

KHUTBA

Friday 18.11.11

English

The Story of Ishmael (Ismail)

All thanks are due to Allah, the Most-Generous. I bear witness that there is nothing worthy of worship except him. He has no partners. May Allah send peace and blessings upon his final messenger.

And then, Servants of Allah, today we will talk about Prophet Ishmael, peace be upon him, Allah willing.

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.

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 Ka'ba under a tree on the spot of Zam-zam, at the highest place in the mosque. During those days there was nobody 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: 'O 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 saying the following prayers: ***'O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Your Sacred House (Ka'ba at Mecca) in order, O our Lord, that they may offer prayers perfectly. So fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits, so that they may give thanks.'***" (14:37-38)

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 also became thirsty. She started looking at him (i.e. Ishmael) tossing in agony. She left him, for she could not endure looking at him, 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 (saws) 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 Zam-zam, 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 (saws) added: "May Allah bestow mercy on Ishmael's mother! Had she let the Zam-zam (flow without trying to control it) (or had she not scooped from that water to fill her water-skin), Zam-zam would have been a stream flowing on the surface of the earth."

The Prophet (saws) 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. 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 water 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 one 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 the people. So, they settled there, and later on they 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 from amongst them."

The Prophet (saws) 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 he asked Ishmael's wife about him, she replied: 'He has gone in search of 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, an old man of such-and-such description came and asked me about you, and I informed him, and he asked about our state of living, and I told him that we were living in a hardship and poverty.' On that Ishmael said: 'Did he advise you anything?' She replied: 'Yes, he told me to convey his 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 (saws) added: "At that time they did not have grain, and if they had had grain, he would have also invoked Allah to bless it. If somebody has only these two things as his sustenance, his health and disposition will be badly affected, unless he lives in Mecca."

The Prophet (saws) continued: "Then Abraham said to Ishmael's wife: 'When your husband comes, give my regards to him and tell him that 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, and he asked about our livelihood and I told him that we were in a good condition.' Ishmael asked her: 'Did he give you any piece of advice?' 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. While Ishmael was handing him the stones, and both of them were saying: «**O our Lord! Accept (this service) from us, verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.**» (2:127) The Prophet (saws) added: "Then both of them went on building and going round the Ka'ba saying: «O our Lord! Accept (this service) from us, verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.» (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

References: Islam Story Website