

Features of Abraham's Personality in Qur'anic Stories

A Narrative Study

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ABSTRACT: The Qur'anic stories are one of the most important forms on which the Qur'an is based. They are considered as messages to the Prophet Mohammed and the whole mankind, and the Prophet Abraham's story is one of these narrations. This article is a descriptive, analytical and narrative study of the Prophet Abraham's stories in the Holy Qur'an. It aims to shed light upon the features of his personality and to demonstrate the psychological and the social dimensions of his character as a son, a father, a thinker and a leader.

KEYWORDS: Prophet Abraham, Qur'anic stories, Abraham personality, narrative.

I. Introduction

The holy Qur'an is considered as a book of legislation, orders, and restrictions. It organises the matters of living, and prepares to the afterlife. In its call to societies for guidance, the holy book adopted many ways, such as enticing, persuading, calling for meditation upon the greatness of the universe, giving examples, and telling the prophets and messengers' stories for lessons, morals, and sage advice. Among those stories lay the story of the prophet Abraham (PBUH).

This paper will focus on clarifying the Prophet Abraham's personality through the Qur'anic stories. How do those stories introduce the Prophet Abraham? What are the dimensions of his personality? How is he presented as a prophet and a leader for mankind? How is the religious belief dimension reflected in his personality? How is his personality shaped under all that his mission as a messenger required? And what are the various social and psychological dimensions of this personality?

In this matter, we will demonstrate the verses that contain the stories of Abraham (PBUH), and study, in the first part, how his personality is presented through descriptive language, dialogue, and events. In the second part, we will draw the multiple aspects of his personality: the religious belief aspect, the social dimension of him as a son and a father, and the psychological dimension through his qualities and attributes. This study will also be dedicated to scrutinise those verses in order to thoroughly study Abraham's personality and answer the previous questions.

II. Abraham's Personality in Qur'anic Stories

The story of the Prophet Abraham (PBUH) was mentioned in eleven chapters (Sûrats) of the Qur'an: Al Baqara, Al An'am, Hûd, Al Hijr, Maryam, Al-Anbiyâ, Ach-Chuâra, Al Ankabut, As-Sâffât, Az-Zukhruf, and Az-Zariyat. While displaying the verses referring to this story, we will draw a well-defined presentation of Abraham's personality that includes three main dimensions: the *religiousbelief* aspect, the *psychological* and the *social* dimensions.

It is worth noting that the Qur'anic stories present Abraham's personality through three artistic elements: descriptive language, dialogue, and events.

III. Through descriptive language

The Qur'an says, in Sûrat Hûd chapter, 11 verse 75: ﴿إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ﴾ "Verily, Abraham was, without doubt, forbearing, used to invoking Allâh with humility, and was repentant [to Allâh all the time, again and again]."¹ According to the interpretation of this verse by scholars, Abraham is described as "Halîm / forbearing", which means that he never got furious, unless it was for the sake of Allâh. Al-Hilm (forbearance) is a state of mind that includes patience and indulgence. Abraham was also portrayed as "Aw'wah / whimperer" who is a person who whimpers a lot from fear of Allâh. It was mentioned that Abraham, could listen to his heart, out of fear of Allâh, as clearly as one can hear eagle wings flapping. The prophet is also described as "munîb /repentant" which is the person who frequently turns with repentance to Allah in every matter.²

In Sûrat Maryam, chapter 19 verse 41, we read: ﴿صَادِقٌ﴾ "Verily, he was a man of truth, a prophet".³ This chapter described Abraham as "Seddiq", a man of truth. This description is interpreted in two ways: First, the word "Seddiq", as explained by Ar-Razy, is an Arabic hyperbole figure of speech of the word "Sadiq", which means a highly truthful person.⁴ The second interpretation made by Az-Zamakhshari, which is the most adequate, associates this quality to a high level of belief in the divine unseen, the holy books, and the prophets. Abraham (PBUH) believed in all the prophets and their holy books. He also believed in all the divine signs and marvels. Well, he should; he is a prophet.⁵

