

Islamic Academy of Coventry

Sīrah of Muḥammad ﷺ

Part 3 – Life before Prophethood

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Part 3 – Life before Prophethood
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introduction

I begin in the name of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, Lord of the Worlds and sending Peace and Salutations on our beloved Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

The lineage of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is the most blessed and noble of all. The tribe of Quraysh were from the descendants of ‘Ismā‘il عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, the elder son of Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. The Quraysh ruled over Makkah and had many responsibilities, including looking after the pilgrims who used to come and visit the House of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى.

‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the paternal grandfather of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was born in Yathrib and brought to Makkah by his uncle Al-Muṭṭalib after his father Hāshim had passed away. He assumed his place as the leader of the Quraysh and Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى showed him many signs.

‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib found the well of Zamzam which had been lost since the tribe of Jurhūm concealed it before leaving Makkah many years ago. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was shown the location of the well through a dream and together with his eldest son Al-Ḥārith, rediscovered it.

The other Qurayshi tribes wanted a share in the well of Zamzam and to settle the matter, they all agreed to visit a soothsayer in Shām.

Along the way, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and his family ran out of water and the other tribes refused to help them. Once again Allāh **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى** helped ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Water started to gush from the place where his camel’s hoof had touched the ground. The other tribes saw this blessing and asked ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib for forgiveness. They all returned to Makkah and now there was no longer any dispute over the well of Zamzam.

‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib had also made an oath to Allāh **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى** that he would sacrifice one son if he had 10 sons that grew up to maturity. Once again, he saw a dream in which he was reminded of his oath. Lots were cast to see which son would be sacrificed. The lot fell upon ‘Abdullāh, the most beloved of his sons. After an outcry, it was decided that the lots would be recast with ‘Abdullāh on one side and 10 camels on the other. Each time ‘Abdullāh’s name was drawn, 10 camels would be sacrificed. Eventually 100 camels were sacrificed in his place.

After this incident, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib started to search for a wife for his son ‘Abdullāh. Āminah was chosen from the tribe of Banū Zuhrah. She was the daughter of Wahb ibn ‘Abd Manāf and Barrah bint ‘Abd al-‘Uzza.

Āminah and ʿAbdullāh got married and she was pregnant with child when ʿAbdullāh went on a trade journey and fell ill. He stayed in Yathrib, and the trade caravan returned to Makkah. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib enquired about his son’s absence and sent his eldest son Al-Ḥārith to find out what had happened. Upon reaching Yathrib, Al-Ḥārith found out that his younger brother ʿAbdullāh had passed away.

The ancestors of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib are shown below:

Fihir (Quraysh)	فِهْرٍ
Ghālib	غَالِبٍ
Luʿayy	لُؤَيِّ
Kaʿab	كَعْبٍ
Murrah	مُرَّةٍ
Kilāb	كِلَابٍ
Quṣayy	قُصَيِّ
ʿAbd Manāf	عَبْدِ مَنَافٍ
Hāshim	هَاشِمٍ
ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib	عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ

The Birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

5 0 or 55 days after the incident with the people of the elephant, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was born in the house of his uncle Abū Ṭālib.

It was the year of the elephant corresponding to 571 CE, in the month Rabīʿ al-Awwal, on a Monday morning around dawn. Contrary to popular belief, there is no unanimous or fixed position regarding the precise date of the birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ¹. The preferred view is that it was the 8th or the 9th of Rabīʿ al-Awwal although the 1st and 2nd are also possible dates.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was born, his mother Āminah called for his grandfather ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, so he could come and see his grandson. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib arrived, took his grandson in his arms, and entered the Holy Kaʿbah where he prayed and gave thanks to Allāh سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى. He then took his grandson to his house so he could show his family its newest member.



¹ <http://islamicportal.co.uk/dates-of-the-blessed-birth-and-demise-of-prophet-muhammad-english/>

The 3-year-old son of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ met him at the door. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib held out the new born baby and said to his son ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, “This is your brother, kiss him”, and ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ kissed him.

The Miraculous Events

There were many miraculous events which took place during the birth of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Fāṭimah bint ‘Abdullāh, mentions that she was with the mother of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ during his birth. At that time, she saw that the whole room was filled with light, and the stars in the sky were bowing down, until she thought they would fall upon her.



There is a narration from ‘Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ who says that at the time of childbirth, the mother of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saw a light which shone on the castles in Syria². In another narration it mentions the castles of Buṣrā which was a town in Syria.

