: then submit your wills to Him: and give thou the good news to those who humble themselves, to those whose hearts, when God is mentioned, are filled with fear, who show perseverance over their afflictions, keep up regular prayer, and spend (in charity) out of what We have bestowed upon them. The sacrificial camels We have made for you as among the symbols from God: in them is (much) Good for you: then pronounce the name of God over them as they line up (for sacrifice): when they are down on their sides(after slaughter), eat ye thereof, and feed such as (beg not) but live in contentment, and such as beg with due humility: Thus have we made animals subject to you, that ye may be grateful.” The Quran acknowledges the ritual of animal sacrifice. Yet Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son is an interesting story since the Quran limits sacrifice to animals given the Quran’s emphasis on the sanctity of human life.

**The question of which of Abraham's two son's was to be sacrificed, Isaac or Ismael?**

The Biblical narrator (s) of the sacrifice passage in the Bible and his (their) contemporaries for obvious reasons had their focus on Isaac. There is no clear evidence about the whereabouts of the Ismaelites tribes at the time of this writing.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, for the Isrealites to have Isaac not Ishmael, as the sacrificial son, was an occasion to

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<sup>57</sup> Biblical scholars up to a half a century ago used to follow a historical hypothesis that the oldest document source is the Yahwist document, who collected oral traditions and ancient manuscripts (Circa 950 B.C.) during Solomon’s day and later. Yet McEvenue writes that “We have become progressively aware that we don’t have the data for much useful critical history of the biblical period. If we are to interpret the meaning of biblical texts on the basis of their historical context, we can come up only with very fragile guesses. This is true in many areas of the Bible. Most dramatically the sources of the Pentateuch have vanished into myriad uncertainties.” Dissatisfaction with biblical history-Scholarship’s Impenetrable Wall

celebrate and remember Abraham's faith to strengthen their own. An occasion to relate, and to create a bond for the community. To perform the ritual in celebration of the redemption of the first-born of Israel.

The Israelites consider themselves the offspring of Isaac not Ismael, the son of the slave girl. They would not relate to Ishmael as the sacrificial son, they would not acknowledge the fact that he was actually Abraham's first born, the first son to implement the sign of covenant, the circumcision, the one that God blessed and promised his mother to make of him a great nation. Ironically this promise remained in the Biblical text against all odds, side by side with the statement which describes Ismael as an ass of a man. While the Quran praises both Isaac and Ismael as those of the righteous, both prophets (Isaac: Quran 37:112 and Ishmael: 6:84,89). The Bible describes Ishmael as a wild ass of a man, his hand against every man, (which could be understood as reference to him living as a real nomad or a Bedouin (Genesis 16: 12). Knowing that the Israelites considered the Ismaelites as enemies. It would not have served the Israelite community to have Ismael as the sacrificial son. This animosity was alive within the community at the time when the narrative was written. And this animosity continued over a thousand year later and was still alive in the beginning of the Christian era with Paul who looked at the Ismaelites as the enemy (Gal. 4:30-31).

Thus the Bible refers to Isaac as the sacrificial son (Gen. 22:2), while the Quran does not mention any name.<sup>58</sup> Muslims, however celebrate the day of sacrifice as one of

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<sup>58</sup> Yusuf Ali, in his commentary on the Quran, writes about the place of the sacrifice according to Muslims: "Some would identify it with the valley of Mina, six miles north of Mecca, where a commemoration sacrifice is annually celebrated as a rite of the Hajj on the tenth of Zul-Hajj, the Id of sacrifice, in memory of this sacrifice of Abraham and Ismail." p.1204, note 4098.

their main religious days called (Eid al-Adhha), meaning the celebration of the sacrifice. They reason that it was harder for Abraham to sacrifice Ismael since he was his only son at the time. According to the Bible, Isaac was not born until Ismael was 14 years old. The Bible also refers to the sacrificial son as "your only son." It also acknowledges Abraham's progeny and the covenant only through Sarah. In the Quran, the sacrifice involved not only testing Abraham, but also his son.<sup>59</sup> In the Quran, the son surrendered willingly to God's command.<sup>60</sup> Abraham knew that submission to God's Will has to come from the believer's heart willingly, not by deceit or coercion, nor by hiding the truth. This is stated in the Quran: "Let there be no compulsion in religion, Truth stands out clear from falsehood." (Quran 2:256).

According to the Biblical text, God promises each son to become a great nation even before their birth, so neither son was really going to be sacrificed.

The important point in the story; is to transcend beyond the identity dispute and reflect on the extent of Abraham's faith and compliance with God's call, in his willingness to sacrifice his only son. Perhaps, the omission of the son's name, in the

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<sup>58</sup> It is interesting that Ismael's names in Hebrew means to obey ( Sm'a is a Hebrew root meaning hear or obey.)

<sup>59</sup> "When (the son) reached (the age of) (serious work with him.)" Abraham told him of the vision and gave him the choice and said: "O my son! I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice: Now see what is thy view!" the son said: "O my father! Do as thou art commanded: thou wilt find me if God so wills one practicing patience and constancy. So when they had both submitted their wills (to God), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out to him, O Abraham ! Thou has 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: And We left (this blessing ) for him among generations (to come) in later times: "Peace and Salutations to Abraham!" Thus indeed do We reward those who do right for he was one of our believing servants. And We gave him the good news of Isaac a prophet , one of the righteous. We blessed him and Isaac: But of their progeny are(some) that do right, and (some) that obviously do wrong, to their own souls." (Quran 37:102-113)



Quran, was precisely to move beyond such petty dispute, to focus on Abraham's religion in his submission to God. To lead the attention of Jews, Christians and Muslims on the theological implications of the story.

Muslims' interpretation is based on their deductions from reading of verse 37:112 to understand the son to be Ismael. This verse comes at the end of the sacrifice story: "And We gave him the good news of Isaac- a prophet, one of the Righteous."

This indicates that after Abraham had passed the test of offering his only son in sacrifice in obedience to God's command, God rewarded him with another son, Isaac: "Now comes the good news of Isaac, a prophet, one of the Righteous" (Quran 37:112). Muslims, therefore, understood that the first son who was going to be sacrificed in the preceding verses must have been Ismael.

Abraham, as a father, no doubt loved both of his sons. Abraham's equal love for his sons is beautifully expressed in the Bible when God tells him the news about Isaac's birth and at that moment Abraham asks God: "O that Ishmael might live in your sight!" (Gen. 17:18). And after establishing the covenant with Isaac and his offspring (Gen 17:19). God says to Abraham: "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation" (Gen. 17: 20). But the text reminds the reader that God will establish the covenant "with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year" (Gen 17: 21).

Ibn Katheer, the classic Quranic exegete, writes in his commentary on the Quran about the possibility of Isaac being the sacrificial son. He writes of a story narrated by

Hamza Alzayat from Abi Maysara, who said: “Joseph, may Allah’s blessings be upon him, said to the angel, “Do you wish to eat with me and I am, by God, Joseph son of Jacob, the Apostle of God, the son of Isaac, God’s sacrificial, the son of Abraham, Khalilu Allah [God’s friend]!.” Ibn Katheer adds that this same story about Joseph identifying himself as the son of Isaac, the sacrificial son, is also related by Al-Thowry from Abbi Sinan from Abbi Hadheel . Also that Sufyan al Thowry narrated from Zaid Bin Aslam from Abdullah Bin Abeed Bin Umair from his father that: “Moses, may Allah’s blessings be upon him, said “O God, they say, by the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Why do they say that?” God said, “Abraham chose me over everything in his life, and Isaac was earnest in his sacrifice and he was even more generous in other times, and Jacob the more I increased his trials the more he thought well of Me.”

Ibn Katheer, also relates the story told by classic scholars, such as Ibn Masud and Al-Abbas and other Muslims referred to as “Tab’een” the Muslim generation following the Prophet’s generation. Ibn Katheer relates the story that at the time of the Khalifa Umar, when a man called Ka’ab Al-Ahbar embraced Islam, he was telling the ruler of what he read in his books, and people asked permission to listen to his stories. Ibn Katheer comments that these sayings are all based on the sayings from Ka’ab Al-Ahbar, yet there is a Hadeeth [sayings of prophet Muhammad] which does refer to the son as Isaac. Ibn Katheer categorizes this Hadeeth as weak in its chain of narrators which relates to Al Hassan Bin Dinar Al-Basri and Bin Zaid Bin Jad’an and according to Ibn Katheer these are not reliable sources. Ibn Katheer also mentions two sources which relate the story to Ibn Abbas and each refers to either Isaac or Ismael as the sacrificial son (Ibn

Katheer, p.17. Vol. 4).

### **31) A ram as a ransom**

**Bible-** “He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me. And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place “The Lord will provide” as it is said to this day, On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided” (Gen. 22:12-14).

**Quran-** “So when they had both submitted their wills (to God), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice, We called out to him, “O Abraham! You have 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: And We left (this blessing) for him among generations (to come) in later times: “Peace and salutation to Abraham! Thus indeed do We reward those who do right, for he was one of our believing servants” (Quran 37:103-111).

**The comparative study of both passages** about the ransom shows that the story is told similarly in both texts. **It was a test of Abraham’s submission to God.** The ultimate test is usually is giving up, for the sake of God, what is dearest to the believer’s heart. In this example, Abraham had remained childless for a long time and God had promised to make him a great nation. When Abraham was blessed with two sons at an old age God had asked him to give his only son (Bible) as an offering to God. Abraham without hesitation, in spite of his great love for his son, obeyed and intended to fulfill the

vision, but God accepted his good intentions and replaced the child with a ram, and rewarded Abraham for his compliance.

**32) God Blesses Abraham for willingness to sacrifice son(Abraham passes the test)**

(See previous point of discussion, no. 31).

**The Bible and the Quran share the fact that Abraham was tested by God three times: The first test, in the Bible, is when God commands Abraham to leave his country of origin but does not say why yet Abraham obeys anyway.**

In the Quran, Abraham engages in many theological debates against idolatry with his father, folks and the king. He makes a decision to withdraw from his people (37:99). They attempt to burn him because of his belief but God saves Abraham and guides him to the Blessed Land.

**The second test, in the Quran, was after Ismael was born Abraham was commanded by God to take him and Hagar and leave them alone in the desert.**

The Bible gives a staggering detail of Hagar's anguish and the baby's suffering and Abraham's fatherly compassion towards the son. But the reason given for this action in the Bible is because of Sarah's jealousy and fear for her son's inheritance. Sarah demands from Abraham to cast them out. Abraham does as she requests because God asks him to listen to her. While in the Quran, there is no mention about the rivalry between Sarah and Hagar. The order comes from God and we hear Abraham's compassionate prayer asking for the safeguarding and divine care of Ismael. This does not necessarily negate the incident of jealousy between the women mentioned in the Bible, but because the focus is different in each of the two texts. The Quran based on the idea that God accepts the best

of their deeds and passes by their ill deeds (46:16), it focused on the moral issues learnt from the different trials Abraham was put through during his life.

**The third test** was when Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his son. The Bible and the Quran both agree that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command in spite of his love for him (regardless of the identity of the son). The Bible mentions Isaac although there are some contradictions in telling the story ("Your only son", Gen. 22:2). While the story in the Quran is told without any reference to the son's name. Muslims, however, believe the son was Ismael, leaving the possibility of Isaac as another option. Some Muslims relate the story with the possibility of having Isaac being the son offered for sacrifice. A strong argument can stand for both cases.

**The focus of the story is on Abraham and his complete obedience to God and his surrender to God's Will, not which of the two sons was going to be sacrificed.**

### **Conclusion to the Comparative study of the two texts**

Telling the Abraham story, the Bible and the Quran share certain basic plot lines. Abraham leaves his country to another land in both texts. They relate that Abraham, at an old age, had two sons Ishmael and Isaac. God commanded Abraham, in a vision, to offer his son in sacrifice. In both texts, Abraham obeys, and God saves the son and blesses Abraham for his willingness to offer his son.

Although their ultimate message is the same, yet there are striking differences in form, structure and style of the story telling, with different themes, emphasis and theological implications in each text. The story is told chronologically in the Bible in Genesis 11:27 to 25. In the Quran, the Abraham story is dispersed between chapters 2-87, woven into

other stories, which are presented as models of behavior and moral guidance. The narrative style, in the Quran, is not historical, but rather didactic at all times. In general, we do not read about the names of specific places in the Quranic text. The only place we read about within the Abraham story is (Becca), the uncultivated valley where Abraham prays for the survival of his family. In the Bible, on the other hand, Abraham's movements from one place to another are recorded meticulously with a detailed itinerary, and names of all places are given. None of the travel events are mentioned in the Quran or alluded to. The episode of Abraham and Sarah in Egypt is repeated three times in three chapters within Genesis,<sup>61</sup> yet there is no mention of it in the Quran.

**The 35 parallel points of discussion of the Abraham story reveal that although the Bible and the Quran convey the same message about Abraham's faith, they present the story with different approaches and emphasis.**

In comparing the two biblical versions (Yahwist and Elohist) with the Quran we find that the Elohist's inclusion of other nations is a progression towards the doctrine of the Quran that God's Grace does not belong to a single nation. The Quran draws examples from the history of humanity to teach and give guidance. These examples are shared with the Bible. Since humanity is one, their ancestors according to the Quran are one community, and their God is One.

The Bible and the Quran tell the stories of the relation between God and His people.

These people at 1300 B.C.E were the Patriarchs; Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, David, Solomon, Joseph, and the Tribes; all leaders of ancient communities. The story of these

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60 with different names of kings, Pharaoh, Abimelech, (Chs. 12:10-20, 20, 26:6) the last episode is with Rebekah instead of Sarah and Isaac instead of Abraham but the same king Abimelech.

patriarchs is told through the Bible and the Quran differently.

