

# The Story of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob

[ peace be upon them ]

قصة سيدنا إبراهيم، إسماعيل، إسحاق و يعقوب عليهم السلام

{English- إنجليزي}

Imam Ibn Kathir

2010 - 1431

islamhouse.com

When Abraham realized that no one else was going to believe his call, he decided to emigrate. He left his people and traveled with his wife and Lot to a city called Ur, then to another called Haran, and then to Palestine.

Allah the Almighty told us: 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. (29:26)

After Palestine Abraham traveled to Egypt, calling people to believe in Allah wherever he traveled judging fairly between people, and guiding them to truth and righteousness.

Abu Hurairah narrated that Abraham (PBUH) did not tell a lie except on three occasions, twice for the sake of Allah (Exalted and Almighty) when he said "I am indeed sick (at heart)!" (37: 89) and when he said: " (I have not done this but) the big idol has done it." The (third was) that while Abraham and Sarah (his wife) were going (on a journey), they passed by (the territory of) a tyrant. Someone said to the tyrant: "This man (i.e. Abraham (PBUH) is accompanied by a very charming lady." So, he sent for Abraham and asked him about Sarah saying: "Who is this lady?" Abraham said: "She is my sister." Abraham went to Sarah and said: "O Sarah! There are no believers on the surface on the earth except you and me. This man asked me about you and I have told him that you are my sister, do not contradict my statement." The tyrant then called Sarah, and when she went to him, he tried to take hold her with his hand, but (his hand got stiff and) he was confounded. He asked Sarah: "Pray to Allah for me and I shall not harm you. So Sarah asked Allah to cure him and he got cured. He tried to take hold of her for the second time, but (his hand got as stiff as or stiffer than before and) he was more confounded. He again requested Sarah: "Pray to Allah for me and I shall not harm you." Sarah asked Allah again and he became all right. He then called one of his guards (who had brought her) and said: "You have not brought me a human being but have brought me a devil." The tyrant then gave Hajar as a maidservant to Sarah. Sarah came back (to Abraham) while he was praying. Abraham, gesturing with his hand, asked: "What has happened?" She replied: "Allah has spoiled the evil plot of the infidel (or immoral person) and gave me Hajar for service." Abu Hurairah then addressed his listeners saying: "That (Hajar) was your mother, O Bani Ma-is-Sama (i.e., the Arab, the descendants of Ishmael, Hajar's son)."

Abraham's wife Sarah was sterile. She had been given an Egyptian woman, Hajar, as a servant. Abraham had aged, and his hair was gray after many years spent in calling people to Allah. Sarah thought that she and Abraham were lonely because she could not have a

child. Therefore, she offered her husband her servant Hajar in marriage. Hajar gave birth to her first son Ishmael (Isma'il) when Abraham was an old man.

Abraham lived on earth worshipping Allah and calling people to monotheism, but he was journeying to Allah, knowing that his days on earth were limited and that they would be followed by death, and finally resurrection. The knowledge of life after death filled Abraham with peace, love, and certitude.

One day he begged Allah to show him how He brought the death back to life. Allah commanded Abraham to take four birds, cut them up, mingle their body parts, divide them into four portions, and place them on top of four different hills, then call back the birds in Allah's name. Immediately the mingled parts of the birds separated to join their original bodies in different places, and the birds flew back to Abraham.

Almighty Allah revealed: 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 Allah is Exalted in Power Wise."

## **SECTION 2 - The Story of Ishmael (PBUH)**

One day, Abraham woke up and asked his wife Hajar to get her son and prepare for a long journey. In a few days, Abraham started out with his wife Hajar and their son Ishmael. The child was still nursing and not yet weaned.

Abraham walked through cultivated land, desert, and mountains until he reached the desert of the Arabian Peninsula and came to an uncultivated valley having no fruit, no trees, no food, no water. The valley had no sign of life. After Abraham had helped his wife and child to dismount, he left them with a small amount of food and water which was hardly enough for two days. He turned around and walked away. His wife hurried after him asking: "Where are you going, Abraham, leaving us in this barren valley?".

