

Names of Allah

(from the Stories of the Quran)

September 29, 2019

Ar Rabb

Our deen teaches us to look upward, forward and onward - look for the best, which is ihsan. We should never stay in one place, but always keep moving forward, doing our best with inner motivation - we don't even need to be checked, because we check ourselves. That is when we really have faith. It is living our lives, worshipping, like we can see Allah SWT.

Today's topic is how we strive like birds to achieve treasures - tangible and intangible. The best of the treasures is of course *la ilaha illa Allah* which keeps us bound together, in such a strong and beautiful manner. People of different races, colors, experiences are all bound together by this best of bonds.

The name of Allah SWT which reveals so many treasures in the Quran is Ar Rabb, the Nurturer. One of the questions we will be asked in the grave will be *man rabbuka*, who is your Rabb? We should be able to answer this with our hearts on that day, so before then our tongues should be able to answer this question. And our answer will determine our eternal destination.

Our Lord is the one who reforms, guides, cares for and nurtures us, and the whole world around us - through His Blessings. Hidden and apparent, big and small, tangible and intangible - His blessings surround us.

And this is how we know our Lord, we recognize Him. In all the signs that He has surrounded us with.

Allah SWT nurtures us in three ways, thought His:

- Blessings
- Decree (tailor-made for each person)
- Commands and Prohibitions

When we don't have a bird's eye view of life, from the top, with the bigger picture in view, and instead ground view - then there is a lot of negativity, problems, blame, distractions etc. With the bird's eye view, we can clearly see opportunities,

Why does Allah SWT nurture us? He does so to reform us, so that He can increase our ranks, to make us suitable to live near to Him in Paradise, above the seven heavens. He upgrades us in the best way so we can be our best selves to enter Paradise, to see and hear Allah SWT. Nobody can nurture us like Allah SWT can, nobody can care for us like He does.

Today we will see how Allah SWT nurtured and took care of Ibrahim AS, the father of many of Allah SWT's prophets, in four stories.

Ibrahim AS was Khalil Allah, he built the Kaaba, was one of the five messengers of determination, father of Ismail and Ishaq, established the Hajj rites and sacrifice, the one who the fire could not burn, the first to be addressed on the Day of Judgement. He is an example of ihsan, and Allah SWT honored him by giving him a pure tawheed, and praised anyone who will follow his example. He was the first imam, the first leader. He had a sound heart, and was the first to call us Muslims! He was given the quality of forbearance.

To reach this high level of Ibrahim AS, of course, it required a special nurturing. Every experience we face teaches us something, makes us different from before. Ibrahim AS had to face three groups of people and three big *shirk*-related problems.

1. People who worshipped the moon, the sun, the stars and the planets

People worship other than Allah SWT because they don't know that ultimately it is Allah SWT that creates and gives everything. With the moon, sun, stars and planets because they can see them, and in *ayaat* 75-79, Allah SWT says He showed Ibrahim AS all the universal signs of the heavens and earth. We don't take the signs as god, but the Creator of all these signs.

Ibrahim AS went with this through his people, where he said the sun, then the moon etc were the Lord but then when they ran their cycles, then he declared to them that he was free of all *shirk*, and believed only in Allah SWT.

2. Idol-worshippers

The idol-worshippers prayed to those things that they built with their own hands. In Surah Ash Shura, Allah SWT says, in *ayaat* 69-85, how Ibrahim AS asked the people how they can have faith in something that is stone, that has no power. Allah SWT has decreed everything, and precise and pre-ordained - nothing depends on luck, nothing is random or coincidence. Allah SWT gives us so much freedom, but we limit ourselves with strange superstitions, giving power to things that have no power, subhanAllah. Only Allah SWT brings us good, and protects us from the bad, that is all we should believe and know.

3. People who worshipped those with power and authority:

This is the story of Ibrahim AS and Namrud. Namrud was one of the four kings that ruled the whole world - Sulaiman AS and Dhul Qarnain were the good ones, and Namrud was one of the bad ones. In Surah Baqarah, *ayaat* 258-260 discusses this story. Ibrahim AS was saved from the fire and then he had to face Namrud. Namrud was full of arrogance because he had so much wealth and power etc. Ibrahim AS went to tell him about Allah SWT, but he was arrogant because he was deceived by the blessings given to him by Allah SWT.

He tells Ibrahim AS that he can do anything that Allah SWT can do - including giving life and death. He believed that when he released someone that was akin to giving life, and his command to kill someone meant he was taking their life away. Then Ibrahim AS told him that Allah SWT caused the sun to rise from the east, so he challenged Namrud to cause the sun to rise from the west.

The end of Namrud was such that Allah caused a small fly to be in his nose for 600 years, an end of immense suffering.

Arrogance is you think you're better or more worthy, that you're the reason for your own success or blessings in your life. Instead we should apply ihsaan and use what Allah SWT gave us to serve the people, and Allah SWT, like Sulaiman AS and Dhul Qarnain.

Ibrahim AS asked Allah SWT for a sign to increase his faith, and so Allah SWT asked him to bring four living birds, cut them into pieces, mix them all up, and then place them in different mountains. Allah SWT then told Ibrahim AS to call them and they would come back quickly, more efficient and better than before.

When things in our own lives are mixed up and scattered, we do not know how to put it back together, but should believe that Allah SWT, our Rabb, will put it into place for us.

وَجَهْتُ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا، وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ، إِنَّ
صَلَاتِي، وَنُسُكِي، وَمَحْيَايَ، وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ
وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الْمَلِكُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَنْتَ رَبِّي، وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ
ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي، وَاعْتَرَفْتُ بِذَنْبِي، فَاغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي جَمِيعًا، إِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ
إِلَّا أَنْتَ، وَاهْدِنِي لِأَحْسَنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ لَا يَهْدِي لِأَحْسَنِهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ، وَاصْرِفْ عَنِّي
سَيِّئَهَا لَا يَصْرِفْ عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ، لَبَّيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ وَالْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي يَدِيْكَ،
وَالشَّرُّ لِيْسَ إِلَيْكَ، أَنَا بَكَ وَإِلَيْكَ، تَبَارَكْتَ وَتَعَالَيْتَ، أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوْبُ إِلَيْكَ

"I have turned my face sincerely towards Him who has brought forth the heavens and the Earth and I am not of those who associate (others with Allah). Indeed my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are for Allah, Lord of the worlds, no partner has He, with this I am commanded and I am of the Muslims.

O Allah, You are the Sovereign, none has the right to be worshiped except You. You are my Lord and I am Your slave, I have wronged my own soul and have acknowledged my sin, so forgive me all my sins for no one forgives sins except You. Guide me to the best of characters for none can guide to it other than You, and deliver me from the worst of characters for none can deliver me from it other than You.

Here I am, in answer to Your call, happy to serve you. All good is within your hands and evil does not stem from you. I exist by your will and will return to you. Blessed and High are You, I seek Your forgiveness and I repent unto You."

(Abu Dawud No# 760)