

**DEPICTING ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE. CASE STUDY:
QISAS AL-ANBIYA'S BOOK [STORIES OF THE PROPHETS] AND CHRISTIAN IMAGES**

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Abstract: *The story of Ismail's Sacrifice by the Prophet Abraham, taken from the Quran and biblical verses, has been interpreted in many ways by narrators, performers, Christian and Muslim storytellers, and has also been represented by the visual artists in countless images. 'Qisas al Anbiya' was one of the books that illustrated this story during the Safavian period. The main purpose of this article is to examine the interpretations, images and implications specific to Islamic and Christian artists, in relation to their different attitudes, education and historical roots, and finally to determine the relevant visual representations and conduct a comparative study of them.*

Key words: *the concept of sacrifice, Abraham, Islamic imagery, Qisas al-Anbiya, Christian imagery*

Rezumat: *Povestea Jertfei lui Ismael de către Profetul Avraam, preluată din Coran și din versetele biblice, a fost interpretată în multe feluri de naratori, interpreți, povestitori creștini și musulmani, și a fost, de asemenea, reprezentată de artiștii plastici în nenumărate lucrări. Scopul principal al acestui articol este de a examina interpretările, imaginile și implicațiile specifice artiștilor islamici și creștini, în raport cu atitudinile, educația și rădăcinile lor istorice diferite, iar în final, de a determina elementele vizuale relevante și de a efectua un studiu comparativ al acestora.*

Cuvinte cheie: *conceptul de sacrificiu, Abraham, imagistică islamică, Qisas al-Anbiya, imagistică creștină*

Introduction

The *Story of Abraham's Sacrifice* is one of the most common religious themes in the field of painting of all time, which provided a suitable basis for the innovation and creativity of painters. The subject captivated both Islamic and Christian artists. The influences and relationships between the two views for interpreting the theme of sacrifice, as well as the controversy over the sacrifice of the Son are important topics of discussion and analysis.

The necessity to study this subject is based on the need to identify and develop common languages for all heavenly religions.

Despite the diversity and difference in symbols, visual signs, and the way of emergence of this theme and of the profound concepts of thought in the visual tradition of

Islam and Christianity, their common roots can be identified and followed.

The questions that arise regarding the representation of this theme are the following: "What is the basis of the worldview of Islam and Christianity in *the Story of Sacrifice*. Did the composition of images have an imagery aspect in the story? What is the position of Prophet Abraham and Zabih¹ in Islamic and Christian religious paintings?" These Quranic indications and factors briefly narrated the image of the sacrifice of Ismail by Abraham in the historical and cultural periods of Iranian-Islamic art and the Christians, in order to better understand it.

The main objective of this paper is the comparative study of several reference images of the Story of Sacrifice in the Art of Muslims and Christians and the analysis of symbols, their visual, cultural and historical differences and similarities, as well as the interaction between the painters and artists of the two religions as a result of the economic and cultural exchanges.

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¹ Ismail was Az-zabih, the chosen sacrifice for Allah in Muslim tradition – *Ed.*

Review of literature

Sedaghat (2007) is among those who have investigated the Sacrifice of Abraham and briefly referred to the time of the incident and imagery in the article of 'Olv-al-Azm's Prophets' in *Qisas al-Anbiya's* imaging of Ishak Neyshaburi. Kurt Whitsman referred to the position of the horned ram in the incident in his transcript. Mahmud Rasul Imani emphasized two perspectives in his paper on the *Sacrifice of Abraham* in the Islamic tradition (2010), which focuses more on, which son was sacrificed. Ayatollah Seyyed Nematollah Jazayeri (1998), in the book of *Qasat-e-Saba'ban*, and Ali Parvaresh, in the book of *Abraham Khalil Sheikh Al-Anbia* (1974), has conducted detailed research of how great the Prophet Abraham's trial was. According to the conducted studies, this article tries to investigate the exact subject of sacrifice in Islamic and Christianity painting and compare their shared characteristic with a new view.