Abraham did not answer her, but continued walking. She repeated what she said, but he remained silent. Finally, she understood he was not acting on his own initiative. She realized that Allah had commanded him to do this. She asked him: "Did Allah command you to do so?" He replied: "Yes." Then his great wife said: "We are not going to be lost, since Allah, Who has commanded you, is with us."

Abraham invoked Almighty Allah thus: "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 the hearts of some among men with love towards them and feed them with Fruits: so that they may give thanks. O our Lord! truly Thou dost know what we conceal and what we reveal: for nothing whatever is hidden from Allah whether on earth or in heaven." (14: 37-38)

Ibn 'Abbas narrated: "The first lady to use a girdle was the mother of Ishmael. She used a girdle so that she might hide her tracks from Sarah (by dragging it). Abraham brought her and her son Ishmael, while she was suckling him, to a place near the Kaba under a tree on the spot of Zamzam, at the highest place in the mosque. During those days there was no body in Mecca, nor was there any water so he made them sit over there and placed near them a leather bag containing some dates and a small water-skin containing some water and set out homeward. Ishmael's mother followed him saying: "Oh Abraham! Where are you going leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything (to enjoy)?" She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her. Then she asked him: "Has Allah ordered you to do so?" He said: "Yes." She said: "Then He will not neglect us," and returned while Abraham proceeded onwards. On reaching the Thaniya where they could not see him, he faced the Ka'ba, and raising both hands, invoked Allah in saying the following prayers: "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 the hearts of some among men with love towards them and feed them with Fruits: so that they may give thanks."

Ibn 'Abbas's narration continued: "Ishmael's mother went on suckling Ishmael and drinking from the water (she had). When the water in the water-skin had all been used up, she became thirsty and her child became thirsty. She started looking at him (i.e. Ishmael) tossing in agony. She left him, for she could not endure looking at hi, and found that the mountain of As-Safa was the nearest mountain to her on that land. She stood on it and started looking at the valley keenly so that she might see somebody, but she could not see anybody. Then she descended from As-Safa and when she reached the valley, she tucked up her robe and ran in the valley like a person in distress and trouble, till she crossed the valley and reached the mountain of Al-Marwa. There she stood and started looking, expecting to see somebody, but she could not see anybody. She repeated that (running between Safa and Marwa) seven times."

The Prophet Muhammad (as-PBUH) said: "This is the source of the tradition of the Sa'y the going of people between them (i.e. As-Safa and Al-Marwa). When she reached Al-Marwa (for the last time) she heard a voice and she asked herself to be quiet and listened attentively. She heard the voice again and said: "O, (whoever you may be)! You have made me hear your voice; have you got something to help me?" And behold! She saw an angel at

the place of Zamzam, digging the earth with his heel (or his wing) till water flowed from that place. She started to make something like a basin around it, using her hand in this way, and started filling her water-skin with water with her hands, and the water was flowing out after she had scooped some of it."

The Prophet (PBUH) added: "May Allah bestow mercy on Ishmael's mother! Had she let the Zamzam (flow without trying to control it)(or had she not scooped from that water to fill her water-skin), Zamzam would have been a stream flowing on the surface of the earth."

The Prophet (PBUH) continued: "Then she drank (water) and suckled her child. The angel said to her: 'Don't be afraid of being neglected, for this is the House of Allah which will be built by this boy and his father, and Allah never neglects his people.'" The house (i.e. the Ka'ba) at that time was on a high place resembling a hillock, and when torrents came, they flowed to its right and left.

