

An Account of Lut

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Commentators of the Holy Qur'an generally believe that Lut was the nephew of Ibrahim. He was the son of Haraan son of Tarukh. However, some believe he was the cousin of Ibrahim i.e.. The son of his mother's sister. According to the second view Sarah was Lut's sister and this is a stronger view. We have already mentioned in forgone discussion that Lut was one of those Prophets who was born circumcised.

Shaykh 'Ali ibn Ibrahim says that when Nimrod threw Ibrahim in the fire, the Almighty caused the fire to become cool by His absolute power. Thus Nimrod started fearing Ibrahim. He told Ibrahim to evict his city as it was now no more possible for him to reside in the territories of Nimrod. Ibrahim had already married his cousin Sarah; and Lut had also accepted the faith of Ibrahim. Lut was a young boy at the time. Ibrahim owned some sheep and that was all he possessed from the economic point of view. Ibrahim departed from the city of Nimrod and took Sarah with him hidden in a casket as she was extremely shy and modest. When Ibrahim set out from the town, agents of Nimrod tried to confiscate his sheep saying he should surrender all that he had earned in their king's territory because he had opposed the king by declaring a new religion. Ibrahim said the king's judge shall decide the matter. This judge was named Sandoom. Ibrahim and the officials went to Sandoom.

The officials told him that since Ibrahim has opposed the king in the matter of religion he should not be allowed to take away from there any property that he has accumulated in that particular place. Sandoom supported the argument and told Ibrahim to surrender whatever he was carrying. Ibrahim said if the judge did not deliver a just judgment he would drop dead. Sandoom asked him what the reality was. Ibrahim said the judge should also order Nimrod's officials to return the years of his life that he had spent in acquiring the property and he would surrender all that he had earned. Sandoom supported the stand of Ibrahim and the officials had to set him free. Nimrod wrote to the neighboring kingdoms that Ibrahim must not be given refuge anywhere. Ibrahim passed a toll station of Nimrod where an official was posted to collect tax from those who passed that way. Sarah was hidden in a casket among the luggage of Ibrahim.

The toll officer calculated the toll of all the goods and finally reached the casket. He ordered Ibrahim to open it in order that he may calculate the tax payable on its contents. Ibrahim told him to assume the contents in any way he liked for the purpose of calculating tax. However the

toll officer insisted on opening the casket and did so forcibly. He saw Sarah in it and was dumbfounded by her beauty. "Who is this lady?" he asked. "She is my sister", replied Ibrahim wanting to say that she was his sister in faith. (She was his cousin sister hence Ibrahim was not lying when he said so). The agents carried the casket to the officer who tried to touch Sarah. Sarah prayed for Allah's refuge from him and his hand became lifeless. The man pained by this exclaimed as to what calamity had befallen him. Sarah told him it was due to his evil intention. He said now he had changed his intention therefore Sarah should pray that his hand be restored to normalcy. Sarah prayed to Allah to restore the man's hand if he spoke the truth. The Almighty cured his hand. The officer had a slave-girl whom he gifted to Sarah. The slave-girl named Hajar was later to be the mother of Isma'il. Ibrahim continued his journey with Sarah and Hajar and halted at a village that fell on their way. It was situated at the junction of roads leading to Yemen.

Ibrahim invited to Islam all those who passed from there. Ibrahim was already a well-known figure and the people knew that Nimrod had tried to burn him and failed. So when the people visited Ibrahim he entertained them at his residence. Ibrahim resided at a distance of seven parasang from the populated towns. These towns had flourishing agriculture and orchards. People who passed through these towns plucked and consumed some of the fruits. The natives did not like this trend and were always thinking of a way to stop this. One day Satan came to them in the form of an old man and said that he can teach them an action that if they practiced it no traveler would ever dare to approach their town. "What is it?" asked the people. "Whenever a person happens to pass through your town" said Satan "You should have intercourse through his anus and confiscate his belongings."