Research Method

The methodology of this paper is a comparative and qualitative study. This is an analytical-descriptive writing and a comparative study between the two religions of Christianity and Islam. The data collection is of a library type. In this article, we describe and analyze the content of the focused images, and we compare these two areas regarding the selection of images from the Safavian² and Christianity school. The comparative method includes classification of images by providing tables, reviewing, and comparing two domains or areas.

Dreaming of Prophet Abraham (*pbuh*)³

God says in *Surah As-Saffat* [verses 101-107]: (Abraham said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think." He said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast."). Abraham has a

strange and wonderful dream which suggests the beginning of another great trial about this great prophet. He dreams that he has been commanded by God to sacrifice and behead his unique son with his own hands. Abraham awakened from sleep terrified, knew that the dream of prophets is real. But two nights passed, and the same dream was repeated emphasizing the necessity of this reality and its urgency. Some say that he had dream at the night of the 'Troyyeh' (the eighth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah) for the first time, and the dream was repeated at the nights of 'Arafa' and 'Eid -Ghorban' (ninth and tenth of Dhu al-Hijjah), so that he had no doubt that this is the decisive command of God (Makarem Shirazi 1996, 111). When Abraham told his dream to his son, Ismail, the son was consented to be beheaded and sacrificed himself (Ismail said: "oh my father, do as you are commanded"), but what can be understood is that this satisfaction statement was in the form of command (do) and he said: "do as you are commanded". He did not say (to sacrifice me) to indicate that his father was the commander of this and did not have any choice except obey to God's command (Tabatabai 1984, 240).

Forbid the sacrifice and good tidings

Abraham suddenly heard the sound. At that time, he heard Gabriel recount: "O Khalilullah, you and your sons, Ishmael, with a strange power, show monotheism or oneness that was not believable to all the angels of heaven. This means that you, in this state of surrender and satisfaction, have proved that you are submitted or surrendered before the divine justice and in front of him without any conditions. Therefore, I greet you and your child because of this surrender (Muslim)". God salute you and says: We do not ask anything for our servants except mercy; we have appointed for man's position and human duties, not killing each other. Sacrifice this white ram with black spots instead of your child on our way. Divide it between the poor so that divine court accepts your sacrifice in the name of truth. But another sound was heard among the carbs of the high world which came to Abraham's ears, and all the angels heard it: "For this surrender". Ismail, there will be a Prophet from the descendants of your son since he was a Muslim like you and will submit to

² The Safavid dynasty was one of the most significant ruling dynasties of Iran from 1501 to 1736 – *Ed*.

³ *pbuh*: "Peace be upon him"; an honorific phrase used by some Muslims after any mention in speech or print of the Islamic Prophets – *Ed*.

you as you will. He and his people will make countless sacrifices on our way in this place, and this place will also be a sacred place in the future because of your satisfaction and surrender. We have tested your sincerity and kindness in this place, admire you and your son because both of you have won the trial. Again, Gabriel came to Abraham's help (because Abraham was surprised and fascinated by that heavenly voice) and said: "O Abraham, why are you surprised? Get up and sacrifice this ram instead of your son in the way of God and give it to the poor."

Which one is Zabihullah?