In SûratAl-Anbiyâ, chapter 21 verse 51, it is said: ﴿وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ﴾ "And indeed we bestowed on Abraham his (portion of) guidance".⁶ According to Az-Zamakhshari, the word "Roshd" is "to be guided to all kinds of goodness and righteousness".⁷ Moreover, Ar-Razi claimed that the word "roshd" "can be explained in two ways: firstly, it means prophethood. As the second part of the same verse says: ﴿وَكُنَّا بِهِ عَالِمِينَ﴾, "And We were All-acquainted with him [as to his Belief in the Oneness of Allâh]."⁸ God Almighty yendows only those with prophethood, who are really worthy of it and are respectful of all the do's and don'ts. Secondly, "roshd" is to be guided to all forms of goodness in both religion and present life matters", like in Sûrat An-Nisaa, chapter 4 verse 6, where the Qur'an says: ﴿فَإِن أَنَسْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ﴾ "If then you find sound judgment in them, release their property to them" (Them, here, refers to the orphans who were put to an eligibility test).⁹

There is also a third explanation that combines both prophethood and true guidance under the meaning of the word "roshd". To explain, a prophet cannot be sent to his people unless

1 Muhammad Taqî-ud- DînAl-Hilaly, and Muhammad MuhsinKhân, *Translation of the Noble Qur'an in English Language* (Madinah: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, 1984), 297.

2 Ibn Attiya Al-Andaloussi, *Al Moharrar Al-Wajiz Fi Tafsir Al-Kitab Al-Aziz*, verified by Mohamed Abd-EssalamAbd-Eshshafi (Beirut: Dar Al-Koutoub Al-Ilmiya, 2002), Vol 3, 192.

3 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 406.

4 Ar-Razi, *Mafatih Al-Ghayb* (Beirut: Dar IhyaeAt-Torath Al-Araby, 2000), Vol 21, 542.

5 Az-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashshaf An Haqaiqi Ghawamid At-Tanzil* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kitab Al-Araby, 1987), Vol 3, 18.

6 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 435.

7 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 3, 121.

8 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 435.

9 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 107.

he is fully aware of the Divine Entity and all its qualities, of his own benefits, and his people's profits.¹⁰

On his side, Ibn Achour explained the word "roshd" as "the true guidance and the ultimate belief." In fact, the verse mentioned earlier says: ﴿كُنُوزٌ مِّمَّا رَزَقْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ﴾ "We bestowed on Abraham his [portion of] guidance".¹¹ As the pronoun "We" refers to God, this guidance reaches an important magnitude. Allâh knew how pure the soul of Abraham was; therefore, this prophet deserved to be Allâh's "intimate friend".¹² That is said, Abraham is the one who was given both prophethood and the ways of goodness in religion and in present life matters. The following verse approves this statement: "And We made them leaders, guiding (mankind) by Our Command, and We revealed to them the doing of good deeds, performing Salât [Iqâmat-as-Salât], and the giving of Zakât and of Us [Alone] they were the worshippers." Sûrat Al-Anbiyâ, chapter 21 verse 73.¹³ In this verse, the pronoun "them" refers to the prophets Abraham, Lot, Isaac and Jacob (PBUT). The verse also says: "We made them leaders, guiding [mankind] by Our Command". It is clear that when a person [prophet] is good and righteous to spread the word of God, and can be followed by his people, the Divine guidance is inevitable. Once ordered by Allâh, the prophet cannot disobey or fail to keep mission. He has to guide himself, first, so he can guide others; people usually tend to follow a self-guided person. Another important part of the previous verse is ﴿تَارِيخًا لِّمَنْ غَفَبَ﴾ "the doing of good deeds". Doing good deeds is an important quality of every prophet. The same goes with performing the Salât (Islamic prayer) and giving the Zakât (The obligatory tax that every Muslim must give).¹⁴

