

Ibrahim (Abraham) and the smashing of the false idols...

Ibrahim left his father's house and abandoned his people and what they worshipped. He decided to do something about their state of disbelief, but did not reveal it. He knew that there was going to be a great celebration on the other bank of the river, which would be attended by all the people. Ibrahim waited until the city was empty, then came out cautiously, directing his steps towards the temple. The streets leading to it were empty and the temple itself was deserted for the priests had also gone to the festival outside the city.

Ibrahim went there carrying a sharp axe. He looked at the stone and wood statues of the gods and at the food laid in front of them as offerings. He approached one of the statues and asked: "The food in front of you is getting cold. Why don't you eat?" the statue kept silent and rigid. Ibrahim asked all the other statues around him: "Will you not eat of the offering before you?" (37:91)

He was mocking them for he knew they would not eat. He once again asked then: "What is the matter with you that you do not speak?" (37:92)

He then raised his axe and started smashing the false gods worshipped by the people. He destroyed them all except one on whose neck he hung the axe. After this his anger subsides and he felt at peace. He left the temple. He had fulfilled his vow to show his people proof of their foolishness in worshipping something other than Allah.

When the people returned, they were shocked to see their gods smashed to pieces, lying scattered all over the temple. They began to guess who had done that to their idols and Ibrahim's name came to their minds.

Allah the Almighty said: They said: "Who has done this to our gods? He must indeed be one of the wrongdoers." They said: "We heard a young man talking against them who is called Ibrahim." They said: "Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may testify." they said: "Are you the one who has done this to our gods, O Ibrahim?" Ibrahim said: "nay, this one, the biggest of them (idols) did it, Ask them, if they can speak!"

So they turned to themselves and said: "Verily you are the Zalimun (polytheists, and wrongdoers)." Then they turned to themselves (their first thought and said): "Indeed you (Ibrahim) know well that these idols speak not?" Ibrahim said: "Do you then worship besides Allah, things that can neither profit you nor harm you? If upon you, and upon that which you worship besides Allah! Have you then no sense?" (21:59-67 Quran)