

WHAT WAS SAID TO ĀMINA WHEN SHE HAD CONCEIVED THE APOSTLE 102

It is alleged in popular stories (and only God knows the truth) that Āmina d. Wahb, the mother of God's apostle, used to say when she was pregnant with God's apostle that a voice said to her, 'You are pregnant with the lord of this people and when he is born say, "I put him in the care of the One from the evil of every envier; then call him Muhammad."' As she was pregnant with him she saw a light come forth from her by which she could see the castles of Buṣrā in Syria. Shortly afterwards 'Abdullah the apostle's father died while his mother was still pregnant.

THE BIRTH OF THE APOSTLE AND HIS SUCKLING

The apostle was born on Monday, 12th Rabī'u'l-awwal, in the year of the elephant. Al-Muṭṭalib b. 'Abdullah who had it from his grandfather Qays b. Makhrar a said, 'I and the apostle were born at the same time in the year of the elephant.' (†. It is said that he was born in the house known as I. Yūsuf's; and it is said that the apostle gave it to 'Aqīl b. Abū Ṭālib who kept it until he died. His son sold it to Muhammad b. Yūsuf, the brother T. 998

of al-Ḥajjāj, and he incorporated it in the house he built. Later Khayzurān separated it therefrom and made it into a mosque.)<sup>1</sup>

Ṣāliḥ b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān b. 'Auf b. Yaḥyā b. 'Abdullah b. 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān b. Sa'd b. Zurāra al-Anṣārī said that his tribesmen said that Ḥassān b. Thābit said: 'I was a well-grown boy of seven or eight, understanding all that I heard, when I heard a Jew calling out at the top of his voice from the top of a fort in Yathrib "O company of Jews" until they all came together and called out "Confound you, what is the matter?" He answered: "Tonight has risen a star under which Aḥmad is to be born."'

103 I asked Sa'id b. 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān b. Ḥassān b. Thābit how old Ḥassān was when the apostle came to Medina and he said he was 60 when the apostle came, he being 53. So Ḥassān heard this when he was seven years old.

After his birth his mother sent to tell his grandfather 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib that she had given birth to a boy and asked him to come and look at him. When he came she told him what she had seen when she conceived him and what was said to her and what she was ordered to call him. It is alleged that 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib took him (Ṭ. before Hubal) in the (Ṭ. middle of the) Ka'ba, where he stood and prayed to Allah thanking him for this gift. Then he brought him out and delivered him to his mother, and he tried to find foster-mothers for him (115).

T. 999 Ḥalīma d. Abū Dhu'ayb of B. Sa'd b. Bakr was asked to suckle him. Abū Dhu'ayb was 'Abdullah b. al-Ḥārith b. Shijna b. Jābir b. Rizām b. Nāṣira b. Quṣayya b. Naṣr b. Sa'd b. Bakr b. Hawāzin b. Manṣūr b. 'Ikrima b. Khasafa b. Qays b. 'Aylān.

The prophet's foster-father was al-Ḥārith b. 'Abdu'l-'Uzzā b. Rifā'a b. Mallān b. Nāṣira b. Quṣayya b. Naṣr b. Sa'd b. Bakr b. Hawāzin (116).

His foster-brother was 'Abdullah b. al-Ḥārith; Unaysa and Hudhāfa<sup>2</sup> were his foster-sisters. The latter was called al-Shaymā', her people not using her proper name. These were the children of Ḥalīma d. 'Abdullah b. al-Ḥārith. It is reported that al-Shaymā' used to carry him in her arms to help her mother.

104 Jāhm b. Abū Jāhm the client of al-Ḥārith b. Hāṭib al-Jumāhī on the authority of 'Abdullah b. Ja'far b. Abū Ṭālib or from one who told him it as from him, informed me that Ḥalīma the apostle's foster-mother used to say that she went forth from her country with her husband and little son whom she was nursing, among the women of her tribe, in search of other babies to nurse. This was a year of famine when they were destitute. She was riding a dusky she-donkey of hers with an old she-camel which did not yield a drop of milk. They could not sleep the whole night because of the weeping of her hungry child. She had no milk to give him, nor could their

<sup>1</sup> Khayzurān was the wife of the caliph al-Mahdī (158-69), and as he did not give her her freedom until after his accession and I.I. died a few years before in the reign of Manṣūr, it would seem unlikely that I.I. should have recorded this tradition.

