

Argumentation in Abraham's (PBUH) story

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ABSTRACT: Argumentation is one of the tools most used by all prophets to convince their people of the unity of God. Abraham (peace be upon Him) proceeded to several types of argumentations according to the communication situations and the people to whom he speaks. Abraham's speech will therefore not be the same with his father, his people and the king since their positions are not the same.

KEYWORDS: Argumentation, Believe, Monotheism.

This paper deals with the argumentation in the Qur'anic story of Abraham (PBUH), from the following elements:

- 1- Abraham in the holy Quran.
- 2- Argumentation in the story of Abraham:
 - 2-1- Meditation leading to truth.
 - 2-2- Argumentation with his father.
 - 2-3- Argumentation with his people.
 - 2-4- Argumentation with the king (Namrud).

I. Abraham (PBUH) in the holy quran:

In the Quran, Abraham (pbuh) is the second most mentioned among all prophets. It's understandable knowing that he was the origin of the three monotheistic religions.

Name of the prophet	times
Moses	136
Abraham	69
Noah	43
Adam- Jesus	25
Mohamed	05

Due to his strength of faith, the Quran attributes the one and only true religion to be the "Path of Abraham" (ملة إبراهيم), even though prophets before him, such as Noah, called to the same faith. Because of his tireless act of obedience to God, He gave him the special title of "Khaleel", or beloved servant, not given to any other Prophet before. Due to the excellence of Abraham, God made prophets from his progeny, from them Ishmael Isaac, Jacob (Israel) and Moses, guiding people to the truth¹.

Abraham (PBUH) is known in the Qur'an of several traits, but the two Quranic verses sum up somehow the most important of these traits.

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَخَلِيلٌ أَوْاهُ مُنِيبٌ (هود: 75)

Truly, Abraham was forbearing, tender-hearted, and ever turning ' to his Lord'

1 www.islamreligion.com

(إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ) [النحل.120]

Indeed, Abraham was a nation obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters

[Halim]: the quality of someone who is meek and forgives rapidly.

[Awah]: “Very interested in people’s concerns and issues”².

[Munib]: all the time repentant to God and asking for forgiveness.

[Ummah]: guide or leader, but it also means he was a lone a community since he had no followers and faced alone the harshness of his people³.

[Quaanit]: obedient to Allah

[Hanif]: ⁴ refers to those people who, in pre-Islamic times, maintained monotheistic beliefs when the society around them had slipped into polytheism. They followed the true nature and disposition given to mankind, which points to a belief in One God.

II. the argumentation in the story of Abraham:

The speech of Abraham (pbuh) is a founding speech. It is a new starting point in the unification of God. Therefore, this speech will be full of all kinds of arguments.

II.a. Meditation leading to truth:

[وَكَذَلِكَ نُرَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ] [الأنعام: 75]

We also showed Abraham the wonders of the heavens and the earth, so

he would be sure in faith.

2 Attaher ben AAchour: Attahrir wa Attanwir, 12/123

3 Azzamakshari jaarallah : Al kachaf, 2/641

4 الحنف الميل وكون إبراهيم عليه السلام حنيفاً معناه «ماتلاً عن الأديان المَكْرُوهةِ إلى الحَقِّ» القرطبي 2/139

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا (مریم. 42)

And mention in the Book 'O Prophet, the story of Abraham. He was surely a man of truth and a prophet.

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا

Remember' when he said to his father, "O dear father! Why do you worship what can neither hear nor see, nor benefit you at all?

يَأْتِبْتُ إِيَّيْ فَجَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا

dear father! I have certainly received some knowledge which you have not received, so follow me and I will guide you to the Straight Path.

يَأْتِبْتُ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا

dear father! Do not worship Satan. Surely Satan is ever rebellious against the Most Compassionate.

يَأْتِبْتُ إِيَّيْ أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا

dear father! I truly fear that you will be touched by a torment from the Most Compassionate, and become Satan's companion 'in Hell'

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ أَنْتَ عَنْ ءَالِهَتِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَمَّا تَنَنَّهُ لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ وَأَهْجُرَنِي وَلِيًّا

He threatened, "How dare you reject my idols, O Abraham! If you do not desist, I will certainly stone you 'to death'. So be gone from me for a long time!"

قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا

Abraham responded, "Peace be upon you! I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness. He has truly been Most Gracious to me.

وَأَعْتَزَلْتُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُوا رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا ٤٨

As I distance myself from 'all of' you and from whatever you invoke besides Allah, I will 'continue to' call upon my Lord 'alone', trusting that I will never be disappointed in invoking my Lord."

These verses show Abraham's attachment to his father and his mercy towards him; Despite his father's intransigence and his absolute rejection of the logical proofs given to him, Abraham continued to express his love and desire to save his father and his people from torment.

The word [abati] (which means in Arabic: very dear father) is used several times in this dialogue instead of [abi] (father) to show the mercy of Abraham and his attachment to his father. Even after being convinced that his father will never leave his idols, Abraham (pbuh) remains very attached to him and promises him to ask God for forgiveness.

II.c. Argumentation with his people

Allah said:

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِعِلْمِينِ (الأنبياء . 51)

And indeed, We had granted Abraham sound judgment early on, for We knew him well 'to be worthy of it'.

