

Prophet Abraham's Role in Divine Civilization and the Establishment of the *Ummah*

Contents

Prophet Abraham: Life, Lineage, and the Dawn of Divine Law	2
Important Life Events of Prophet Abraham.....	3
Breaking the Idols and Confronting Idolatry	3
Being Thrown into the Fire and Its Cooling	5
The Migration of Prophet Abraham.....	5
The Migration to Mecca, Hagar, and the Zamzam Spring	6
The Vision of Sacrificing Prophet Ishmael	7
Building the House of God and Constructing the Kaaba.....	8
The Resurrection of the Birds.....	8
The Spiritual Stations of Prophet Abraham.....	9
Messengership.....	9
Imamate.....	9
Divine Friendship (<i>Khullah</i>).....	10
Infallibility (<i>Ismah</i>)	10
Judgment	11
Building a Divine Civilization and the Necessity of Infallible Leadership	11
Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of Abraham	13
References	14

Prophet Abraham: Life, Lineage, and the Dawn of Divine Law

Prophet Abraham (Peace be upon him) was the second of the Arch-Prophets (*Ulu al-Azm*)¹ and a messenger endowed with a divine law (*Sharia*). The Holy Quran refers to his scripture as the "*Suhuf*"² (Scrolls). Known as "*Khalilullah*"³ (the Friend of God), he was born in Iraq or Harran approximately twenty centuries before the birth of Christ. He lived for about 200 years and passed away in Hebron (*Al-Khalil*), Palestine.

Prophet Abraham's biological father was Terah. The individual the Quran refers to as "*Ab*" by the name "*Azar*"⁴ was not his father, as the Arabic term "*Ab*" can also signify a grandfather, uncle, or adoptive guardian. Prophet Abraham consistently distanced himself from Azar, openly expressing his disavowal of him.

His first wife, Sarah, was his maternal cousin and the sister of Prophet Lot. Initially unable to conceive, Sarah eventually offered her maidservant, Hagar, to Prophet Abraham. Prophet Ishmael was born to Hagar, and a few years later, Prophet Isaac was born to Sarah.

Prophet Abraham is frequently mentioned in the Quran, which recounts his prophethood, life events, spiritual stations, and miracles. The Old Testament⁵ also references various aspects of his life. His story is filled with profound and instructive events; understanding them illuminates the struggles of divine leaders and clarifies Prophet Abraham's role in divine civilization.

He was appointed to his prophetic mission at a time when human societies had not yet developed distinct, civilized structures. Humanity was only beginning to receive divine law, and no universal *Sharia* had been established. Following Prophet Noah, Prophet Abraham guided the people using his own specific scripture and law.

Because divine law serves as the foundational pillar of any civilization, the *Sharia*—the basis for a heavenly civilization—could not be presented to early humanity all at once. Instead, each law-

bringing prophet was responsible for communicating and perfecting a specific phase of it. With each subsequent prophet, the divine law grew more complete, rendering the new *Sharia* obligatory for all.

Prophet Abraham's *Sharia* was founded upon monotheism (*Tawhid*), obedience to God, ethics, virtues, acts of worship, and divine rulings. His undertaking to form the divine community (*Ummah*) and lay the groundwork for a heavenly civilization was both arduous and impactful, as he faced a superficial, resistant, and primitive populace. In pursuing this goal, he successfully endured numerous trials and tribulations. This triumph paved the way for him to attain exalted spiritual stations such as messengership (*Risalah*), leadership (Imamate), divine friendship (*Khullah*),⁶ infallibility (*Ismah*),⁷ and judgment.

This article examines his significant life events, miracles, and spiritual stations, along with his role in building a divine civilization, illustrating how he provided the prerequisites for forming the divine *Ummah*.

Important Life Events of Prophet Abraham

To fully understand the character of Prophet Abraham, we must carefully examine his life events, his miracles, as well as his trials and tribulations. While numerous occurrences in his life require profound contemplation, certain events played a far more fundamental role in his mission of messengership, Imamate, and civilization-building.