² Musnad Imām Aḥmad 17203

The Seventh Day

On the 7th day after the birth of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib performed the ‘Aqīqah of his grandson and invited all the Quraysh. This is when an animal is sacrificed on the occasion of a child’s birth.

‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib then named his grandson Muḥammad. The Quraysh asked him, “O Abū al-Ḥārith (that was his teknonym), why have you given him a name which none of your forefathers or your people, have kept before?”. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib said “I have named him this because Allāh in the Heavens and Allāh’s creation on the earth can praise this child”.

The Meaning of Muḥammad

The root word for Muḥammad in Arabic is ‘Ḥamd’, which means praise, therefore the meaning of Muḥammad, is that person who is praised. The perfect name for the person who is the most praised on the earth.



The Other Names of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

There is a Ḥadīth in both Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim narrated by Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ as follows:

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرِ بْنِ مُطْعِمٍ عَنِ أَبِيهِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ
 قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
 " لِي خَمْسَةٌ أَسْمَاءٍ أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَحْمَدُ وَأَنَا الْمَاجِي الَّذِي يَمْحُو اللهُ بِى
 الْكُفْرَ وَأَنَا الْحَاشِرُ الَّذِي يُحْشِرُ النَّاسَ عَلَى قَدَمِي وَأَنَا الْعَاقِبُ " ³

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “I have five names. I am Muḥammad, and Aḥmad, I am Al-Māḥī, through which Allāh will remove disbelief, I am Al-Ḥāshir, the one around whose feet the people will gather, and I am Al-Āqib (meaning the one who comes after all the Prophets)”.

³ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 3532

The Kunyah (teknonym) of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

In Arab culture, many people have teknonyms, or a kunyah as it is called in Arabic. This is the practise where a parent is referred to by the names of their children. Sometimes the teknonym can refer to an attribute which the person possesses.

The teknonym of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was Abū al-Qāsim, meaning the father of Al-Qāsim. Al-Qāsim was the eldest son of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and Khadījah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. passed away at a young age.

أبو القاسم

The Ḥadīth below shows how Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام called Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Abū Ibrāhīm.

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: " لَمَّا وُلِدَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ ابْنُ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
أَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ فَقَالَ: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ ⁴

Anas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates, “When Ibrāhīm the son of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was born, Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام came and said ‘Assalāmu ‘Alayka Yā Abā Ibrāhīm’”
(Peace be upon you, O father of Ibrāhīm)

⁴Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn Lil Ḥākīm 4188

The Early Days

After the birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, his mother Āminah suckled him for 3 or 4 days. Then Thuwaybah, the freed slave girl of Abū Lahab, gave him milk. This made Thuwaybah the first wet nurse of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Abū Lahab was the paternal uncle of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Thuwaybah had gone to her master, Abū Lahab to inform him of the good news that his nephew had been born. Upon hearing the good news, Abū Lahab was so happy that he freed Thuwaybah.

Thuwaybah also suckled Ḥamzah and Abū Salamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا. Therefore, both of them are also the milk brothers of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

ثَوْبِيَّة



Halimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا

Young children born in the noble Arab households would be sent to the desert to spend the early part of their lives. This would enable them to grow up in a clean environment, whilst also learning pure Arabic.



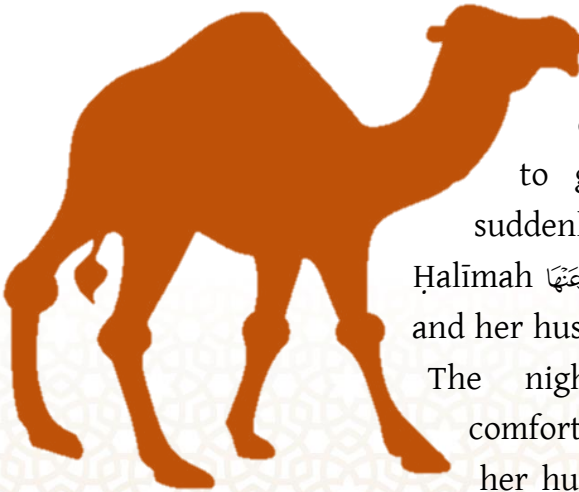
The women of the Banū Sa‘ad ibn Bakr tribe used to come to Makkah each year to look for children who needed to be wet nursed. Their territory lied to the south east of Makkah. One of the women of the tribe was Halimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, who also came to Makkah soon after Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was born. Her husband, whose name was Al-Hārith accompanied her as well as one of her unweaned children. She had brought with her a skinny donkey and a she camel, which never used to give a drop of milk. Due to hunger, they were not even able to sleep at night.