God, the Exalted One, tested Abraham himself to sacrifice his son. The predecessors' scholars of the Prophet's people dispute who was the sacrifice agent of the two Abraham's sons. It was narrated from 'Obeid ibn Amir', 'Ibn Sayyid', 'Abu al-Ala'il', and 'Ibn Massoud' that Az-Zabih was Isaac. And it was also narrated in 'Majma al-Bayan' of Imam Baqir (as) and Abbas ibn Abdulmutallab of Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) that Az-Zabih was Ismail. According to the Gospel writings mentioned in verse 22, the scholars of Christianity considered Isaac as 'Zabiullah'. God said Labayk to Abraham: "Now take your son, Isaac, who is the only one and you love him, and go to Moriah land and take him to stay there on one of the mountains. I will show you to sacrifice." Abraham put the burnt sacrifice on his son, Isaac, and took fire and knife; they both went together. When they arrived at the place God said, he built an altar and put some woods on it. Abraham placed his son on the altar, and then he stretched out his hand to sacrifice his son (Gospel 22: 29). Of course, some Christian sources referred to the fire, but most of the images were briefly referred to the fire besides Abraham. On the other hand, the scholars of Islam consider the issue of sacrifice of Ismail certainly and true based on the verses of the Quran and Muslim narratives: The narrator asked Imam Reza (as): Who is Zabih? Prophet Samen al-Aime (as) said: Ismail was Zabih, but did you hear the promise of Blessed and Almighty God in *Surah Al-Safat* after good tidings, Ismail, and his story, he said: "we gave Abraham good tidings of Isaac and this is the reason why Zabih was Ismail not Isaac. The author says that the subject of Ismail's birth in the year 90 was Abraham's lifetime, and Isaac's birth in the year 120 was

Abraham's life. And thus, sacrifice was before the birth of Isaac. Therefore, Zabih was Ismail and it is said in *Surah Al-Sufat*: "So we gave him good tidings of a forbearing boy". The forbearing boy was Ismail and the righteous one was Isaac. "We left for him [favorable mention] among later generations."

Literary books of *Qisas al-Anbiya*

The *Qisas al-Anbiya*'s books are referred to Islamic works in which the stories and events narrated in the Quran are mentioned in both Arabic and Persian. The first version dates back to AD 6th century / AH 1th century or AD 8th century / AH 2th century.⁴ It has 203 pages of 24/34 cm and 28 images. In terms of its writing, *Qisas al-Anbiya*'s books depict the expression of oral tradition from stories to the view of the theorizing of Scholars. The *Qisas al-Anbiya* expresses the stories of the Prophets commissioned by God to guide the people of his time (Nasr 2003, 29). In the case of the visual elements of the images which will be explained below, a number of selected images of *Qisas al-Anbiya*'s book have been discussed from the point of view of semiotics and structure.

To investigate the images of Prophet Abraham (*pbuh*) in the illustrated version of *Qisas al-Anbiya*

Figure 1 is the second version of the National Library of Paris. This version is smaller in size than other versions, and its paper is thick and orange. Text writings or scripts are in the form of *nasta'liq* script and black color. Quranic statements of frontispiece and titles are written in red and gold colors. The papers of this version are decorated with gold. In the above image, like other images, Abraham (*pbuh*) has a white veil, a green cover, and glittering halo around him with a dagger on his right hand, while Ismail is putting his head on the ground looking at the sky. In front of him, Gabriel, with his open wings, shows Abraham (*pbuh*) a ram to sacrifice. The face mode and movements of people in this story are remarkably interesting. The twisting of the body and the faces of the people in the image suggest that they are doing some actions. Like other images, part of the story is written in

⁴ AH: (Latin) *Anno Hegirae*, "in the year of the Hijra" (the emigration of the Prophets and Muslims from Mecca to Medina) – *Ed.*

black 'nastaliq' script⁵ and white text in the upper and lower boxes. The colors used in this image are green, red (the cover of Ismael's garment), and yellow, brown, blue, and dark green. The main attribute of this image is the character of Prophet Abraham (*pbuh*) who is subject to a difficult trial. He is blessed with divine mercy and God left for him among other generations. Today, all those who go on the pilgrimage to the house of God and Hajj, should sacrifice their souls like Abraham (*pbuh*). This version has pictures of Isfahan's painting style. According to most scholars, this style was commissioned by Shah Abbas I and it was surely performed in the court of Iran. The unique features of this version are the relationship between text and its images (Sadaghat 2007, 33-34).