The Bible, collected and put together over a period of more than a thousand years in the history of the people of Israel, recorded their sacred history. Therefore, there is a reciprocal relationship between the writings or 'Books' of the Old Testament and the life of Israel in that given period of history.<sup>62</sup> The scope of the Yahwist writer was broadened by the rewriting of the Elohist, "the Elohist feels that God not only has plans for the nation of Israel, but also brings about the moral perfection of the individual, and reveals Himself directly in testing the Israelite and converting the foreigner" (Gen. 20).<sup>63</sup>

The Quran, on the other hand, revealed during the years 600-632 A.D., confirmed the origins of the Sacred Books before it and announced itself as a book of guidance to humanity at large.<sup>64</sup> God's relation with people, in the Quran, is thus has been expanded to include humanity at large. The Quran was not limited to the Israelites, nor to the Arabs. The Quran explains that Muhammad was sent as Mercy to the worlds to include that what we know, and that which is beyond us.(Quran 21:107)

The focus and points of emphasis in the Bible, unfolded beautifully to me, only with the

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<sup>62</sup> Akenson, in his book of 1998, "*Surpassing Wonder*" on the invention of the Bible, writes "the Bible deals with cause and effect, chronological sequences and sometimes, origins, all within the guise of being an historical narrative." Page 10. And Akenson, refers to the Yahwist collector as "the first real historian in world history, that later had his text turned into sacred writ-" he adds "indeed, many subsequently declared it to be the word of God- is not an honour he sought. Nor one suspects, would he have understood it. He knew that Yahweh was perfect, but that his own text was imperfect. He knew that the only inerrantly divine word was that which Yahweh gave to a special messenger, face to face, and he had himself seen such messages in old forms, in tattered papyri, but never directly. Totally beyond his conception would have been the fact that his Genesis-Kings invention was to become, several centuries later, the plinth on which two great derivative religions, Christianity and Judaism, were based. That the scrolls he produced became the founding documents of the Judahist faith."

<sup>63</sup> McEvenue, *Interpreting the Pentateuch*, page 97.

<sup>64</sup> "To thee We sent the Scripture in Truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: So judge between them by what God hath revealed ." (Quran 5:51) And "Verily this [Quran] is no less than a Message to all the Worlds." (Quran 81:27)

additional reading of the story of Abraham in the Quran. As each text's emphasis complemented the other.

The Quran, read as the continuation of the Abraham story in the Bible, its emphasis was on Abraham's religion and debates about monotheism. The theological message of Abraham's faith in God, his spirituality and obedience to God's commands, was the focus of the story in the Quran while in the Bible the emphasis was on Abraham's genealogy, movements and number of descendants. Only by placing both texts together could one understand the connection: Since Abraham was chosen by God, (in the Bible and the Quran), his descendants, therefore, were the chosen people. Through the election of Abraham and the election of his descendants, the right religion was to be preserved. This religion was to be monotheism, the true religion of Abraham. Abraham's religion thus is the religion which the Quran repeatedly calls people to follow, by setting the example of Abraham. The connection between the Bible and the Quran is this main message of God: to be true to Yahweh or Allah in worship (Submission to the One God). The names Yahweh or Allah are "Beautiful Names" of the same God, as we find explained in the Quranic verse: "Call upon God or call upon Rahman: By whatever name you call upon Him, (it is well): For Him belong The Most Beautiful Names" (Quran 17: 110).

God elected Abraham to guard the Truth among many nations with different ways of worship. Abraham and his descendants thus should be distinguished according to the Bible. Later generations should know true religion of Yahweh from that of false gods. According to the Quran, the Covenant with Prophets, including Abraham, was to guard the true religion (Quran 33:7-8). The same Covenant was referred to in the Bible when



Yahweh elected Abraham to teach his offspring the way of God (Gen. 18:19). The responsibility of guarding the religion, according to the Bible, was to be distinguished by circumcision. Through the line of Abraham's offspring, the religion was to be taught and passed on. Thus the continuation of the right religion and the sign of this Covenant was very significant. This distinction was to be a mark on the male body, symbolizing the continuation of the line of Abraham given the patriarchal lineage of the time. The argument otherwise could be why the sign of this Covenant was not asked to be for example a slit in the ear, or a special scar made on the cheek? Because preserving the line was through the reproductive sexual part of the fathers or the leaders of the Israelite community, the Patriarchs which continued the line. The religion was preserved, in the Bible, through circumcised males of Abraham's household and his descendants. The Quran, continued this teaching of Abraham's religion (monotheism) and extended its transmission to include all of humanity. The Quran rendered this message universal.

The method of spreading the message, was the same in both texts: First to one's household, then to a family circle, then to spread universally. Prophet Mohamed, in his mission, told his wife, Khadeeja, who was the first to believe. Then others within his household converted, his young cousin Ali, and his young adopted son, Zaid. Then the command came from God that Muhammad should call his family circle to the mountain; his aunts and his uncles (his aunt Safyia and uncle Hamza later became among his strong supporters in his mission). And only after the immediate household and blood relatives were called, Muhammad was given permission from God to go out and declare the message universally. Thus, the next phase for Muhammad, was to send his apostles to

Rome, Byzantine, Persia, and Yemen with a letter declaring to them the knowledge, which have come to him from God. He invited them all to submit to the Will of the One God, to follow the Right Path, and to bow their will to the Creator, whom He declared His Personal Name is Allah. This method of propagating the religion of Islam is the same method used to guard the religion (the covenant) in the story of Abraham in the Bible. The sign of the Covenant with Abraham was that every male of his *"household"* should be circumcised. God did not limit circumcision to Abraham's children through Sarah. According to the Bible, Abraham circumcised every male in his household, he and Ishmael were circumcised on the same day before Isaac was born (Gen 17:26).

The method thus is: (1) God elects the right person (a prophet) to carry the message of true religion, the worship of the One God. (2) God instructs the prophet to teach his household. (3) God, then, asks to expand the call to the larger family circle. (4) After that, God instructs the prophet to spread the Word universally.

The correlation between the two texts is further emphasized through the election of Abraham and his descendants to propagate the message. We see this through the emphasis of the Bible on genealogy and lineage. Abraham was the descendant of Noah, according to the genealogy given in (Gen. 11:24) and in the Quran Abraham is of the same belief as Noah (Quran 37:83). The Quran confirms the continuation of the message through Abraham's lineage to reach to Muhammad, the seal of prophets who is also a descendant of Abraham through his son Ismael.

Therefore the underlying message and the thread that goes through the Abraham story in both texts seems to be the same: God elected the prophets and sent with them the

Sacred Books to guide people to the Truth: Submission to the One God. The message of the Sacred Books to the people is one: **To make a conscious decision to submit one's will to God, obey His commands. Then to know with certitude even at the darkest moments that God will never abandon His people.** But evil insinuates itself in all sorts of insidious ways from within so as to deplete one's will to the illusion that he is about to loose everything by obeying God. Therefore, Muslims during Hajj stone a symbolic Satan in commemorating Abraham's stoning of Satan when he tried to deter him from sacrificing his beloved son, by telling Abraham that by obeying God's command he is about to loose everything.<sup>65</sup> The opposite of submission is conscious decision to rebel. God in His Mercy sends many warnings for those before his decision to destroy, or abandons them. God came to warn the king in his dream and did not destroy him because the king rectified the situation and returned Sarah to Abraham. On the other hand God did destroy Lot's people including his wife because they did not listen to Lot's admonition according to the Quran. In both texts Abraham pleads with God on their behalf and Lot tries to reason with the people, both Abraham and Lot in their role as prophets given permission to intercede. God, in His Mercy, had granted prophets permission for intercession on behalf of their people.

We can easily understand the message of each episode within the Abraham story in both texts by observing the following underlying message or formula. The formula is: God elects: One submits. God commands: One obeys. Then with certitude to know that God will never abandon His people.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibn Katheer, volume 4, page 15.

**Both texts tell people if you submit to God- He will never abandon you. Moreover He will Bless you (increase His sustenance in abundance).**

**God blesses Abraham by making him very rich as a reward for his obedience to God's command to leave his country (land) and kin (family). This blessing is illustrated in the growth of the number of their cattle in the episode of the strife between Abraham's herders and Lot's over land, which compels them to separate. The episode of the war with kings also ends with the blessing of the king/priest of Abraham which brings back all the people, women and wealth. The focus in the episode of "Abraham in Egypt," in the Bible, should not be on whether it is historically accurate or not but on the reader's reaction to the story, and what theological message is concluded. We learn that God did not abandon Abraham, God saves Sarah unharmed, moreover he sends them back carrying many gifts (blessings), as Abram becomes very rich in livestock, silver and gold. Although in the darkest moments it looked as if Abraham was about to lose the promise of becoming a great nation through losing Sarah to the king. This formula could also be applied to the "Abraham-Hagar" episode, when Abraham was commanded to hearken to Sarah's voice and leave Hagar in the desert, Abraham obeyed: God did not abandon them. In the episodes of both Sarah and Hagar God blesses Abraham by the promise of making each of his two sons into a great nation. The same formula can be easily seen in the sacrifice story, God commands: Abraham obeys, God did not abandon Abraham and rewarded him for his obedience and willingness to sacrifice his only son. God redeemed the son with a ram. This implies that self-sacrifice in the service of God is the supreme purpose in life, which earned both father and son the greatest rank. In fact, all through Abraham's journey, from**

the time God asked Abraham to leave his country till the climax in the sacrifice story, God never abandoned Abraham. As God assured Abraham “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield” (Gen. 15:1) .

We can apply the same formula to the different episodes of the story in the Quran: God elects Abraham: Abraham consciously submits to God (Abraham’s search for the True God, his disputes with his people against idol worship), God did not abandon Abraham when they cast him in the fire, God saves Abraham from the fire unharmed and guides him to the blessed land. In the episode of Hagar, again Abraham submits to God’s command and obeys and leaves his child and mother in the uncultivated valley, again God did not abandon His people, Abraham prays for the region to be fruitful for Ismael to grow and be faithful to God. God not only saves them but blesses them by giving Hagar the promise of making Ishmael a great nation, moreover, gives her freedom, independence in owning her own property and the well of water, the Zamzam spring, which runs in abundance to the present day, and Ismael survives and earns God’s blessings being among the prophets and builds with Abraham God’s Sacred House in Mecca (the Ka’ba). God blesses the region and makes Mecca the center of pilgrimage for all those who submit their will to God: God’s blessings will always be there for those who submit. (The meaning of the word Islam). And makes the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Ismael fill the region. God rewards and blesses Abraham in the Quran, as in the Bible for his willingness to sacrifice his son and for his complete obedience to God’s command. Therefore we conclude that the sacred scriptures were not sent with a new message but were sent as

confirmation of revival to reform and bring people back to the worship of the One God following the same religion: Submission to God.<sup>66</sup>

The Christian-Jews remained faithful to Judaism when they accepted Jesus, the new Prophet who clearly declared that he came not with a new message but to affirm and complete the previous message and to reform the corruption which occurred in the society at his time. "Jesus proclaims the message and heals... ....he went round the whole Galilee in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom...Then he began to speak: "Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them." (Matt 5:17).

The Quran revealed to Muhammad in Arabia declared the same, to bring people back to the worship of the One God: "To thee We sent the Scripture in Truth, confirming The scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what God hath revealed .."(Quran 5:51). And thus the Quran in the beginning did not address the Muslims as separate community from the Jews and Christians in Mecca. It was the solidification of these communities in Medina later on that led to the announcement of Muslims as separate community.

**The unity of faith is declared in the Quran, not only to believe in the Torah and the Gospel but to say "I believe in whatever Book God may have revealed"**  
(Quran 42:15. **Because God's guidance does not belong to any community or nation.**  
As God declares that: "The same religion has He established for you as that which He

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<sup>66</sup> "The light of eternal unity has shone in all ages and among all nations through chosen apostles of God, so that their message and their life might fulfil the eternal and unchanging purpose of God (the Most High) to lead people to their noblest destiny." Y.Ali p. 3

enjoined on Noah- the which We have sent by inspiration to thee- and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: **Namely that you should remain steadfast in religion, and make no division therein**" (Quran 42:13).<sup>67</sup>

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67 "To those who worship other things than God, hard is the (way) to which thou callest them. God chooses to Himself those whom He pleases, and guides to Himself those who turn (to Him). And they became divided only after knowledge reached them, through selfish envy as between themselves. Had it not been for a Word that went forth before from thy Lord, (tending to a term appointed), the matter would have been settled between them: But truly those who have inherited the Book after them are in suspicious (disquieting) doubt concerning it. Now then, for that (reason), call (them to the Faith), and stand steadfast as thou are commanded, Nor follow thou their vain desires; but say: "I believe in the Book which God has sent down; And I am commanded to judge justly between you. **God is our Lord and your Lord**: For us (is the responsibility for) our deeds, and for you your deeds. There is no contention between us and you. God will bring us together, and to Him is (our) final goal" (Quran 42: 13- 16).