Then a young handsome man appeared in the town. People caught him and sodomised him. They enjoyed the evil act so much that they started having sexual relations amongst themselves. The men joined with men and became needless of women and the women had sexual relations amongst themselves, thus becoming needless of males. Ibrahim received complaints of this evil practice and dispatched Lut in order to warn the people of Divine chastisement and to stop them from indulging in such actions. When Lut reached Sodom the people asked him who he was. "I am Lut," he replied, "the cousin of Ibrahim who was cast into the fire by Nimrod but he did not burn. The Almighty ordered the fire to be cool and a medium of safety for Ibrahim. He is residing at a short distance from here. Hence fear Allah and stop this evil practice. If you do not the Almighty shall destroy you." The people were fearful and could not muster the courage to harm him. But they continued to rape travelers who passed through their village. Lut tried to save the poor victims. Lut married one

of their women and had daughters with her. He continued to live among them for a long time, preached, and admonished them. But they were not affected by his admonishments and told him to stop it or they would stone him to death or expel him from the town. At last Lut prayed for a divine chastisement for these people.

One day Ibrahim was preparing to entertain guests at his residence when he had four visitors. The visitors whose faces resembled human beings saluted Ibrahim. Ibrahim informed Sarah that they had four more visitors who did not seem to be human beings. Sarah said they had nothing except a calf. The calf was slaughtered and brought to Ibrahim. The Qur'an mentions this in the following words: "Has there come to you information about the honored guests of Ibrahim?" When they entered upon him, they said, "Peace, Peace", said he, "a strange people."

Then he turned aside to his family secretly and brought a fat (roasted) calf. (51:24-26) But they refused to eat anything. Ibrahim became afraid. Sarah came to them accompanied with other women and asked them why they refused the invitation of Ibrahim Khaleelullah.

They told her not to fear.

They said "Surely we are sent to a guilty people that we may send down upon them stones of clay sent forth from your Lord for the extravagant." (51:32-34)

The visitors said they have been sent to punish the people of Lut. When Sarah heard this she was shocked and began to menstruate although years had passed since her menopause.

The Qur'an says: "Then we gave her the good news of Ishaq and after Ishaq of Ya'qub." She said "O wonder! Shall I bear a son when I am an extremely old woman and this my husband an extremely old man? Most surely this is a wonderful thing." They said, "Do you wonder at Allah's bidding? The mercy of Allah and His blessings are on you. O people of the house, surely he is Praised, Glorious." So when fear had gone away from Ibrahim and the good news came to him he began to plead with Us for Lut's people. (11:71-74)

Ibrahim asked Archangel Gabriel how could they punish them while Lut also lived in the same town. Archangel Gabriel said he knew better who lived there and that he would save Lut and his family except his wife who shall remain behind to suffer chastisement. Ibrahim said "Would you punish them even if there are a hundred believers among them?" "No", replied Archangel Gabriel. If there are fifty?" "No" replied Archangel Gabriel again. "If there is only one believer?" "No" repeated Archangel Gabriel. As the Almighty says, "But we did not find therein save a (single) house of those who submitted (the Muslims)." (51:36)

Ibrahim persuaded Archangel Gabriel to return to Allah and secure forgiveness for those people. In a split second the Almighty sent a revelation restraining Ibrahim from asking pardon for Lut's people as the divine decree for chastisement has already been issued. The celestial

visitors took leave of Ibrahim and came to Lut while he was irrigating his field. "Who are you" asked Lut. "We are travelers," they replied, "Please give us shelter for the night." Lut told them that the natives of that city were evil, that they sodomised the travelers and looted their belongings. "It is quite late and we cannot go to some other place," they said, "Let us stay tonight, at least." Lut came to his wife who was a native of that village and told her that he had some visitors but if she refrained from leaking the information to her townsmen he would forgive her all her past misdeeds. She agreed to this. Now Lut's wife had a secret pact with her townspeople. If Lut had a visitor during the day she would let out smoke from the top of the

house and if someone visited him at night she would light a fire to pass on the information. When Archangel Gabriel and the angels accompanying him reached Lut's house, his wife hurried to the roof and lit a fire. The villagers saw the fire and converged upon Lut's house. Upon reaching the door they said "O Lut! Have we not commanded you not to lodge any guests?" Then they tried to abduct the visitors. Lut refrained them from doing so and said they could take his chaste daughters in exchange. "Fear Allah!" he said "And do not humiliate me by misbehaving with my visitors. Is there not a single righteous man among you?"