Breaking the Idols and Confronting Idolatry

Prophet Abraham lived with Azar, his uncle or adoptive guardian. Azar was not a monotheist and firmly opposed Prophet Abraham's beliefs, constantly threatening him and forbidding him from

practicing monotheism. Eventually, their paths separated, and Prophet Abraham left Azar's household to live and work independently.

Even then, Prophet Abraham never ceased guiding the people and warning them against idolatry. Public reaction varied: A few believed, some claimed his words were too difficult to grasp, and others stubbornly resisted, fanatically rejecting his message. They argued that they could not abandon the idolatrous practices their forefathers had observed for centuries.

Refusing to retreat from his monotheistic stance, Prophet Abraham took decisive action to awaken the people. On a day of major public celebration, when the populace left for the desert, the Prophet remained behind. Once the city was empty, he took an axe, entered the temple, shattered all the idols, and placed the axe on the shoulder of the largest one.

Upon returning, the people discovered the destruction and reported it to Nimrod, the tyrannical ruler of the time. Nimrod's guards arrested Prophet Abraham, and a public trial convened. When the judge accused him, the Prophet used the opportunity to awaken their intellect, suggesting they ask the idols themselves who had broken them.⁸

When the judge replied that stone and wood cannot speak, Prophet Abraham asked how they could worship something incapable of speech. He clarified that his enmity was not toward the stone and wood, but toward the people's ignorance and misguidance, before speaking comprehensively about the oneness of God.

His words caused the people to reflect deeply. This intellectual awakening alarmed Nimrod, making him regret holding the public trial. This incident demonstrated that throughout his prophethood and Imamate, Prophet Abraham sought to prove and promote the most crucial issue of human existence: monotheism and the absolute rejection of polytheism.

Being Thrown into the Fire and Its Cooling

Following his spiritual victory in Nimrod's court, the king ordered a massive fire to be built to consume him. The Prophet was cast into the flames with a catapult. What remains an absolute certainty is that, by the permission of God, the fire became cool⁹ and safe for Prophet Abraham.

Various theological perspectives explain this: some hold that the essence of the fire transformed into a garden, while others maintain that God placed a protective barrier between the Prophet and the flames. Regardless of the interpretation, the cooling of the fire stands as one of the most significant miracles in religious history.

Being cast into the fire was a severe trial that he overcame with immense patience and faith, illustrating that the path of clarifying monotheism and guiding humanity is fraught with suffering, threats, and tribulations.

The Migration of Prophet Abraham

Some of the most critical events and miracles in the life of Prophet Abraham resulted from his migration. Following the idol-breaking incident and Nimrod's decree to exile him, the tyrant perished from a disease caused by a gnat entering his brain.¹⁰ Simultaneously, a severe famine and drought struck Babylon.

Prophet Abraham had fulfilled his mission there, having planted the seeds of awareness in the hearts of the people. Because these seeds required time to bear fruit, he needed to travel to a new land to continue his mission.

Accompanied by his wife Sarah, Prophet Lot, and likely a few believers, he departed Babylon for the Levant (Sham), journeying toward Jerusalem (Bait al-Maqdis). The Quran describes this migration as a journey toward a place of divine grace, as referenced in verse 71 of Surah Al-

Anbiya: “Then We delivered him, along with Lot, to the land We had showered with blessings for all people.” This pivotal moment in the Prophet’s life is further illuminated by his own declaration of faith and submission, recorded in verse 26 of Surah Al-Ankabut: “So Lot believed in him. And Abraham said, ‘I am emigrating [in obedience] to my Lord. He [alone] is indeed the Almighty, All-Wise.’”

Initially, his exact destination was unspecified. He moved toward the Levant region—encompassing modern-day Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan. He resided for a time in Harran¹¹ (modern-day southern Turkey), where he guided many. Driven by famine, he traveled to Egypt¹² before eventually returning to settle in Palestine.

Prophet Abraham's migration was one of the most impactful journeys in history for promoting monotheism and establishing a divine civilization. He made this decision with absolute reliance on God, aiming to initiate profound transformation in a new land.