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# **APPENDIX**

## **A CROSS-REFERENCE OF THE BIBLICAL AND QURANIC TEXTS**

**M.A. THESIS  
Presented by Amira Elias**

## **PARALLEL POINTS OF DISCUSSION AND CONCORDANCE**

### **Abraham in the Bible**

### **Abraham in the Quran**

1. Abraham's genealogy.  
Gen. 11:26- 28

1. No genealogy.

2. Family migration with father.  
Father is referred to as Terah:  
Gen. 11:31- 32

2. Theological arguments with father.  
Father is referred to as Azar:  
Quran 19:46, 6:74, 19:42-45

3. Migration from Ur as God Commands-  
Unto a Promised land that God will reveal  
Gen. 12:1- 2

3. Abraham's religion causes persecution-  
God saves him from fire and guides him to  
the blessed land  
Quran 21:68, 69, 70

4a. Dispute *after* migration:  
Between his herdsmen & those of Lot.  
And war with kings  
Gen. 13:5-14

4a. Dispute *before* migration:  
Father, people, and king about God.  
Quran 26:70- 74, 21:51- 55, 43:26-28, 21:56,  
19:47, 9:114

4b. Abraham departs:  
As God commands  
Gen. 12:3-5, 15:7

4b. Abraham departs:  
He withdraws to protect his religion  
Quran 19:48, 21:71, 9:115, 19:49-50,

4c. Dispute *after* migration:  
With kings  
Gen. 14:1-16

4c. Dispute *before* migration:  
Attacking tradition: destroys idols  
Quran 21:57-67, 37:85-96, 26:75-86

5. Abraham is Blessed: by God.  
And by king/priest of Salem  
Gen. 14:17-24

5. Abraham is Blessed: by God  
Quran 37:109-113, 11:73, 26:89-93,  
26:87-88

6. Abraham builds an altar  
Gen. 12:6-9  
Gen. 13:3-4, 13:18, 22:9

6. Abraham builds an altar  
Quran 3:96-97, 22:26,27, 2:125, 127, 128-  
131, 14:35-37, 14:41

7. Abraham's Religion:  
Chosen to keep the way of the Lord.  
Rewarded with descendants and land  
Gen. 12:4, 18:19, 15:1-4, 17:1, 15:5-7, 15:13-  
14

7. Abraham's Religion:  
Chosen by God in a chain of Prophets.  
Quran 3:33-34, 3:84, 2:137,  
God has chosen for you the Faith of Abraham  
22:78, 2:138  
Will ye dispute with us about God  
Quran 2:139-140, 22:78, 3:65

## **PARALLEL POINTS OF DISCUSSION AND CONCORDANCE**

### **Abraham in the Bible**

Chosen to keep the way of the Lord  
 Asked to be Blameless  
 Gen. 17:1  
 8. God's dialogue with Abraham  
 Gen 15:5, 15:8  
 Evidence to possess land: the offering of  
 animals.  
 Gen. 15:9-12

9. God's covenant with Abraham:  
 To your descendants I give this land  
 Gen 13:17-18, 15:7, 15:17-21  
 Gen 17:1-6

10a. Abraham's attributes: Righteous.  
 Gen. 15:6  
 10b. Abraham's attributes: a Prophet.  
 Gen. 20:7  
 10c. Abraham's attributes: Blameless.  
 Gen. 17:1

11. Abraham & the Stars  
 To count his numerous descendants  
 Gen 15:5, 13:14-16

12. Abraham and Hagar:  
 Hagar is expelled to the desert  
 Gen. 16:1-16, 21:9-21

13. Covenant with Abraham's seed:  
 13a. To be God to you 17:7  
 13b. To give the land of Canaan for perpetual  
 holding 17:8  
 13c. Every male shall be circumcised  
 Gen. 17:9-14

### **Abraham in the Quran**

Chosen for you the Faith of Abraham  
 3:66,67, 2:135, 136, 3:68, 3:85  
 8. God's dialogue with Abraham  
 Quran 2:131-32, 16:120  
 Evidence of how God gives life to the dead:  
 The taming of animals  
 Quran 2:260, 258

9. God's covenant with Abraham:  
 Prophets to guard the Truth  
 Quran 33:7-8, 3:81, 83, 2:124,125, 2:128-131

10a. Abraham's attributes: Righteous.  
 Quran 16:122, 2:130-131  
 10b. Abraham's attributes: a Prophet.  
 Quran 19:41  
 10c. Abraham's attributes: Upright  
 Quran 3:95, 6:161-164  
 11:75, 16:121, 16:120, 123

11. Abraham & the Stars  
 To contemplate about the Creator  
 Quran 6:75-79

12. Abraham and family:  
 Family taken to a valley uncultivated  
 Quran 14:37, 38, 2:158, 2:124-134

13. Covenant with Abraham's seed:  
 13a. To bow thy will to Me. Quran 2:131  
 13b. God chosen for you true religion  
 Quran 2:132-133  
 13c. Believe in the revelation Quran 2:136-139  
 13d. Not to conceal God's testimony  
 Quran 2:141,21:73



## **PARALLEL POINTS OF DISCUSSION AND CONCORDANCE**

### **Abraham in the Bible**

14. Abraham's sons:  
Angel tells Hagar to name son Ishmael  
Gen. 16:11-12, 17:18,20,22-27
  
15. Abraham's prayer for Ishmael  
Gen. 17:18, 20, 22
  
16. A Father-son bonding  
Abraham & Ishmael circumcised  
Gen. 17:23-27
  
17. Abraham's sons.  
Sarah is blessed & given a son  
Gen. 17:15-21
  
18. Abraham's sons.  
Both sons are promised to be great nations  
Gen. 21:13,18, 17:20, 16:10, 17:16
  
19. Angels visit Abraham  
Birth of Isaac: A covenant  
Gen. 17:17, 19,21
  
20. Angels visit Abraham.  
Roasted calf: Three Angels *eat*  
Gen. 18:1-10
  
21. Angels visit Abraham  
Abraham & Sarah laugh  
Gen. 18:11-15
  
22. Angels bring news about Sodom.  
Gen. 18:16,17,20-23
  
23. Abraham pleads with God  
Gen. 18:22-33

### **Abraham in the Quran**

14. Abraham's sons:  
Abraham is grateful for Ismael & Isaac.  
Quran 14:39
  
15. Abraham's prayer for Ismael  
Quran 14:37,38,40. 2:126
  
16. A Father-son bonding  
Abraham and Ismael build Ka'ba  
Quran 2:127, 125
  
17. Abraham's sons.  
Sarah is blessed & given a son  
Quran 11:73, 51:28
  
18. Abraham's sons  
Both sons are given Scripture & guidance  
Ismael and Isaac each a prophet  
Quran 6:84-90, 38:112, 113, 19:54,55
  
19. Angels visit Abraham.  
Birth of Isaac: Good news  
Quran 15:51-56
  
20. Angels visit Abraham.  
Roasted calf: Angels *do not eat*  
Quran 11: 69-70, 51:24-28
  
21. Angels visit Abraham  
Sarah laughs  
Quran 51:29,30 , 11:71-73
  
22. Angels bring news about township  
Quran 29:31, 15:57,58, 29:32, 51:31-34
  
23. Abraham pleads with God  
Quran 11:74-76

## **PARALLEL POINTS OF DISCUSSION AND CONCORDANCE**

### **Abraham in the Bible**

24. Angels come to Lot  
Gen. 19:1-14

25. Angels come to Lot  
Take thy wife lest she be consumed  
Gen. 19:15-18

26. Angels come to Lot.  
Lot asks to flee to a closer city  
Gen. 19:19-24

27. God destroys the cities.  
But his wife looks back  
Gen. 19:25-29

28. Lot's daughters.  
Gen. 19:30

29. Our father drink wine& we will lie w/him  
Gen. 19:31-38

30. Abraham's vision to sacrifice son  
Gen. 22:1-12

31. A Ram as ransom  
Gen. 22:13-15

32. God blesses Abraham  
for willingness to sacrifice son  
Gen. 22:16-19

33. Descendants of Abraham.  
Gen. 25:12-18

### **Abraham in the Quran**

24. Angels come to Lot.  
Quran 11:77-80, 29:28-30, 29:34. 35, 15:57,  
58, 61-63

25. Angels come to Lot  
Your wife will remain behind  
Quran 29:33, 11:81, 15:58-60, 26:171, 172

26. Angels come to Lot.  
Wife set as example to the unbelievers  
Quran 66:10, 27:54-56

27. God destroys the cities.  
Let none of you turn back  
Quran 15:64-66, 51:35, 36, 15:72, 11:82,  
51:37, 11:83, 27:58, 15:73-77, 27:57, 26:173,  
174, 27:58, 26:160-164, 15:67

28. Lot's daughters.  
Quran 15:68-71

29. And leave the mates your Lord created?  
Quran 26:165-170  
Taste My punishment after My warning  
26:175, 54:33-39

30. Abraham's vision to sacrifice son  
Quran 37:99-106

31. A Ram as ransom  
Quran 37:107-112

32. God blesses Abraham  
for willingness to sacrifice son  
Quran 37:113

33. Descendants of Abraham.  
Quran 21:72, 85, 19:59, 60, 29:26, 38:45-  
48, 29:27, 6:84-90, 12:38, 3:33, 4:54, 12:6,  
4:163, 57:26, 19:58

**PARALLEL POINTS OF DISCUSSION  
AND CONCORDANCE**

**Abraham in the Bible**

34. Sarah's death and burial.

Gen. 23:1-20

35. Abraham's death.

Gen. 25:7

**Abraham in the Quran**

34. Sarah's death and burial.

35. Abraham's death.

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **Abram, Abraham**

#### **1. Abraham's genealogy**

"When Terah had lived seventy years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran." Gen. 11:26

"Now these are the descendants of Terah. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot." Gen. 11:27

"Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldeans." Gen. 11:28

#### **2. Family migration with father.**

**Father is referred to as Terah:**

"Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot son of Haran, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there." Gen. 11:31

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **Ibrahim, Abraham**

#### **1. No genealogy.**

#### **2. Theological arguments with father.**

**Father is referred to as Azar:**

"He said: 'O Abraham ? If thou cease not, I shall surely stone thee. Depart from me a long while!'" Quran 19:46

"Abraham said to his father Azar:

"Takest thou idols for gods? For I see thee and thy people in manifest error." Quran 6:74

"He said to his father, 'O my father ! Why worship that which heareth not and seeth not, and can profit thee nothing?'" Quran 19:42

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **2. Family migration with father.**

**Father is referred to as Terah:**

“The days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.” Gen. 11:32

### **3. Migration from Ur as God commands- Unto a Promised land that God will reveal to him**

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Go from your country, and your kindred, and your father's house to a land that I will show you.” Gen. 12:1

“I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; so that you will be a blessing.” Gen. 12:2

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **2. Theological arguments with father**

**Father is referred to as Azar:**

“O my father! To me has come knowledge which has not reached thee: So follow me: I will guide thee to a way that is even and straight.” Quran 19:43

“O my father I serve not Satan: for Satan is a rebel against (God) most Gracious.” Quran 19:44

“O my father ! I fear lest a penalty afflict thee from (God) most Gracious, so that thou become to Satan a friend.” Quran 19:45

### **3. Abraham's religion causes persecution - God saves him from fire and guides him to the Blessed land**

“They cried: ‘Burn him and stand by your gods, if ye will be doing.’”

Quran 21:68

“We said: ‘O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham,’” Quran 21:69

“And they wished to set a snare for him, but We made them the greater losers.”

Quran 21:70

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 4. Dispute *after* migration:

#### **Between his herdsmen & those of Lot.**

“Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.”

Gen. 13:5

“So that the land could not support both of them living together; for their possessions were so was great that they could not live together.” Gen. 13:6

“And there was a strife between Abram's livestock and the herders of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanite and the Perizzite lived in the land.” Gen. 13:7

“Then Abram said to Lot, ‘**Let there be no strife between you and me and between your herders and my herders; for we are kindred.**’” Gen. 13:8

“**Is not the whole land before you?** separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left’.” Gen. 13:9

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 4. Dispute *before* migration:

#### **Father, people and king about God.**

“Recite unto them the story of Abraham” Quran 26.70

“When he said unto his father and his folk: What worship ye ?” Quran 26.71

“They said: ‘**We worship idols.** and are ever devoted unto them’” Quran 26.72

“He said: ‘Do they hear you when you call (on them) ?Or do they benefit or harm you ?’” Quran 26.73

They said: ‘Nay, but we found our fathers worshiping thus.’” Quran 26.74

“And We verily gave Abraham of old his proper course, and We were Aware of him,” Quran 21.51

“When he said unto his father and his folk: ‘What are these images unto which ye pay devotion ?’” Quran 21.52

“They said: ‘We found our fathers worshipers of them.’” Quran 21.53

“He said: ‘Verily ye and your fathers were in plain error.’” Quran 21.54

“They said: ‘Bringest thou unto us the truth, or art thou some jester?’”

Quran 21.55

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **4. Dispute *after* migration:**

**Between his herdsmen & those of Lot**

“Lot looked about him, and saw that the plain of the Jordan was well watered every where like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar; this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.”

Gen. 13:10

“So Lot chose for himself all the plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward; thus they separated from each other.”

Gen. 13:11

“Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the plain and moved pitched his tent as far as Sodom.” Gen. 13:12

“Now the people of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.”

Gen. 13:13

“The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, ‘Raise your eyes now, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;’ Gen. 13:14

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **4. Dispute *before* migration:**

**Father, people and king about God**

“Abraham said to his father and his people: ‘I do indeed clear myself of what ye worship’ Quran 43:26

“(I worship) only Him Who made me, and He will certainly guide me.” Quran 43:27

“And he left it as a Word to endure among those who came after him, that they may turn back (to God)”

Quran 43:28

“He said: ‘Nay, but your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who created them; and I am of those who testify unto that.’” Quran 21:56

“He said: ‘Peace be unto thee! I shall ask forgiveness of my Lord for thee. He was ever gracious unto me’” Quran 19:47

“The prayer of Abraham for the forgiveness of his father was only because of a promise he had promised him, but when it had become clear unto him that he (his father) was an enemy to God he (Abraham) disowned him.

Abraham was tender-hearted, forbearing.” Quran 9:114

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

**Abraham departs :**

**As God commands**

“I will bless those who bless you, and the one curses you I will curse and in you all families of the earth shall be blessed.” Gen. 12:3

“So Abram went, as the Lord had told him: and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed from Haran.”

