



## Stories from the Hijaz

### THE MAKKAH CHRONICLES



# Zam-zam, the water without equal

**SALIM PARKER**

IBN Abbas narrated that after Haajar (RA) and Ismail (AS) were left alone in Makkah, the infant continued to suckle on his mother. They drank from the water that Nabi Ibrahim (AS) had left for them in a skin flask, and she ate of the dates and some provisions which they had taken along.

After a while, the water was depleted and both became thirsty. Ismail, as any infant would do when the need to quench their thirst and relieve their hunger became intense, started to cry.

Haajar was greatly distressed and soon it became evident to her that her child was becoming more and more distressed and would not stop crying.

She could no longer bear looking at him writhing in agony, and looked around. The hillock of Safa was the nearest high point that she could see and she decided to ascend it.

Her intention was to see from that high vantage whether there were any other humans around or any forms of sustenance that would alleviate her child's acute hunger and thirst.

She ascended the hill of Safa and looked, hoping to see somebody but in vain. When she came down to the valley, she ran till she reached another hill, the hill of Marwah, about 450 metres away. At one point she looked at her baby and realised that he was famished and was frantically kicking the sand.

She continued her search for any form of help and again traversed the distance between Safa and Marwah. She completed seven rounds of running between Safa and Marwah, all the time desperately looking for help or food and water.

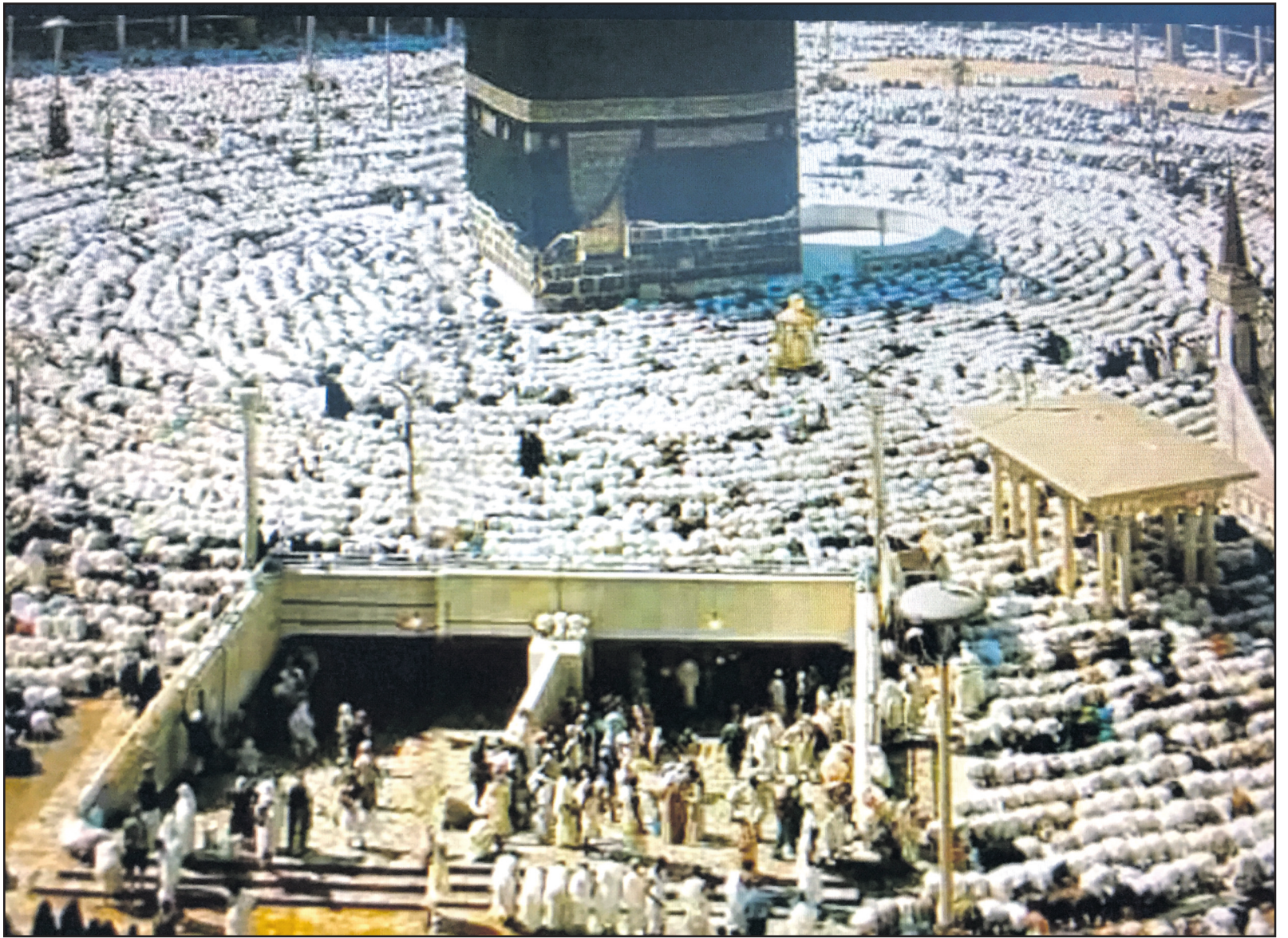
Her motherly instincts again drove her to go look at her child. Suddenly, she heard a voice that was not familiar to her. In utter despair she cried, 'Help us if you can offer any help.' The voice was that of Archangel Jibreel. Allah in His infinite mercy and wisdom would not abandon Haajar and her infant.

