

# The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

## DID PROPHET ABRAHAM <sup>(pbuh)</sup> REALLY SEND HIS WIFE HAGAR AND SON ISHMAEL <sup>(pbuh)</sup> AWAY ALONE TO A BARREN LAND?

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There is no mention of Hagar in the Quran. Nor is there any mention of Abraham's son Ishmael <sup>(pbuh)</sup> being sent away to a far off valley as a child with his mother Hagar alone. These narratives are only found in [Islamic secondary sources](#) and Biblical narratives.

However, the following Quranic verse is often used as support for the case that Prophet Abraham <sup>(pbuh)</sup> sent his wife and child away to a barren land alone. A popular translation is used and is discussed within context of its surrounding verses.

### 014:037

"O our Lord! I have made some (Arabic: min) of my offspring (Arabic: Dhuriyati) to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular prayer: so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks"

Please note the use of the word 'some' which is translated from the Arabic preposition 'min' to insinuate the settlement of part of Prophet Abraham's <sup>(pbuh)</sup> family linking it to the common Abraham-Hagar-Ishmael narrative.

The reader will note that:

- (1) The 'some' is not elaborated within the Quranic verse and one cannot deduce which part of Prophet Abraham's <sup>(pbuh)</sup> offspring this refers to.
- (2) At the time of the prayer in this verse, the Sacred House was already built (Please see verse). Therefore Ishmael <sup>(pbuh)</sup> was already at an age old enough to assist and complete the build work with his father Prophet Abraham <sup>(pbuh)</sup> (2:127).

If we take a look at two surrounding verses for additional information we read the following. (Note: 14:36 and 14:38 are prayers and are not included for theme continuity in this instance. Please check for yourselves)

Again popular translations are utilised, however key Arabic terms are noted for discussion.

#### 014:035

"And when Abraham said: My Lord! Make safe this territory, and preserve me and my sons/children (Arabic: Baniyya) from serving idols"

#### 014:037

"O our Lord! I have made some (Arabic: min) of my offspring (Arabic: Dhuriyati) to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular prayer: so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks"

#### 014:039

"Praise be to God Who has given me, in my old age, Ishmael and Isaac! Lo! my Lord is indeed the hearer of prayer"

Verse 14:37 (highlighted in red) which is sandwiched in-between the above two verses speak of Prophet Abraham's<sup>(pbuh)</sup> offspring (Arabic: Dhuriyati). However we note from a preceding verse (14:35 above) that the plural 'Baniyya' (sons) is already mentioned.

Baniyya translates to 'sons' and is a masculine plural noun. Masculine plurals in Arabic can also include females, so a better rendition of the term would be 'children' (both sons and daughters). Readers will be familiar with the terms 'Bani Israel' which does not only refer to the 'sons of Israel' but includes all males and females, or indeed the term 'Bani Adam' which once again refers to 'children' (sons and daughters).

Later in verse 14:39 above, we note that both Ishmael and Isaac<sup>(pbuh)</sup> are specifically mentioned in another prayer. Therefore within the context of the term 'offspring' mentioned in 14:37, both Ishmael and Isaac<sup>(pbuh)</sup> are most likely INCLUDED in the prayer of verse 14:35 but also not restricted to them.

Arabic noun's can have three forms - single, dual and a plural object.

Where 'Ibn' is single for son, the above 'bani' is plural for sons (which can include daughters) The dual object for 'sons' where the noun only refers to 2 sons can be seen in the following example of the Quran used in respect with the two sons of Adam.<sup>(pbuh)</sup>

#### 005:027 (Part)

"And relate to them the story of the two sons (Arabic: Ibnay) of Adam"

أَبْنَى

The above is a masculine 'dual' noun form (referring to two sons) and is not the form used to describe Prophet Abraham's<sup>(pbuh)</sup> children in verse 14:35

Prophet Abraham<sup>(pbuh)</sup> fathered many tribes and though only Ishmael<sup>(pbuh)</sup> and Isaac<sup>(pbuh)</sup> are mentioned by name, this does not imply (certainly from a Quran's perspective) that they were his only offspring,

just as much as the mention of the two sons of Adam <sup>(pbuh)</sup> does not imply that they were his only children. Certainly given the use of 'baniyya' in 14:35, Prophet Abraham <sup>(pbuh)</sup> seems to have fathered many children.

This also seems to be supported by Biblical narratives:

**Genesis 25:1-2**

"Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah"

Therefore in conclusion, all one can decipher from the prayer in 14:37 is that both sons were already born and are referred to as 'offspring'. Furthermore, Ishmael <sup>(pbuh)</sup> was of old enough age that he could complete the build of the sacred house with his father Prophet Abraham <sup>(pbuh)</sup> and that a 'part' of Prophet Abraham's <sup>(pbuh)</sup> offspring was left to dwell in that land. Which son or what part of Prophet Abraham's <sup>(pbuh)</sup> offspring this may or may not refer to, is not expounded by the Quran.

Equally, verse 14:37 does not provide proof that a child son and his mother were sent away to a barren land alone and therefore should not be used as such. Whether or not this incident occurred is not a belief which can be proved from Quranic narratives as no such information is provided or elucidated.

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