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَيِّهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ النَّمَاتُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ

Remember ' when he questioned his father and his people, "What are these statues to which you are so devoted?"

قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا ءَابَاءَنَا لَهَا عَابِدِينَ

They replied, "We found our forefathers worshipping them.

قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَءَابَاؤُكُمْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

He responded, "Indeed, you and your forefathers have been clearly astray.

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ اللَّاعِبِينَ

They asked, "Have you come to us with the truth, or is this a joke?"

قَالَ بَلْ رَبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ الَّذِى فَطَرَهُنَّ وَاَنَا عَلَىٰ ذٰلِكُمْ مِنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ

He replied, "In fact, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who created them 'both'. And to that I bear witness.

وَتَاللّٰهِ لَآكِيدَنَّ اَصْنٰمَكُمْ بَعْدَ اَنْ تُوَلُّوا مُدْبِرِيْنَ

Then he said to himself, "By Allah! I will surely plot against your idols after you have turned your backs and gone away.

فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذَاذًا إِلَّا كَبِيرًا لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ

So he smashed them into pieces, except the biggest of them, so they might turn to it for answers

قَالُوا مَنْ فَعَلَ هَذَا بِآلِهَتِنَا إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

They protested, “Who dared do this to our gods? It must be an evildoer!

قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَذُكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ

Some said, “We heard a young man, called Abraham, speaking ‘ill’ of them.

قَالُوا فَأْتُوا بِهِ عَلَى أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُونَ

They demanded, “Bring him before the eyes of the people, so that they may witness ‘his trial’.

قَالُوا ءَأَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ هَذَا بِآلِهَتِنَا يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ

They asked, “Was it you who did this to our gods, O Abraham?

قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا فَسْأَلُوهُمْ إِنْ كَانُوا يَنْطِقُونَ

He replied ‘sarcastically’, “No, this one—the biggest of them—did it! So ask them, if they can talk!

فَرَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

So they came back to their senses, saying ‘to one another’, “You yourselves are truly the wrongdoers!

ثُمَّ لَکَسُوا عَلَىٰ رُءُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْطِقُونَ

Then they ‘quickly’ regressed to their ‘original’ mind-set, ‘arguing,’ “You already know that those ‘idols’ cannot talk.

قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ

He rebuked ‘them’, “Do you then worship—instead of Allah—what can neither benefit nor harm you in any way?

أَمْ لَكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

Shame on you and whatever you worship instead of Allah! Do you not have any sense?

قَالُوا خَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ

They concluded, "Burn him up to avenge your gods, if you must act.

فَلَمَّا يَنزَارُ كُوَيْبًا وَسَلَّمًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

We ordered, "O fire! Be cool and safe for Abraham!

وَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَخْسَرِينَ ٥٧

They had sought to harm him, but We made them the worst losers.

These Quranic verses summarize the events that occurred between Abraham and his people, who wanted to disfigure him in front of everyone, but God makes him win. And even when they wanted to punish him, God saved him and made from his story a lesson to all polytheists.

II.d. Argumentation with the king (Namrud)

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ جَاءَ إِِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَيْبَةٍ أَنْ ءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِِبْرَاهِيمَ (فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالسَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأَتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ) البقرة: 258

Are you 'O Prophet' not aware of the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord because Allah had granted him kingship? 'Remember' when Abraham said, "My Lord is the One Who has power to give life and cause death." He argued, "I too have the power to give life and cause death." Abraham challenged 'him', "Allah causes the sun to rise from the east. So make it rise from the west." And so the disbeliever was dumbstruck. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.

After defeating his people, Ibrahim had another sequence of argumentation with the king who by his intelligence tried to destroy the logical arguments presented by Ibrahim.

To prove that he is able to do as a god who gives life and causes death, he ordered to kill a man and he said: I am able to cause death, then he ordered to keep another alive, then he said to Ibrahim: I am able to give life.

Every sane person will understand that the argument presented by the king is a fallacy, but Ibrahim wanted to end the dialogue with irrefutable proof when he asked the king to bring the sun from the west since Allah bring it from the east. Then the end was the king's defeat.

III. Conclusion:

Abraham (PBUH) used a hierarchy of arguments depending on who he was trying to convince. An argument, based on rationality in the face of their people, is so that the conviction is complete and therefore the faith is firm.

Regarding King Nimrod bin Canaan, Ibrahim (PBUH) made him fall into contradiction when he noticed the falsity of his argument. Because forgiving the prisoner and not killing him, is not a creation of life. He asked him to bring the sun from the west, which the king could not do. Then the king's defeat was visible.

When Ibrahim spoke with his father, trying to convince him of the oneness of God, his speech was gentle, but it was not without rational evidence. He kept trying to persuade him until he finally reached the impossibility of changing his father's beliefs. Because the what covered his father's eyes and heart was the same that drowned Nimrod in his tyranny and authority.

A rational argument is much more convincing than a blind faith appeal. Rather, faith and reason do not contradict each other, and the belief that rests on a mental foundation is stronger than that which is inherited.

Therefore, Abraham's call for rationality that conducts to faith is, in fact, an invitation for all of us to think about what unites people more than what divides them.

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