

Prophet Ishaq / Isaac and Yaqub / Jacob (pbuh)

The Quran does not give details of Isaac's life (pbuh), but reliable Quranic 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 upon 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 prophethood. This ill feeling became so serious that Esau threatened to kill his brother. Fearing for 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 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 Isreal, (belonging to the people of Israel).

The People of the Book claimed that when Isaac (pbuh) grew old and 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 asked: "Did you bring it an hour ago and ask me to pray for you?" Esau said: "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 Esau threatened to kill his brother when their father was dead. They also said 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 the Laban's daughters. She told her husband Isaac to command him with that advice 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 Rachel (Rahil). The latter was the better and 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 feast and gathered people for the wedding. He married Leah, his elder daughter, to him at night. She was weak-sighted and ugly. When morning came, Jacob discovered 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 one was named Rueben (Robel), after whom there were Simon (Shamun), Levi (Lawi), and Judah (Yahudh). Rachel felt jealous of Leah's having sons, as she was barren. She gave her slave Bilha to her husband 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 give birth to a son, so she in turn gave her slave Zilpah to Jacob (pbuh), Zilpah gave birth to two sons, Gad and Asher. Then Leah got pregnant and gave birth to her fifth son, Issaacher, 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.

Then 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.

Then Rachel got pregnant and gave birth to a son, Benjamin.

Allah the Almighty declared in the Glorious Qur'an: "And who turns away from the religion of Abraham (Islamic Monotheism) except him who befools himself? Truly, We chose him in this world and verily, in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous.

When his Lord said to him: "Submit (be a Muslim)!" He said: "I have submitted myself (as a Muslim) to the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)."

And this (submission to Allah, Islam) was enjoined by Abraham upon his sons and by Jacob, (saying): "O my sons! Allah has chosen for you the true religion, then die not except in the Faith of Islam (as Muslims -- Islamic Monotheism)."

Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob? When he said unto his sons: "What will you worship after me?" They said: "We shall worship your Ilah (God) and the Ilah (God) of your fathers, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, One Ilah (God), and to Him we submit (in Islam)."

That was a nation who had passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned and you of what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do.

They say: "Be Jews or Christians, and then you will be guided." Say (to them O Muhammad): "Nay (we follow) only the religion of Abraham, Hanifan (Islamic monotheism, i.e. to worship none but Allah Alone, and he was not of the Al Mushrikeen (those who worshiped others along with Allah))."

Say (O Muslims): "We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which had been sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and to Al Asbat (the twelve sons of Jacob), and that which has been given to Moses and Jesus and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (in Islam)."

So if they believe in the like of that which you believe, then they are rightly guided, but if they turn away, then they are only in opposition. So, Allah, will suffice you against them. He is the All Hearer, the All Knower.

(Our Sibghah, religion is) the Sibghah (religion) of Allah (Islam) and which Sibghah (religion) can be better than Allah's. We are His worshipers.

Say (O Muhammad, to the Jews and Christians): "Dispute you with us about Allah while He is our Lord and your Lord? And we are to be rewarded for our deeds and you for your deeds. We are sincere to Him in worship and obedience (i.e., we worship Him Alone and none else, and we

obey His Orders)." Or say you that Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and Al Asbat (the twelve sons of Jacob) were Jews or Christians? Say: "Do you know better or does Allah know better....that they all were Muslims? And who is more unjust than he who conceals the testimony (to believe in the Prophet Muhammad, when he comes written in their books) he has from Allah? Allah is not unaware of what you do." (Ch 2:130-140 Quran)

In another surah Almighty Allah declared: "O People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Why do you dispute about Abraham, while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed till after him? Have you then no sense? Verily, you are those who have disputed about that of which you have knowledge. Why do then dispute concerning that which you have no knowledge? It is Allah Who knows, and you know not.

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim Hanifan (Islamic Monotheism), to worship none but Allah Alone and he was not of the polytheists (he joined none in worship with Allah).

Verily, among mankind who have the best claim to Abraham are those who followed him, and this Prophet (Muhammad) and those who have believed (Muslims). And Allah is the Wali (Protector and Helper) of the believers." (Ch 3:65-68 Quran)

Allah the Exalted also affirmed: "Then verily! Your Lord for those who do evil (commit sins and are disobedient to Allah) in ignorance and afterward repent and do righteous deeds, verily, your Lord thereafter to such is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Verily, Abraham was an Ummah (a leader having all the good righteous qualities or a nation), obedient to Allah, Hanifan (to worship none but Allah), and he was not one of those who were Al Mushrikeen (polytheists, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah and those who joined partners with Allah). He was thankful for His (Allah's) Graces. He (Allah) chose him (as an intimate friend) and guided him to a Straight Path (Islamic Monotheism, neither Judaism or Christianity). We gave him good in this world and in the Hereafter he shall be of the righteous. Then, We have inspired you (O Muhammad saying): "Follow the religion of Abraham Hanifan (Islamic Monotheism to worship none but Allah) and he was not of the Mushrikeen (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah and His Messenger Muhammad, those who worship others along with Allah or set up rivals with or partners to Allah)." (Ch 16:119-123 Quran)