"She lived in that way till some people from the tribe of Jurhum or a family from Jurhum passed by her and her child, as they (i.e. the Jurhum people) were coming through the way of Kada'. They landed in the lower part of Mecca where they saw a bird that had the habit of flying around after and not leaving it. They said: "This bird must be flying around water, though we know that there is no water in this valley." They sent on or two messengers who discovered the source of water and returned to inform them of the water. So, they all came (towards the water). Ishmael's mother was sitting near the water. They asked her: "Do you allow us to stay with you?" She replied: "Yes, but you will have no right to possess the water.;" They agreed to that. Ishmael's mother was pleased with the whole situation, as she used to love to enjoy the company of people. So, she settled there, and later on she sent for their families, who came and settled with them so that some families became permanent residents there. The child (i.e. Ishmael) grew up and learned Arabic from them and (his virtues) caused them to love and admire him as he grew up, and when he reached the age of puberty they made him marry a woman amongst them"

The Prophet (PBUH) continued: "After Ishmael's mother had died, Abraham came after Ishmael's marriage in order to see his family that he had left before, but he did not find Ishmael there. When she asked Ishmael's wife about him she replied: "He has gone in search for our livelihood." Then he asked her about their way of living and their condition, and she replied: "We are living in misery; we are living in hardship and destitution," complaining to him. He said, "When your husband returns, convey my salutation to him and tell him to change the threshold of the gate (of his house)."

"When Ishmael came, he seemed to have felt something unusual, so he asked his wife: "Has anyone visited you?" She replied, "Yes, and old man of such-and-such description came and asked me about you, and informed him, and he asked about our state of living, and /I told him we were living in hardship and poverty." On that Ishmael said: "Did he advise you anything?" She replied: "Yes, he told me to convey my salutation to you and to tell you to change the threshold of your gate.' Ishmael said: "It was my father, and he has ordered me to divorce you. Go back to your family." So, Ishmael divorced her and married another woman from among them (i.e. Jurhum).

"Then Abraham stayed away from them for a period as long as Allah wished and called on them again but did not find Ishmael. So he came to Ishmael's wife and asked her about Ishmael. She said: "He has gone in search of our livelihood." Abraham asked her: "How are you getting on?" asking her about their sustenance and living. She replied: "We are prosperous and well-off (i.e. we have everything in abundance)." Then she thanked Allah. Abraham said: "What kind of food do you eat?" She said: "Meat". He said: "What do you drink?" She said: "Water". He said: "O Allah! Bless their meat and water."

The Prophet (PBUH) added: "At that time they did not have grain, and if they had grain, he would have also invoked Allah to bless it. If somebody has only two things as his sustenance, his health and disposition will be badly affected, unless he lives in Mecca."

The Prophet (PBUH) continued: "Then Abraham said to Ishmael's wife" "When your husband comes, give my regards to him and tell him he should keep firm the threshold of his gate." When Ishmael came back, he asked his wife: "Did anyone call on you?" She replied: "Yes, a good looking old man came to me," so she praised him and added: "He asked about you and I informed him, he asked about our livelihood and I told him that we were in good condition." Ishmael asked her: "Did he give you any piece of advise?" She said: "Yes, he told me to give his regards to you and ordered that you should keep firm the threshold of your gate." On that Ishmael said: "It was my father, and you are the threshold (of the gate). He has ordered me to keep you with me."

"Then Abraham stayed away from them for a period as long as Allah wished and called on them afterwards. He saw Ishmael under a tree near Zam-Zam, sharpening his arrows. When he saw Abraham, he rose up to welcome him (and they greeted each other as a father does with his son or a son does with his father). Abraham said: "O Ishmael! Allah has given me an order." Ishmael said: "Do what your Lord has ordered you to do." Abraham asked: "Will you help me?" Ishmael said: "I will help you." Abraham said: "Allah has ordered me to build a house here," pointing to a hillock higher than the land surrounding it.

"Then they raised the foundations of the House (i.e. the Ka'ba). Ishmael brought the stones while Abraham built, and when the walls became high, Ishmael brought this stone and put it for Abraham, who stood over it and carried on building. When Ishmael was handing the stones, and both of them were saying: "Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us for thou art the All-Hearing the All-Knowing." (Surah 2: 127) Then both of them went on building and going round the Ka'ba saying: ""Our Lord! accept (this service) from us for thou art the All-Hearing the All-Knowing." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Ibn 'Abbas narrated a slightly different version: "When Abraham had differences with his wife (because of her jealousy of Hajar, Ishmael's mother), he took Ishmael and his mother and went away. They had a water-skin with them containing some water. Ishmael's mother used to drink water from the water-skin so that her milk would increase for the child. When Abraham reached Mecca, he made her sit under a tree and afterwards returned home. Ishmael's mother followed him, and when they reached Kada', she called him from behind: "O Abraham! To whom are you leaving us?" He replied: "(I am leaving you) to Allah's (care). She said: "I am satisfied to be with Allah". She returned to her place and started drinking water from the water-skin, and her milk increased for her child.