Making sacred faces notable

Ethnic and racial effects that have no casualties with the ethnic or race are seen in most faces, modes, and clothes. In some cases, painters used different methods to characterize prophets, which were generally depicted as a certain topic and among other people in a graphic art or an image, such as the allocating special spatial locations to work composition and taking into account the light for them called the Halo of holiness or the halo of light around their head. Further, it was changed into the form of diffused light or flame around head or whole body. But artists gradually achieve a set of conventional principles in portraying the image of the Prophet and Imams (Aemeh Athar) and in the process of transforming the sacred image of the saints. The purpose of this statement is to pay attention to the elements and/or common features that make the symbolism of the images in the painting of this period. One of the features has been found in many of the works of art is their symbolic aspect which is appeared in the religious image of Shia Muslims. Fig. 1 shows Abraham (*pbuh*). In this image, a visual element of the sanctity feature has found a symbolic place and his (Abraham) position has been used as a particular conception.

According to Sadaghat (2007), it can be concluded that the narrating pattern of the story mobilizes all the elements and dimensions of the story to create integrity, and according to investigation (Fig. 1), it can be inferred that various elements such as angel, cloud, and features such as the application of special colors, magnifying the head and turban, taking into account the particular place of Abraham, has been a symbol aspect in composition and in expressing the subject. The clothing of Prophet Abraham has been shown green that is a symbol of purity here, and the red dress of Ismail is the symbol of non-material love and yellow is the symbol of closed angels.

In the Figs. 2 and 3, Prophet Abraham (*pbuh*) wears a garlic blue color (the symbol of virtue and piety) and he seems a little short in front of Gabriel's huge body. Gabriel is flying hastily and diagonally while he has a precious ram in his hand (Sega 2006, 35). The size of the angel looks great and inappropriate compared to the mountains. The inversion of proportions between humans and landscapes has been changed during Timurid period and '*Miraj Nameh*' (ascension letter) of Mir Heydar (Ishaghpour 2000, 4) (Fig. 2). Restoration is seen in the elements of Figs. 2 and 3, such as sponge rocks, blue, golden or azure sky, twinkling and comet clouds, narrow bodies or figures in colorful garments, land covered by various irregular greeneries, trees with compact and uniform leaves (Pakbaz 2013, 27). In the upper left-hand side of the image, there is another person who witnesses the event from the above. Undoubtedly, he is Satan with a different manner of human faces. As always, he tries to turn away the divine parents from God's command. Part of the text that tells the subject of the story are at the top and bottom of the image like the rest of the images in a box. The common feature of the two images is an angel embracing the ram. The painter did not depict Ismail's face. As if the painter had depicted the sacredness, sanctity, and spirituality of them without drawing of their faces. It is the symbolic aspect that can be seen in the religious faces of Muslims. In Fig. 3, unlike the previous one, bodies have more dynamics and movements due to the balanced composition.

⁵ 'Nastaliq' is the core script of the post-Sassanid Persian writing tradition and is equally important in the areas under its cultural influence – *Ed.*

The position of the body or figure of Abraham (*pbuh*) in the composition

As seen in Fig. 4, the body of Abraham is quite simple in terms of composition, design and the position of the hands and is drawn in a conventional way. Prophet Abraham and Ismail (*pbuh*) have been drawn with bright or glittering halo around them and garments of high sleeves, which have partially covered the hands. In front of them, Gabriel with beautiful wings observes the event, and on the top of scene behind the rocks, there are other people who are watching the event, which is likely to be the inhabitants of the area and followers of the Prophet. The paper used in this version is cream colored. Flowers and bushes have been drawn out of the box and image, and the colors of this image are dark, light blue, red, green, gold, and yellow. Also, red, yellow, green, white, and gold make human fascinated on a deep blue background. The Cerulean color that covers the background of this work is the color of sky. This vast sky in an unlimited and deep space takes human into an infinite and imaginary world and it is the symbol of eternity and immortality. The presence of twisting clouds and rough golden flames has created a warm atmosphere. The twisty and wavy clouds that guide our look from below to the top of the image emphasize on lightness, joyance, and spirituality of the scene (Goodarzi 2005, 136). The position of Abraham (*pbuh*) in the images is an asymmetric arrangement that allows the painter to create active and dynamic scenes. The central space that covers the body of Ismail is overcome by the greatness of the Prophet on the entire composition filled with other persons (Pakbaz 2013, 27). The sense of movement and action of the bodies revive them. This feature is seen in active and dynamic body of Gabriel (Fig. 5), which is also exacerbated by wavy strips and it is more dynamic than other faces (Pop 2005, 75). So far, what is seen in the images is that there is not much effort to be made about the perspective of both clothing and faces, because "images of individuals in Islamic face-painting are usually in two-dimensional mode, and painting also plays a significant role in this work" (Akashe 2001, 198). Therefore, about the perspective of bodies, photographer can compensate for the lack of shadowing by using lines in the collar of the garments. The artist was pleased to create a beautiful and

