



Stories from the Hijaz

THE MAKKAH CHRONICLES



Born in the Year of the Elephant

SALIM PARKER

THE exact birth date of Nabi Muhammad (SAW) is not known. What there is no controversy about is that it was in the Year of the Elephant, which historians put at about 570 AD.

Abraha, the ruler of Yemen, intended to destroy the Kaabah that year. Yemen was part of the Abyssinian empire (currently Ethiopia) at the time. He planned to retaliate against the Quraish as his temple in Sana had been defiled by one of them.

Abraha got to Makkah with an army of forty thousand men. An elephant named Mahmud was part of this entourage. Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Prophet (SAW), met with Abraha, and realised that they were powerless against this massive army.

Abdul Muttalib advised the Makkans to stay out of the way of the invading army. He went around the Kaabah, prayed to his Creator and said: 'The owner of this House is its defender, and I am sure He will save it from the attack of the adversaries, and will not dishonour the servants of His House.'

The Quran explains what happened the next day when the army wanted to enter Makkah. Accord-



It is generally believed that this building, now identified as a library, stands on the site where Nabi Muhammad (SAW) was born, in Makkah.

Photo SALIM PARKER

ing to Surah al-Fil (105), 'Have you (O Muhammad) not seen how your Lord dealt with the owners

of the elephant?

'Did He not make their plot go astray? And sent against them birds, in flocks, striking them with stones of baked clay. And made them look smashed like eaten straw.' Mahmud refused to walk in the direction of the holy city and the defeated army returned to Yemen.

According to some scholars, the Prophet (SAW) was born about 55 days after this event. At that time, the Arabs did not use a particular calendar and thus the exact date of birth of Allah's Messenger (SAW) is based on oral traditions.

The majority held view is that it was on a Monday, the 12th Rabi al-Awwal. Muslim reports that Abu Qataadah al-Ansari narrated: 'The Prophet (SAW) was asked about fasting on Mondays and he said: "That is a day on which I was born and on it my mission began – or revelation came to me."'

A few hold the view that Nabi Muhammad (SAW) was born on Friday the 17th Rabi al-Awwal. However, some authorities such as Ibn Katheer said: 'Those who say that he was born on Friday 17th Rabi al-Awwal were mistaken.'

Though in retrospect there were signs that a special person was to arrive, perhaps the reason for the difference of opinion is that when he was born, no one expected that he would be the final prophet.

It is evident that Nabi Muhammad (SAW), was not the centre of attention from the beginning of his life. It was only after Allah decreed that the Messenger (SAW) should begin to convey His message 40 years after he was born that people began to seek out whatever memories they had about him.

They started asking one another about every detail of his life. They were assisted in that respect by what the Messenger (SAW) himself narrated about incidents that he had experienced from his

birth. The reports narrated by his Companions and those who had also gone through those events with him were then used as supplements by historians.

The place where Nabi Muhammad (SAW) was born is widely believed to be in a house in Shi'ab Banu Haashim. Currently, there is a library at that location. Since there is no authoritative proof that it is the correct site, the current Saudi regime actively discourages pilgrims from visiting the premises. No pilgrim is allowed to enter the building and, previously, even photographing the library was forbidden, though it is tolerated these days.

The Prophet's (SAW) father was Abdullah ibn Abdul-Muttalib, from the Banu Hashim branch of the Quraish, and his mother was Amina, the daughter of Wahb ibn Abdumanaf, who was a member of the Banu Zuhra branch of the Quraish tribe. The Prophet (SAW) was their only child.

Abdullah was eighteen-years-old when he got married. Abdul-

lah, was a handsome young man and was admired by his friends and family. He had a beauty and brightness in his face that the other young men lacked. This is considered to be the 'light of nubuwwa' (the light of prophethood, Nur al-Muhammadi) that belongs to Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Sayyidatina Amina was pregnant when Abdullah went for trade purposes to Syria. On his way back, he stopped in Yathrib (Madina) and visited Adi ibn Najjar, his father's uncle. However, Abdullah fell ill and had to stay with relatives for about a month.

When Abdul Muttalib learned of Abdullah's condition, he sent his elder son, Harith, to Yathrib. Unfortunately, Abdullah passed away before Harith's arrival in the city and he was buried there. The Prophet (SAW) was thus born without a father.

The majority of Islamic scholars maintain that Abdullah will be granted Jannah as he did not live to see the prophethood of his son.

أخي المسلم

لم يبق دليل على صحة تعيين مكان مولده صلى الله عليه وسلم . فالتبرك بهذا المكان أو تخصيص هذا المكان بصلاة أو دعاء لا يجوز شرعا .

برادر عزیز :

بر تولد رسول اکرم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم در اینجا (کتا بخاته مکہ مکرمہ) دلیلی صحیح وارد نشده است پس تبرک کردن اینجا ونماز مخصوص خواندن ویا دعای مخصوص کردن در اینجا شرعا جایز نیست

نبی ﷺ کی پدائش کی گئے بالتحديد ثابت نہیں ہے لہذا اس گئے سے برکت حاصل کرنا اور دعا کے لئے متعین کرنا مشروع نہیں ہے۔

Müslüman kardeşi :

peygamber efendimiz (s.a.v) in doğduğu ev ile ilgili kesin bir kaynak, bulunmamaktadır Bu yerden bereket ummak namaz kılmak veya dua etmek (masru) caiz değildir

Saudaraku seislam :

Tidak ada dalil shohih yang menentukan tempat lahirnya nabi Muhammad SAW. Maka mengambil barakah di tempat ini atau mengkhususkannya dengan sholat atau doa adalah perbuatan yang dilarang menurut syariat.

Dear brothers In Islam :

There is no proof that prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) was born in this place so it is forbidden to make this place specific for praying supplicating or ger blessing .

বেরাদারানে ইসলাম:

নবী করীম(সাঃ)এর জন্মস্থান কোনটি তা সঠিকভাবে প্রমাণিত নয়, সুতরাং নিশ্চয় করে এস্থানটি থেকে বরকত গ্রহন করা বা নামাজ ও দোয়ার জন্য নিযুক্ত করা শরীয়ত সম্মত নয়।

This notice claiming that there is no proof that it is the site where Nabi Muhammad (SAW) was born is prominently displayed outside the library. Photo SALIM PARKER



The board identifying what is generally considered to be the birthplace of Nabi Muhammad (SAW) as a library – to which access is restricted. Photo SALIM PARKER