Traditions mention that by 'his chaste daughters' Lut meant the girls of the community. A Prophet is supposed to be the father of his community, therefore the girls were 'his daughters'. Moreover a Prophet restrains the people from haram acts and invites them to halal actions. Hence, he told them that their women were best for them. They said "You know very well that we will have nothing to do with women. You also know what we desire." Lut was helpless. He said "Ah! that I had the power to suppress you, rather I shall have recourse to a strong support." (11:80)

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq says, "The Almighty never sent a Prophet to his people but that he dominated the people. He had his own tribe and relatives among the people."

Another interpretation of "a strong support" is al-Qa'im (Imam al-Mahdi) and his 313 companions.

Archangel Gabriel remarked, "Had Lut known what power was on his side." When Lut heard this he asked "Who are you in reality?" "I am Archangel Gabriel." "What is your mission here?" "To destroy these people." "Destroy them this very moment," implored Lut. "The time appointed for their destruction is tomorrow morning." "But morning is far!" pleaded Lut. By now the people broke the door and rushed inside Lut's house. Archangel Gabriel hit them with his wings and blinded them. As Allah says, "By your life! They were wandering blindly in their intoxication." (15:72)

The people realized that Divine punishment had descended on them. Archangel Gabriel then

instructed them to flee the town with his supporters after a part of the night had passed. He told him that none of them should look back and added that should his wife look back she would invite the same wrath as the townsmen.

There was a scholar among the people of Lut. He warned the villagers that the wrath of Allah was upon them as repeatedly forecasted by Lut. He exhorted the people to surround Lut and not let him escape. As long as he is among the people the chastisement would not descend on them. The natives surrounded the residence of Lut from all sides. Archangel Gabriel told Lut to escape from amidst them. "How can I do that?" asked Lut "They have besieged my house from all sides."

Archangel Gabriel planted a pillar of light before him and said that they should leave by its support and must not at any cost look back. Lut and his people left the town from underground. His wife looked back and Almighty dropped a stone upon her killing her instantly. When the morning Sun rose, each of the angels left the city by four different directions and dug the ground around the city up to its seventh layer. The town, which was in the centre, was raised so prominently that the inhabitants of the celestial world could hear the cackling of hens and barking of the village dogs. The whole city was then turned upside down and it crashed on its inhabitants. The Almighty rained coated, multicolored stones on them from the first heaven or from hell.

According to a reliable tradition Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq said, "No one considers the acts of Lut's people (homosexuality) halal, but the Almighty kills him with a stone from the stones that rained on the people of Sodom. But the people are unable to see this stone."

In a correct report Imam Muhammad al-Baqir says, "The Messenger of Allah sought Allah's refuge from miserliness every morning and every night and we too seek Allah's refuge from miserliness. According to Imam, the Almighty commands us to beware of miserliness. Only those who refrain from miserliness achieve salvation. Imam warns us of miserliness and says the people of Lut were great misers with their food. As a result the Almighty inflicted them with a terrible ailment of the private parts. There was no cure for this malady.

Lut's people now inhabited the highways that led to Egypt and Syria. The caravan folk halted at their towns and the people provided them with food and assistance. But when the frequency of the guests increased the people grew tired of their hospitalization and began to be miserly due to the evil of their hearts. Their miserliness caused them to mistreat the guests and to sodomize them without having any sensual feeling for this lewd act. By this act they intended to deter other caravans from halting at their town so that they did not have to provide them with lodging and boarding. They also intended this to be publicized in other cities so that none

would dare to cross their town. But soon they got addicted to homosexuality and their obsession increased to such an extent that they used to procure boys from other towns and pay them for this act.

What malady can be a worse than miserliness? Its consequences are more terrible than being a miser. It degrades a person to such an extent.

The narrator asked if all the people of Lut were homosexuals? "All except for one Muslim family," replied Imam, "I think you have not heard the words of Allah, Then we brought forth such as were therein of the believers. But we did not find therein save a (single) house of those who submitted (the Muslims)." (51:35-36)

Imam says that Lut preached amongst the people for 30 years and continued to invite them towards Allah and warn them of the divine chastisement. The people did not wash after passing stool, neither did they perform the ritual bath of Janabah. Lut was the maternal cousin of Ibrahim and the brother of Sarah the wife of Ibrahim. Lut and Ibrahim were two Prophets of Allah who warned the people of Allah's retribution. Lut was a generous and a kind person. He was very hospitable towards his guests and gave them refuge from the mischief of his people. When the people came to know that Lut had visitors, they said to him, "Have we not warned you against lodging guests in your house? If you do not desist we shall insult them and insult you before them." Thus whenever Lut had some guests, he used to hide them from the villagers.