decorative work, whose shapes are interconnected. He was also pleased to decorate it with eye-catching and attractive garment and exhibited his skill in designing these clothes. Another sign seen in Figs. 4 and 5 ignores the limitations of framing, achieves a new space during this period, and removes part of the image elements from the frame. This is "a sign of total power and the basic freedom of insight in relation to simulation contracts, which the accompanying text does not deal with it". This feature is the breaking of the cadre in most of the works of the Ilkhan⁶ period. "Using this dry and rough quality method, which imprisoned the artist, makes the linearized framework moderated or adjusted and allows him to follow his artistic purposes with more feely actions." (Ishaghpour 2000, 14) As can be seen in Figs. 4 and 5, the image of Prophet Abraham (*pbuh*) is symbolically a holy person. Everybody can understand this concept when looks at this image. Even if the attached text is not seen, this symbol again represents a holy man. Accordingly, in most of the paintings or images, Ismail's garment is red. It is as a sign of religious position. This sign making has been taken from the mind of the artist and his religious passion.

This image, like the previous versions, has been extracted from *Qisas al-Anbiya*'s book and dates back to 984 AH. There is warm and pleasant atmosphere in painting, coloring, and features of Iranian painting, regardless of the effects of eastern paintings (Hosseini 2005, 19). In this version, the space of the sky has a pretty golden and azure color in which a few clouds are wandering, or it is seen in a flat and almost uniform golden color (Ahmadi Maleki 2001, 54). What is presented in most of the paintings or images is the symbolic element of water; it is considered as the fundamental element that is the symbol of life, motion, resurrection, the secret of creation, purity and salvation, fertility and growth, restoration, and transformation (Kafshchian-Yaghighi 2011, 19). The collection of images like the tree, the cliff, the cloud, the blooming trees, the image of Prophet are symbolic, the small sky that was blue and golden in color, and the clouds were drawn with the same painting. The trees have certain types, their leaves are single, and the

⁶ Ilkhan dynasty was a Mongol dynasty that ruled in Iran from 1256 to 1335 – *Ed.*

water is depicted as simple as possible. Also, the complementing colors of the clothes of angels in the works, their colorful wings against a dark blue and cold background, and white and gray clouds create a movement in the background and make the eyes circulating once more. The rotation of the colors also emphasizes the central character as the angel enters the frame from all sides (Kamrani 2000, 262). The golden and fiery halo with a detailed layout surrounded their heads and gradually capture all the bodies in some of the paintings. They are closely related to the wavy clouds (in several images). Particular attention has been given to the image of Abraham (*pbuh*), emphasizing the type of deployment in the scene, the moods and behavior, the role of the head, and the movements of the hands presented in various combinations. According to the desired level, the size of the body of Abraham in the process of Iran's figuration in different periods is in harmony with other components of the scene and sometimes it is larger than other bodies of varying quality to emphasize his position (Alshibi Kamel 2001, 382).

