

original kinsfolk should be resuscitated for him in this or in the world to come, and he chose to accept the like of them in this world and be reunited with his original family in the world to come; and (iv) his original family was resuscitated for him in this world, and *the like of them with them* means their increase in due course of time as a mercy (*rahma*), al-Zajjāj (d. 311/924) considered this to be more acceptable opinion (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 21:84; Zajjāj, *Maʿanī*, *sub* Q 38:44).

Prophet Ayyūb, upon him peace, and the Biblical Job

While most exegetes and historians rely on the narrations of the People of the Book (*q.v.*) for their reconstruction of the life of Ayyūb, upon him peace, and consider the Biblical “man [of] the land of Uz, whose name was Job” (Job 1:1) and whose story is chronicled in the Book of Job, to be one and the same person (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, dhikr Ayyūb ‘alayhi-l-salām 1:322-25; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh* 3:190-200)—even as they doubt the authenticity of certain Israelite accounts—the pronounced difference between the character of the Biblical Job and the Qurʾānic Prophet Ayyūb prompted a twentieth-century commentator to state that “it is hard to believe, while reading these [Biblical] passages, that the account pertains to the same Job who has been presented in the Qurʾān as a paragon of patience, and whose life is considered instructive for all who are devout” (Mawdūdī, *Tafhīm*, *sub* Q 21:84).

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See also: ANIMALS; IBLIS; ISRAELITE ACCOUNTS; PERSEVERANCE, PATIENCE, AND FORTITUDE; PROPHETHOOD; PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS; TRIALS AND STRIFE; TRUST IN ALLAH; VOWS; WEALTH AND PROSPERITY.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

Azal

See ETERNITY

ĀZAR

The word Āzar appears in the Qurʾān once, in the verse *And when Ibrāhīm said to his father, Āzar, do you take idols as gods? Verily, I see you and your people in manifest error* (Q 6:74; all exegetical citations in this entry are to this verse, unless otherwise noted).

Three different opinions are found in classical exegetical literature regarding his identity: (i) Āzar is the name of Prophet Ibrāhīm’s (*q.v.*) father; (ii) it is the name of the idol his father worshipped; and (iii) it is the name of his uncle. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) considered the first two opinions and suggested that it is possible that Ibrāhīm’s father had two names or one of the two was his agnomen (*laqab*) (*Tafsīr*). Ibn

Kathīr (700-774/1300-1373) strongly supported this view (*Tafsīr*).

Sāmī b. Muḥammad al-Salāma, an editor of Ibn Kathīr's *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, further enhanced the argument in support of this view with reference to *al-Mu'rib*, a book by the Egyptian philologist and hadith scholar Aḥmad Shākīr (d. 1958). Shākīr pointed out that since the Prophet, upon him peace, himself called Āzar the father of Ibrāhīm in a hadith included in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, this constitutes a “conclusive proof” (*al-ḥujjat al-qāṭi'a*) for Āzar being the name of the father of Ibrāhīm, upon him peace (Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*).

Al-Rāzī's (543-606/1148-1209) *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* contains one of the most extensive discussions about Āzar's identity. He points out that Q 6:74 clearly states that Āzar was the name of Ibrāhīm's father, even though al-Zajjāj (241-311/855-923) claimed that “there is no disagreement among genealogists that his name was Tārah” (the Terah of Genesis 11:26-28). This, al-Rāzī writes, can be resolved in two ways: (i) the name of Ibrāhīm's father was in fact Āzar, and the statement about the unanimity of genealogists is weak because their agreement rests on one or two reports which, ultimately, go back to Jewish or Christian sources that cannot be relied upon at the expense of the express text of the Qur'an; (ii) if we accept that his name was Tārah, then it is possible that he was commonly known as Āzar. If, instead, Āzar was the name of an idol he worshipped, then Allah called him by it for two reasons: (a) when one dedicates oneself to what one loves, one may take the name of the beloved, as Allah Most High said: *On this day We shall call all people by their leaders* (Q 17:71); and (b) the governing noun (*muḍāf*) of this construct state has been removed and in its stead the genitive governed noun (*muḍāf ilayhi*) has been retained.

Al-Rāzī also examined the view that Āzar was an uncle of Prophet Ibrāhīm, upon him peace. He ascribed this view to the Shī'a, although it is also held by some Sunni scholars, most notably al-Suyūṭī (849-911/1445-ca.1505), who devoted a long section of his *Masālik al-ḥunafā' fī wāliday al-muṣṭafā'* to the question of Āzar's identity and repeated some of the arguments mentioned by al-Rāzī, though without explicitly mentioning his name. Al-Suyūṭī supported his arguments for Āzar being the name of an uncle of Prophet Ibrāhīm on the following basis:

- hadiths which state that none of the forebears of the Prophet, upon him peace, were polytheists, while scholars agree that Āzar was a polytheist and

died as such (, p. 41, 51-53);

- the sayings of a number of Companions, including Ibn 'Abbās and Sulaymān b. Ṣard, quoted by Ibn al-Mundhir (d. 318/930) in his *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (of which only the first two volumes are now extant), that Āzar was the uncle of the Prophet (, p. 51-52); and
- Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, asked Allah to forgive his parents after building the Ka'ba (*q.v.*) (Q 14:41), long after the death of Āzar, who is said to have died when Ibrāhīm was cast into the fire; Ibrāhīm—upon him be peace—would not have asked Allah to forgive Āzar because *when it was made clear unto him that he (Āzar) was an enemy of Allāh, he (Ibrāhīm) disavowed him; behold, Ibrāhīm was most tender-hearted and clement* (Q 9:114) (, p. 53).

Among the arguments in favor of this view is the Arabic linguistic use of the father's name for an uncle, as also occurs in Q 2:133, where the children of Prophet Ya'qūb, upon him peace, say to him: “*the God of your fathers Ibrāhīm and Ismā'il and Ishāq*” (Q 2:133)—whereas it is well-known that Ismā'il was the uncle of Ya'qūb. The Prophet, upon him peace, also called his uncle 'Abbās, “my father” (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, al-Maghāzī, fathī Makka). But al-Rāzī had already rejected the view that Āzar was the name of an uncle of Ibrāhīm, upon him peace, calling it a baseless and unnecessary convolution because the name of Ibrāhīm's father was Āzar as clearly stated in Q 6:74 (Rāzī).

In the aforementioned hadith quoted by Aḥmad Shākīr as “conclusive proof” for the view that Āzar is the name of the father of Ibrāhīm, upon him peace, it is narrated that the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, said: “On the Day of Resurrection, Ibrāhīm will meet his father Āzar whose face will be dark and covered with dust. Ibrāhīm will say unto him: ‘Did I not tell you not to disobey me?’ His father will reply: ‘Today I will not disobey you.’ Ibrāhīm will say: ‘O my Lord! You promised me that you would not put me to shame on the Day of Resurrection; and what greater disgrace is there [for me] than [that of] my father being most forlorn?’ Allah Most High will say: ‘Indeed, I have forbidden Paradise for the disbelievers.’ Then it will be said: ‘O Ibrāhīm, see what is underneath your feet!’ He will look and find [there] a blood-spattered hyena (*dhīkhīn multatīkh*), which will be caught by the legs and thrown into the Fire” (Bukhārī, Aḥādīth al-Anbīyā', qawl Allāh ta'ālā *wa-ttakhadha-l-lāhu Ibrāhīma khalīlā*).