"When the water had all been used up, she said to herself: "I had better go and look so that I may see somebody." She ascended As-Safa Mountain and looked, hoping to see somebody but in vain. When she came down to the valley, she ran till she reached Al-Marwa Mountain. She ran to and fro (between the two mountains) many times. Then she said to herself: "I had better go and see the state of the child." She went and found it in a state of one on the point of dying. She could not endure to watch it dying and said (to herself): "If I go and look, I may find somebody." She went and ascended Al-Safa and Al-Marwa. Again she said (to herself ): "I had better go back and see the state of the child." But suddenly she heard a voice, and she said to that strange voice: "Help us if you can offer any help." Lo! It was Gabriel (who had made the voice). Gabriel hit the earth with his heel like this (Ibn' Abbas hit the earth with his heel to illustrate it), and so the water gushed out. Ishmael's mother was astonished and started digging."

Abu Al-Qasim, i.e. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "If she had left the water, (flow naturally without her intervention), it would have been flowing on the surface of the earth."

Ibn Abbas continued narrating: "Ishmael's mother started drinking from the water, and her milk increased for her child. Afterwards some people of the tribe of Jurhum saw some birds while passing through the bottom of the valley and that astonished them. They said: "Birds can only be found at a place is water." They sent a messenger, who searched the place and found water, and returned to inform them about it. Then they all went to her and

said: "O Ishmael's mother! Will you allow us to be with you (or dwell with you)?" (And thus they stayed there).

"Later on her boy reached the age of puberty and married a lady from them. Then an idea occurred to Abraham, which he disclosed to his wife (Sarah) "I want to call on my dependants I left (at Mecca)." When he went there he greeted Ishmael's wife and said: "Where is Ishmael?" She replied: "He has gone out hunting." Abraham said to her: "When he comes tell him to change the threshold of his gate." When Ishmael came, she told him the same, whereupon Ishmael said to her: "You are the threshold, so go to your family (i.e. you are divorced).

"Again Abraham thought of visiting his dependants whom he had left (at Mecca), and he told his wife (Sarah) of his intentions. Abraham came to Ishmael's house and asked: "Where is Ishmael?" Ishmael's wife replied: "He has gone out hunting," and added "Will you stay (for some time) and have something to eat and drink?" Abraham asked: "What is your food and what is your drink?" She replied: "Our food is meat and our drink is water". He said: "O Allah! Bless their meals and their drink."

Abu Al-Qasim, i.e. Prophet (PBUH) said: "Because of Abraham's invocation there are blessings (in Mecca)"

Ibn Abbas continued: " Once again Abraham thought of visiting his family he had left (at Mecca), so he told his wife (Sarah) of his decision. He went and found Ishmael behind the Zam-zam well, mending his arrows. He said: "O Ishmael, your Lord has ordered me to build a house for Him." Ishmael said: "Obey (the order of) your Lord." Abraham said: "Allah has ordered me that you should help me therein." Ishmael said: "Then I will do so." So both of them rose and Abraham started building (the Ka'ba) while Ishmael went on handing him the stones, and both of them were saying: ""Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us for thou art the All-Hearing the All-Knowing."