The art of Christianity

Regarding the way of thinking and the Christian community, we find that artist, with his/her art, wants to bring the unseen world to the earth. Images must indicate the truth of Allah and other facts of the higher world through mysteries, similes, and references. Artists who worked for the first Christian community changed things into religious forms that were exclusively interpreted by words until then. This act has been depicted as a set of images without a regular relationship between them, and it is especially depicted in such a way as to induce the immortality of that ceremony to the viewer and elements of the religious message. Christian art begins with a focus on the mysteries. The work of artist is to pay attention to the inner and cosmic world in relation to these mysteries and secrets. All the images are manifestations that show a reality (Madadpour 1992, 176). Christian painting was developed in several stages. From the beginning, this art was the reflection of the absolute belief in the existence of Supreme Being in whom every believer found his identity. So, at the beginning, Christian painting was the concrete expression of the

Christian man's religion. The initial attempts to do iconography date to the third and fourth century. The style was commonly used in this period and then in the Middle Ages in painting is called Byzantine style. Although it had technically undergone many changes, it had always been religious in terms of its theme and content (Shayestehfar-Kian- Shayestefar 2011, 44). According to the most experts, since there is no clear limit between the art of the beginning of Christianity and the Byzantine art; the beginning of the 5th century can be considered as the birth of the Byzantine art from the beginning of Christianity (Ayatollahi and Beheshti 2011, 40). Christianity is based on the embodiment or manifestation of God in Christ, and according to this, Christ is the parable of supremacy and leader. It is the sign that God has revealed His nature to the universe. It has been suggested that Byzantine's followers of iconography in the eighteenth century defended using painting in texts related to the Christian secrets. They considered painting as the most important tool for conveying the message of Christianity to illiterate people and familiarizing them with the foundations of that religion. The purpose of Christians in depicting saints, religious scholars, and martyrs of Christianity was to celebrate Oswah or excellent people of Christianity, not to sanctify or make holy their own images (Shayestehfar-Kian- Shayestefar 2011, 44). The visualization of the verses of the Torah was similar to Christian painting. The painters and the Christian illustrators made great efforts to express the visuality of the Bible stories in order to make the concepts of religion clearer for illiterate and literate people. Christian's book sources like Byzantine's mosaics should be found in artistic tradition. Religious subjects moved toward abstraction and a two-dimensional approach in order to adapt to spiritual content (Abdi and Mehrzai Mehr 2006, 19).

The holy or sacred images in this period have completely depicted as personal with feeling and full of bitterness and ascetically. In the composition of most of the works, there are a limited number of human faces or images (Ayatollahi and Beheshti 2011, 43). With regard to Fig. 7, Christian artists have painted a ram on the edge of the image of the incident in the middle ages and even before that. The

appearance of a ram in the grove is an essential part of the story in the Middle Ages. In this image, the ram appeared miraculously, while it was trapped with its horn in the grove. It is a gift for Abraham to sacrifice it instead of his son, and getting caught in the margin, which was induced by Hebrew writer from an ancient Babylonian-Sumerian ceremony, was interpreted by the church as a kind of prophecy of crucified Christ. An analogy has been implicitly depicted as showing the scene of a horny ram from the margin branches in pictures of the 12th century or later. The symbolic sense of Christianity is not implemented with these details in Islam; the description of the altar in the Holy Quran ignored completely the ram located in the grove. The static composition, the proximity of the components to the box or cadre, the types of lines, wrinkled clothes, the moods of the faces, and the long images have been affected by the elements of Byzantium.

According to the evidence in Figs. 6 and 7, the first argument is the representation of a kind of good tidings or Evangelism. In these images, the faces are completely long, while hedges and folds covered the thin or lean bodies. Here, perhaps for the first time in the history of Byzantine iconography, the bodies have been found to be physically and slightly grounded. It represents the influence of the art of west. The faces are bowed, three-dimensional, with immaterial or earthly light that were reflected in the manifestation event (Ayatollahi and Beheshti 2011, 46).

Regarding the image, it can be deduced that the figures are severe and motionless like the prominent Egyptian people. Abraham is seen in three and a half faced. He raised his hands as the sign of astonishment, as if he is God-like in the images. As seen in the images of Christ, the angel is seen in the form of a profile. He stretched out his right hand in a special state. It is the symbol of speech and forbiddance in the medieval art. The artist did not intend to simulate natural forms, but his attention was given to put together all those sacred religious icons that are necessary for religious representation. Ram is also trapped in the grove in both images. The kind of distinction between these images and Islamic images is in the type of arrangement of the figures, composition, valuation, and the type of color that has symbolic value.