Gen. 12:4

“Abram took Sarai his wife, and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons that they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan.” Gen. 12:5

“Then he said unto him, ‘I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.’” Gen. 15:7

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

**Abraham departs:**

**He withdraws to protect his religion**

“I shall withdraw from you and that unto which ye pray beside Allah, and I shall pray unto my Lord. It may be that, in prayer unto my Lord, I shall not be unblest.” Quran 19:48

“We saved him and Lot (and directed them) to the land which We have blessed for the nations.” Quran 21:71

“And God will not mislead a people after He has guided them, It was never God's (part) that He should send a folk astray after He had guided them until He had made clear unto them what they should fear (and avoid). For God has knowledge of all things.” Quran 9:115

“So, when he had withdrawn from them and that which they were worshiping beside God, We gave him Isaac and Jacob. Each of them We made a prophet.” Quran 19:49

“And We bestowed of Our Mercy on them, and assigned to them a high and true renown.” Quran 19:50



## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 4. Dispute *after* migration:

#### With kings: War

"In the days of king Amraphel king of Shinar, king Arioch of Ellasar, king Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and king Tidal Goiim" Gen. 14:1

"These kings made war with king Bera of Sodom, king Birsha king of Gomorrah, king Shinab of Admah, king Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, (that is Zoar)." Gen. 14:2

"All these joined forces in the valley of Siddim, (that is the Dead Sea)." Gen. 14:3

"Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled." Gen. 14:4

"In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, came and subdued the Rephaims in Ashteroth- Karnaim, the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim," Gen. 14:5

"And the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El-paranon the edge of the wilderness." Gen. 14:6

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 4. Dispute *before* migration:

#### Attacking tradition: destroys idols

"And, by God. I have a plan for your idols after you go away and turn your backs." Quran 21:57

"Then he broke them to pieces, (all) save the chief of them, that they might turn and have recourse to it." Quran 21:58

"They said: 'Who hath done this to our gods ? Surely it must be some evil-doer'" Quran 21:59

"They said: 'We heard a youth make mention of them, who is called Abraham.'" Quran 21:60

"They said: 'Then bring him (hither) before the people's eyes that they may testify.'" Quran 21:61

"They said: 'Is it thou who hast done this to our gods, O Abraham? Quran 21:62

"He said: 'But this, their chief hath done it. So question them, if they can speak.'" Quran 21:63

"Then they turned to themselves and said: Surely ! you yourselves are the wrong- doers." Quran 21:64

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 4. Dispute *after* migration:

#### With kings: War

“Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat, (that is Kadesh), and subdued all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar. Gen.14:7

“Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they **joined battle** in the valley of Siddim;” Gen. 14:8

“With Chedorlaomer the **king** of Elam, king Tidal **king of Goiim**, king Amraphel of Shinar, and king Arioch of Ellasar; four **kings** against five.” Gen. 14:9

“Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits; and as the **kings** of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country.” Gen. 14:10

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 4. Dispute *before* migration:

#### Attacking tradition: destroys idols

“And they were **utterly confounded** with shame:( they said), “ Well thou knowest well that **these (idols) speak not.**” Quran 21:65

“He said: ‘**Worship ye** then instead of God that which **cannot profit you** at all, nor harm you?’” Quran 21:66

“Fie upon you and all that ye worship instead of God! Have ye then no sense?” Quran 21:67

“When he said unto **his father and his folk**: ‘What is it that **ye worship?**’” Quran 37:85

“Is it **falsehood - gods beside God-** that ye desire ?” Quran 37:86

“What then is your opinion of the Lord of the Worlds ?” Quran 37:87

“And he cast a **glance at the stars**” Quran 37:88

“Then said: ‘**I am indeed sick** (at heart)!’” Quran 37:89

“So they **turned away from him, and departed.**” Quran 37:90

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 4. Dispute *after* migration:

**With kings: War**

“So the enemy **took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah**, and all their provisions, and went their way.” Gen. 14:11

“They also took **Lot**, the son of Abram's brother, who lived in Sodom, and **his goods**, and departed.” Gen. 14:12

“Then one who escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew; who was living by the oaks of **Mamre** the Amorite, brother of Eschol, and of Aner; **these were allies of Abram**.” Gen. 14:13

“When Abram heard that his nephew brother had been taken **captive**, he led forth his **trained men**, born in his house, **three hundred eighteen** of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.” Gen. 14:14

“And he **divided his forces against them** by night, and he and his servants, and routed them, and **pursued them** to Hobah, north of Damascus.” Gen. 14:15

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 4. Dispute *before* migration:

**Attacking tradition: destroys idols**

“Then turned he to their gods and said:

“**Will ye not eat?**” Quran 37:91

“What is the matter with you that ye **speak not ?**” Quran 37:92

“Then **he attacked them**, striking with his **right hand**.” Quran 37:93

“And (his people) came toward him, hastening.” Quran 37:94

“He said: ‘**Worship ye that which ye yourselves do carve**’” Quran 37:95

“When God hath created you and what ye make?” Quran 37:96

“He said: ‘See now that which ye worship,’” Quran 26:75

“Ye and your forefathers!” Quran 26:76

“For they are (all) **an enemy unto me, save the Lord of the Worlds**,” Quran 26:77

“Who created me, and it is He who guides,” Quran 26:78

“And Who gives me food and drink.” Quran 26:79

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **4. Dispute *after* migration:**

**With kings: War**

“Then he **brought back all the goods**, and also brought back his nephew Lot, with **his goods**, and the women also, and the people.” Gen. 14:16

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **4. Dispute *before* migration:**

**Attacking tradition: destroys idols**

“And when I am sick, it is He who cures me,” Quran 26:80

“Who will cause me to die, and then to live (again),” Quran 26:81

“And Who, I hope, will **forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment**”  
Quran 26:82

“My Lord! Bestow wisdom on me and **unite me with the righteous.**”

Quran 26:83

“And grant me honorable mention on **the tongue of truth among the later generations.**” Quran 26:84

“And place me among the **inheritors of the Garden of Bliss,**” Quran 26:85

“And **forgive my father.** For that he is among those astray.” Quran 26:86

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 5. Abraham is blessed: By God and by king/priest

"I will make of you a great nation. and I will bless you, and make your name great: so that you will be a blessing:"  
Gen. 12:2

"And I will **bless** those who **bless** you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you shall all the families of the earth shall be **blessed**." Gen. 12:3

And by **king of Salem, a priest**

"After his return from the defeat of **Chedorlaomer**, and of the **kings** who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh, (that is, the king's Valley."

Gen. 14:17

"And king **Melchizedek of Salem** brought out **bread and wine**: he was **priest of God the Most high**."

Gen. 14:18

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 5.Abraham is blessed: By God

"Peace and salutation to Abraham"  
Quran 37:109

"Thus indeed We reward those who do right" Quran 37:110

"For he was one of Our believing servants." Quran 37:111

"**We blessed him and Isaac**: but of their progeny are (some) that do right, and (some) that obviously do wrong, to their own souls." Quran 37:113

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 5.Abraham is blessed: By God and by king/ priest

"He blessed him, and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High. maker of heaven and earth:" Gen. 14:19

"And **blessed be God most High**, who hash delivered your enemies into your hand. And Abram gave him one tenth of everything." Gen. 14:20

"Then the **king of Sodom** said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and **take the goods to yourself.**" Gen. 14:21

"But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the Lord, God Most High, maker of heaven and earth," Gen. 14:22

"That I would not take a thread or a sandal-thong or anything that is yours, so that you **might not say, 'I have made Abram rich'**" Gen. 14:23

"I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share." Gen. 14:24

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 5.Abraham is blessed: By God

"The Grace of God and His Blessings on you, O you people of the house. For He is indeed Worthy of all praise, full of all Glory." 11:73

"Only he (will prosper) that brings to God **a sound heart.**" Quran 26:89

"To the righteous the Garden will be brought near." Quran 26:90

"And hell will appear plainly to those straying in evil." Quran 26:91

"And it will be said unto them: Where is (all) that ye used to worship" Quran 26:92

"Instead of God ? Can they help you or help themselves ?" Quran 26:93

"And (Abraham said) let me not be in disgrace on the day when they are raised" Quran 26:87

"The day when **wealth and sons avail** not (any man)" Quran 26:88

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 6. Abraham builds an Altar.

“Abram passed through the **land** to the place at **Shechem**, to the oaks of **Moreh**. At that time the Canaanite were in the land.” Gen. 12:6

“Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said , ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’ So he built there an **altar** to the Lord, who had appeared to him.”  
Gen. 12:7

“ From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of **Bethel**, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an **altar** to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord.” Gen.12:8

“And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.” Gen. 12:9

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 6. Abraham builds an Altar.

“The **first Sanctuary** appointed for people was that at **Becca**, full of blessing and of guidance for the Worlds” Quran 3:96

“Wherein are plain memorials (of God’s guidance); the place where **Abraham** stood up to pray; and whosoever enters it attains security; **pilgrimage** to the House thereto is a duty, people owe to God, those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, God stands not in need of any of His creatures.”

Quran 3:97

“And (remember) when We gave the site to Abraham, of the (Sacred) **House**, saying: “Associate not anything (in worship) with Me; and sanctify **My House** for those who compass it round, (thereof) and those who stand up and those who bow and **prostrate** themselves (therein in prayer)”

Quran 22:26

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 6. Abraham builds an Altar.

“He journeyed on by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between **Bethel** and **Ai**,” Gen. 13:3

“To the place where he had made an **altar at the first**; and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.” Gen. 13:4

“So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the **Oaks of Mamre**, which are at **Hebron**, and there he built an **altar to the Lord**.” Gen.13:18

### **Bound Isaac on the Altar for sacrifice**

“When they came to the place that God had shown, **Abraham built an altar** there, and laid the wood in order. He **bound his son Isaac**, and **laid him on the altar** on top of the wood.” Gen. 22:9

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 6. Abraham builds an Altar.

“And proclaim unto the people the **pilgrimage**. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine.

Quran 22:27

“And when We made the **House** a **place of assembly** for people and a **sanctuary**, (saying): ‘Take as your place of worship the place where Abraham stood (to pray).’ And We **imposed a duty upon Abraham and Ismael**, (saying): ‘**Purify My house** for those who go around and those who meditate therein and those who **bow down** and **prostrate themselves** (in worship).’”

Quran 2:125

“And when Abraham and Ismael were raising the **foundations of the House**, (Abraham prayed): ‘Our Lord! Accept from us (this duty). Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the **Hearer, the Knower**.’”

Quran 2:127



## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **6. Abraham builds an Altar.**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **6. Abraham builds an Altar.**

**“Our Lord! And make us submissive unto Thee , bowing to Thy (Will) and of our seed a nation submissive unto Thee. bowing to Thy (Will), and show us our ways of worship, and turn unto us (in Mercy); for Thou, only Thou, art the Relenting, the Most Merciful.”**

**Quran 2:128**

**“Our Lord! Send amongst them an Apostle of their own, who shall recite unto them Thy revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom and sanctify them. For Thou, only Thou, art the Exalted in Might, the Wise.” Quran 2:129**

**“And who turns away from the religion of Abraham but such as debase their souls with folly ? Him We chose and rendered pure in this world, and he will be in the Hereafter among the righteous.” Quran 2:130**

**“When his Lord said unto him:**

**‘Surrender’! He said: ‘I have surrendered to the Lord of the Worlds.’” Quran 2:131**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **6. Abraham builds an Altar.**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **6. Abraham builds an Altar.**

**“And when Abraham said: ‘My Lord!**

**Make this city one of peace and security, and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols.’”**

**Quran 14:35**

**“O My Lord! they have indeed led astray many among people. But whoso follows my (ways), is of me. And he that disobeys me - Still Thou art Forgiving, Merciful.” Quran 14:36**

**“Our Lord! I have settled some of my offspring in an uncultivable valley near unto Thy Sacred House, our Lord! that they may establish proper worship; so incline some hearts of people that they may yearn toward them, and provide Thou them with fruits in order that they may be thankful.”**

**Quran 14:37**

**“Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and believers on the day when the account is cast.”Quran 14:41**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **7. Abraham's Religion:**

**Chosen to keep the way of the Lord.**

**Abraham is obedient to God's call.**

**"So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran."** Gen. 12:4

**"No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, by doing righteousness and justice; so that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."** Gen. 18:19

**Abraham is annoyed with God**

**"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram: I am your shield, your reward shall be very great.'"**

**Gen. 15:1**

**"But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?'"** Gen. 15:2

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **7. Abraham's Religion:**

**Chosen by God in a chain of Prophets.**

**They joined no gods with God.**

**"God did choose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham, the family of Imam above all people"** Quran 3:33

**"Offspring, one of the other, and God heareth and knoweth all things."**

**Quran 3:34**

**"Say: 'We believe in God and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, Ismael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus and the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered.'"** Quran 3:84

**"So if they believe as ye believe, they are indeed on the right path; but if they turn back, it is they who are in schism; but God will suffice thee as against them, and He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing."** Quran 2: 137

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 7. Abraham's Religion:

#### Abraham is annoyed with God

"And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.'" Gen. 15:3

"But the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir, no one but your own issue shall be your heir.'" Gen. 15:4

#### Rewarded by descendants and land

"He brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.'" Gen. 15:5

"And he believed in the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness." Gen. 15:6

"Then he said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.'" Gen. 15:7

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 7. Abraham's Religion: God has Chosen for you the Faith of Abraham

"And strive in God's cause with the endeavor which is His right. He hath chosen you and hath not laid upon you in religion any hardship; the faith of your father Abraham (is yours). He hath named you Muslims of old time and in this (Scripture), that the messenger may be a witness for you, and that ye may be witnesses for people." Quran 22:78

### God's dispute re-Abraham: Will ye dispute with us about God

"(Our religion is) the Baptism of God; and who can baptize better than God? And it is He whom we worship." Quran 2:138

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **7. Abraham's Religion:**

#### **Rewarded by descendants and land**

“Then the Lord said to Abram, ‘Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be oppressed for **four hundred years**” Gen. 15:13

“But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with **great possessions.**”  
Gen. 15:14

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **7. Abraham's Religion:**

#### **Will ye dispute with us about God**

“Say: ‘Will ye dispute with us about God, seeing that He is our Lord and your Lord: that we are responsible for our doings and ye for yours; and that we are sincere (in our faith) in Him?’”  
Quran 2:139

