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PROPHET ABRAHAM AND URFA

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When we talk about the city of Prophets, we first think about Prophet Abraham. He is the great prophet, who unites all monotheistic religions (Islam, Christianity, and Judaism). While telling about the life story of Prophet Abraham, the Koran, the Bible, the Torah and narrations have been used. According to them; Nemrut Bin Kenan (approximately 2.000 BC) is a pagan and cruel ruler, who introduced himself as a god. One night, King Nemrut sees in his dream that a bright star is born above his head that this bright star lets the moon and sun extinguish and that it brings light to the world. Nemrut calls the most famous astrologers and priests of the period and asks for an interpretation of this dream. The interpreters say "that the star signifies a child that will be born within the year in his land, that this child will proclaim himself a prophet and that it will end his reign". Upon this, Nemrut commands to kill all children that are born that year. This decision is applied without exception. Many mothers and innocent children are being murdered.



City of Harran

The father of Prophet Abraham, Terah, is from the people of Harran. Terah, who is building idols and worships them, is married to Nuna and they weren't able to have children for 8 years. This is why the people of Nemrut didn't watch Terah and his family. Nuna gets pregnant in this brutal environment. Terah and Nuna don't tell anybody about this situation. At the time of the birth, Nuna secretly leaves town and successfully gives birth to the child in a cave. She gives him the name "Abraham", which means father of society. It is believed, that this cave is the cave southeast from the Balıklıgöl Lake.



Mevlid-i Halil Cave (The place of Prophet Abrahams Birth)

Nuna comes every morning, under the pretext of milking, to the cave, looks after her son and returns home. As a representative of the divine wisdom, Prophet Abraham grows 1 year older with every month. The fact that Prophet Abraham grows up so fast, saves him from the death sentence. After prophet Abraham reaches 15 years (15 months after he was born), he goes home with his mother. Terah tells everybody that he had a child years ago, that he kept it a secret from his relatives and that the child will live with them from now on. Since Terah is a very reliable person, everybody believes him. Unlike the society, in which prophet Abraham lived, he started to search for God. He first examines the stars, then the moon and lastly the sun. He comes to the conclusion that they cannot be God. With his own mind he finds God, which cannot be seen with the eyes. According to Islam, Prophet Abraham is the first person who was able to find God with his own reason and logic before becoming a prophet. After that, according to the holy books, God send Gabriel, who brings commands to the prophets, to him and gives him the prophetic mission. He commands him to call out monotheism (the belief in one God) to the people. Prophet Abraham starts with his own family and calls the people to monotheism. After a short time prophet Abraham becomes more known and every time Terah gets warned. Despite all of the resistance of this father, Prophet Abraham doesn't give up and continues with his mission.



Nemrut Throne

Nemrut and his fold would gather at certain days, climb together up the mountain and picnic (exegetes say that these ritual symbolizes the Nowruz holiday). It is believed that this recreational area is the place called "throne of Nemrut" in the district Eyyübiye, which oversees the city. During this holiday prophet Abraham goes into the hall of idols with an axe, destroys all of them and hangs the axe around the neck of the biggest idol before leaving. Nemrut and his folk, who enter the hall of idols, see what has been done and are astounded. People who heard what prophet Abraham had done, tell on him. Finally he finds Prophet Abraham and orders him in front of King Nemrut and the people. Prophet Abraham points at the solid idol (the one with the axe around the neck) and say that he could have done it.

But Nemrut and the others say that "he knows, that they are not able to move". So Prophet Abraham says "-So why did you leave God and worship things that can neither benefit nor hurt you? Shame on you that you left God and shame on what you are worshipping! Haven't you become wiser?" (Koran Enbiya sura: 66, 67). They carry out a consultation and decided that he has to be burned with fire. Upon the command of Nemrut, everybody gathers wood for days, which is put on a big square. It is believed that this place is the Halil ür-Rahman Lake (Balıklıgöl) and its surroundings. Nemrut and his folk go up to an overlooking Hill (the location of the Urfa castle today), from where the fire will be lit. Prophet Abraham is thrown from the hill into the fire with a catapult, while his arms and legs are tied up. With the command of God, Gabriel comes to him: "Abraham, God greets you, do you need anything?" he asks. Prophet Abraham: "-No, I don't need you. It is enough for me that the almighty God knows about me. I am his servant, I seek refuge in him alone, and the fire is also his. It will happen what he commands" he says. Upon this God commands "Fire, be cool and saving against Abraham" (Koran Enbiya Sura; 69). The place, where Abraham lands, becomes a rose garden. It is believed that the place, where this miracle happened, is the Halil ür-Rahman Lake (Balıklıgöl) and surroundings, in the Şanlıurfa Center.



Halil Ür-Rahman Lake (Balıklıgöl)

Nemrut and the majority of people still don't believe after seeing this miracle. Amongst the few people that believe in Abraham is also the daughter of Nemrut (other sources say it is a relative) Zeliha. The story to this point is based on the holy books but the rest is based on stories and rumors. According to one story, Zeliha throws herself from the hill, after she had witnessed the miracle. She also survives. She goes up to Prophet Abraham and believes him. This is why the lake, which occurs after Zeliha steps on the ground, is called "Aynzeliha Lake (Zeliha Spring)".



Aynzeliha Lake

After this prophet Abraham decides to take the people who believe in him to the city of Harran, 48 kilometers southwest of the city, which is named after his great grandfather and uncle, also named Harran. Prophet Abraham comes together with his brother (or uncle) Prophet Lut, son of Harran, to the city of Harran. It is told that prophet Abraham lives here for fifteen years.



Harran Kumbet Houses

Prophet Abraham then immigrates to the south of Harran, where he will form a residence in the city of Halep. He marries his uncle's daughter Sare at a water spring, 20 km southwest from Harran. This water spring, of which half lies in our district Akçakale and the other half in Syria, is called "Aynel Arus", which means "Eye of Wedding". Prophet Abraham continues and arrives at Damascus. For a long time he lives in Halep and does farming and animal husbandry. Later he continues towards Palestine, Jordan and Egypt. At last he returns to Palestine, where he lives until his death. According to Saheeh narrations, Prophet Abraham lived for 200 years. He was buried in the "El-Halil Cave" (City of El Halil today), in the town of Habrun, connected to Jerusalem.



Prophet Abraham Grave (City of El Halil / Palestine)

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