It was for this very fact that Lut did not have any relatives or tribesmen staying with him in that town. Lut was always hoping for divine wrath to descend on the people. He had a high station before the Almighty. Whenever Allah decided to send punishment He observed the love and devotion of Ibrahim and the love of Lut and postponed the punishment. At last Allah's fury intensified and He decreed annihilation for the people of Lut. As a requital of this punishment He decided to grant Ibrahim a son who would be a source of comfort during the sorrow he was to experience as a result of the people's destruction. Allah sent Messengers (angels) to Ibrahim to give the glad tidings of Isma'il. The angels came to Ibrahim after nightfall and entered his house. Ibrahim was afraid they might be thieves. When the angels perceived Ibrahim's fear they said salaam to him. Ibrahim responded to their salaam. The angels told him that they were messengers from Allah and asked him not to be afraid. They gave him glad tidings of a son.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir says the glad tiding of a righteous son was regarding Isma'il who was born to Hajar. "Is it specifically for me?" asked Ibrahim. "Yes," they replied, "Do not lose hope."

"Is there any other purpose for your visit?" asked Ibrahim. They said "We have been sent for a transgressing nation that is the people of Lut. They are a group of sinners and we have come to warn them of Allah's wrath."

"But Lut is present in their midst," said Ibrahim. "We know better who is present, where?" retorted the angels, "Lut and his family members shall be saved except for his wife who will succumb to the punishment." When these angels came to Lut he did not recognize them and asked them their identity. They said, "Your nation doubts Allah's chastisement. We come with truth to warn your people of their impending doom. Indeed we are truthful. After seven days and nights, O Lut, you must leave the town with your family members. But none of you should look back. Your wife will glance behind and will be inflicted with the same disaster as your nation. You can escape to any place you like. After daylight all the people of your town will be destroyed."

On the morning of the eighth day the Almighty again sent messengers to Ibrahim to inform him of the birth of Ishaq and to console him upon the annihilation of Lut's nation. As mentioned in the Qur'an, And certainly Our messengers came to Ibrahim with good news. They said, Peace.

Peace, said he, and he made no delay in bringing a roasted calf. But when he saw that their hands were not extended towards it, he deemed them strange and conceived fear of them.. They said, Fear not, surely we are sent to Lut's people. And his wife was standing (by), so she laughed, then We gave her the good news of Ishaq and after Ishaq of (a son's son) Ya'qub.

She said, O wonder! Shall I bear a son when I am an extremely old woman and this my husband an extremely old man? Most surely this is a wonderful thing.

They said, Do you wonder at Allah's bidding? The mercy of Allah and His blessings are on you, O people of the house, surely He is Praised, Glorious.

So when fear had gone away from Ibrahim and good news came to him, he began to plead with Us for Lut's people.

Most surely Ibrahim was forbearing, tender-hearted, oft-returning (to Allah): O Ibrahim! Leave off this, surely the decree of your Lord has come to pass, and surely there must come to them a chastisement that cannot be averted. (11:69-76)

According to authentic chains Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali says, "This nation (the Muslim) has six qualities of the people of Lut: (1) shooting of pellets (2) throwing stones (3) scratching the armpits (4) dragging their garments on the earth in vanity (5) leaving the buttons of their shirt undone and (6) leaving the fasteners of the gown open."

Another tradition says, "The people of Lut had the shameless habit of passing gas (loudly)

before each other in their gatherings. Lut chastised them for this evil deed. In another authentic tradition Imam Muhammad al-Baqir says that the Messenger of Allah asked Archangel Gabriel as to how the people of Lut were consigned to annihilation. Archangel Gabriel said "Lut's nation inhabited a particular town. They did not wash their private parts after attending to nature's call. They did not perform the ritual bath either, and they were miserly." Lut lived among them for thirty years. He remained there as an alien without any relative or fellow tribesmen. He invited them to Allah, to have faith in Him, to follow him (Lut) and to desist from lewd practices. He persuaded them to worship the Lord. But the people rejected his call and refused to obey him.