A Wet Nurse is found

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was presented to all of the women from the Banū Sa‘ad, but as soon as they found out he was an orphan they would refuse to take him. If a child does not have a father, then how will they be rewarded for looking after him?

All the women managed to find a child except Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. When the time came for the women to return home, she found it difficult that she should go home empty handed. All of a sudden, she found an urge to take this orphan child, Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Ḥalīmah went to her husband and told him she wanted to take the child. Al-Ḥārith agreed with her and said he hoped that Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى would make him a source of good and blessings for them.

With this hope, Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا took the child. Due to this, Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى opened the doors of blessings for her and her family. Previously, she could not produce milk to feed her other child, but as soon as she took in Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, she had enough milk to feed both children.



When they went to milk the camel which never used to give a drop of milk, suddenly its udders were full. Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا said that both she and her husband drank to their fill. The night passed by very comfortably and in the morning her husband Al-Ḥārith said to

her, “O Ḥalimah, understand this well, by Allāh **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى** you have taken a very blessed child”.

The time now came for them to leave Makkah, so they all mounted their animals and started to go. Ḥalimah **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا** also began her journey with this new blessed child. The skinny donkey which previously had to be forced to move, was now moving swiftly along. The other women from her tribe asked Ḥalimah **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا**, “Is this the same donkey you came on?”.

The Banū Sa‘ad

Ḥalimah **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا** arrived home at the Banu Sa‘ad with her family and Muḥammad **صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ**. At that time, there was no other place where there was more drought, than their land.

When the goats of Ḥalimah **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا** would go to graze, they would now come back in the evening with their udders full, whilst other people’s goats would not even have a drop. The other people instructed their shepherds to take their animals to the same places where the animals of Ḥalimah **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا** would graze. The shepherds did as commanded, but their animals would still return home hungry and without milk, whilst the goats of Ḥalimah **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا** would be full of milk.



Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and her family continued to witness many blessings from Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى whilst Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was in their care.

The Splitting of the Chest

When Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was two years old, Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا weaned him so he no longer needed her milk. She brought him back to Makkah to return him to his mother. At that time there was a plague in Makkah and also due to the blessings this child had brought with him, Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا requested if she could keep him a while longer. Her request was accepted, and she brought him back to the Banū Sa‘ad.

One day, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ went with his foster brothers to take the animals to graze. Suddenly one of them came running back to Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and said that two people dressed in white came and laid our Qurayshi brother (Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) on the ground.

As soon as they heard this, Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and her husband Al-Ḥārith ran looking for Muḥammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. They found him standing and his face was very pale. They both took the child to their chest and asked him what had happened. He said that two men clothed in white came to him and laid him down. They then opened his chest and searched for something, but he didn’t know what it was they were looking for.

Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and her husband looked around but could see no sign of these men. There were also no signs of blood or even any scars on the blessed body of this child. But the children would not take back their words.



Who were these two men? They were the blessed Angels of Allāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، and MIKĀIL عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. They had come that day dressed in white with a gold

basin full of snow. They split open the chest of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and took out his heart. His heart was then opened, and they took out one or two clots of blood, which was the portion of Shayṭān. They then placed the heart of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in the gold basin and washed it with the snow. The heart was put back inside the body of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and a seal was placed in between his sides.

How many times was the Chest Split?

There were four occasions when the chest of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was split open as follow:

1. When he was living with the Banū Sa‘ad – aged 4
2. When Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was 10 years old
3. When he became a Prophet
4. On the night of Mi‘rāj (Ascension to the Heavens)

Why Wash with Snow?

The question might be asked, why was the heart of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ washed with snow?

In Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, there is a Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, which mentions that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to make the following supplication:

اللَّهُمَّ بَاعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ
اللَّهُمَّ نَقِّنِي مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنَقَّى الثَّوْبُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ
اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْ خَطَايَايَ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ⁵

“O Allāh set apart between me and my sins as the East and the West are set apart from each other and clean me from my sins like how a white garment is cleaned from dirt, O Allāh wash off my sins with water, snow and hail.”

In this supplication, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ asked for many things. Amongst them was for Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى to wash away his sins. Generally, only unclean things are washed, clean things are not washed. Secondly, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ requested water from hail and snow be used to wash away the sins, because the effect of sins is heat. If sins had no heat, then he would not have asked for snow or hail water to be used.