When the building became high and the old man (Abraham) could no longer lift the stones (to such a high position) he stood over the stone o Al-Maqam and Ishmael carried on handing him the stones, and both of the were saying: ""Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us for thou art the All-Hearing the All-Knowing." Allah the Almighty told us of Abraham's affliction with his beloved son: (and he said after rescue from the fire) "He said: "I will go to my Lord! He will surely guide me! O my Lord! grant me a righteous (son)! So We gave him the good news of a boy ready to suffer and forbear. Then when (the son) reached (the age of) (serious) work with him he said: "O my son! I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice: now see what is thy view!" (The son) said: "O my father! do as thou art commanded: thou will find me if Allah so wills one practicing Patience and Constancy! So when they had both

submitted their wills (to Allah) and He had laid Him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice). We called out to him "O Abraham! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision!" thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For this was obviously a trial And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice: 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." (Surah 37:99-11)

Time passed. One day Abraham was sitting outside his tent, thinking of his son Ishmael and Allah's sacrifice. His heart was filled with awe and love for Allah for his countless blessings. A big tear dropped from his eyes and reminded him of Ishmael.

In the meantime, three angels descended to the earth: Gabriel, Israphael, and Michael. They came in human shape and saluted Abraham. Abraham rose and welcomed them. He took them inside his tent, thinking they were strangers and guests. He seated them and made sure they were comfortable, then excused himself to go to his people.

His wife Sarah arose when he entered. She had become old and white haired. Abraham said to her: "We have three strangers in the house." "Who are they?" she asked. "I do not know any of them," he answered. "What food have we got?" Abraham asked. "Half a sheep," she replied. "Half a sheep! Slaughter a fat calf for them; they are strangers and guests," he ordered while leaving.

The servants roasted and served the calf. Abraham invited the angels to eat so as to encourage them. He continued, but when he glanced at his guests to assure they were eating, he noticed that none of them touched their food. He said to them: "Are you not going to eat?" He resumed eating, but when he glanced at them again he found that they were still not eating. Their hands did not reach out for the food. He began to fear them.

Abraham's fears increased. The angels, however, were reading his inner thoughts and one of them said: "Do not fear." Abraham raised his head and replied: "Indeed I am in fear. I have asked you to eat food but you do not stretch out your hands to eat. Do you intend me evil?"

One of the angels smiled and said: "We do not eat. We are Allah's angles." One of them then turned towards his wife and conveyed the glad tidings about Isaac (Ishaaq).

Almighty Allah revealed: "There came Our Messengers to Abraham with glad tidings. They said "Peace!" He answered "Peace!" and hastened to entertain them with a roasted calf. But when he saw 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 Lut." And his wife 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!" he said: "Dost thou wonder at Allah's decree? The grace of Allah and His blessings on you O ye people of the house! for He is indeed worthy of all praise full of all glory!" (Surah 11: 69-73).

### **SECTION THREE - The story of Isaac (Ishaaq) and Jacob (Yaqub) (Peace be upon them)**

The Qur'an does not give details of Isaac's life (PBUH), but reliable Qur'anic commentators mentioned that when Abraham felt that his life was drawing to a close, he wished to see Isaac married. He did not want Isaac to marry one of the Canaanites, who were pagans, so he sent a trustworthy servant to Haran in Iraq to choose a bride for Isaac. The servant's choice fell on Rebekah Bint Bethuel, Ibn Nahor, who was a brother of Abraham. Isaac married her and she gave birth to a set of twins, Esau (Al-Eis) and Jacob (Yaqub).

Ill feelings developed between the two brothers when they grew into manhood. Esau disliked the fact that Jacob was favored by his father and by Allah with prophet hood. This ill-feeling became so serious that Esau threatened to kill his brother. Fearing of his life, Jacob fled the country.

The People of the Book said that when Isaac was forty years old, he married Rebekah, Bint Bethuel, during his father's life. They said she was sterile, so Isaac prayed to Allah and then she became pregnant. She gave birth to two twin boys. The first one was called Esau whom the Arabs called Al-Eis. He became the father of Rum. The second one was called Jacob, which means Israel (belonging to the people of Israel).