It is reported by Ibn Abbas that Jibreel struck the earth with his heel. When Ibn Abbas related this incident as narrated to him by Nabi Muhammad (SAW), he demonstrated the event by stamping his own heel on the ground.

Other traditions relate that Jibreel struck the earth with his wing. Water started gushing out at that very spot. Haajar was completely astonished and she started digging at that place. She drank from the water and the flow of her breast milk increased and she could feed her little boy.

She started to make something like a basin around the place where the water was coming from by using her hands, and started filling her skin flasks, scooping up the water with her hands. According to the Saudi Geological Society, as the water gushed out, Haajar uttered, 'Zome Zome,' which means 'stop flowing'.

This water was the water without equal, the water that we now call Zam-zam. Jibreel said to her,



Up to the 1990s, one could access the area from where the Zam-zam was flowing, below the mataaf in Makkah's Haram. There were steps leading down to the area from where the Zam-zam was pumped to various parts of the Haram. Photo [https://aswjmedia.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/zamzam\\_well\\_hajj\\_mecca-101.jpg](https://aswjmedia.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/zamzam_well_hajj_mecca-101.jpg)

'Don't be afraid of being neglected for this is the House of Allah, which will be built by this boy and his father, and Allah never neglects His people.'

The Prophet (SAW) said, 'May Allah bestow mercy on Ismail's mother! Had she let the Zam-zam flow without trying to control it or had she not scooped from that

water to fill her water skin, Zam-zam would have been a stream flowing on the surface of the earth.'

The miracle of Zam-zam per-

sists till this day, and its virtues are unquestionable. Ibn Abbas said, 'The people of Makkah used to be the fastest when it comes to sprinting, and the most powerful when it comes to wrestling but as soon as they stopped drinking Zam-zam water, they started to suffer from a disease in their legs.'

He also said that Muhammad (SAW) said, 'Zam-zam water is for what one intends to drink it. When one drinks it to be healed, Allah heals him; when one drinks it to be full, Allah makes him full; and when one drinks it to quench his thirst, Allah quenches it.'

Our Prophet (SAW) further said that, 'The best water on earth is Zam-zam water.'

One of the miracles of Zam-zam water is its ability to satisfy both thirst and hunger.

One of the Companions of the Prophet said that before Islam, the water was called 'shabbaa-ah' or 'satisfying'.