⁵ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 744

From this we can determine that sins are not only unclean, but also cause heat. Therefore, as well as removing the uncleanliness we also have to remove the heat which is caused by them. By using warm water, the sins would be cleaned but the heat would remain.

Return to Makkah

After the incident with the splitting of the chest, Ḥalimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا got worried that something might happen to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. She took him back to his mother Āminah and told her what had happened. When Āminah heard about the incident, she didn't get worried at all. Āminah mentioned the things that used to happen to her when she was pregnant with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and at the time of his birth. She said the status of her child would be very high.

Ḥalimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا then returned home to the Banū Sa'ad and left Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ with his mother.



The Demise of Āminah

Rasūlullāh ﷺ had spent the first few years of his life with the Banū Sa‘ad. He was now back with his mother in Makkah.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was 6 years of old, his mother Āminah decided to take him to Madīnah, which was still known as Yathrib at the time. Umm Ayman accompanied them on the journey. They stayed there for one month and then left to return home to Makkah. On the way home, Āminah fell ill. They reached a place called Al-Abwā, and there the mother of Rasūlullāh ﷺ passed away.



Figure 1 - Al-Abwā

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was brought back to Makkah by Umm Ayman and given to his grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. ‘Abdullāh, the father of Rasūlullāh ﷺ had passed away even before he was born and now, Rasūlullāh ﷺ also lost his mother.



Figure 2 - The Grave of Āminah in Al-Abwā

Guardianship of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was now looked after by his grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, whose real name was Shaybah, was the son of Hāshim and Salmā. He had come to Makkah with his uncle Al-Muṭṭalib.

‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib kept his grandson Muḥammad ﷺ with him at all times. Whenever ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib used to go to the Ka‘bah, a special couch was put in its shade, and no one had the courage to even place a foot on it. His own children would sit around it or on its edge, but when Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to come, he used to sit on it without any worries. His uncles used to try and move him, but ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib would tell them to leave him alone. He then used to call Rasūlullāh ﷺ near him, sit him down and get pleased in watching what he was doing.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ stayed under the guardianship of his grandfather for 2 years, until he was 8 years old. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib then passed away.

Before his demise, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib handed over guardianship of Rasūlullāh ﷺ to Abū Ṭālib, his paternal uncle. ‘Abdullāh, the father of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Abū Ṭālib both shared the same mother and father. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib advised Abū Ṭālib to bring up Rasūlullāh ﷺ with love and affection.

Umm Ayman mentions, when the funeral of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was being taken, she saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ following it while crying. He was only at the tender age of 8 and had now lost both his parents and grandfather. His maternal grandfather ‘Wahb’ had already passed away before his parents were married. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was buried in a cemetery called Jannah al-Mu‘allāh.

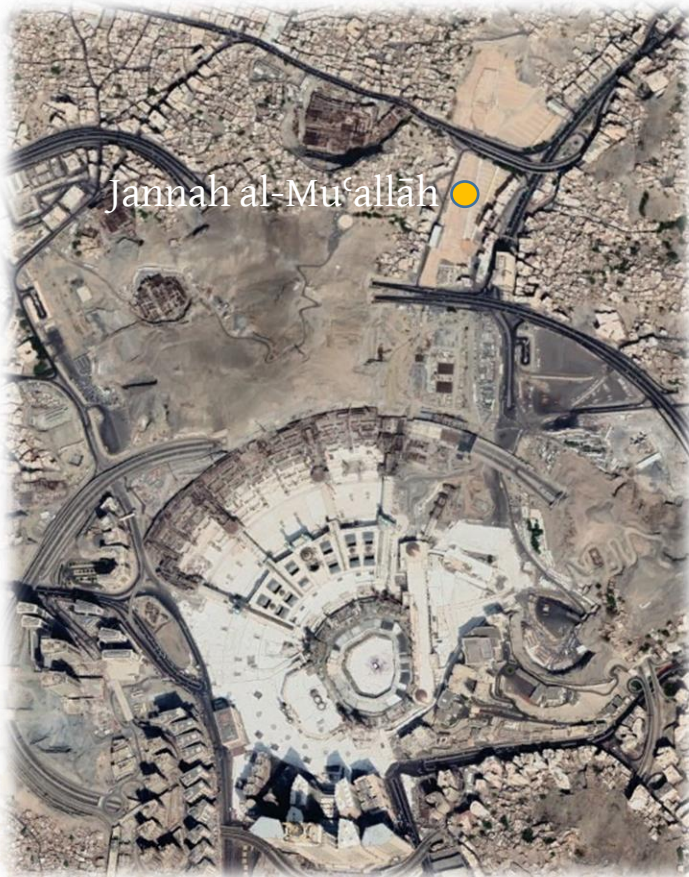


Figure 3 - Jannah al-Mu‘allāh cemetery

Guardianship of Abū Ṭālib

After the death of his grandfather, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was now cared for by his uncle Abū Ṭālib and his wife Fāṭimah. Abū Ṭālib looked after his nephew even more than his own children. He fulfilled the rights of guardianship dutifully. Abū Talib's love for his nephew Rasūlullāh ﷺ was immense, however he never embraced Islām.

