

Hope, Patience, and Perseverance: The Story of Hajirah

Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) was asked by God to leave his son Ismael and his mother, Hajirah in a barren valley called Bakkah. He brought them with some provisions for sustenance. As he was about to leave, Hajirah rushed towards him asking why he was leaving them there. Ibrahim was a clement and soft hearted man. He did not turn around to face her or the child. He stood there silent. She asked him again, and he did not answer. She then asked, is the Lord asking you to do this? Ibrahim could only nod his head in affirmative without facing her. She replied, "If the Lord is asking you to leave us here, then he will not let us go to waste" meaning to say that the Lord has a purpose for us to be there in that barren, desolate land, and I have faith in His plan.

The story then tells us that soon her water finished and the little child started to cry from thirst. She looked around for any sign of another human, but could not see one. She had faith and hope in God, but she could not just sit and wait for water to come to her. There were two hillocks on either side of her. The hills are called Safa and Marwa. She ran to climb on one of them (Safaa). When she reached the top of the hill, she searched the surrounding area for as far as her sight could see. There was no sign of any caravan, nor of any human dwelling or source of water. The fear of losing her child to a wolf or any other creature made her rush back down the rocky hill to be with her child. But his thirst for water made her run again and climb to the top of the second hill (Marwa) to search for any sign of life in the other direction from the first hill. In her agony at the thought of losing her only child, she struggled this way climbing on top of one hill, then rushing back to her child, then climbing on top of the other hill to search for any sign of human life. She had hope that God would find a way of relief for them. She would remain steadfast and not give up. Finally, the 7th time, as she ran up the hill, she heard a noise coming from where she had left her child. When she rushed back down to him, she found a spring of water gushing near his feet. She quenched his thirst, drank the wather herself and praised God for saving her child and her. She formed a boundary around the spring of water and it was called Zam Zam. Muslims from all around the world, when performing their pilgrimage to Makakh,

commemorate this act of faith, hope and perseverance run as they complete the rite of Sai (strive, pursue) by running between the two hills as Hajirah did and drinking from the water of Zam Zam.