

## The Dialogue between Father and Son

In Mina, in a quiet corner, Ibrahim talked to his son! The father gray-haired and bearded, lived a century, while Ismail was just growing into a young man. The sky of the Arabian peninsula, no, the world, could not tolerate such a sight! History had never before recorded a similar dialogue between a father and a son. No one had ever thought of this conversation, a very friendly, but fearful one!

At first, Ibrahim was unable to open his mouth to repeat the story to his son – "I am here to sacrifice you with my hands". Finally, he put himself in God's trust and said, "Ismail, I had a dream I was slaughtering you"! He said these words quickly so he would not hear them himself. Then he remained silent. Fearful and pale, he could not bear looking into Ismail's eyes. Ismail realized what his father was going through and he tried to console him. He said, "Father be obedient and do not hesitate to fulfill the order of Almighty God. You will find that I am also obedient and with God's help can tolerate it".

Ibrahim put all his trust in God and became more fearful. He made his decision, stood up, picked the knife and tried to sharpen it with a piece of stone. Could he do this to the son he so loved? Ismail, the brave man who accepted Allah's will, was so relaxed and quiet, as if nothing was going to happen. Ibrahim, the true lover of Allah, first destroyed his selfish feelings and relied only on Him. Then he took the young victim to the place of sacrifice, asked him to lie on the ground, held his legs, grabbed his hair and held his head back in order to see his carotid artery.

In the name of God, he put the knife to Ismail's throat and tried to cut it as quickly as possible. The old man tried to finish in a moment. But, oh this knife! The knife would not cut! It hurts me; what a torture it is! Angrily, he threw the knife away! Ibrahim was roaring like a wounded lion. Full of fear, he asked, "Am I not his father"? Hurriedly, he picked up the knife to try again. Ismail remained quiet and calm during this time; he did not even move. Before Ibrahim touched him again, a sheep suddenly appeared with a message – "Oh Ibrahim, God does not want you to sacrifice Ismail. This sheep is sent to you as his ransom. You have carried out the order! God is great!!!"

A lesson was taught by the Almighty God – from now on there would be no more sacrifice of man for God ... That was a tradition and form of worshipping God! In Ibrahim's religion, sheep are sacrificed and not man! Another great lesson is that Ibrahim's God, in contrast to other gods, is not blood-thirsty; those

other gods are hungry, hungry for meat! The most meaningful lesson is that God did not want Ismail to be sacrificed, but wanted Ibrahim to sacrifice Ismail and he did it bravely! Ismail was honored to have been chosen for the sacrifice and he patiently persevered. But then, there was no need to kill him. God, the Almighty, is not needy; we human beings have all kinds of needs!

This was the will of Almighty God, the most kind and most merciful to man. He honored and promoted Ibrahim to the point where he was ready to sacrifice Ismail without actually killing him. God also honored Ismail by being His sacrifice, yet he was not hurt at all!

This is Ibrahim's faith (Islam) and not the story of blood thirsty gods, masochists or human torturers. It is a story of man's perfection and his freedom from selfishness and animalistic desires. It is man's ascension to a higher spirit and love, to a strong will that frees him from anything that may hinder his responsibility as a conscious man, to make him ready to sacrifice himself as Ismail, to become a martyr and finally, something not found in the dictionary – "to be like Ibrahim"! The story ends with the sacrifice of a sheep. This is what Almighty God requested at the end of this greatest human tragedy – to sacrifice a sheep to feed a few hungry people.

Like Ibrahim, you should select and bring your Ismail to Mina who is your Ismail? You should know; there is no need for others to know! May be your wife, job, talent, sex, power, rank, position ... etc. I don't know which one it is, but it should be whatever is so dear as Ismail was to Ibrahim! Some of the signs of your Ismail are whatever takes away your freedom and stops you from performing your duties, whatever joy entertains you, whatever keeps you from hearing and knowing the truth, whatever persuades you to rationalize rather than accept responsibility and whoever supports you only to receive your support in the future. You must search and find it in your life. If you are going to approach Almighty God, you should sacrifice your Ismail in Mina.

Do not choose the sheep (ransom) yourself; let the Almighty help and present it to you as a gift. This is how he accepts the sheep as a sacrifice. To offer a sheep instead of Ismail is a "sacrifice", but to sacrifice a sheep just for the sake of sacrifice is "butchery"!

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