The Migration to Mecca, Hagar, and the Zamzam Spring

The second migration was to Mecca. Because Sarah was initially unable to bear children, he married Hagar, who gave birth to Prophet Ishmael. Later, by the will of God, Prophet Isaac was born to Sarah.

Following Prophet Isaac's birth, God commanded Prophet Abraham to take Hagar and Prophet Ishmael to Mecca, which was then an arid, uninhabited desert. This journey, made solely to relocate his family, was one of his most agonizing divine trials.

He left Hagar and the infant in that desolate land with only a small amount of water and dates before returning to the Levant. In this distressing situation, he placed his complete trust in God.

Eventually, the provisions ran out, and severe thirst made Ishmael intensely restless. Searching for water, Hagar ran between the hills of Safa and Marwah seven times, perceiving only mirages. This desperate effort was permanently immortalized as the ritual of *Sa'i* in the ceremonies of Hajj and Umrah.

When a despairing Hagar returned, she saw water gushing from beneath Ishmael's feet. Driven by thirst, Ishmael had been striking his heels against the ground, and in response, God caused the Zamzam spring to flow. The gushing of the Zamzam spring is a monumental miracle inextricably connected to Prophet Abraham's arduous path of migration.

The Vision of Sacrificing Prophet Ishmael

Another crushing trial was the command to sacrifice Prophet Ishmael. One night, Prophet Abraham saw in a dream that he must sacrifice his son with his own hands. The dreams of prophets are absolute truth, and this vision repeated on the nights of Arafah and Eid al-Adha.

Prophet Abraham shared the dream with Prophet Ishmael, who accepted the divine command with absolute certainty. With a heart brimming with paternal love, Prophet Abraham took Ishmael to the sacrificial site in Mecca. At that precise moment, a divine call proclaimed that Abraham had fulfilled the mission, commanding him to release Ishmael and sacrifice a ram instead.¹³ Offering immense gratitude to God, he sacrificed the ram in place of his son.

This thought-provoking incident is one of his most profound miracles, demonstrating that the greatest divine victories are achieved when the champions of monotheism prioritize God¹⁴ and the path of *Tawhid* over their own personal attachments.

Had Prophet Abraham not proceeded to sacrifice Prophet Ishmael, or had he not abandoned his family in the desert by God's command, attaining such elevated spiritual stations would have been

impossible. Ranks such as Imamate and *Khullah* were achieved precisely by sacrificing his deepest affections and striving in the path of God (*Jihad*).

Building the House of God and Constructing the Kaaba

God commanded Prophet Abraham to build a house for worship in Mecca. The Kaaba had existed since the time of Prophet Adam but was damaged during Prophet Noah's flood.¹⁵ Alongside Prophet Ishmael, Prophet Abraham engaged in immense physical effort to reconstruct it. Prophet Ishmael gathered stones, while Prophet Abraham raised the walls.¹⁶

During construction, Prophet Abraham sought a stone for the eastern corner. God sent down the heavenly Black Stone (*Hajar al-Aswad*), which the Prophet installed.

Building the House of God was a deliberate act to promote monotheism, ensuring everyone understood that the universe must center around a single focal point. The circumambulation of human bodies and hearts around a single divine axis is a foundational pillar in forming a monotheistic *Ummah*.

The Resurrection of the Birds

Prophet Abraham asked God to show him how He brings the dead back to life.¹⁷ In response, God commanded him to take several different birds, slaughter them, and mix their remains together. He was then told to place a portion of this mixture on various mountaintops and call out to the birds. Prophet Abraham followed the divine instructions. When he called them, the scattered parts of each bird flew toward one another, reuniting to restore them to life. Each bird then flew back to him. The revival of the birds remains one of the most remarkable miracles of Prophet Abraham.

The Spiritual Stations of Prophet Abraham

To fully grasp Prophet Abraham's role in divine civilization, one must first understand his spiritual stations. A leader's divine rank reflects the expansiveness of their soul, their existential capacity, and their ability to guide humanity toward forming the divine *Ummah*.