“Or do ye say that Abraham, Ismail, Isaac Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: ‘Do ye know better than God?’ Ah ! Who is more unjust than those who conceal the testimony they have from God? But God is not unmindful of what ye do!” Quran: 2:140  
“So establish regular prayer, give regular charity, and hold fast to God. He is your Protecting friend. A blessed Patron and a blessed Helper!” Quran 22:78  
“O People of the Scripture! Why will ye argue about Abraham, when the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed till after him? Have you no understanding ?” Quran 3:65

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **7. Abraham's Religion:**

**Chosen to keep the way of the Lord.**

**Asked to be blameless.**

**"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless.'" Gen.**

**17.1**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **7. Abraham's Religion:**

**Chosen for you the Faith of Abraham.**

**"You are those who argue in matters of which you have some knowledge:**

**But why then argue concerning that which you have no knowledge ? It is God who knows, and you who know not." Quran 3.66**

**"Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian; but he was an upright man who had surrendered (to God), and he was not of the idolaters." Quran 3:67**

**"They say: 'Become Jews or Christians if ye would be guided (to salvation).' Say thou: 'Nay! (I would rather) the Religion of Abraham the True, and he joined no gods with God.'" Quran 2:135**

**"Say Ye: 'We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: and we bow to God (in Islam).'" Quran 2:136**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **7. Abraham's Religion:**

**Chosen to keep the way of the Lord.**

**Rewarded by descendants and land**

### **8. God's dialogue with Abraham:**

"He brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and count the **stars**, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall **your descendants** be.'" Gen. 15:5

"But he said, 'O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?'" Gen. 15:8

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **7. Abraham's Religion: God has**

**Chosen for you the Faith of Abraham.**

"Those who have the **best claim to Abraham** are those who follow him, **and this Prophet** and those who believe (with him); and God is the Protecting Guardian of the believers." Quran 3:68  
"And whoso seeketh as religion other **than the Surrender** (to God) it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter." Quran 3:85

### **8. God's dialogue with Abraham:**

"Behold! His Lord said to him: '**Bow** (thy will to Me).' He said: 'I bow (my will) to the Lord and Cherisher of the universe.'" Quran 2:131

"And this was **the legacy that Abraham left to his sons.**" Quran 2:132

"Abraham was indeed a **model, devotedly obedient to God, (and) true in faith**, and he joined no gods with God" Quran 16:120

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **8. Abraham's dialogue with God:**

**Evidence to possess land:**

**The offering of animals.**

"He said to him, 'Bring me an **heifer** three years old, a female **goat** three years old, a **ram** three years old, a **turtledove**, and a young **pigeon**.'" Gen. 15:9

"He brought him all these, and **cut them** in two, laying each half over against the other: but he did not cut the **birds** in two." Gen. 15:10

"And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away." Gen. 15:11

"As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him." Gen. 15:12

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **8. Abraham's dialogue with God:**

**Evidence of how God gives life to the dead: The taming of animals.**

"And when Abraham said (unto his Lord): 'My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead', he said: 'Dost thou not believe?' Abraham said: 'Yea, but (I ask) in order that my heart may be at ease.' (His Lord) said: '**Take four of the birds and cause them to incline unto thee, then place a part of them on each hill, then call them, they will come to thee in haste, and know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.**'" Quran 2:260

"Hast thou not turned thy vision to one who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because God had granted him power? Abraham said: 'My Lord is He who giveth life and death.' He said: 'I give life and death.' Said Abraham: 'But it is God that causeth the sun to rise from the East: Do thou then cause it to rise from the West.' Thus was he confounded who (in arrogance) rejected Faith. Nor doth God give guidance to a people unjust." Quran 2:258



## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **9. God's Covenant with Abraham:**

**To your descendants I give this land**

"Rise up, walk through the length and the breadth of the land it; for I will give it to you." Gen. 13:17

"So Abram moved his tent, and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the Lord." Gen. 13:18

"Then he said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.'" Gen. 15:7

"When the sun had gone down, and it was dark, a smoking fire pot, and a flaming torch passed between these pieces." Gen. 15:17

"On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.'" Gen. 15:18

"The land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites," Gen. 15:19

"And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, the Rephaims," Gen. 15:20

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **9. God's Covenant with Abraham:**

**Prophets to guard the Truth**

"And remember We took from the prophets a covenant, as (We did) from thee and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant"

**Quran 33:7**

"That He may question the (the Custodians) concerning the Truth of their loyalty. And He hath prepared a painful doom for the unfaithful."

**Quran 33:8**

"Then God made (His) Covenant with the Prophets, (He said): 'Behold that which I have given you of the Scriptures and Wisdom. And afterwards there will come unto you a messenger, confirming that which you possess. You shall believe in him and render him help. Do you agree, and take this covenant as binding on you?' They said: 'We agree' He said: 'Then bear witness and I am with you among the witnesses.'" Quran 3:81

"Verily among those who followed his (Noah's) way was Abraham."

**Quran 37:83**

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 9. God's Covenant with Abraham:

**To your descendants I give this land**

**"The Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."**

Gen. 15:21

**"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am the God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless.'"**

Gen. 17:1

**"And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous."** Gen. 17:2

**"Then Abram fell on his face: and God said to him,"** Gen. 17:3

**"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations."** Gen. 17:4

**"No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations"** Gen. 17:5

**"I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you."** Gen. 17:6

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 9. God's Covenant with Abraham:

**Prophets to guard the Truth**

**"(Remember) when his Lord tried Abraham with (His) commands, and he fulfilled them, He said: I will make thee a leader to the nations. (Abraham) said: And of my offspring (will there be leaders) ? He said: My covenant includeth not wrong-doers."**

Quran 2:124

**"And We covenanted with Abraham and Ismail that they should sanctify My house for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (in prayer)"** Quran 2:125

**"Our Lord! And make us submissive unto Thee and of our seed a nation submissive unto Thee, and show us our ways of worship, and relent toward us. Thou, only Thou, art the Relenting, the Merciful."** Quran 2:128

**"Our Lord! And raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who shall recite unto them Thy revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom...."** Quran 2:129

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **10a. Abraham's attributes: Righteous**

**"And he believed in the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness." Gen. 15:6**

### **10b. Abraham's attributes: A Prophet**

**"Now then return the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if and if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you, and all that are yours." Gen. 20:7**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **10a. Abraham's attributes: Righteous**

**"And We gave him (Abraham) good in the world, and in the Hereafter he is among the righteous." Quran 16:122**  
**"And who turns away from the religion of Abraham but such as debase their souls with folly? Him We choose and rendered pure in this world ; and he will be in the Hereafter in the ranks of the righteous." Quran 2:130**

**"When his Lord said unto him: 'Surrender!' He said: 'I have surrendered to the Lord of the Worlds.'" Quran 2:131**

### **10b. Abraham's attributes: A Prophet**

**"And make mention in the Scripture of Abraham. He was a man of Truth, a prophet " Quran 19:41**

### **10c. Abraham's attributes: Upright**

**"Say: 'God speaketh the Truth: Follow the religion of Abraham, the upright, who was no idolater.'" Quran 3:95**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **10c. Abraham's attributes: Blameless**

“And when Abram was ninety-nine years old nine, the **Lord appeared** to Abram, and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty God; walk before me, and be blameless.’ ” Gen. 17:1

### **10c. Abraham's attributes**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **10c. Abraham's attributes: upright**

“Say: ‘Verily my Lord has guided me to a way that is straight,- a religion of right,- the **community of Abraham, the upright, who was no idolater**’.”

**Quran 6:161**

“Say: ‘Truly, my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for God, Lord of the Worlds.’” **Quran 6:162**

“He hath no partner. This I am commanded, and I am first of those who bow to His Will (surrender.)”

**Quran 6:163**

“Say: ‘Shall I seek another than God for Lord, when He is Lord of all things?’

Every soul draws the meed of its acts on none but itself: no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. Your goal in the end is towards God. He will tell you the truth of the things wherein ye disputed.” **Quran 6:164**

“Verily Abraham was mild, imploring, penitent.” **Quran 11:75**

“Thankful for His bounties; He chose him and He guided him unto a straight path.” **Quran 16:121**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **10c. Abraham's attributes**

#### **11. Abraham & the stars:**

**To count his numerous descendants**

**"He brought him outside, and said,  
'Look toward heaven and count the  
stars, if you are able to count them.'"**

**Then he said to him, 'So shall your  
descendants be.'"**Gen. 15:5

**"The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had  
separated from him, 'Raise your eyes  
now and look from the place where you  
are northward and southward, and  
eastward, and westward:"** Gen. 13:14

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **10c. Abraham's attributes: Upright**

**"Abraham was indeed a model,  
devotedly obedient to God, by nature  
upright, and he was not of the  
idolaters"** Quran 16:120

**"And afterward We inspired thee  
(Muhammad, saying): 'Follow the  
religion of Abraham, as one by nature  
upright. He was not of the idolaters.'"**  
Quran 16:123

#### **11. Abraham & the stars:**

**To contemplate about the Creator**

**"So also did We show Abraham the  
power and the Laws of the heavens  
and the earth, that he might (with  
understanding) have certitude."**

**Quran 6:75**

**"When the night covered him over, he  
saw a star: He said : 'This is my lord.'  
But when it set, He said: 'I love not  
those that set.'"** Quran 6: 76

**"When he saw the moon rising in  
splendor, he said: . . ." Quran 6: 77**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **11. Abraham & the stars:**

**To count his numerous descendants**

**“For all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.”**

Gen. 13:15

**“I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth: so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring can also be counted.” Gen. 13:16**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **11. Abraham & the stars:**

**To Contemplate about the Creator**

**“‘This is my Lord.’ But when the moon set, he said: ‘Unless my Lord guide me, I shall surely be among those who go astray.’” Quran 6: 77**

**“When he saw the sun rising in splendor, he said: ‘This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all).’ But when the sun set, he said:...”Quran 6:78**

**“‘O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to God.’” Quran 6: 78**

**“For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to God.” Quran 6: 79**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **12. Abraham and Hagar:**

#### **Hagar is expelled to the desert**

"Now Sarai Abram's wife bore him no children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl whose name was Hagar." Gen. 16:1

"And Sarai said to Abram, 'You see that the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.'

And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai." Gen. 16:2

"So after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave-girl, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife." Gen. 16:3

"And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes." Gen. 16:4

"And Sarai said unto Abram, 'May the wrong to me be on you! I gave my slave-girl to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me.'" Gen. 16:5

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **12. Abraham and family:**

#### **Family taken to a valley uncultivated**

"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, so fill the hearts of some people with love towards them, and provide them with fruits, so that they may give thanks." Quran 14:37

"O our Lord! Truly Thou knowest that which we conceal and that which we reveal. For nothing whatever is hidden from God on earth or in heaven."

Quran 14:38

"Behold! Safa and Marwa are among the Symbols of God, so if those who go for pilgrimage of The House in the Season or at other times, there is no sin to compass them around, and if anyone obeyeth his own impulse to do good, be sure that God is He who recogniseth and knoweth." Quran 2:158

"(Remember) when his Lord tried Abraham with (His) commands, and he fulfilled them, He said:" Quran 2:124

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 12. Abraham and Hagar:

#### Hagar is expelled to the desert

“But Abram said to Sarai, ‘Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please.’ Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she ran away from her.”

Gen. 16:6

“And the **angel** of the Lord found her by a **spring of water** in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.”

Gen. 16:7

“And he said, ‘Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?’ She said, ‘I am running away from my mistress Sarai.’”

Gen. 16:8

“The **angel** of the Lord said to her, ‘Return to your mistress, and submit to her.’” Gen. 16:9

“The **angel** of the Lord also said to her, ‘I will so greatly multiply your offspring that they cannot be counted for multitude.’” Gen. 16:10

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 12. Abraham and family:

#### Family taken to a valley uncultivated

“‘I will make thee a **leader to the nations.**’ (Abraham) said: ‘And of **my offspring** (will there be leaders)?’ He said: ‘My **covenant** includeth not wrong-doers.’” Quran 2:124

“And when We made the House a **place of assembly for people and a sanctuary**, (saying): ‘Take as your place of prayer the station where Abraham stood (to pray).’ And We **covenanted with Abraham and Ismael** that they should sanctify **My house** for those who compass it round, and those who use it as a retreat and those who **bow down and prostrate themselves** (in prayer).” Quran 2:125

“And when Abraham prayed: ‘My Lord! **Make this a region of security** and bestow upon its people fruits, such of them as believe in God and the Last Day,’ He answered: ..” Quran 2:126



## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **12. Abraham and Hagar:**

#### **Hagar is expelled to the desert**

“And the **angel** of the Lord said to her,  
‘Now you have conceived and shall  
**bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael;**  
for the **Lord has given heed to your**  
**affliction.**” Gen. 16:11

“He shall be a **wild ass of a man;** with  
his hand against every man, and every  
one's hand against him; and he shall live  
at odds with all his kin.” Gen. 16:12

“So she named the Lord who spoke to  
her, ‘You are El-roi’; for she said, ‘Have  
I really seen God and remained alive  
after seeing him?’ ” Gen. 16:13

“Therefore the well was called  
Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it lies between  
Kadesh and Bered.” Gen. 16:14

“Hagar bore Abram a son: and Abram  
named his son, whom Hagar bore,  
Ishmael.” Gen. 16:15

“Abram was eighty-six years old when  
Hagar bore him Ishmael.” Gen. 16:16

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **12. Abraham and family:**

#### **Family taken to a valley uncultivated**

“As for him who disbelieveth. I shall  
leave him in contentment for a while,  
then I shall compel him to the doom of  
Fire- an evil destination (indeed).”

Quran 2:126

“And when **Abraham and Ismael were**  
**raising the foundations of the House,**  
(Abraham prayed): ‘Our Lord! Accept  
from us (this duty). Thou, only Thou, art  
the Hearer, the Knower.’ ” Quran 2:127

“Our Lord! And make us submissive  
unto Thee and of **our seed a nation**  
**submissive** unto Thee, and show us our  
places for the celebration of (due) rites,  
and turn unto us(in Mercy). For Thou  
art the Relenting, the Merciful.”