The First Journey to Shām

Rasūlullāh ﷺ reached 12 years of age when Abū Ṭālib decided to go on a trade journey to Shām. He had no intention of taking Rasūlullāh ﷺ with him, but when he was leaving, he saw how upset his nephew was, so decided to take him along.



Figure 4 - The Land of Shām

The caravan made its way to Buṣrā which was a town in Shām. A Christian monk used to live there whose name was Baḥīrā.

Baḥīrā was familiar with the signs of the final Prophet which had been mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. When the caravan from Makkah arrived, upon seeing the face of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, he realized that this is none other than the last Prophet. Normally he would not even go to see the caravans that had arrived, but this time, he looked at each and every one of them until he took the hand of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

The leaders of the Quraysh asked Baḥīrā, how did he know that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was a Prophet. Baḥīrā said, “When you came, there was no tree or stone which did not bow down, and trees and stones only bow down to Prophets”. Baḥīrā also said he recognised the seal of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Baḥīrā prepared food for the whole caravan and everyone came to eat, but Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was not there. He asked, where had he gone? He was told Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had gone to take the camels to graze. They then sent someone to go and call him.

When Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ arrived, there was a cloud over him giving him shade. All the people had sat under the shade of the tree and there was no shaded area left, so Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ went and sat on the side of the tree. As soon as he sat, the shade

of the tree moved towards him. Baḥīrā commented on how the shadow moved over Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He asked who the guardian of this child was. Everyone pointed to Abū Ṭālib. Baḥīrā advised Abū Ṭālib to send Rasūlullāh ﷺ back to Makkah for his protection, and he did.



Al-Amīn

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ grew up and in his people, he had the best of character. He looked after the needs of others and was kind and forbearing. He was the most truthful and trustworthy. He would stay away from arguing, lewdness and bad talk, more than anyone else. This is why the people called him ‘Al-Amīn’.

الأمين

‘Abdullāh ibn Abū al-Hamsā narrated that before Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had been granted Prophethood, he had made a transaction with him. He still had to give something to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, so he said to him that he would go and get it.

When ‘Abdullāh got home, he forgot. Three days later he remembered so he went back the same place and found Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was waiting there. The only thing Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to him was:

يَا فَتَى لَقَدْ شَقَقْتَ عَلَيَّ أَنَا هَا هُنَا مُنْذُ ثَلَاثِ أَنتَظِرُكَ ⁶

“O young man, you have caused me some bother. I have been waiting here for you, for three days.”

⁶ Sunan Abū Dāwūd 4996

Khadijah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا

Khadijah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا was a wealthy woman from a noble family in Makkah. In the times of ignorance as well as after the advent of Islām, she was known as ‘Ṭāhirah’ due to her pure qualities. When the Quraysh used to send their trade caravans, she used to send her own goods as well.

When Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was 25 years old, Khadijah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا sent him a business proposal for him to take her goods and sell them on her behalf. His reputation of being a trustworthy person preceded him.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ accepted the proposal and with her slave Maysarah, set off for Shām. They reached Buṣrā and stopped to take shade under a tree.

A monk by the name of Naṣṭūr used to live there. He saw Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and came towards him. He looked at the blessed Messenger and said, “After ‘Īsā ibn Maryam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, up until now, no Prophet has come besides you”.

There were also other miraculous events which took place on this journey. Maysarah said, when noon time used to arrive and if it was very hot, he used to see two Angels providing shade to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

After this Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ got busy with trading. Upon their return, Maysarah informed Khadijah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا about their travels and all the miraculous incidents that took place.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave Khadijah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا the income from the trade journey and she made more profit than ever before. She had agreed to give Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ a certain share but due to the profits, she gave him even more.