The People of the Book claimed that when Isaac (PBUH) grew old, his eye-sight had weakened, he had a desire for food, so he asked his son Esau to go hunting and bring him some cooked game. Esau asked him to bless the food and pray for him. Esau, a hunter, went out to get his father the meat. Rebekah, overhearing this, ordered her son Jacob to slaughter two goats of his best flock and cook them as his father liked and bring it to him before his brother returned. She dressed Jacob in his brother's clothes and put goat skin on his arms and neck, for Esau was hairy while Jacob was not.

When he approached his father with the food, his father asked: "Who are you?" Jacob answered "I am your son". When his father finished eating, he prayed for his son to be the

more blessed brother and to prevail over them and all people, and for Allah to sustain him and his children.

When he left his father, his brother Esau, who had carried out his father's command, entered. Isaac asked him: "What is this my son?" He answered: "This is the food you like." Isaac said: "Did you bring it an hour ago and asked me to pray for you?" Esau answered: "No, I swear I did not," and he knew his brother had preceded him in this matter and he was sick at heart.

The People of the Book said that Esau threatened to kill his brother when their father was dead. They also that he asked his father to pray for him that Allah make the earth good for his offspring and multiply his sustenance and fruits.

When their mother knew that Esau threatened his brother Jacob, she commanded her son Jacob to go to her brother Laban in the land of Haran and abide with him for a time until his brother's anger had abated, and to marry one of Laban's daughters. She told her husband Isaac to command him with that advise and pray for him, and he did.

Jacob (PBUH) left his family. When night came he found a place to rest. He took a stone and put it under his head and slept. He dreamed of a ladder from heaven to earth. Angels were ascending and descending and the Lord addressed him and said to him: "I will bless you and your offspring and make this land for you and for those who come after you."

When he awoke he felt joyful from what he had seen in his dream and vowed, for Allah's sake, that if he returned to his family safely, he would build here a temple for Allah the Almighty. He also vowed to give one tenth of his property for the sake of Allah. He poured oil on the stone so as to recognize it and called the place "Ayle's House" (Bethel), which means "House of Allah". It was to be the location of Jerusalem later.

The People of the Book also said that when Jacob came to his maternal uncle in the land of Haran, his uncle had two daughters. The elder one was called Leah (Lia) and the younger one was called Rachel (Rahil). The later was the better and the lovelier of the two. His uncle agreed to marry his daughter to him on the condition that Jacob pasture his sheep for seven years.

After a period of time, his uncle prepared a feasts and gathered people for the wedding. He married Leah, his elder daughter, to hi at night. She was weak-sighted and ugly. When morning came, Jacob discovered that she was Leah and he complained to his uncle: "You deceived me; I was engaged to Rachel and you married me to Leah." His uncle said: "It is not our tradition to marry the younger daughter before the elder daughter. However, if you

love her sister, work another seven years and I will marry you to both of them."

Jacob worked for seven years and then married Rachel. It was acceptable in their time, as described in the Torah, for a man to marry two sisters. Laban gave a female slave to each daughter. Leah's slave was called Zilpah and Rachel's slave was called Bilha.

Almighty Allah compensated Leah's weakness by giving her sons. The first was named Reuben (Robel), after whom there was Simeon (Shamun), Levi (Lawi) and Judah (Yahudh). Rachel felt jealous of Leah's having sons, she was barren. She gave her slave Bilha to her servant and he had relations with her until she became pregnant. She gave birth to a son and named him Naphtali.

Leah was vexed that Rachel's slave had given birth to a son, so she in turn, gave her slave Zilpah to Jacob (PBUH). Zilpah gave birth to two son, Gad and Asher. Then Leah got pregnant and gave birth to her fifth son, Issachar, and later she gave birth to a sixth son, Zebulun. After this Leah gave birth to a daughter named Dinah. Thus, Leah had seven sons from Jacob.

The Rachel prayed to Allah to give her a son from Jacob. Allah heard her call and responded to her prayer. She gave birth to a son, great, honorable and beautiful. She named him Joseph (Yusuf).

All of this happened when they were in the land of Haran and Jacob (PBUH) was pasturing his uncle's sheep, which he did for a period of twenty years.