The second argument is based on a mainstream or tendency to these beliefs (Fig. 7). In some Western examples, there are two angels: one of them takes the sword of Abraham and the other one takes the ram. The first angel is added only to the normal form of the scene and gives letter of action and gospel, and the second angel takes the sword in one hand stating that the artist has depicted the ram as a distinct part of the story (Fig. 8). The figure has a characteristic of high tolerance and rank. The expression of this deep sympathy has been the greatest success of Christianity in religious art. Space is intangibly divided into several parts; on the one hand, the Prophet Abraham (*pbuh*) has been presented while taking the sword, and in another part, Gabriel is taking the sword to prevent it. Also, in Fig. 9, the method of mountain processing, strong figure, distinct and regular wrinkles of the clothing of Prophet Abraham and Gabriel, the type of composition, and strength of the body has been derived from the Byzantine art. The only Iranian element of these images is the closeness and stickiness of the figures to the cadre, the type of face and body processing, and symmetrical composition. Also, according to the narration of the Gospel in which God said to provide fire woods to sacrifice, in most Christian works, there are fire woods and fire that can't be seen in Islamic paintings.

Conclusion

In the Safavian period, regarding the religious trend and formalizing the Shi'a religion, religious thoughts became a source of pictorial versions. Religious books with Quranic themes including the religious version of *Qisas al-Anbiya*, whose purpose is to present Quranic stories, make people aware, and guide them with different executive methods and styles, became prevalent. Regarding the discussed issues and approaches of the sacrifice theme in Islamic and Christian art works, conducted studies, differences in beliefs in the two religions about which son is sacrificed, and the similarities and differences in structural elements, it can be stated that although the tradition of Islamic illustration, as a Christian tradition, is based on a supernatural image and the products of revelation, it reflects illustration later than Christianity. Some of the elements of Christian's iconography including the way of framing, color combination, the processing of clothing, landscapes of nature

and so on, were at the service of Iranian painting and they could create great valuable works with their Iranian genius and ability. In fact, Islamic stories contrast with static and emotionless; from this perspective, there is a fundamental difference between worldviews of Islamic and Christian images. The theme of sacrifice was in the works of both domains for better understanding of religious issues. The standing position of the Prophet Abraham (*pbuh*) played a central role in the middle of the cadre and various elements in the Islamic painting, and also Ismail, as a main character, stood behind his father and other elements are sometimes decorative or symbolic, such as herbal elements, written script, glittering halo, and the mystical and simplified face of the Prophet. These cases can be considered as visual and symbolic features. Other features that have been used later, such as conventional situation, simplified designs, and details of the organs caused the Prophet to pass the borderline and he himself become a symbol for the holy character. The method of drawing figures in Christian versions influenced by Byzantium and its elements includes dry, irregular lines, and geometric of clothing and landscapes.

Unlike the Islamic versions of the images, the worldview of Christianity has a terrestrial or earthly aspect, and with respect to the mysteries or secrets, the artist has given the prophet a godly and symbolic form. The figures are conventionally depicted to represent a religious matter, but despite the fact that the spirit, the overall atmosphere, the hidden aesthetic feeling in painting, with respect to the movement and circular form, are very different from the sanctity and spirituality seen in the images of Christianity. In general, it can be concluded that the basis of all arts is in one common sense and that is their symbolic aspect.

Finally, in visual searching, there is a common interrelationship between subject and composition, and there is also a clear relationship between the theme or the subject of painting and its composition. The images have been drawn in terms of the variety, patterning of the subjects and the composition of the images. In both schools, theme affects the configuration of images and the configuration of images reveals a religious matter based on the subject.

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Brukenthal. Acta Mvsei, XV.2, 2020
DEPICTING ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE.

CASE STUDY: *QISAS AL-ANBIYA*'S BOOK (STORIES OF THE PROPHETS) AND CHRISTIAN IMAGES

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Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9