<sup>2</sup> In W. Judhāma. I have followed C. which has the authority of I. Ḥajar. The name is uncertain.

she-camel provide a morning draught, but we were hoping for rain and relief. I rode upon my donkey which had kept back the other riders through its weakness and emaciation so that it was a nuisance to them. When we reached Mecca, we looked out for foster children, and the apostle of God was offered to everyone of us, and each woman refused him when she was told he was an orphan, because we hoped to get payment from the child's father. We said, "An orphan! and what will his mother and grandfather do?" and so we spurned him because of that. Every woman who came with me got a suckling except me, and when we decided to depart I said to my husband: "By God, I do not like the idea of returning with my friends without a suckling; I will go and take that orphan." Her eplied, "Do as you please; perhaps God will bless us on his account." So I went and took him for the sole reason that I could not find anyone else. I took him back to my baggage, and as soon as I put him in my bosom, my breasts overflowed with milk which he drank until he was satisfied, as also did his foster-brother. Then both of them slept, whereas before this we could not sleep with him. My husband got up and went to the old she-camel and lo, her udders were full; he milked it and he and I drank of her milk until we were completely satisfied, and we passed a happy night. In the morning my husband said: "Do you know, Ḥalīma, you have taken a blessed creature?" I said, "By God, I hope so." Then we set out and I was riding my she-ass and carrying him with me, and she went at such a pace that the other donkeys could not keep up so that my companions said to me, "Confound you! stop and wait for us. Isn't this the donkey on which you started?" "Certainly it is," I said. They replied, "By God, something extraordinary has happened." Then we came to our dwellings in the Banū Sa'd country and I do not know a country more barren than that.

105 When we had him with us my flock used to yield milk in abundance. We milked them and drank while other people had not a drop, nor could they find anything in their animals' udders, so that our people were saying to their shepherds, "Woe to you! send your flock to graze where the daughter of Abū Dhuayb's shepherd goes." Even so, their flocks came back hungry not yielding a drop of milk, while mine had milk in abundance. We ceased not to recognize this bounty as coming from God for a period of two years, when I weaned him. He was growing up as none of the other children grew and by the time he was two he was a well-made child. We brought him to his mother, though we were most anxious to keep him with us because of the blessing which he brought us. I said to her: "I should like you to leave my little boy with me until he becomes a big boy, for I am afraid on his account of the pest in Mecca." We persisted until she sent him back with us.

Some months after our return he and his brother were with our lambs behind the tents when his brother came running and said to us, "Two men

<sup>1</sup> Ṭ here inserts *Yā Zi'ru* 'O nurse!' implying that Āmina was not his mother. A strange reading.

clothed in white have seized that Qurayshī brother of mine and thrown him down and opened up his belly, and are stirring it up." We ran towards him and found him standing up with a livid face. We took hold of him and asked him what was the matter. He said, "Two men in white raiment came and threw me down and opened up my belly and searched therein for I know not what."<sup>1</sup> So we took him back to our tent.

His father said to me, "I am afraid that this child has had a stroke, so take him back to his family before the result appears." So we picked him up and took him to his mother who asked why we had brought him when I had been anxious for his welfare and desirous of keeping him with me. I said to her, "God has let my son live so far and I have done my duty. I am afraid that ill will befall him, so I have brought him back to you as you wished." She asked me what happened and gave me no peace until I told her. When she asked if I feared a demon possessed him, I replied that I did. She answered that no demon had any power over her son who had a great future before him, and then she told how when she was pregnant with him a light went out from her which illumined the castles of Buṣrā in Syria, and that she had borne him with the least difficulty imaginable. When she bore him he put his hands on the ground lifting his head towards the heavens. "Leave him then and go in peace," she said.'

Thaur b. Yazīd from a learned person who I think was Khālīd b. Ma'dān al Kalā'ī told me that some of the apostle's companions asked him to tell them about himself. He said: 'I am what Abraham my father prayed for and the good news of (T. my brother) Jesus. When my mother was carrying me she saw a light proceeding from her which showed her the castles of Syria. I was suckled among the B. Sa'd b. Bakr, and while I was with a brother of mine behind our tents shepherding the lambs, two men in white raiment came to me with a gold basin full of snow. Then they seized me and opened up my belly, extracted my heart and split it; then they extracted a black drop from it and threw it away; then they washed my heart and my belly with that snow until they had thoroughly cleaned them. Then one said to the other, weigh him against ten of his people; they did so and I outweighed them. Then they weighed me against a hundred and then a thousand, and I outweighed them. He said, "Leave him alone, for by God, if you weighed him against all his people he would outweigh them."'

The apostle of God used to say, There is no prophet but has shepherded a flock. When they said, 'You, too, apostle of God?', he said 'Yes.'

The apostle of God used to say to his companions, 'I am the most Arab of you all. I am of Quraysh, and I was suckled among the B. Sa'd b. Bakr. It is alleged by some, but God knows the truth, that when his foster-mother brought him to Mecca he escaped her among the crowd while she was taking him to his people. She sought him and could not find him, so she went to 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib and said: 'I brought Muhammad tonight and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sūra 94. 1.

when I was in the upper part of Mecca he escaped me and I don't know where he is.' So 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib went to the Ka'ba praying to God to restore him. They assert that Waraqa b. Naufal b. Asad and another man of Quraysh found him and brought him to 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib saying, 'We have found this son of yours in the upper part of Mecca.' 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib took him and put him on his shoulder as he went round the Ka'ba confiding him to God's protection and praying for him; then he sent him to his mother Āmina.