The Marriage Proposal

Ibn Ishāq mentions, that after Khadijah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا listened to the incidents which took place on the trade journey, like what Nasṭūr the monk had said, and Maysarahs account, she went to her cousin Waraqah ibn Naufal and told him about them. Waraqah said, “Khadijah, if what you say is true, then surely Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is the Prophet of these people and I know for sure that a Prophet is going to come who we are waiting for, and his time is approaching”.

2 months and 25 days after Rasūlullāh ﷺ returned from the trade journey, Khaḍījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا sent him a marriage proposal. Rasūlullāh ﷺ consulted his uncle Abū Ṭālib and accepted it.

The Nikāḥ of Rasūlullāh ﷺ & Khaḍījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا

On the appointed day, Rasūlullāh ﷺ went with his uncles Abū Ṭālib and Ḥamzah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as well as some more people from his family to the house of Khaḍījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. Her father Khuwaylid had passed away, so her uncle ‘Amr ibn Asad was present. The marriage took place in her house.

At the time of their marriage, Muḥammad ﷺ was 25 years old and Khaḍījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was 40. The dowry was set at 20 camels. This was the first Nikāḥ of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the third Nikāḥ of Khaḍījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. They remained together for 25 years and Allāh ﷻ blessed them with many children. Rasūlullāh ﷺ took no other wives whilst he was married to Khaḍījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا.



The Rebuilding of the Ka‘bah

Since the beginning of time, up until now, the Ka‘bah has been rebuilt and repaired a number of times. In *Sīrat* Muṣṭafā, it mentions five particular instances as below:

The First Time - Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Āṣ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى sent Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to ‘Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ with the command to build the Ka‘bah. When Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ completed the building of the Ka‘bah, he was ordered to perform Ṭawāf of it, meaning to go around it. He was told that you are the first man, and this is the first House which has been built for people’s worship.⁷



The Second Time - Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ & Ismā‘īl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

When the floods came in the time of Nūḥ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, there were no remains left of the Ka‘bah. Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was then given the command to build the Ka‘bah for a second time. There were no signs left of the original foundation, so Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ came and showed him where they were. Along with his son Ismā‘īl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ rebuilt the Ka‘bah.



⁷ Dalāil al-Bayhaqī

The Third Time – The Quraysh

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was 35 years old, 5 years before the advent of Prophethood, the Ka‘bah was in a state of disrepair. At that time, there was no roof on the building so when it rained, the water would collect inside.

The leaders of the Quraysh gathered and decided that they would take down the existing Ka‘bah and rebuild it completely. When this decision had been made, Abū Wahb ibn ‘Amr, who was the maternal uncle of ‘Abdullāh, the father of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, got up and said that all the money which was to be spent on rebuilding the Ka‘bah should only come from permissible earnings. There should be no money which has come from interest, robbery etc.

The Responsibilities are Divided

The honour of rebuilding the Ka‘bah was so great that each clan was given a certain part to build, ensuring no one was left out from this honour.

The side of the Ka‘bah by the door was given to the Banū ‘Abd Manāf (which was the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ) and Banū Zuhrah.

The side of the Ka‘bah between Al-Rukn al-Yamāni and Al-Ḥajr al-Aswad was the responsibility of the Banū Makhzūm and some other clans from the Quraysh.

The back wall of the Ka‘bah was the responsibility of the Banū Jamaḥ and Banū Sahn.

Finally, the side of the Ḥaṭīm was the responsibility of the Banu ‘Abd ad-Dār, ibn Asad and Banū ‘Adiy. At this moment in time, the Ḥaṭīm was part of the Ka‘bah.