Jacob then asked his uncle Laban to let him go and visit his family. His uncle said to him: "I have been blessed because of you; ask for whatever money you need." Jacob said: "Give me each spotted and speckled goat born this year and each black lamb."

But at Laban's command his sons removed their father's goats that were striped, spotted or speckled, and the black lambs, lest others should be born with those traits. They walked for three days with their father's goats and sheep while Jacob tended the remaining flock.

The People of the Book said that Jacob (PBUH) took fresh rods of poplar, almond and plane. He peeled streaks in them and cast them into the water troughs for the goats to look at. The young inside their abdomens were terrified and moved and they were born striped, spotted or speckled. When the sheep were breeding, he set their faces towards the balk sheep in Laban's flock and put the rods among them. Their lambs were born black. This was considered an example of supernatural powers, a miracle. His uncle and his sons faces changed as if they (the sheep and goats) had been stolen from the.

Allah the Almighty inspired Jacob to return to the country of his father and people, and He promised to stand by him. Jacob told his family that, and they responded and obeyed him. Jacob did not tell Laban of his plans, however, and left without bidding farewell.

Upon leaving, Rachel stole her father's idols. After Jacob and his people had fled for his country, Laban and his people followed them. When Laban met with Jacob, he blamed him for leaving him without his knowledge. He would have liked to know so that he could have made them leave with celebration and joy, with drums and songs, and so that he could have bidden his daughters and sons farewell. And why had they taken his idols with them?

Jacob had no knowledge of his idols, so he denied he had taken them from him. The Laban entered the tents of his daughters and slaves to search, but he found nothing, for Rachel had put the idols in the camel saddle under her. She did not get up, apologizing she had her menses. Thus he could not perceive what they had done.

Then they sat on a hill called Galeed and made a covenant there. Jacob would not ill-treat Laban's daughters nor marry others. Neither Laban nor Jacob would pass the hill into the other's country. They cooked food and their people ate with them. Each bade the other farewells they departed each returning his own country.

When Jacob approached the land of Seir, the angles greeted him. He sent a messenger ahead with greetings to his brother Esau, asking forgiveness and humbling himself before him. The messenger returned greetings and told Jacob that Esau was riding towards him with four hundred men.

This made Jacob afraid and he entreated and prayed to All Almighty. He prostrated in humiliation and asked Him to fulfill His promise which He had made before. He asked him to stop the evil of his brother Esau. Then Jacob (PBUH) prepared a great present for his brother: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.

He commanded his slaves to take the animals, each drove by itself, and pass on ahead of him with a space between the droves. He instructed them: "When you meet my brother Esau he will ask you, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going?' You shall say 'They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a present to my master Esau. Moreover, he is behind us.'"

Jacob stayed behind with his two wives, his slaves and his children for two nights, then continued walking by night and resting by day.

When the dawn of the second day came one of the angels appeared in the shape of a man. Jacob began to wrestle with him. They were neck and neck until the angel injured his thigh and Jacob became lame. When the day was breaking, the angel said to him: "What is your name?" He answered: "Jacob" The angel said: "After today you shall not be called (anything) but Israel." Jacob asked: "And who are you? What is your name?" He vanished. Then Jacob knew that he was one of the angels. Jacob was lame, and for this reason the children of Israel do not eat the thigh muscle on the hip socket.

Jacob raised his eyes and saw his brother Esau coming. Jacob prostrated seven times before him, for it was their salutation in that time. It was lawful for them just as the angels had prostrated in salutation to Adam.

When Esau saw him, he ran towards him, and embraced and kissed him and wept. When Esau raised his eyes and saw the women and children he asked, "Who are these with you?" Jacob answered: "Those whom Allah has given me, your servant." Leah, Rachel, their slaves, and all the children approached and prostrated before him. Jacob asked Esau to accept his gift and insisted until he did so.

Esau returned and went in advance before him. Jacob and his family followed with the flocks and herds and slaves to the mountains (Seir).