Quran 2:128

“Our Lord! Send amongst them an  
apostle of their own, who shall rehearse  
Thy Signs to them and instruct them in  
Scripture and Wisdom, and sanctify  
them. For Thou art the Exalted in Might,  
The Wise.” Quran 2:129

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 12. Abraham and Hagar:

#### Hagar is expelled to the desert

“But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had born to Abraham, **playing with her son Isaac**” Gen. 21:9

“So she said to Abraham, ‘**Cast out this slave woman and her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son, Isaac.**’” Gen. 21:10

“The matter was very distressing to Abraham's on account of his son.” Gen. 21:11

“But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of the slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you.’” Gen. 21:12

“As for the son of the slave woman will, I make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.” Gen. 21:13

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 12. Abraham and family:

#### Family taken to a valley uncultivated

“And who forsaketh the religion of Abraham save him who befooleth himself? Verily We chose him in the world, and in the Hereafter he is among the righteous.” Quran 2:130

“When his Lord said unto him: Surrender! he said: ‘I have surrendered to the Lord of the Worlds.’” Quran 2:131

“This was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons, and so did Jacob, (saying): ‘O my sons! God has chosen the Faith for you; (true) religion; therefore die not save as men who have surrendered (unto Him).’” Quran 2:132

“Or were ye present when death came to Jacob, when he said unto his sons: What will ye worship after me? They said: ‘We shall worship thy God, the God of thy fathers,..’” Quran 2:133

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **12. Abraham and Hagar:**

#### **Hagar is expelled to the desert**

“So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread, and a skin of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder along with the child, and **sent her away: and she departed**, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer- sheba.” Gen. 21:14

“When the **water in the skin was gone**, she cast the child under one of the bushes.” Gen. 21:15

“Then she went, and sat her down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot: for she said, ‘Do not let me not look on the death of the child.’ And **she sat opposite him**, she lifted up her voice and wept.” Gen. 21:16

“And God heard the voice of the boy; and the **angel of God called to Hagar** from heaven, and said to her, ‘What troubles you Hagar? **Do not be afraid**; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.” Gen. 21:17

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **12. Abraham and family:**

#### **Family taken to a valley uncultivated**

“Abraham and **Ismael and Isaac**. One God, and unto Him we have surrendered.” Quran 2.133

“Those are a **people who have passed away**. Theirs is that which they earned, and yours is that which ye earn. And ye will not be asked of what they used to do.” Quran 2:134

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **12. Abraham and Hagar:**

**Hagar is expelled to the desert**

“Come, lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand; for I will **make him a great nation of him.**” Gen. 21:18

“Then God opened her eyes, and she **saw a well of water**; she went, and filled the skin of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.” Gen. 21:19

“God was with the boy; and he **grew up**; and lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow.” Gen. 21:20

“And he lived in the **wilderness of Paran**: and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.” Gen. 21:21

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **12. Abraham and family:**

**Family taken to a valley uncultivated**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **13. Covenant with Abraham's seed:**

**To be God to you. Gen.17:7**

**To give the land of Canaan for  
perpetual holding. Gen. 17:8**

**Every male circumcised. Gen.17:10**

"I will establish my **covenant** between  
me and thee and your offspring after  
throughout their generations, for an  
everlasting **covenant**, to be a God to  
you, and to your offspring after you."

Gen. 17:7

"And I will give to you, and to your  
offspring after you, the land where you  
are now an alien, all the **land** of Canaan,  
for a **perpetual holding**; and I will be  
their God." Gen. 17:8

"God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you  
shall keep my **covenant**, you and your  
offspring after you throughout their  
generations.'" Gen. 17:9

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **13. Covenant with Abraham's sons:**

**To bow thy will to Me. 2:131**

**God chosen for you true religion.2:132**

**Believe in the Revelation. 2:136**

**Not to conceal God's testimony.2:140**

"Behold! His Lord said to him: 'Bow  
(thy will to Me)', he said: 'I bow (my  
will) to the Lord and Cherisher of the  
universe.'" Quran 2:131

"This was the legacy that Abraham left  
to his sons, and so did Jacob, (saying):  
'O my sons! God has chosen the Faith  
for you; (true) religion; therefore die not  
save as men who have surrendered (unto  
Him).'" Quran 2:132

"Or were ye present when **death came**  
to **Jacob**, when he said unto his sons:  
'What will ye worship after me? They  
said: '**We shall worship thy God, the**  
**God of thy fathers, Abraham and**  
**Ismael and Isaac, One God, and unto**  
**Him we have surrendered**'" Quran 2:133  
"Say ye: 'We believe in God, and the  
revelation given to us,..." Quran 2:136

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### **13. Covenant with Abraham's seed: Every male shall be circumcised**

"This is my **covenant**, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you; Every male among you shall be **circumcised**." Gen. 17:10  
"You shall **circumcise** the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a sign of the **covenant** between me and you."

Gen. 17:11

"Throughout your generations every male among you shall be **circumcised** when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with **your money** from any foreigner who is not of **your offspring**."

Gen. 17:12

"Both the slave born in your house, and the one bought with your money, must be **circumcised**: So shall my **covenant** be in your flesh an everlasting **covenant**." Gen. 17:13

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### **13. Covenant with Abraham's sons: To bow thy will to Me.**

**God chosen for you true religion.**

**Believe in the Revelation.**

**Not conceal God's testimony**

"And to Abraham, Ismael, Isaac. Jacob, and the Tribes and that given to Moses, Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord. We make no difference between one and another of them. And we bow to God in submission (Islam)."

Quran 2:136

"So if they believe as ye believe, they are indeed on the right path, but if they turn back, it is they who are in schism; but God will suffice thee as against them, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." Quran 2:137

"The **Baptism of God**. And who can baptize better than God? And it is He whom we worship." Quran 2:138

"Say: 'Will ye dispute with us about God, seeing that **He is our Lord and your Lord**, that we are responsible for our doings and ye for yours; and that we are sincere (in our faith) in Him?'"

Quran 2:139

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **13. Covenant with Abraham's seed: Every male shall be circumcised**

“Any **uncircumcised** male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my **covenant**.” Gen. 17:14

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **13. Covenant with Abraham's sons: To bow thy will to Me. God chosen for you true religion. Believe in the Revelation. Not to conceal God's testimony**

“Or do ye say that Abraham, Ismail, Isaac Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: ‘Do ye know better than God?’ Ah ! Who is more unjust than those who **conceal the testimony** they have from God? But God is not unmindful of what ye do!” Quran: 2:140

“Those are a **people who have passed away**. Theirs is that which they earned, and yours is that which ye earn. And ye will not be asked of what they used to do.” Quran 2:141

“And We made **them chiefs who guide** by Our command, and We inspired in them the doing of **good deeds** and to establish regular prayer and to practice regular charity, and they were worshiper of Us (alone).” Quran 21:73

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **14. Abraham's sons:**

#### **Angel tells Hagar to name son Ishmael**

**"And the angel of the Lord said to her.**

**"Now you have conceived and shall bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael; for the Lord has given heed to your affliction." Gen. 16:11**

**"He shall be a wild ass of a man; with his hand against every man, and every one's hand against him; and he shall live at odds with all his kin." Gen. 16:12**

### **15. Abraham's prayer for Ishmael:**

**"And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!"**

**Gen. 17:18**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **14. Abraham's sons:**

#### **Abraham is grateful for Ismael & Isaac**

**"Praise be to God, who hath granted me in my old age, Ismael and Isaac: For truly My Lord is indeed the Hearer of Prayer." Quran 14:39**

### **15. Abraham's prayer for Ismael:**

**"O Our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley near by Thy Sacred House, in order, O our Lord! that they may establish regular prayer, so fill the hearts of some people with love towards them, and provide them with fruits in order that they may give thanks." Quran 14:37**

**"Our Lord! Truly Thou knowest that which we conceal and that which we reveal. For nothing is hidden from God, whether on earth or in heaven."**

**Quran 14:38**



## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **15. Abraham's sons:**

**Abraham prays for Ishmael**

**Blessed & made into a great nation**

“As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.” Gen. 17:20

“And when he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.”  
Gen. 17:22

### **16. A father- son bonding:**

**Abraham & Ishmael circumcised**

“And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in that very day, as God had said to him.” Gen. 17:23

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **15. Abraham's sons:**

**Abraham prays for Ismael**

“My Lord! Make me one who establishes regular prayer, and also (raise such) among my offspring O our Lord! and accept Thou my prayer.” Quran 14:40

“And when Abraham prayed: ‘My Lord! Make this a region of security and bestow upon its people fruits, such of them as believe in God and the Last Day,’ He answered: ‘As for him who disbelieveth, I shall leave him in contentment for a while, then I shall compel him to the doom of Fire-an evil destination (indeed)!’” Quran 2:126

### **16. A father- son bonding:**

**Abraham & Ismael build Ka'ba**

“And when Abraham and Ismael were raising the foundations of the House, (With this prayer): ‘Our Lord! Accept from us (this service). For! Thou, only Thou, art the Hearer, the Knower.’”  
Quran 2:127

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **16. A father- son bonding:**

#### **Abraham & Ishmael circumcised**

“Abraham was **ninety-nine years old and nine** when he was **circumcised** in the flesh of his foreskin.” Gen. 17:24

“And **his son Ishmael** was thirteen years old, when he was **circumcised** in the flesh of his foreskin.” Gen. 17:25

“That very day Abraham and **his son Ishmael** were **circumcised**.” Gen. 17:26

“And all the **men** of his house, slave born in the house, and those bought with money from a foreigner, were **circumcised** with him.” Gen. 17:27

### **17. Abraham’s sons:**

#### **Sarah is Blessed and given a son**

“God said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.” Gen. 17:15

“I will **bless her**, and moreover I will give you a **son** by her. I will **bless her**, and she shall **give rise to nations**; kings of people shall come from her.”

Gen. 17:16

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **16. A father- son bonding:**

#### **Abraham & Ismael build Ka’ba**

“And when We made the **House** a place for assembly for people and a sanctuary, (saying): ‘And take as your place of prayer, the station where Abraham stood (to pray),’ and We **covenanted** with Abraham and Ismael, that they should **sanctify My house** for those who compass it round and those who use it as a retreat, and those who **bow down and prostrate** them in prayer).” Quran 2:125

### **17. Abraham’s sons:**

#### **Sarah is Blessed and given a son**

“They said: ‘Dost thou wonder at God decree? **The Grace of God and His blessings** on you, O ye people of the house! For He is indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory!’” Quran 11:73

“(When they did not eat), He conceived a fear of them. They said, ‘Fear not’ And they gave him **Glad tiding of a son** endowed with knowledge.” Quran 51:28

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 18. Abraham's sons:

**Both sons promised to be great nations**

"As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring."

Gen. 21:13

"Come lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him ." Gen. 21:18

"As for **Ishmael**, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a **great nation**.'" Gen. 17:20

"The angel of the Lord also said to her, 'I will so greatly multiply your offspring that they cannot be counted for multitude.'" Gen. 16:10

"I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

Gen. 17:16

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 18. Abraham's sons:

**Both sons: Scriptures & Prophethood**

"We gave him **Isaac and Jacob**: (all three) We guided....This is the guidance of God, He gives that guidance to whom He pleases,...Those are unto whom We gave The Scripture and command and **Prophet hood**..." Quran 6:84-89

"**Those were the (Prophets)** who received God's guidance. So follow their guidance. Say: 'No reward for this do I ask of you. This is no less than a Message for all nations'." Quran 6:90  
And We gave him The good news of Isaac- a prophet, -one of the Righteous." Quran 38:112

"We **blessed him and Isaac**: But of their progeny are (some) that do right, and (some) that obviously do wrong, to their own souls." 38:113

"And make mention in the Scripture of **Ismael**. He was a keeper of his promise, and he was a messenger (of God), a prophet." Quran 19:54

"He enjoined on his people prayer and charity, and he was most acceptable in the sight of his Lord" Quran 19:55

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **19. Angels visit Abraham**

#### **Birth of Isaac: A covenant**

“Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, ‘Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?’” Gen. 17:17  
“God said, ‘No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.’” Gen. 17: 19

“But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year.” Gen. 17:21

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **19. Angels visit Abraham**

#### **Birth of Isaac: Good news**

“And tell them of Abraham's guests. ”  
Quran 15:51

“(How) when they came in unto him. and said: ‘Peace.’ He said: ‘We are afraid of you.’” Quran 15:52

“They said: ‘Be not afraid! We bring thee good tidings of a boy possessing wisdom.’” Quran 15:53

“He said: ‘Bring ye me good tidings (of a son) when old age hath overtaken me? Of what then can ye bring good tidings?’” Quran 15:54

“They said: ‘We bring thee good tidings in truth. So be not thou of the despairing.’” Quran 15:55

“He said: ‘And who despaireth of the Mercy of his Lord save those who are astray?’” Quran 15:56

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 20. Angels visit Abraham

**Roasted calf: Three angels *eat***

“And the **Lord appeared** Abraham by the oaks of Mamre: as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day;” Gen. 18:1

“He looked up and saw **three men standing near him**, and he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and **bowed down to the ground,**” Gen. 18:2

“He said, ‘My Lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant’”  
Gen. 18:3

“Let a little water be brought and **wash your feet**, and rest yourselves under the tree:” Gen. 18:4

“Let me bring a little **bread**, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on-since you have come to your servant.” Gen. 18:5

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 20. Angels visit Abraham

**Roasted calf: Angels *do not eat***

“And Our **messengers came** unto Abraham with **good news**. They said: ‘Peace!’ He answered: ‘Peace!’ and delayed not to bring a **roasted calf.**”  
Quran 11:69

“And when he saw **their hands reached not towards the (meal)**, he felt some mistrust of them and conceived a fear of them. They said: ‘Fear not! We have been sent against the folk of Lot.’”  
Quran 11:70

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 20. Angels visit Abraham

**Roasted calf: Three angels *eat***

“And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, ‘Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.’”