Messengership

Prophet Abraham attained the station of messengership (*Risalah*), a rank surpassing ordinary prophethood. He was among a select few law-bringing prophets entrusted with a specific *Sharia*. Delivering this distinct divine law further amplified Prophet Abraham's role in divine civilization. God also bestowed the station of prophethood upon several of Prophet Abraham's descendants, including Prophet David, Prophet Solomon, Prophet Job, Prophet Joseph, Prophet Moses, and Prophet Aaron (Peace be upon them). Additionally, the noble lineage of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his family) traces back through Prophet Ishmael directly to Prophet Abraham.

Imamate

Notably, after affirming his prophethood, the Quran highlights Prophet Abraham's elevation to the station of Imamate—a rank even higher than messengership. God makes it clear that Abraham achieved this monumental station only as a direct result of successfully enduring severe divine trials and tribulations.

Having traversed every stage of certainty, Prophet Abraham received the decree of Imamate through revelation while already serving as a prophet. Beyond the privileges of messengership, Imamate encompasses political leadership, authoritative guardianship (*Wilayah*), and ultimate

religious authority. These multifaceted dimensions are reserved for a select few divine prophets, setting them apart from the rest. Ultimately, Prophet Abraham's ability to fulfill his role in divine civilization depended entirely on his station of Imamate and authoritative guardianship.

Divine Friendship (*Khullah*)

The station of *Khullah* represents the highest degree of proximity and intimacy with God, deriving from a root meaning profound friendship and affection.

Prophet Abraham's spiritual characteristics made him worthy of this station: pure monotheism, sincerity in religion, immense sacrifice, absolute submission to the will of God, and total liberation from worldly attachments. The station of *Khullah* was held by exceedingly few; even Prophet Moses, despite holding the exalted stations of messengership and prophethood, did not possess it. This station symbolizes a flawless connection with God. Prophet Abraham attained this rank only after passing agonizing trials and proving his unwavering faith.

Infallibility (*Ismah*)

Quranic verses implicitly refer to the infallibility of Prophet Abraham. Infallibility means absolute immunity from sin, error, or mistake. This attribute is exclusive to prophets and Imams, ensuring they can accurately convey the divine message without deviation.

If divine prophets lacked infallibility, they might err in communicating the religion, leading to its distortion. Furthermore, if people knew their prophets were prone to mistakes, they could not trust or accept them as perfect role models.

Judgment

The station of judgment and arbitration was one of the most critical ranks God bestowed upon Prophet Abraham, serving as a testament to his intellectual prowess and capacity for engaging with complex ethical and social issues. The Holy Quran explicitly references this station.

The Prophet's intellect and wisdom in arbitration, coupled with his unwavering faith, experience, and awareness, were primary reasons God granted him this rank. His judicial authority profoundly impacted society and his followers, establishing justice, cementing ethics, and playing an instrumental role in constructing an Islamic governance in the future.

Building a Divine Civilization and the Necessity of Infallible Leadership

Building a divine civilization—one centered on the purity of the soul and the heart's alignment with God—is the most arduous endeavor in existence. Fulfilling this ultimate purpose of creation requires centuries of steadfast patience, deep suffering, and the dedicated stewardship of specialized divine leaders alongside their followers. The life and character of Prophet Abraham reveal the vital principles that serve as the indispensable blueprint for this sacred endeavor.

1. Absolute Monotheism as the Central Axis

Throughout his prophethood and Imamate, Prophet Abraham focused above all on propagating pure monotheism (*Tawhid*) and uncompromisingly confronting polytheism (*Shirk*). During the idol-breaking incident, he addressed this core issue before all else, demonstrating that without absolute reliance on the oneness of God, no meaningful progress can be made toward guiding humanity.

Constructing the Kaaba was a monumental step on this path—a physical initiative ensuring humanity understood that human hearts and bodies must circumambulate a single, unshakeable Divine axis.

2. Divine Law as a Shield Against Social Fragmentation

Through his *Sharia* and scripture, Prophet Abraham taught that robust divine law is an essential prerequisite for civilizational progress. Without divine guidance to define the boundaries of personal and social conduct, human societies inevitably fracture into extremism, moral lawlessness, and division—destroying the unity and heartfelt devotion required for a divine *Ummah*.