Consequently when Allah wished to send down His wrath upon them He first dispatched His messengers (angels) in order to warn the people and exhaust all arguments. The people flourished economically but their sins increased, so Allah commanded the angels to evacuate all the believers from Lut's city. But they did not find any except a single Muslim household. They were shifted out of town. The angels then told Lut to take away with him this family during the night. After midnight Lut set out with his daughters. His wife rushed to her people to inform them of Lut's flight. When the sun arose the next day the Almighty ordered: "O Archangel Gabriel! The fate of Lut's nation has been sealed. So dig the earth up to its seventh layer and raise the centre area towards the sky, then await the command of Allah the Mighty, to turn the city upside down and leave a manifest sign of Lut's house to serve as a lesson to those who pass by the town."

Archangel Gabriel I went towards the unjust group and hit my right wing on the eastern part of the town and my left wing on the western portion and dug the earth right up to its seventh layer. Only the house of Lut that was spared to serve as a sign for the coming generations. I raised the town so high that the people of the sky could hear the cackle of hens and barking of dogs. When the sun arose I was ordered to topple the town on its inhabitants. I toppled it upon them upside down. Stones of baked clay rained upon Lut's people. Each of the stones were marked or were inscribed.

O Muhammad! The same fate shall befall the people of your nation if they commit this sin (of homosexuality). The Prophet asked Archangel Gabriel the location of Lut's town. Archangel Gabriel said it is in the vicinity of the Tigris river in Syria (Tiberius). "Where did the town and its people fall after you had turned them upside down?" asked the Messenger of Allah. Archangel Gabriel replied, "O Prophet! They fell into the sea from Syria to Egypt. They became dunes in the sea."

Another trustworthy tradition says the angels told Ibrahim that they have come to destroy the

citizens of this town. When Sarah heard this she was surprised at the paucity of the angels and the huge numbers of Lut's people and she said, "Is it possible for you to match the power and numbers of Lut's people?" The angels gave her glad tidings of Ishaq and after him Ya'qub. She slapped her face and said "How could an old woman like me have a child?" At that time she was 90 years of age and Ibrahim was a hundred and twenty. Then Ibrahim tried to intercede for Lut's nation but it had no effect. Archangel Gabriel and the other angels came to Lut. When Lut's people learnt that he had visitors they headed towards his residence. Lut came and put his hand against the door. Under oath, he told them to fear Allah and not insult his guests. The people said, "Have we not forbidden you to invite guests?" Lut offered his daughters saying, "I am prepared to give them in legal marriage to you if you desist from my visitors." They said "We have no right on your daughters and you know what we desire." Lut said "I wish I had a solid support with which to take refuge." Archangel Gabriel said, "Would he but know what support was behind him." Archangel Gabriel called Lut to his side. They went inside. The people broke open the door and poured into the house. Archangel Gabriel pointed his finger at them and they became blind. They groped at the walls and vowed that they would not leave a single person from Lut's progeny alive in the morning. Archangel Gabriel told Lut, "We are the messengers of your Lord."

"Please expedite the matter," requested Lut.

"Yes."

"Please hurry up," said Lut again.

"Yes, the appointed time for their nemesis is morning next."

"But it is too long for daybreak" said Lut.

Archangel Gabriel advised Lut to take his belongings and children and escape to a particular town. Lut said his mule wasn't strong enough but Archangel Gabriel persuaded him to load his things and leave immediately. At dawn Archangel Gabriel descended to the town and with the help of his wing elevated it towards the sky. When it was at a substantial height, Archangel Gabriel toppled it upside down and broke the walls into bits and pieces. Lut's people heard a deafening sound and died as a result.^[1]

An authentic tradition of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq says that a person who decided to have a sexual liaison with another of the same sex is of the "remainder of Sodom."

"I don't say that he is from their progeny." said Imam. "He is from their Tinah (essence)." Imam further said that Lut's nation inhabited four towns that were turned upside down on them.

Sodom, Seedoom, Ladna and A'meer.