Gen. 18:6

**Fetch a calf:**

“Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf tender and good, and gave it to the servant; who hastened to prepare it.”

Gen. 18:7

“Then he took curds and milk, and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, while they ate.” Gen. 18:8

“They said to him, ‘Where is **your wife Sarah thy wife?**’” And he said, ‘There, in the tent.’ Gen. 18:9

“Then one said, ‘I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah **shall have a son**’”. And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him.” Gen. 18:10

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 20. Angels visit Abraham

**Roasted calf: Angels *do not eat***

“Has the story reached thee. of the honored guests of Abraham?”

Quran 51:24

“Behold, they entered his presence, and said: Peace’ He said, ‘Peace’ (And thought, These seem ) unusual people”

Quran 51: 25

“Then he turned quickly to his household, brought out a fatted calf,”

Quran 51:26

“And placed it before them, he said,

‘Will you not eat?’” Quran 51:27

“(When they did not eat), He conceived a fear of them. They said, ‘Fear not’ And they gave him Glad tiding of a son endowed with knowledge.” Quran 51:28

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **21. Angels visit Abraham**

#### **Abraham and Sarah laugh**

“Now Abraham and Sarah were old advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.”

Gen. 18:11

“So Sarah laughed to herself, saying,

‘After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?’” Gen. 18:12

“The Lord said to Abraham, ‘Why did Sarah laugh, and say, Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’”

Gen. 18:13

“Is any thing too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.””Gen. 18:14

“But Sarah denied, saying, ‘I did not laugh’; for she was afraid. He said, ‘Oh yes, you did laugh.’””Gen. 18:15

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **21. Angels visit Abraham**

#### **Abraham’s wife laughs**

“But his wife came forward (Laughing) aloud: she smote her forehead and said:

‘A barren old woman!’” Quran 51:29

“They said, ‘Even so has thy Lord spoken. He is full of Wisdom and knowledge.’” Quran 51: 30

“And his wife, standing by laughed when We gave her good tidings (of the birth) of Isaac, and, after Isaac, of Jacob.”Quran 11:71

“She said: ‘Alas for me! Shall I bear a child when I am an old woman, and my husband here is an old man? That would indeed be a wonderful thing!’”

Quran 11:72

“They said: ‘Dost thou wonder at God decree? The Grace of God and His blessings on you, O ye people of the house! For He is indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory!’” Quran 11:73

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 22. Angels bring news about Sodom

“Then the men set out from there, and they looked toward **Sodom**: and **Abraham** went with them to set them on their way.” Gen. 18:16

“The Lord said, ‘**shall I hide from Abraham** what I am about to I do’ ” Gen. 18:17

“Then the Lord said, ‘How great is the outcry against **Sodom and Gomorrah** and how very grave their sin.’” Gen. 18:20

“I must **go down** and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know.” Gen. 18:21

### 23. Abraham pleas with God

“So **the men** turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while **Abraham** remained standing before the Lord.” Gen. 18:22

“then Abraham came near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?” Gen. 18:23

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 22. Angels bring news about township

“And when Our messengers brought Abraham the good news (of Isaac), they said: ‘We are **about to destroy the people of that township**, for its people are wrong-doers.’” Quran 29:31

“He said: ‘And afterward what is **your business**, O ye messengers (of God)?’” Quran 15:57

“They said: ‘We have been sent unto a **guilty folk**,’” Quran 15:58

“He said: ‘Lot is there’. They said: ‘We are best aware of who is there. We are to **deliver him and his household, all save his wife**, who is of those who stay behind.’” Quran 29:32

“(Abraham) said: ‘And what is your errand(now), O you Messengers?’” Quran 51:31

“They said, ‘We have been sent to a people (Deep) in sin” Quran 51: 32

“To bring on them (A shower of)stones of clay (brimstones)” Quran 51:33

“Marked as from they Lord for those who trespass beyond bounds.” Quran 51:34



## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **23. Abraham pleads with God**

“Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city: will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it?” Gen. 18:24

“Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”

Gen. 18:25

“And the Lord said, ‘If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake’”

Gen. 18:26

“Abraham answered, ‘Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes:’” Gen. 18:27

“Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?’ And he said, ‘I will not destroy it If I find forty- five there.’” Gen. 18:28

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **23. Abraham pleads with God**

“And when the awe departed from Abraham, and the glad news reached him, he pleaded with Us on behalf of the folk of Lot.” Quran 11:74

“For Abraham was, without doubt, forbearing (of faults), compassionate, and penitent.” Quran 11:75

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **23. Abraham pleads with God**

“Again he spoke to him, ‘Suppose **forty** are found there.’” He answered, ‘For the sake of **forty I will not** do it .’”

Gen. 18:29

“Then he said, ‘Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose **thirty** are found there.’” He answered, ‘I will not do it, if I **find thirty** there.’” Gen. 18:30

“He said, ‘Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose **twenty** are found there.’” He answered, ‘For the sake of **twenty** I will not destroy it.’”

Gen. 18:31

“Then he said, ‘Oh do let not the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose **ten** are found there.’” He answered, “For the sake of **ten** I will not destroy it.’”

Gen. 18:32

“And the **Lord went his way** when he had finished speaking to; and Abraham **returned to his place.**” Gen. 18:33

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **23. Abraham pleads with God**

“O Abraham! **Forsake this!** The decree of thy Lord hath gone forth: for them there **cometh a penalty** that cannot be turned back.” Quran 11:76

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **24. Angels come to Lot**

“The two **angels came to Sodom** in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and **bowed down with his face to the ground.**” Gen. 19:1

“He said, ‘Please my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet, then you can rise early and go on your way.’” They said, ‘No; we will spend the night in the square.’” Gen. 19:2

“But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he made them a feast, and baked them unleavened bread, and they ate.” Gen. 19:3

“But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house” Gen. 19:4

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **24. Angels come to Lot**

“When **our messengers** came to Lot, he was grieved on their account and felt himself powerless (to protect)them. He said: ‘This is a distressful day.’”

Quran 11: 77

“And his people came rushing towards him, and they had been long in the habit of practicing abominations, he said: ‘O my people! Here are **my daughters**, they are purer for you! Now fear God, and cover me not with shame about my guests! Is there not among you a single right-minded man?’” Quran 11:78

“They said: ‘Well does thou know we have no need of **thy daughters**; indeed thou knowest quite well what we want!’”

Quran 11:79

“He said: ‘Would that I had power to surpass you or that I could betake myself to some powerful support.’”

Quran 11:80

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 24. Angels visit Lot

“And they called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them.’” Gen. 19:5

“Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him,” Gen. 19:6

“And said, ‘I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.’” Gen. 19:7

“Look, I have **two daughters** who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.’ ” Gen. 19:8

“But they replied, ‘Stand back!’ And they said, ‘This fellow came here as an alien, and he will play the judge. Now will we deal worse with you than with them.’ Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near the door to break it down.” Gen. 19:9

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 24. Angels visit Lot

“And (Remember) Lot! when he said unto his folk: ‘Ye commit lewdness such as no creature did before you.’”

Quran 29:28

“For **come ye not in unto males**, and cut ye not the road (for travelers), and commit ye not abomination in your meetings?’ But the answer of his folk was only that they said: ‘Bring God’s **doom upon us** if thou art a truth teller!’”

Quran 29:29

“He said: ‘My Lord! Give me victory over folk who work corruption.’”

Quran 29:30

“We are about to bring down upon the folk of this township a fury from the sky because they are evil-livers.” Quran 29:34

“And verily of that We have left a clear sign for people who have sense.”

Quran 29:35

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **24. Angels come to Lot**

“But the men inside reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut to the door.”

Gen. 19:10

“And they struck with blindness the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, so that they were unable to find the door.” Gen. 19:11

“Then the men said to Lot, ‘Have you anyone else here? Sons-in law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place:’”

Gen. 19:12

“For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord; and the Lord has sent us to destroy it.”

Gen. 19:13

“So Lot went out, and said to his sons- in law, who were to marry his daughters, ‘Up get out of this place; for the Lord is about to destroy this city.’ But he seemed to his sons- in law to be jesting.”

Gen. 19:14

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **24. Angels come to Lot**

“He said: ‘And afterward what is **your business**, O ye messengers (of God)?

Quran 15:57

“They said: ‘We have been sent unto a **guilty folk**’” Quran 15:58

“And when the **messengers came unto the family of Lot,**” Quran 15:61

“He said: ‘You are folk **unknown (to me).**’” Quran 15:62

“They said: ‘Nay, but we bring thee that concerning which they keep disputing,’” Quran 15:63

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **25. Angels come to Lot**

**Take thy wife lest she be consumed  
Angels' hand upon the wife**

“When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, ‘**Get up, take your wife and your two daughters**, who are here, or else you will be consumed in the punishment of the city.’” Gen. 19:15

“But he lingered; so the men seized him and **his wife** and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him: and they brought him out, and left him outside the city.” Gen. 19:16

“When they had brought them outside, they said, ‘Flee for your life; do not look back or stop anywhere in the plain; flee to the hills, or else you will be consumed.’” Gen. 19:17

“And Lot said to them, ‘Oh, no my Lords’” Gen. 19:18

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **25. Angels come to Lot**

**Your wife will remain behind.  
She is a specimen of the unbelieving.**

“And when Our **messengers** came unto Lot, he was troubled upon their account. for he could not protect them; but they said: ‘Fear not, nor grieve! We are to save thee and thy household, (all) **except thy wife**, who is of those who stay behind.” Quran 29:33

“But **thy wife** (will remain behind) to her will happen what happens to the people. Morning is their time appointed: Is not the morning nigh?” Quran 11: 81

“They said: ‘We have been sent to a people (deep) in sin.” Quran 15:58

” Except the **family of Lot**. Them we shall save from harm.” Quran 15:59

“**Except his wife**, of whom We had decreed that she should be of those who stay behind” Quran 15:60

“Save an **old woman** among those who stayed behind.” Quran 26:171

“Then afterward We destroyed the others.” Quran 26:172

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 26. Angels visit Lot

#### Lot asks to flee to a closer city

"Your servant has found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life; but I cannot flee to the hills, for I fear the disaster will overtake me and I die" Gen. 19:19

"Look that city is near enough to flee to. Let me escape there-is it not a little one?- and my life will be saved!."

Gen. 19:20

"He said to him, 'Very well I grant you this favor too, and will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken.'"

Gen. 19:21

"Harry, escape there; for I can do nothing until you arrive there".

Therefore the city was called Zoar."

Gen. 19:22

"The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar." Gen. 19:23

"Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven;" Gen. 19:24

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 26. Angels visit Lot

#### Wife set as example to the unbelievers

"God sets forth, for an example to the unbelievers the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot: They were (respectively) under two of our righteous servants, but they were false to their (husbands), and they profited nothing before God on their account, But were told: 'Enter ye the fire along with (others) that enter!'"

Quran 66:10

"And Lot! when he said unto his folk:

'Will ye commit abomination knowingly?'" Quran 27:54

"Would you really approach men in your lusts rather than women ? Nay, you are a people (grossly ) ignorant!"

Quran 27.55

"But his people gave no other answer, but, 'Drive out the household of Lot from your city, for they are indeed folk who want to be clean and pure!'"

Quran 27:56

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 27. God destroys the cities

**But his wife looks back**

“And he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew on the ground.” Gen. 19:25

“But Lot’s wife, **behind him, looked back**, and she became a pillar of salt.” Gen. 19:26

“And he looked down toward **Sodom and Gomorrah**, and toward all the land of the Plain, and saw the smoke of the land going up like the **smoke of a furnace**.” Gen. 19:28

“So it was that, when God **destroyed the cities of the Plain**, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot had settled.” Gen. 19:29

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 27. God destroys the cities

**Let none of you turn back**

“We have brought to thee the that which is inevitably due, and assuredly we tell **the truth**.” Quran 15:64

“So travel with thy household in a portion of the night, and follow thou **their backs**. **Let none of you turn round**, but go whither ye are commanded” Quran 15:65

“And We made plain the case to him, that **the root of them** (who did wrong) was to be cut at early morn.” Quran 15:66

“Then We evacuated those of the believers who were there,” Quran 51:35  
“But We found not there any just persons except in one house:” Quran 51:36

“By thy life they **moved blindly** in the frenzy of **approaching death**.” Quran 15:72

“When our decree issued, We **turned (the cities) upside down**, and rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer,” Quran 11:82



## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **27. God destroys the cities**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **27. God destroys the cities**

“And We left there a Sign for such as  
Fear the Grievous Penalty.” Quran 51:37

“Marked as from thy Lord. Nor are they  
ever far from those who do wrong.”

Quran 11: 83

“And We **rained a rain** upon them.

Dreadful is the rain of those who have  
been warned.” 27:58

“Then the (Awful) Cry **overtook** them at  
the **sunrise**.”Quran 15.73

“And We utterly confounded them, and  
We **rained upon them stones** of heated  
clay.”Quran 15:74

“Behold! in this are Signs for those who  
by tokens do understand.” Quran 15:75

“And the (cities were) right on the **high-  
road**.” Quran 15:76

“Behold! in this is a Sign for those who  
believe” Quran 15:77

“And We saved him and his family,  
except his wife: Her We destined to be  
of those who lagged behind”

Quran 27: 57

“And We **rained on them a rain**. And  
dreadful is the rain of those who have  
been warned.” Quran 26:173

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **27. God destroys the cities**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **27. God destroys the cities**

**“Verily in this is a Sign. But most of them are not believers” Quran 26:174**

**“And We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone) and evil was the shower on those who were admonished (But heeded not)!” Quran 27:58**

**“The folk of Lot denied the messengers (of God),” Quran 26:160**

**“When their brother Lot said unto them: ‘Will ye not ward off (evil)?’”**

**Quran 26:161**

**“I am a faithful messenger unto you,”**

**Quran 26:162**

**“So fear God and obey me.”**

**Quran 26:163**

**“No reward do I ask of you for it. My reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds.”” Quran 26:164**

**“And the people of the city came, rejoicing at the news (of new arrivals).”**

**Quran 15:67**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **28. Lot's daughters**

"Now Lot went up out of Zoar, and settled in the hills with his **two daughters**, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar: so he lived in a cave with his two daughters." Gen. 19:30

### **29. Our father drink wine, and we will lie with him**

"And the firstborn said to the younger, 'Our father is old, and there is not a man on the earth to come in to us after the manner of all the world.'" Gen. 19:31

"Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father.'" Gen. 19:32

"So they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and **lay with her father**; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose." Gen. 19:33

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **28. Lot's daughters**

"He said: 'They are **my guests**. Disgrace me not!'" Quran 15:68

"But fear God, and shame me not!'"