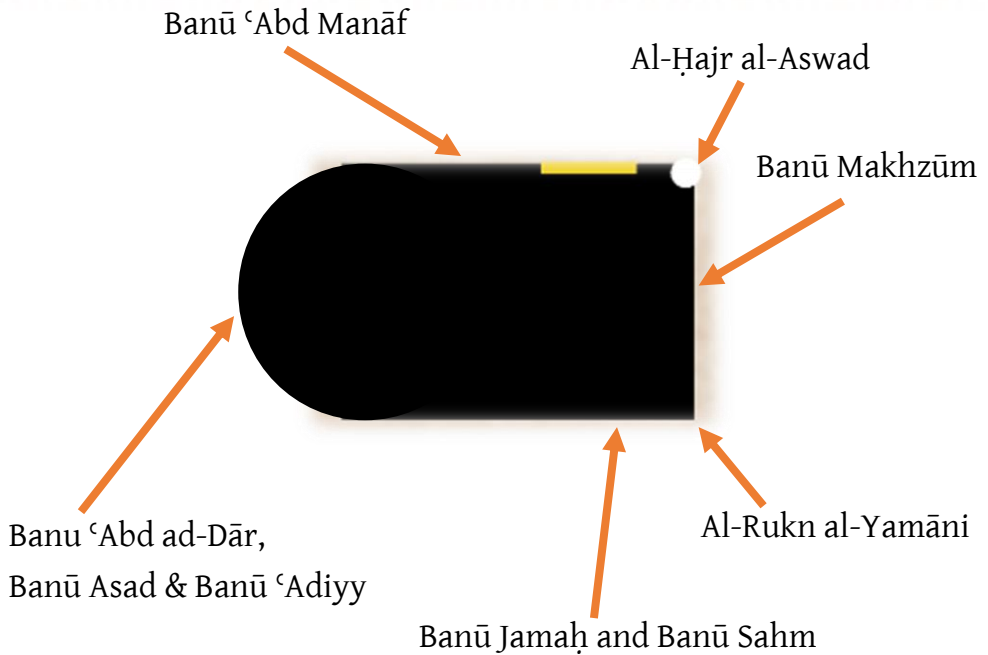


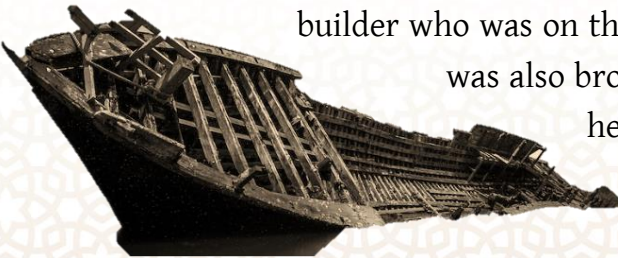
Figure 5 - The Rebuilding of the Ka‘bah

When the time came for rebuilding, the Quraysh heard that a trade ship had broken up off the coast of Jeddah. Jeddah is a town on the coast of the Red Sea which is about 50 miles from Makkah.



Figure 6 - Jeddah

Walid ibn Mughirah arrived in Jeddah and took some planks to be used for the roof of the Ka'bah. There was also a Roman builder who was on the ship called Baqūm. He was also brought back to Makkah to help with the rebuilding of the Ka'bah.



The Ka‘bah is taken down

The moment now arrived to take down the old building, but no one could sum up the courage to do so. Finally, Walīd ibn Mughirah stood up and said, “O Allāh, we only have the intention of doing well, and our intention is not to do anything bad”. With these words he started to take down the part of the wall which was between Al-Rukn al-Yamāni and Al-Ḥajr al-Aswad.

The people of Makkah were worried that something might happen to them if they took down the Ka‘bah, so they decided to wait until night time in case some divine punishment is sent down upon Walīd. If some punishment arrives, then they would restore the Ka‘bah back to how it was, but if not, they would help Walīd to also take it down.

When the morning came, Walīd came to the Ḥaram safe and sound, so the people realised that Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى was happy with this action. They grew in confidence and started to help Walīd in removing the old walls.

They carried on digging until they saw the foundations of the Ka‘bah which had been laid by Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. A Qurayshi then struck the foundation with his spade. Suddenly there was a loud noise which was heard in the whole of Makkah. The people then stopped digging and started to build the Ka‘bah upon these foundations.

The different clans started collecting stones and built the relative parts of the Kaʿbah as had been delegated.

Al-Ḥajr al-Aswad

When the time came to put the Al-Ḥajr al-Aswad back in its place, there was a severe difference of opinion. Swords were drawn and people started getting ready to fight. This situation continued for 4 or 5 days.

To put an end to the dispute, Abū Ummayah, the eldest Qurayshī, suggested that the first person who enters the door of the Masjid the following morning should be made the arbitrator. This person could decide what needs to be done to resolve the situation.



Everyone accepted this opinion and the following morning they arrived in the Masjid to see who was going to be the first person to enter.

It so happened that the first person to enter was none other than Rasūlullāh ﷺ. As soon as they saw him, they all said:

هذا محمد الأمين رضينا هذا محمد الأمين

“This is Muḥammad the trustworthy, we are happy for him to make the decision, this is Muḥammad the trustworthy.”

The Decision

Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked for a sheet and placed Al-Ḥajr al-Aswad in the middle of it. He then requested that the leaders of each clan should hold the sheet, so no one is left out from this honourable act. Everyone was happy with this decision and held the sheet. When the sheet was lifted up to the place where the stone needed to sit, Rasūlullāh ﷺ moved Al-Ḥajr al-Aswad into its place with his own blessed hands. This was how Rasūlullāh ﷺ helped settle an argument as well as place the Al-Ḥajr al-Aswad in its position.