3. Human Effort, Trials, and the True Nature of Miracles

Abraham's life demonstrates that spiritual growth is sequential. He ascended to higher spiritual ranks step by step, doing so only after successfully emerging from severe tribulations—including being cast into the fire, undertaking multiple migrations, leaving his family in a barren desert, and submitting to the command to sacrifice his son. He attained the exalted station of Imamate only after enduring these grueling trials with immense patience.

Furthermore, his legacy teaches that a monotheistic community must not rely on miracles from the outset. Divine aid (*Nasr*) arrives only after human beings have exerted deep effort, striven with patience, and proven their unwavering sincerity. Only then do the gates of divine mercy open and angelic support descend. God has willed that civilizational progress be forged primarily through human choice, desire, and struggle, rather than effortless supernatural interventions.

4. The Imperative of Specialized, Infallible Leadership

Humanity cannot achieve true bliss in this world and the Hereafter without divine leadership. Only a leader who has earned God's endorsement through immense suffering—passing rigorous trials

to attain stations such as judgeship, intimate friendship (*Khullah*), infallibility (*'Ismah*), and Imamate—can guide humanity along the path of spiritual and social development. Such a leader advances society based on a profound understanding of the structure of the human soul (*Nafs*) and the secrets to eternal prosperity.

5. Transcending Personal Attachments for Spiritual Victory

Another critical lesson from Abraham's life is that the greatest divine support and victories occur when the monotheistic community prioritizes God over personal inclinations. Abraham's spiritual ascension was the direct result of surrendering his deepest personal attachments in obedience to God—most notably exemplified by leaving Hagar and her infant in a barren desert and offering Ishmael for sacrifice. These pivotal moments provide an enduring methodology for all who tread the path of truth.

Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of Abraham

Through his divine law, his elucidation of *Tawhid*, his migrations, his endurance of trials, the construction of the Kaaba, and the nurturing of a monotheistic generation, Prophet Abraham laid the permanent foundations for a divine *Ummah*.

His life—marked by extraordinary miracles like the cooling of the fire, the resurrection of the birds, and the gushing of Zamzam—demonstrates that a sacred civilization requires monotheism, divine law, infallible leadership, patient perseverance, continuous human effort, and the willingness to relinquish personal attachments. Prophet Abraham's legacy stands as an enduring guiding light for all whose hearts are receptive to divine counsel.

References

- ¹ . Quran 19:41.
- ² . Ibid., 87:19.
- ³ . Ibid., 4:125.
- ⁴ . Ibid., 6:74.
- ⁵ . Genesis 11:26–32; 12:1–9; 10–20.
- ⁶ . Quran 4:125; Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, *Tafsir al-Mizan: An Exegesis of the Quran*, vol. 9, p. 117.
- ⁷ . Ridha Kardan, *Imamate and Infallibility of Imams in the Quran*, trans. Sayyid Iraj Razzaqi (ABWA Publishing and Printing Center), chap. 1.
- ⁸ . Quran 21:62-68.
- ⁹ . Ibid., 21:69.
- ¹⁰ . Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, *Hayat al-Qulub*, trans. Sayyid Athar Husayn S.H. Rizvi, vol. 1, p. 151.
- ¹¹ . *The History of al-Tabari*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (State University of New York Press, 1987), vol. 2, p. 128; Genesis 12:10.
- ¹² . Genesis 12:10–20.
- ¹³ . Quran 37:107.
- ¹⁴ . Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, *Tafsir al-Mizan: An Exegesis of the Quran*, vol. 36, p. 9; Quran 47:7.
- ¹⁵ . Nasir Makarem Shirazi, *Quran: Translation and Commentary in Brief*, vol. 1, p. 139.
- ¹⁶ . Ali Shariati, *Hajj (Pilgrimage)*, trans. Ali A. Behzadnia and Najla Denny (Costa Mesa: Jubilee Press, 1977), chap. “Ibrahim’s Position.”

¹⁷ . Quran 2:260.

Mentazer Mentazer

Mentazer Mentazer

Mentazer Mentazer

Mentazer Mentazer

Mentazer Mentazer

Mentazer Mentazer