Quran 15:69

"They said: 'Have we not forbidden you from (entertaining) anyone?'"

Quran 15:70

"He said: '**Here are my daughters**, if ye must be act (so).'" Quran 15:71

### **29. And Leave the mates your Lord created?**

"What! Of all creatures do ye **come unto the males**," Quran 26:165

"And **leave the mates your Lord created** for you? Nay, but ye are a people transgressing (all limits)."

Quran 26:166

"They said: 'If thou cease not, O Lot, thou wilt soon be of the outcast.'"

Quran 26:167

"He said: 'I am in truth of those who **hate your conduct**.'" Quran 26:168

"My Lord! **Save me and my household** from what they do." Quran 26:169

"So **We saved him and his household**, every one," Quran 26:170

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 29. Lot's daughters

"On the next day, the firstborn said to the younger, 'Look, I lay last night with my father: let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our Father'." Gen. 19:34

"So they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger rose, and he did not know when she lay down or when she rose." Gen. 19:35

"Thus **both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father.**"

Gen. 19:36

"The firstborn bore a son, and named him **Moab**: he is the ancestor of the Moabites to this day" Gen. 19:37

"The younger also bore a son, and named him **Ben-ammi**; he is the ancestor of the Ammonites to this day." Gen. 19:38

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 29. Lot's daughters

**Taste now My punishment after My warnings**

"And verily thy Lord is He, the Mighty, the Merciful." Quran 26:175

"The folk of Lot rejected warnings."

Quran 54:33

"We sent a **storm of stones** upon them (all) save the family of Lot, whom We rescued in the last watch of the night,"

Quran 54:34

"As grace from Us. Thus We reward him who giveth thanks." Quran 54:35

"And he indeed had warned them of Our blow, but they did doubt the warnings."

Quran 54:36

"They even asked of him **his guests** for an ill purpose. Then We blinded their eyes (and said): 'Taste now My punishment after My warnings!'"

Quran 54:37

"And in truth the punishment decreed befell them early in the morning."

Quran 54:38

"Now taste My punishment after My warnings!" Quran 54:39

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **30. Abraham's Vision to sacrifice son**

**"After these things God tested**

**Abraham he said to him, 'Abraham!'**

**and he said, 'Here I am.'" Gen. 22:1**

**"He said, 'Take your son, your only son**

**Isaac, whom you love, and go to the**

**land of Moriah; and offer him there as a**

**burnt offering on one of the mountains**

**that I shall show you.'" Gen. 22:2**

**"So Abraham rose early in the morning,**

**and saddled his donkey, and took two of**

**his young men with him, and his son**

**Isaac, he cut the wood for the burnt**

**offering, and set out and went to the**

**place in the distance that God had shown**

**him." Gen. 22:3**

**"On the third day Abraham looked up**

**and saw the place far away." Gen. 22:4**

**"Then Abraham said to his young men,**

**'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and**

**I will go over there and worship, and**

**then we will come back to you'"**

**Gen. 22:5**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **30. Abraham's Vision to sacrifice son**

**"And he said: 'I am going unto my Lord**

**Who will guide me."Quran 37:99**

**"O my Lord! Grant me a righteous**

**(son)!" Quran 37:100**

**"So We gave him the good news of a**

**gentle son." Quran 37:101**

**"And when (his son) was old enough to**

**walk with him, (Abraham) said: 'O my**

**dear son, I have seen in a vision that I**

**offer thee in sacrifice. Now see what is**

**thy view!' He said: 'O my father! Do as**

**thou art commanded. God willing, thou**

**shalt find me of the steadfast.'" Quran 37:102**

**"Then, when they had both surrendered**

**(to God), and he had flung him down**

**upon his face," Quran 37:103**

**"We called unto him: 'O Abraham!"**

**Quran 37:104**

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 30. Abraham's Vision to sacrifice son

"Abraham took the wood of the **burnt offering**, and **laid** it on **his son Isaac**, and he himself carried the fire and a knife. So the two of them walked on together." Gen. 22:6

"Isaac said to his father Abraham 'Father', and he said, 'Here am I, my son.' He said, 'The **fire** and the **wood** are here but **where is the lamb** for a burnt offering?'" Gen. 22:7

"Abraham said, '**God himself will provide** the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.' So the two of them walked together." Gen. 22:8

"When they came to the place which God had shown him; Abraham **built an altar** there, and laid the wood in order. He **bound his son Isaac**, and **laid him on the altar** on the altar, on top of the wood." Gen. 22:9

"Then Abraham reached out his hand, and took **the knife to kill** his son." Gen. 22:10

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 30. Abraham's Vision to sacrifice son

"Thou hast already **fulfilled the vision**. Thus indeed do **We reward** those who do right." Quran 37:105

"**For this was obviously a trial.**" Quran 37:106

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **30. Abraham's Vision to sacrifice son**

"But the **angel** of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here am I'"  
Gen. 22:11

"He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy, or do anything to him: for now I know that you fear God, since you have **not withheld your son**, your only son from me.'" Gen. 22:12

### **31. A Ram as a ransom**

"And Abraham looked up and saw a **ram** caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son." Gen. 22:13

"So Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide', as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'" Gen. 22:14

"The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven,"  
Gen. 22:15

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **30. Abraham's Vision to sacrifice son**

### **31. A Ram as a ransom**

"Then We **ransomed him** with a **momentous sacrifice**." Quran 37:107  
"And We left for him among the later folk (the salutation)" Quran 37:108  
"**Peace be unto Abraham!**"

Quran 37:109

"Thus indeed do We reward those who do right." Quran 37:110

'For he was one of Our **believing servants**.'" Quran 37:111

"And we gave him tidings of the **birth of Isaac, a prophet one of the righteous**." Quran 37:112

## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 32. God Blesses Abraham

**For willingness to sacrifice son**

“And said, ‘By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son:” Gen. 22:16

“I will indeed **bless you**, and I will **make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies;**”

Gen. 22:17

“And by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth **gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.**” Gen. 22:18

“So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham lived at Beer-sheba.” Gen. 22:19

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 32. God Blesses Abraham

**For willingness to sacrifice son**

“And We **blessed him and Isaac. And of their seed are some who do good, and some that obviously do wrong, to their own souls.**” Quran 37:113



## ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE

### 33. Descendants of Abraham:

#### Through Ishmael:

“These are the **descendants of Ishmael**, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's slave-girl, bore to Abraham” Gen. 25:12

“These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael and Kedar, and Adbeel, Mibsam” Gen. 25:13

“Mishma, Dumah, and Massa” Gen. 25:14

“Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah:” Gen. 25:15

“These are the **sons of Ishmael**, and these are their names, by their villages and by their **encampments, twelve princes** according to their tribes.” Gen. 25:16

“(This is the length of the life of Ishmael, one hundred thirty-seven years; he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.)” Gen. 25:17

## ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

### 33. Descendants of Abraham:

#### Later generations:

“And We bestowed upon him Isaac, and **Jacob as a grandson**. Each of them We **made righteous**.” Quran 21:72

“And (remember) Ismael, Idris, and Dhul-kifl, all (Men) of constancy and patience.” Quran 21:85

“But after them there followed a posterity who missed prayers and **followed after lusts**. Soon, then, will they face destruction.” Quran 19:59

“Save him who shall repent and believe and do right. Such will enter the Garden, and they will not be wronged in the least” Quran 19:60

“But Lot had faith in him: He said: “I will leave home for the sake of my Lord: for He is Exalted in Might, and Wise.” Quran 29:26

“And commemorate Our servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, possessors of power and vision.” Quran 38: 46

“Verily We did choose them for a special (purpose)- Proclaiming the Message of the Hereafter.” Quran 38:46

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **33. Descendants of Abraham: Later generations**

“They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria; he settled down alongside of all his people.” Gen. 25:18

#### **Abraham’s sons: through Keturah**

“Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.” Gen. 25:1

“She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.” Gen. 25:2

“Jokshan was the father of Sheba. The sons of Dedan. were Asshurim, Etushim, and Leummim.” Gen. 25:3

“The sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephraim, Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.” Gen. 25:4

“Abraham gave all he had to Isaac.” Gen. 25:5

“But to the sons of the concubines, Abraham gave gifts, while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country.” Gen. 25:6

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **33. Descendants of Abraham: Later generations**

“They were, in Our sight. truly. of the company of the elect and the Good.” Quran 38:47

“And commemorate Ismael, Elisha. and Dhul-Kifl: all are of the chosen.” Quran 38:48

“And We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and We established the prophet hood and the Scripture among his seed, and We gave him his reward in the world, and in the Hereafter he verily is among the righteous.” Quran 29:27

“And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob; each of them We guided; and Noah did We guide afore time; and of his seed (We guided) David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the good.” Quran 6:84

“And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias. Each one (of them) was of the righteous.” Quran 6:85

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **34. Sarah's death and burial**

"Sarah lived one hundred twenty- seven years; this was the length of Sarah's life." Gen. 23:1

"And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba(that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan: and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." Gen. 23:2

"Abraham rose up from beside his dead, and said to the Hittites," Gen. 23:3

"I am a stranger and an alien residing among you; give me property among you for burying place, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight." Gen. 23:4

"The Hittites answered Abraham, " Gen. 23:5

"Hear us, my lord; you are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places; none of us will withhold from you any burial ground for burying your dead.." Gen. 23:6

"Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the people of the land." Gen. 23:7

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **33. Descendants of Abraham:**

#### **Later generations**

"And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot. **Each one** (of them) did We prefer above (Our) creatures" Quran 6:86

"With some of their forefathers and their **offspring** and their brethren; and We **chose** them and **guided** them unto a **straight path**." Quran 6:87

"Such is the **guidance of God**

wherewith He guideth whom He will of His worshipers. But if they were to join other gods with Him, (all) that they did would have been vain." Quran 6:88

"Those are they unto whom We gave the **Scripture**, authority and **prophethood**. But if these disbelieve therein, then indeed We shall entrust it to a people who will not be disbelievers therein." Quran 6:89

"Those are they whom God guideth, so **follow their guidance**." Quran 6:90

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **34. Sarah's death and burial**

"He said to them, 'If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and entreat for me Ephron son of Zohar,' Gen. 23:8  
"So that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he own; it is at the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as a possession for a burying place.'" Gen. 23:9

"Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, of all who went in at the gate of his city," Gen. 23:10

"No, my lord, hear me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in; in the presence of my people give I it to you; bury your dead." Gen. 23:11

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **33. Descendants of Abraham: Later generations**

"And I have followed the religion of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. It never was for us to attribute aught as partner to Allah. This is of the bounty of Allah unto us (the seed of Abraham) and unto mankind; but most men give not thanks." Quran 12:38

"God preferred Adam and Noah and the Family of Abraham and the Family of 'Imran above all people." Quran 3:33

"Or do they envy people because of that which God of His bounty has bestowed upon them ? For We bestowed upon the house of Abraham (of old) the Scripture and wisdom, and We bestowed on them a mighty kingdom" Quran 4:54

"Thus will thy Lord choose thee and teach thee the interpretation of stories events, and will perfect His grace upon thee and upon the family of Jacob as He perfected it upon thy forefathers, Abraham and Isaac. Thy Lord is Knower, Wise." Quran 12:6

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **34. Sarah's death and burial**

**"Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land."** Gen. 23:12

**"He said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, 'If you only will listen to me! I will give the price of the field; accept it from me, so that I may bury my dead there.'" Gen. 23:13**

**"Ephron answered Abraham,"**

**Gen. 23:14**

**"My lord, listened to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver- what is that between you and me? Bury your dead.'" Gen. 23:15**

**"Abraham agreed with Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchant."**

**Gen. 23:16**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **33. Descendants of Abraham:**

#### **Later generations**

**"We have sent thee inspiration as We sent it to Noah and the prophets after him: We sent inspiration to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms."**

**Quran 4:163**

**"And We sent Noah and Abraham, and established in their line Prophethood and Revelation: and some of them were on right guidance, but many of them became rebellious transgressors." Quran 57:26**

**"These are they unto whom God showed favor from among the prophets, of the seed of Adam and of those whom We carried (in the ship) with Noah, and of the seed of Abraham and Israel, and from among those whom We guided and chose. When the revelations of the Beneficent were recited unto them, they fell down, in prostrate adoration in tears"**

**Quran 19:58**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **34. Sarah's death and burial**

"So the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, throughout its whole area, passed"

Gen. 23:17

"To Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites, in the presence of all who went in at the gate of his city." Gen. 23:18

"After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah facing Mamre(that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan."

Gen. 23:19

"The field and the cave that is in it passed from the Hittites into Abraham's possession as a burying place."

Gen. 23:20

"Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things."

Gen. 24:1

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **34. Sarah's death and burial**

## **ABRAHAM IN THE BIBLE**

### **35.Abraham's death**

"This is the length of Abraham's life, one hundred seventy -five years" Gen. 25:7

"Abraham breathed his last and died in a good age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people."

Gen. 25:8

"And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre;"

Gen. 25:9

"The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife."Gen. 25:10

"And it came to pass **after the death of Abraham**, that **God blessed his son Isaac**; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi." Gen. 25:11

## **ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN**

### **35.Abraham's death**