When he came to Succoth (Sahur), he built a house for himself and shades for his beasts. Then he passed by Jerusalem, the village of Shechem, and camped before the village. He bought a farm from Shechem Ibn Hamor with one hundred goats and built an altar, which he recalled Ayl, as stands today and later Solomon Son of David (PBUH) rebuilt it. It is in the place of the stone which he had earlier anointed with oil, as was mentioned before.

The People of the Book tell a story of Dinah, daughter of Jacob and Leah. Shechem Ibn Hamor seized her and lay with her by force. Then he asked her father and brothers to let him marry her. Her brothers said: "Circumcise, all of you, and we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves; but we do not marry with uncircumcised people." They (the men of the city) agreed to that, and all of them were circumcised. When the third day came and the pain from the circumcision had increased, Jacob's sons approached and killed them till the last one. They killed Shechem and his father for the evil they had committed against them and for their worship of idols. That is why Jacob's sons killed them and seized their money as spoils.

Then Rachel got pregnant and gave birth to a son, Benjamin, but she had a hard labor and died after delivery. Jacob buried her in Ephrath (Afrath). The tomb of Rachel is there till the present day.

Jacob's sons were twelve men. From Leah there were Rueben (Robil), Simeon (Shamun), Levi (Lawi), Judah (Yahudh), Issachar (Isakher), and Zebulun (Zablun). From Rachel there were Joseph (PBUH) and Benjamin. From Rachel's slave there were Dan and Naphtali (Neftali), and from Leah's slave there were Gad and Asher.

Jacob came to his father Isaac and settled with him in the village of Hebron which lies in the land of Canaan where Abraham had lived. Then Isaac fell ill and died when he was one hundred eighty years old. His sons Esau and Jacob, buried him with his father Abraham Al-Khalil in a cave which he had bought. It was said that Abraham died at the age of one hundred seventy-five.

All the Almighty declared in the Glorious Qur'an: "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 in the ranks of the righteous. 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. And this was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons and so did Jacob; "O my sons! Allah hath chosen the faith for you; then die not except in the faith of Islam." Were ye witnesses when death appeared before Jacob? Behold he said to his sons: "What will ye worship after me?" They said: "We shall worship thy Allah and the Allah of thy fathers of Abraham Isma`il and Isaac the one (true) Allah to Him we bow (in Islam)." That was a People that hath passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did and ye of what ye do! of their merits there is no question in your case! 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 not gods with Allah." Say ye: "We believe in Allah and the revelation given to us and to Abraham Isma`il 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 Allah (in Islam)." 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 Allah will suffice thee as against them and He is the All-Hearing the All-Knowing. (Our religion is) the baptism of Allah; and who can baptize better than Allah? and it is He whom we worship. Say: Will ye dispute with us about Allah 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? Or do ye say that Abraham Isma`il Isaac Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: Do ye know better than Allah? Ah! who is more unjust than those who conceal the testimony they have from Allah? But Allah is not unmindful of what ye do!" (Surah 2: 130-140)

In another surah Almighty Allah declared: "Ye people of the Book! why dispute ye about Abraham when the Law and the Gospel were not revealed till after him? Have ye no understanding? Ah! ye are those who fell to disputing (even) in matters of which ye had some knowledge! but why dispute ye in matters of which ye have no knowledge? It is Allah Who knows and ye who know not! Abraham was not a Jew nor yet a Christian but he was true in faith and bowed his will to Allah's (which is Islam) and he joined not gods with Allah. Without doubt among men the nearest of kin to Abraham are those who follow him as are also this Apostle and those who believe; and Allah is the Protector of those who have faith." (Surah 3: 65-68)

Allah the Exalted also confirmed: "But verily thy Lord to those who do wrong in ignorance but who thereafter repent and make amends thy Lord after all this is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful. Abraham was indeed a model devoutly obedient to Allah (and) true in faith and he joined not gods with Allah: He showed his gratitude for the favors of Allah Who chose him and guided him to a straight way. And We gave him good in this world and he will be in the Hereafter in the ranks of the righteous. So We have taught thee the inspired (message) "Follow the ways of Abraham the true in faith and he joined not gods with Allah." (surah 16: 119-123).