In SûratAs-Sâffât, chapter 37 verse 84, the Qur'an says: ﴿إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ﴾ "When he came to his Lord with a pure heart [attached to Allâh Alone and none else, worshipping none but Allâh Alone _ true Islamic Monotheism, pure from the filth of polytheism]."¹⁵ To come to Lord with a pure heart conveys full loyalty and devotion.¹⁶ To explain the words ﴿قَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ﴾ "a pure heart", some scholars claim that a pure heart is free from polytheism, doubt, or any other human flaw, such as grudge, envy, arrogance, etc.¹⁷ This kind of hearts is safe. Ar-Razi confirms this meaning. He said that Abraham's heart is safe; it is free of polytheism; Abraham worshipped none but Allâh. Explaining the same words, fundamentalists say that Abraham had a pure heart free of sins all his life. This includes being free of polytheism, doubt, grudge, deceit, hatred, and heart-burning. Ibn Abbâs reported that Abraham wanted for his people what he liked for himself, and that people were safe from his deceit or injustice.¹⁸ Ibn Achour considers the purity of the heart to be the source of all good deeds. He inferred his statement from the Hadîth (the Prophet Muhammad Sayings): «ألا وإن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله، ألا وهي القلب»¹⁹ "Truly, there is a piece of flesh in the body; if it becomes good, the whole body becomes good. But if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt. That (piece) is the heart."

The purity of the heart of any spoilt creed or vicious feelings, and the unconditional love towards others were, in fact, some of noticeable aspects the Prophet Abraham's personality. He should be a model to follow to anyone who has read his story and has come to know about the aspects of his personality.

10 Ar-Razi, Vol 22, 151.

11 See Al-Hilaly and Khân, 435.

12 Ibn Achour, *At-Tanwir Wat-Tahrir*, (Tunis: Dar TounissiaLi-Nashr, 1984), Vol 17, 92-93.

13 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 436.

14 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 3, 127.

15 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 602.

16 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 4, 48-49.

17 Al-Andaloussi, Vol 4, 447.

18 Ar-Razy, Vol 26, 340-341.

19 Ibn Achour, Vol 23, 137.

IV. Through dialogue

IV.a. His monologues

In Sûrat Al-Anâam, chapter 6, the verses 76 to 79, Allâh almighty enlightened Abraham about the realms of the heavens and the earth, made him aware of Allâh's oneness and divine nature, and guided him to inner peace and logical reasoning.²⁰ This unique vision had amazingly brought Abraham in a good position to rebuke his people for their practice and make them admit the unsoundness of their beliefs.²¹

IV.b. His conversations with his Lord

In chapter 2, verse 260 of Sûrat Al-baqarah, Abraham asks his Lord to enlighten him about how he (Allâh) gives life to the dead.²² In fact, scholars argue about the reason behind this request. A large number of them said that Abraham never doubted God's ability to give life to the dead. He just wanted to observe the process.²³ When Allâh asked: ﴿أَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِنُ﴾ "Do you not believe?" Abraham said: ﴿بَلَىٰ﴾ "yes, I believe", ﴿وَلَكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي﴾ "but to be stronger in Faith".²⁴ Abraham wanted to be content and secured, and to have a peaceful heart, the peacefulness of his heart is to settle in his mind a strong belief, and "to be stronger in Faith".²⁵ Generally, the tranquillity of the heart can be achieved by the full knowledge of the process in order to erase any doubt or any need to deduce or to reason. In our case, the process of giving life to the dead is not important; what do matter here is how Abraham formed his creed, and how he reached a higher level of Faith.