A learned person told me that what urged his foster-mother to return him to his mother, apart from what she told his mother, was that a number of Abyssinian Christians saw him with her when she brought him back after he had been weaned. They looked at him, asked questions about him, and studied him carefully, then they said to her, 'Let us take this boy, and bring him to our king and our country; for he will have a great future. We know all about him.' The person who told me this alleged that she could hardly get him away from them.

#### ĀMINA DIES AND THE APOSTLE LIVES WITH HIS GRANDFATHER

The apostle lived with his mother Āmina d. Wahb and his grandfather 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib in God's care and keeping like a fine plant, God wishing to honour him. When he was six years old his mother Āmina died.

'Abdullah b. Abū Bakr b. Muhammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm told me that the apostle's mother died in Abwā' between Mecca and Medina on her return from a visit with him to his maternal uncles of B. 'Adīy b. al-Najjār when he was six years old (117). Thus the apostle was left to his grandfather for whom they made a bed in the shade of the Ka'ba. His sons used to sit round the bed until he came out to it, but none of them sat upon it out of respect for him. The apostle, still a little boy, used to come and sit on it and his uncles would drive him away. When 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib saw this he said: 'Let my son alone, for by Allah he has a great future.' Then he would make him sit beside him on his bed and would stroke his back with his hand. It used to please him to see what he did.

## ABŪ ṬĀLIB BECOMES GUARDIAN OF THE APOSTLE

After the death of 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib the apostle lived with his uncle Abū Ṭālib, for (so they allege) the former had confided him to his care because he and 'Abdullah, the apostle's father, were brothers by the same mother, Fāṭima d. 'Amr b. 'Ā'idh b. 'Abd b. 'Imrān b. Makhzūm (121). It was Abū Ṭālib who used to look after the apostle after the death of his grandfather and he became one of his family.

Yaḥyā b. 'Abbād b. 'Abdullah b. al-Zubayr told me that his father told him that there was a man of Liḥb (122) who was a seer. Whenever he came to Mecca the Quraysh used to bring their boys to him so that he could look at them and tell their fortunes. So Abū Ṭālib brought him along with the others while he was still a boy. The seer looked at him and then something claimed his attention. That disposed of he cried, 'Bring me that boy.' When Abū Ṭālib saw his eagerness he hid him and the seer began to say, 'Woe to you, bring me that boy I saw just now, for by Allah he has a great future.' But Abū Ṭālib went away. 115

## THE STORY OF BAḤĪRĀ

Abū Ṭālib had planned to go in a merchant caravan to Syria, and when all preparations had been made for the journey, the apostle of God, so they allege, attached himself closely to him so that he took pity on him and said that he would take him with him, and that the two of them should never part; or words to that effect. When the caravan reached Buṣrā in Syria, there was a monk there in his cell by the name of Baḥīrā, who was well versed in the knowledge of Christians. A monk had always occupied that cell. There he gained his knowledge from a book that was in the cell, so they allege, handed on from generation to generation. They had often

<sup>1</sup> i.e. 'never has your equal been born'. The figure is that of a woman nursing a baby while her necklace falls over the child at her breast. The correct reading would seem to be 'iqd not 'aqd; *dhāt niṭāf* means 'possessor of pendant earrings', i.e. a woman. Dr. Arafat suggests that 'aqd 'girdle' should be read and the line would then run: 'Never has the knot of a woman's girdle run over your like'. The general sense would be the same, but the particular reference would be to a pregnant woman.