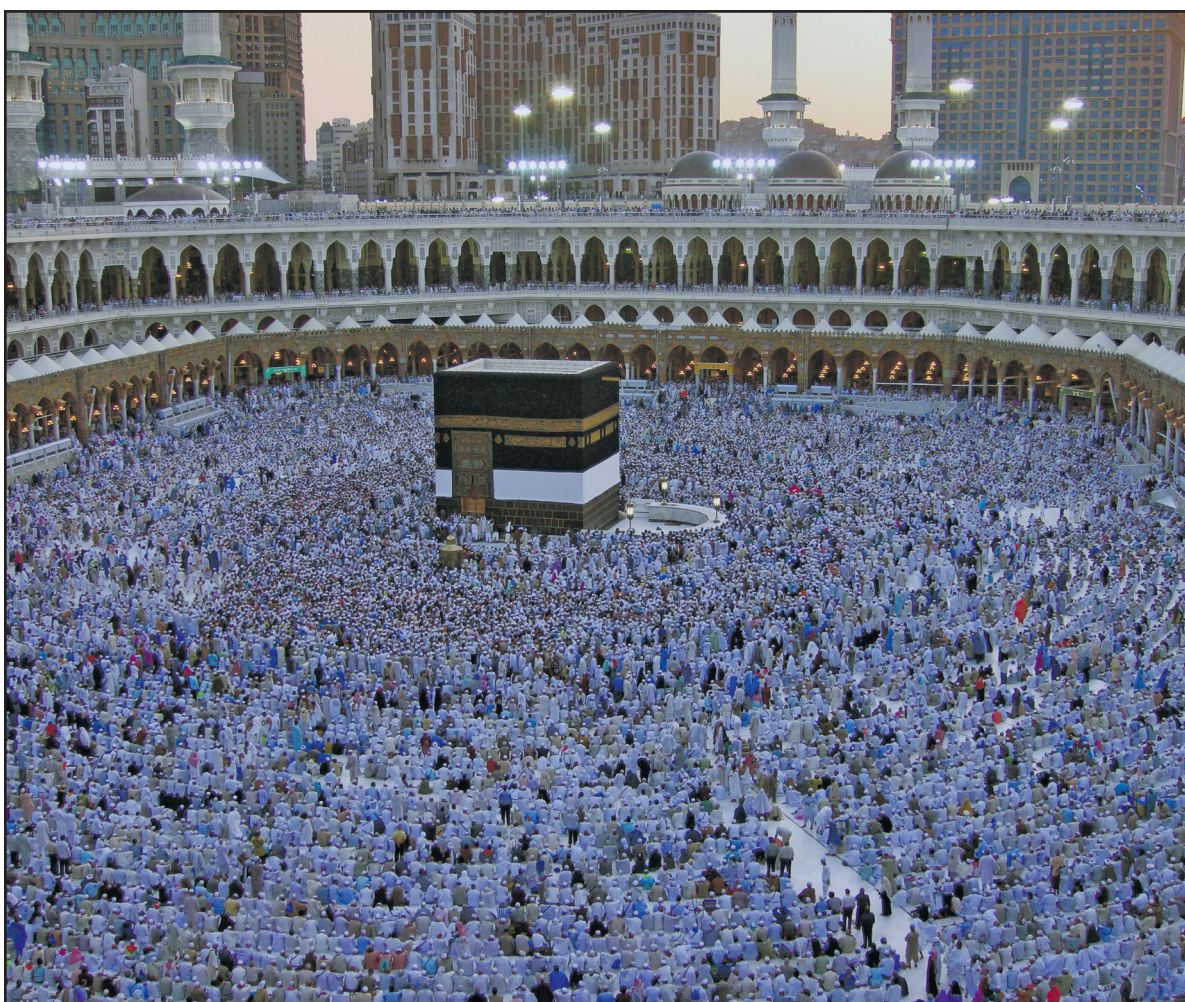
It was filling and helped them nourish their families.

It is also reported that the Prophet (SAW) rubbed the gums of his two grandchildren, Hassan and Hussain, with dates and Zam-zam.

It was also reported that the Prophet used to carry the water of Zam-zam in pitchers and water skins from Makkah back to Madinah.

He used to sprinkle it over the sick and make them drink it.

Most scholars agree that this natural spring has never run dry. It is known, though, to have been buried during certain times.



The 'Zam-zam pit' in the Haram was closed during the expansion of the mataaf and there is now no trace of the area from where the Zam-zam originates. Photo SALIM PARKER