IV.c. His conversation with his Father

The Prophet Abraham's conversations with his father appear in many Qur'an stories. In Sûrat Al-Anâm, chapter 6 verse 74, it is said: ﴿وَإِذ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ أَرَزَرَأَنْتَجِدُ أَصْنَامًا إِلَهًا إِنِّي أَرَكَ وَفَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾ "And [remember] when Ibrâhîm [Abraham] said to his father Âzar: 'Do you take idols as âlihah [gods]? Verily, I see you and your people in manifest error.'²⁶ In this statement, the Prophet Abraham expresses his rejection of the all the idols that his people were worshipping as gods.²⁷

There is another example of those conversations in Sûrat Maryam, chapter 19 verses 42 to 48.²⁸ Actually, the Qur'an mentions those events to confute people who just adopt what their fathers and ancestors worship without reasoning. It reminds them of the practice of their most honourable ancestor, the Prophet Abraham, who followed monotheism (the belief that there is only one God). The Qur'an tells the story to clarify Abraham's attitude towards his father and people's beliefs; an attitude that was founded on evidence and reasoning. Headopted logical and methodical reasoning instead of blindly following his father's belief.²⁹ In the previous con-

20 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 2, 40.

21 Ibn Achour, Vol 7, 317.

22 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 1, 308.

23 Al Andaloussi, Vol 1, 352.

24 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 59.

25 Al-Andaloussi, Vol 1, 353.

26 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 181.

27 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 2, 39.

28 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 406-407.

29 Ar-Razi, Vol 21, 542.

versation, Abraham gently advised his father to give up on his unsound belief, which is against reason.³⁰ First, the prophet asked his father to demonstrate the reasons behind worshipping idols. Worshipping is indeed the highest form of glorification. It is worthy of God, the Great Creator, the Provider, the Giver of life and all the blessings, the Rewarder, and the Punisher. Worshipping the unworthy is far from reason, especially if the object of worship is a lifeless being, devoid of any sense or feeling. Second, Abraham kindly invited his father to the right path. He softly made his request with no insult or disregard. Third, the Prophet Abraham politely tried to discourage his father from following the path of Satan, which will lead him to torments.³¹ He said: "I fear lest a torment from the Most Gracious (Allah) should overtake you."³² Abraham implored his father's approval out of love and respect towards him.³³ Oppositely, the father rudely answered his son's requests. He was surprised of his son's attitude; he threatened to stone him to death.³⁴

From this conversation, the religious belief aspect of the personality of Abraham is clear. He renounce the idols to show the unsoundness of his father's beliefs. He was actually pointing to three fundamental conditions that should be applicable to a god to be worshipped: to be able to hear, to see, and to bless the worshipper, either by endowing with a blessing or by removing harm or injury.

The social dimension is also present in those verses, as Abraham was gentle, kind, polite, and patient towards his father, even though they were in total religious disagreement.

IV.d. His conversations with his people

The Prophet Abraham's conversations with his people were cited in eight different locations:

In *Sûrat Al-Anâm*, chapter 6 verses 80 to 82, in *Sûrat Al-Anbiyâ*, chapter 21 verses 52 to 56, and verses 59 to 68, in *Sûrat Ach-chuarâ*, chapter 26 verses 69 to 82, in *Sûrat Al-Ankaboot*, chapter 29 verses 16 to 18 and verses 24 and 25, in *Sûrat As-Sâffât*, chapter 37 verses 85 to 100, and last, in *Sûrat Az-Zukhruf*, chapter 43 verses 26 to 28.