The Changes to the Ka'bah

When the Quraysh rebuilt the Ka'bah, there were a number of changes they made to the original building. Firstly, the Ka'bah used to have 2 doors, so people could go in and out, but now the rear door was closed off and only one door remained.

The second change was that the door was raised to a high position so no one could enter it unless a stair was placed at the bottom.

Finally, the side of the Ka'bah which was towards the Ḥaṭīm was shortened. If a person reads Ṣalāh in the Ḥāṭim, within the semi-circular wall, it is as if you have read Ṣalāh inside the Ka'bah.

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ كُنْتُ أَحِبُّ أَنْ أُدْخَلَ الْبَيْتَ فَأُصَلِّيَ فِيهِ فَأَخَذَ
 رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِيَدِي فَأَدْخَلَنِي الْحِجْرَ فَقَالَ
 " صَلَّى فِي الْحِجْرِ إِنْ أَرَدْتَ دُخُولَ الْبَيْتِ
 فَإِنَّمَا هُوَ قِطْعَةٌ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَلَكِنَّ قَوْمَكَ اسْتَقْصَرُوهُ حِينَ بَنَوْا
 الْكَعْبَةَ فَأَخْرَجُوهُ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ " ⁸

‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrated, “I desired to enter the House so I could perform Ṣalāh in it, so Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ took me by the hand and put me in the Ḥijr (Ḥaṭīm), and he said: ‘Perform Ṣalāh in the Ḥijr if you want to enter the House. For indeed it is part of the House, but your people shortened it when they built the Ka‘bah, so left it outside the House.’”

⁸ Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī 876

The Fourth Time - ‘Abdullāh ibn Zubayr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ

The 4th time the Ka‘bah was rebuilt was when ‘Abdullāh ibn Zubayr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, rebuilt it when he was the Khalīfah in Makkah. He rebuilt the Ka‘bah upon the original foundations of Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ towards the Ḥaṭīm and also added an additional door to the Ka‘bah.

The Fifth Time – Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf

The 5th time, it was rebuilt by Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf who was the governor of Makkah in the time of ‘Abdul Mālīk ibn Marwān. Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf wrote to ‘Abdul Malīk, informing him of the changes which has been made by ‘Abdullāh ibn Zubayr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. He was told to reduce the side of the Ḥaṭīm to what it was previous and to also remove the additional door which had been built.⁹



⁹ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1333

Summary

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was born in the year of the elephant, corresponding to the year 571 CE, in the month of Rabī‘ al-Awwal, in the city of Makkah, in Arabia.

Before the birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, his father ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib had passed away in Yathrib, at the tender age of 18. A few days after his birth, as per Arab custom, he was given to a wet-nurse by the name of Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. Rasūlullāh ﷺ spent the initial years of his life with her in the tribe of Banū Sa‘ad. Ḥalīmah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا nursed him and his presence was a means of multiple blessings upon her and her family.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ went back to his mother Āminah in Makkah and when he was 6 years old, he went with her to Yathrib. On the return journey, she also passed away in a place called Abwā. He was brought back to Makkah by Umm Ayman.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ spent the next 2 years under the guardianship of his grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib until he also passed away. After this, he was entrusted to his uncle Abū Ṭālib.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was 12 years old, he accompanied his uncle Abū Ṭālib on a trade journey to Shām. On the journey they met the monk Baḥīrā who recognised that Rasūlullāh ﷺ

was the Prophet who they had been waiting for. Upon his advice, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was sent back to Makkah.

At the age of 25, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ once again went to Shām, to sell goods on behalf of Khaḍījah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. He made great profit from the journey and upon his return, Khaḍījah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا sent him a marriage proposal which he agreed to. He married Khaḍījah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا when he was 25 years old, and she was 40.

The Ka'bah had been in a state of disrepair and the Quraysh decided that it should be rebuilt only with money which had come from permissible sources. During its rebuilding, all the tribes wanted the honour of placing Al-Ḥajr al-Aswad back in its location. The argument became serious, however Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ found a solution whereby the stone was placed on a sheet, which was lifted up by members of all the tribes. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then put the stone back in place with his own blessed hands.

Very soon, the light of Prophethood would descend on Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the Revelation of the final scripture would begin in a cave, high on top of a mountain on the outer edges of Makkah.

Sīrah of Muḥammad ﷺ
Part 3 – Life before Prophethood

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