An authentic tradition mentions that people asked Imam how the townsmen learnt that Lut had

guests? Imam replied, "The wife of Lut came out of her house and whistled. People heard the whistle and gathered there. The sound is known as Soomak

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir says in an authentic hadith that the nation of Lut were the foremost among nations but the accursed Satan made tremendous efforts to mislead them. One of their peculiarities was that whenever they had to go out the men went together leaving all the women behind. When they returned from their farms and storehouses the Satan destroyed everything. The people decided to keep a watch on the culprit and finally caught him. He turned out to be a handsome youth. They asked him if he was the one responsible for the wholesale destruction of their stocks. He owned up to the charge immediately. The captors decided to kill the young man but for the time being entrusted his charge to a fellow citizen.

At night the young boy began to weep and wail. When the person who had been in his charge asked what was the matter with him he said that his father used to make him lie on his belly. The man told him to sleep on him instead. The boy agreed and during the night acted perversely and the captor succumbed to his evil act. In this way he taught the man to have sex with him. The man enjoyed the act very much. Later the Satan escaped from his house. In the morning the man went to his fellow citizens and narrated the details. The other people now wanted to experience this act as they had never known such a thing was possible. As time passed they indulged in sodomy and considered men sufficient for men. They waylaid travelers who passed through their town and forced this act on them.

Consequently travelers avoided that particular route. They abstained from women and were involved in physical relationships with their own sex. When Satan saw that the practice of sodomy was established among them he came to the women in the form of a lady and said "Your men are busy with those of their sex, so come let us have sexual relationship amongst us." So the women also began to indulge in this act with those of their sex (lesbianism). All the exhortations of Lut fell on deaf ears and when finally all the arguments were exhausted the Almighty sent Archangel Gabriel, Mika'il and Israfil in the form of ordinary young men. They were dressed in robes and wore turbans. They came to Lut while he was busy on his farm. Lut saw them and remarked that he had not seen such elegant people. They said that their master had sent them to the chief of this town.

"I think your master is unaware of the evil habits of the people of this town" said Lut. "By Allah! They catch hold of men and indulge in such intense sodomy that they bleed due to this." They said, "Our master has instructed us to traverse the route that passes through this town." Lut advised them to wait until it was dark. They sat down near Lut. He sent his daughter to get them some food, water and a sheet to protect them from cold. The daughter had just left when

it began to rain and soon the field was flooded. Lut was afraid they might drown, so he told them to get up and follow him. He walked holding a wall and told them to walk close to the side of the path.

However they said the master had instructed them to walk in the middle of the path. The darker it grew the more thankful Lut was that they may not be seen by the people. During this time the Satan caused a child of Lut to fall into a well. Due to the ensuing commotion people gathered at Lut's door. When they saw the young visitors, they remarked "O Lut! Have you also acquired our practice?" "They are my guests, so do not insult me before them," said Lut. They said, "There are three of them, keep one to you and hand us the remaining two." Lut housed his guests in a room and said, "I wish I also had relatives and kinsmen to protect me from your mischief." The people intensified their efforts and broke open the door.

Archangel Gabriel said to Lut, "We have been sent by your Lord. These people cannot harm you." He took a handful of dust and threw it towards the people saying, "May their faces spoil." The people were blinded instantly. Lut asked the angels what Allah had commanded them concerning the people. They replied, "We have been ordered to subject them to a torment next morning." "I wish you could destroy them this very minute," said Lut. "The appointed time for their annihilation is morning next. Is it too long for the day to dawn? If you want we can hold anyone of them captive. Then take your daughters but leave your wife behind."

Imam says, "May Allah have mercy on Lut if he knew the identities of his guests at the time he wished he had a strong support to take refuge in he would have indeed realized that he had received support. For who can be a stronger support than Archangel Gabriel who was with Lut in his room?" Allah the Almighty said to the Holy Prophet that the same punishment is for those of his Ummah who practice the deeds of Lut's people.

According to a reliable chain of authorities Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq quoted the Messenger of Allah thus: "When the people acquired the habit of sodomy the earth pleaded to its Lord. The plea reached up to the sky. The sky wept and wailed. Its wail reached the throne (the Holy Throne). The Almighty revealed to the sky to rain stones upon them and commanded the earth to bury them beneath its surface."