As mentioned above, Abraham argued with his people about the invalidity of their idols. He adopted reason and logic to abolish polytheism and emphasise monotheism. Before Islam, Abraham was the first prophet to fight polytheism by methodical reasoning.³⁵ He criticised the worship of useless idols, and was determined in this fight. He tried argumentation and conversation, first. Then, he moved to practical action. He said: "And by Allâh, I shall plot a plan (to destroy) your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs." (57)³⁶ So he broke them to pieces, (all) except the biggest of them, that they might turn to it. (58)". Abraham demolished all the idols, leaving, intact, the biggest of them, to prove its invalidity to be worshipped. That master idol could not defend nor protect the other idols; how can it protect the humans, bless or help them? His people knew he proved the unsoundness of their worship of idols, but would not admit it. Instead, they chose to burn him.³⁷ Abraham, through his smart manoeuvre, demonstrated the conditions that should apply to the worshipped: the ability to create, guide, provide, heal, give and remove life, and to forgive all sins, beside the previous conditions mentioned before, such as to hear, see, profit, remove harm, and to answer and realize invocations. Whenever those conditions apply, the worshipped is worthy (of worship).

30 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 3, 18.

31 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 3, 19.

32 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 407.

33 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 3, 20.

34 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 3, 20.

35 Ibn Achour, Vol 17, 92.

36 Ibn Achour, Vol 17, 94-97.

37 Ibn Achour, Vol 17, 105.

IV.e. His conversation with whom was king at that time

In Sûrat Al-Baqarah, chapter 2, the verse 258 shows a part of Abraham's argumentation with a king called Nimrud.³⁸ The debate was clearly about the secret of life and death, which is the key element of the right conception of our existence.³⁹ The matter of life and death defines godhood. A true god gives life and causes death. When Nimrud claimed his ability to give and remove life, Abraham denoted a higher divine speciality, which is to control the laws of nature. He challenged the king to bring the sun from the west, which is against nature. The prophet Abraham used his reasoning faculties to reach the complete truth, that godhood cannot be limited to a planet, a star, or a human being. To Abraham, divinity is about believing in God, the creator of the universe, his marvellous creations, and his mighty power to manage all. To reflect upon the wonders of the universe was indeed one of the fundamental basics of Abraham's Methodical reasoning to reach the absolute truth.

IV.f. His conversation with his guests, the messengers to Lot

The conversation of Abraham with Allah's messengers to Lot is mentioned in Sûrat Hûd, chapter 11 verses 69 to 76, in Sûrat Al-Hijr, chapter 15 verses 51 to 60, and in Sûrat Az-Zariyât, chapter 51 verses 24 to 34.⁴⁰ Those verses reveal another aspect of Abraham's personality, which is hospitality. By analysing the meanings, we learn about the way he greeted his guests. "They said: Greetings/peace" He answered: "Greetings/peace". Scholars say that Abraham's greetings were better than his guests' as a kind of hospitality.⁴¹ The words ﴿فَمَا لَبِثَ﴾ mean that he hastened to provide food for them, although they were perfect strangers. He brought to them a nice roasted calf. ﴿فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ﴾ "And placed it before them", which means he placed it before them without making them change their seat, then politely invited them to eat. This is also a kind of extreme hospitality.⁴² The way Abraham behaved towards his guests reflects his generosity, his open-handedness, and his unconditional hospitality, by which he established an example to follow in human and social relationships.

IV.g. His conversation with his son

From the verses 102 to 107 of Sûrat As-Sâffât, chapter 37, we are trying to deduce the father-son relationship. Firstly, it is said: ﴿فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ﴾ "When he was old enough to walk with him."⁴³ According to Az-Zamakhshari, those words mean: when he [the son] was old enough to work along with his father and help him in every day's tasks, and that the father was most gentle and kind to him. This scene reveals how Abraham made a friend and companion out of his son when he was old enough (thirteen years old, according to scholars) to help him with his daily matters.⁴⁴ Another verse confirms this attitude in Sûrat Al-Baqarah, chapter 2 verse 127: "And [remember] when Ibrâhîm [Abraham] and [his son] Ismâ'îl [Ishmael] were raising the foundations of the House [the Ka'bah at Makkah], [saying], "Our Lord! Accept [this service] from us. Verily! You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower."⁴⁵ Here, Abraham associated his son in the task of building the house, the holy mosque in Mecca; a task that had both, practical and religious dimensions. Secondly, When Abraham saw himself in a dream, slaughtering his

38 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 58.

39 Sayed Qotb, *Fi Zhilal Al-Quran*, (Beirut: Dar Ash-Shorouq, 1991), Vol. 1, 296.

40 See Al-Hilaly and Khân.

41 Ibn Achour, Vol 12, 116.

42 Ibn Achour, Vol 26, 359.

43 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 603-604.

44 Az-Zamakhshari, Vol 4, 53.

45 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 25.

son, he said: ﴿يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى﴾ "O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you [offering you in sacrifice to Allāh]. So look what you think!"⁴⁶ Even though the prophet's dream is an incontestable revelation, Abraham consulted his son about the slaughtering that was inevitable. This kind of behaviour is appreciated in dealing with children. Instead of giving a direct order, Abraham kindly asked for his son's opinion. For his side, the son showed total obedience, and gently answered his father's request.

V. Through events

Khalaf-Allah said that the link between the events and the characters of a story is too strong and relevant to be pointed at. They are the main elements of every story, and that we cannot imagine a character in isolation from the events that involve him.⁴⁷ Having that in mind, the events reveal the aspects of the personality of a character. In this way, the characters' attitudes towards the events that involve them expose their mentalities, their moods, and their states of mind.⁴⁸ On the same topic, here are some of the main events that contribute to show some of the aspects of the Prophet Abraham's personality:

- Looking upon the marvels of the universe.
- Arguing in multiple occasions.
- Rejecting the ancestral beliefs.
- Standing by the creed of monotheism despite intimidation.
- Honoring the guests.
- Obeying Allāh's order to slaughter his son.

Through all the verses presented above, the Qur'anic stories present three dimensions of Abraham's personality, which are the religious belief dimension, the social and the psychological dimensions. On the other hand, we note the absence of any physiological dimension. According to Noqra Tuhami, the Qur'an did not attach particular importance to draw the physiological lines of a character or to emphasise its external traits, such as the colour of the hair or the eyes, the shape of the nose, the mouth or the forehead, tone of the voice, the manner of walking, or other similar physiological descriptions that could actually represent the character. It does not serve any of the religious purposes of the Qur'anic stories.⁴⁹ Being subject to religious purposes is what allowed those three dimensions to be exposed more than others. The story in the Qur'an is given to serve absolute religious intentions. For instance, to establish a revelation or message, to confirm Allāh's oneness, to show the shared origin of all the revealed religions, to warn, to portend or to announce glad tidings, to display the outcome of good and evil, or to manifest the divine powers.⁵⁰ As the story of Abraham is one of those stories, it is obvious that the main focus will be on the religious and the moral dimensions.

46 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 603.

47 Mohamed Ahmed Khalaf -Allah, *Al Fann Al Qassassi Fi Al-Quran*, (Beirut:Mouassasat-Al-Intishar Al-Arabi, 1999), 310.

48 Khalaf -Allah, 299.

49 Tuhami Noqra, *Psychologia Al-Qissa Al-Quraniya*, (Tunis: Dar Tounissia Lit-Tawzie, 1987), 360.

50 Sayed Qotb, *At-Taswir Al-Fanni Fi Al-Quran*, (Egypt: Dar Ach-Chourouq, n.d.), 144.

VI. Some of the Dimensions of Abraham's Personality

By reviewing the way in which the Prophet Abraham's personality is presented in the Qur'anic stories, we conclude that this personality was built upon three dimensions: the religious belief dimension, the social and the psychological dimensions.