In another hadith, one of the Imams says that Allah sent four angels to destroy the people of Lut: Archangel Gabriel, Mika'il, Israfil and Karubeel. The angels came to Ibrahim dressed in turbans and saluted him. Ibrahim did not recognize them but due to their elegant appearance said he would serve them himself. Being a good host he sacrificed a young calf for his guests. When it was cooked well he served it to his visitors but they paid no heed to it. Ibrahim became fearful. Archangel Gabriel took off his turban and Ibrahim recognized him. "Are you Archangel

Gabriel?" asked Ibrahim. "Yes" replied Archangel Gabriel. Meanwhile Sarah entered and Archangel Gabriel gave them glad tidings of Ishaq and Ya'qub. Ibrahim then asked them the purpose of their visit. "To destroy Lut's people," they replied.

"Would you destroy them even if there are a hundred faithful believers among them?"

"No."

"If there are fifty believers?"

"Not even then."

"What if there are thirty believers?"

The reply was still negative. "And if there are nearly 20 of them?"

"No" replied the angel.

"Would you destroy them if there are only 5 believers?"

"No." Finally Ibrahim asked what the angels would do if there is only a single believer among the people. When they still replied in the negative, Ibrahim said that Lut was present among them. "We know better that he is present there," said the angels. "No harm would come to him or his family except his wife." Two of the angels went to Lut from there. Lut was busy on his farm on the outskirts of town. The angels saluted him. They were wearing turbans. Lut noticed their pure countenances and saw that they were wearing white dresses and had tied white turbans. He invited them to his house. They accepted the invitation. Lut led the way and they followed. Lut was very pensive about taking them to his residential quarters through the midst of his people. He knew the habits of the people and hence would be responsible for whatever befalls his guests. He told them "You are going towards a community that is the worst of creatures."

The Almighty Allah had instructed the angels to desist from destroying the people until Lut testifies at least thrice for their evil deeds. Archangel Gabriel said that it was the first testimony. After walking for some more time Lut addressed them, "You are walking towards the most evil creatures of Allah." This is the second testimony said Archangel Gabriel. Upon reaching the gates of the city Lut uttered the same words again and Archangel Gabriel reiterated that it was the third testimony.

They entered the residential quarters of Lut. When his wife saw the handsome men she rushed to the terrace and clapped her hands. When the people hearkened to the clapping she let out smoke from the attic. People saw the smoke and rushed towards Lut's house. His wife told them that they had visitors and that she had never seen such handsome men. They tried to force themselves inside but Lut resisted the attempt. Then occurred the incidents that we have already mentioned in the previous narrations. Finally the people entered Lut's house forcibly.

Archangel Gabriel told Lut to leave them alone. Then he pointed towards them and all of them were blinded immediately.

According to a Prophetic tradition related through authentic channels one of the practices of Lut's nation was throwing stones at each other whenever there was a gathering. Some people narrate that they sat in groups by the wayside and pelted stones at the passers-by. Whoever hit the target earned the right to molest that traveler.

Imam al-Ridha says that one of their detestable habits was shamelessly passing gas loudly in gatherings. It is also recorded that these people indulged in sodomy openly and did not care if others looked on. There is a difference of opinion regarding the name of Lut's wife: Wahla, .Walfa or Walha are some of the names recorded for her

Note:

[1] There is a difference of opinion among the scholars regarding Luṣ offering his daughters to the people. According to some, the word 'daughters' indicates all the unmarried girls of Luṣ's nation and since a Prophet is the spiritual father of his nation all the girls are his daughters. So

Luṣ meant to tell the people they could legally marry the virgin girls of their town. There is another opinion that previously some people had asked for the hand of Luṣ's daughter but he refused due to their infidelity. On that particular occasion, he felt helpless and even agreed to hand them his daughters in marriage. However, the people did not accept it. This is also justified in two ways. One: In that particular shari'ah it was allowed for girls to marry disbelievers. Second: Luṣ may have made their acceptance of faith as one of the conditions of their marriage with his daughters.

It is also recorded that two of them were leaders of Luṣ's nation. Luṣ offered them his daughters' hands so that the rest of the people would leave his progeny unharmed. Both of .these two points find mention in the traditions related by us previously