VI.a. The religious belief dimension

All the verses of the Qur'anic stories highly focus on this dimension. To illustrate, Surât Al-Baqara, Al-Anaâm, Mariyam, Al-Anbiyâ, Ach-Chuarâ, and As-Sâffât insist on presenting Abraham as a young man who rejects the ancestral religion of his community, and as a prophet who invites to monotheism, which his people refuse, and who turns away from them because of the unsoundness of their creed.⁵¹ In this dimension, Abraham used a methodical reasoning based on reflection to evaluate the common ancestral belief. So, by reflecting upon the harmonious and coordinated natural phenomena, including the sun, the moon, and the stars, he realised that it must be a divine power behind all that creation. He questioned his father and his people's beliefs, and then tried to set right their creed. He even asked his Lord about the process of giving life to the dead, only to be stronger in faith and to have a peaceful heart. He finally challenged the king of that time by defining godhood criteria, like the ability to give and remove life, and to control the laws of the universe.⁵² Those were the main steps that define Abraham's method to reach the absolute truth and destabilise his father and people's creed.⁵³ That was Abraham's way to discuss and argue. He analyses his opponent flaws, then found his arguments on logical and objective basics that are easily understood by his rivals.⁵⁴

VI.b. The social dimension

Besides the religious aspect, the social dimension of Abraham's personality is presented through his life as a son and a father. He showed the basics of the father-son relationship through his conversations with his father. This is a relationship that should be based on patience, kindness, politeness, and gentleness, no matter how the differences are, even in religion. He also showed that the obedience to one's father should not be on the expense of one's creed. On the other hand, the Prophet Abraham drew the standards of dealing with children. For instance, he showed kindness and affection towards his son. He engaged him in the daily life matters, and asked him for his opinion. Abraham showed us that it is more efficient to gently give instructions, instead of violently order things to be done. The prophet Abraham has set the example to his son to follow. In fact, setting the good example is the most efficient way of education.⁵⁵

VI.c. The psychological dimension

The description of a character in the Qur'anic stories generally attaches special significance to his feelings and thoughts. All the qualities and attributes of the personality shed light upon its

51 Ahmad Al-Barae Al-Amiri, *Ibrahim Alayhi-Salam Wa Da-watouhou Fil-Quran Al-Karim*, (Jeddah: Dar Al-Manara, 1986), 64-67.

52 Al-Amiri, 90-97.

53 Al-Amiri, 80-82.

54 Hadi Hassan Hammoudi, *Qissass Al-Quran min Ar-Ramziila Al-Waqie*, (Beirut: Dar Al-Koutoub Al-Ilmiya, 2012), 226.

55 Imad Zouhir Hafez, *Al-Qassass Al-Qurani :Bein Al-Abaewa Al-Abnae*, (Damascus: Dar Al-Qalam Li TibaawaNashr, 1990), 138.

psychological aspects.⁵⁶ Abraham's personality was perfect. He was the ideal example to follow in truthfulness, perseverance, loyalty, obedience to Allāh, politeness and kindness to his kin, endurance, and forbearance.⁵⁷ Not only was he an example of quietness, clemency, and tolerance, but also an example of generosity, hospitality and mercifulness.

VII. Conclusion

The prophet Abraham had reached the highest levels of faith and persuasion by the soundness of his natural disposition, and the purity of his heart. He had set a whole humanistic method that joins creed, human and social relationships, and ethical values. He was so unique that Allāh praised him. For instance, in Sūrat An-Nahl, chapter 16 verses 120 to 122, the Qur'an says:

“Verily, Ibrāhīm [Abraham] was an Ummah [a leader having all the good righteous qualities], or a nation, obedient to Allāh, Hanīf [i.e. to worship none but Allāh], and he was not one of those who were Al-Mushrikūn [polytheists, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allāh, and those who joined partners with Allāh]. [120], [He was] thankful for His [Allāh's] Favours. He [Allāh] chose him [as an intimate friend] and guided him to a Straight Path [Islāmic Monotheism - neither Judaism nor Christianity]. [121] And We gave him good in this world, and in the Hereafter he shall be of the righteous. [122]”⁵⁸

No wonder that Allāh did take him as an intimate friend.

56 . Noqra, 361.

57 Qotb,203.

58 Al-Hilaly and Khân, 365-366.

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