passed by him in the past and he never spoke to them or took any notice of them until this year, and when they stopped near his cell he made a great feast for them. It is alleged that that was because of something he saw while in his cell. They allege that while he was in his cell he saw the apostle of God in the caravan when they approached, with a cloud overshadowing him among the people. Then they came and stopped in the shadow of a tree near the monk. He looked at the cloud when it overshadowed the tree, and its branches were bending and drooping over the apostle of God until he was in the shadow beneath it. When Bahīra saw that, he came out of his cell and sent word to them,\* 'I have prepared food for you, O men of Quraysh, and I should like you all to come both great and small, bond and free.' One of them said to him, 'By God, Bahīra! something extraordinary has happened today, you used not to treat us so, and we have often passed by you. What has befallen you today?' He answered, 'You are right in what you say, but you are guests and I wish to honour you and give you food so that you may eat.' So they gathered together with him, leaving the apostle of God behind with the baggage under the tree, on account of his extreme youth. When Bahīra looked at the people he did not see the mark which he knew and found in his books,<sup>1</sup> so he said, 'Do not let one of you remain behind and not come to my feast.' They told him that no one who ought to come had remained behind except a boy who was the youngest of them and had stayed with their baggage. Thereupon he told them to invite him to come to the meal with them. One of the men of Quraysh said, 'By al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā, we are to blame for leaving behind the son of 'Abdullah b. 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib.' Then he got up and embraced him and made him sit with the people.\* When Bahīra saw him he stared at him closely, looking at his body and finding traces of his description (in the Christian books). When the people had finished eating and gone away,† Bahīra got up and said to him, 'Boy, I ask you by al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā to answer my question.' Now Bahīra said this only because he had heard his people swearing by these gods. They allege that the apostle of God said to him, 'Do not ask me by al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā, for by Allah nothing is more hateful to me than these two.' Bahīra answered, 'Then by Allah, tell me what I ask'; he replied, 'Ask me what you like'; so† he began to ask him about what happened in his (Ṭ. waking and in his) sleep, and his habits,<sup>2</sup> and his affairs generally, and what the apostle of God told him coincided with what Bahīra knew of his description. Then he looked at his back and saw the seal of prophethood between his shoulders †in the very place described in his book (123).† When he had finished he went to his uncle Abū Ṭālib and asked him what relation this boy was to him, and when he told him he was his son, he said that he was not, for it could not be that the father of this boy was alive. 'He is my nephew,' he

<sup>1</sup> Lit. 'with him'.

<sup>2</sup> *hay'a*, perhaps 'his body'.

\* Ṭ. 'sent word to invite them all' and omits passage ending 'people'.

† . . . † Ṭ. om.

said, and when he asked what had become of his father he told him that he had died before the child was born. 'You have told the truth,' said Bahīra. 'Take your nephew back to his country and guard him carefully against the Jews, for by Allah! if they see him and know about him what I know, they will do him evil; a great future lies before this nephew of yours, so take him home quickly.'

So his uncle took him off quickly and brought him back to Mecca when he had finished his trading in Syria. People allege that Zurayr and Tam-mām and Daris, who were people of the scriptures, had noticed in the apostle of God what Bahīra had seen during that journey which he took with his uncle, and they tried to get at him, but Bahīra kept them away and reminded them of God and the mention of the description of him which they would find in the sacred books, and that if they tried to get at him they would not succeed. He gave them no peace until they recognized the truth of what he said and left him and went away. The apostle of God grew up, God protecting him and keeping him from the vileness of heathenism because he wished to honour him with apostleship, until he grew up to be the finest of his people in manliness, the best in character, most noble in lineage, the best neighbour, the most kind, truthful, reliable, the furthest removed from filthiness and corrupt morals, through loftiness and nobility, so that he was known among his people as 'The trustworthy' because of the good qualities which God had implanted in him. The apostle, so I was told, used to tell how God protected him in his childhood during the period of heathenism, saying, 'I found myself among the boys of Quraysh carrying stones such as boys play with; we had all uncovered ourselves, each taking his shirt<sup>1</sup> and putting it round his neck as he carried the stones. I was going to and fro in the same way, when an unseen figure slapped me most painfully saying, "Put your shirt on"; so I took it and fastened it on me and then began to carry the stones upon my neck wearing my shirt alone among my fellows.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Properly a wrapper which covered the lower part of the body.

<sup>2</sup> Suhayli, 120, after pointing out that a somewhat similar story is told of the prophet's modesty and its preservation by supernatural means, at the time that the rebuilding of the Ka'ba was undertaken when Muhammad was a grown man, says significantly that if the account here is correct divine intervention must have occurred twice. It may well be that he was led to make this comment by the fact that Ṭ. omits the story altogether and in its place (Ṭ. 1126. 10) writes: 'I. Ḥamid said that Salama told him that I.I. related from Muhammad b. 'Abdullah b. Qays b. Makhrama from al-Ḥasan b. Muhammad b. 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib from his father Muhammad b. 'Alī from his grandfather 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib: I heard the apostle say, "I never gave a thought to what the people of the pagan era used to do but twice, because God came between me and my desires. Afterwards I never thought of evil when God honoured me with apostleship. Once I said to a young Qurayshī who was shepherding with me on the high ground of Mecca, "I should like you to look after my beasts for me while I go and spend the night in Mecca as young men do." He agreed and I went off with that intent, and when I came to the first house in Mecca I heard the sound of tambourines and flutes and was told that a marriage had just taken place. I sat down to look at them when God smote my ear and I fell asleep until I was woken by the sun. I came to my friend and in reply to his questions told him what had happened. Exactly the same thing occurred on another occasion. Afterwards I never thought of evil until God honoured me with his apostleship.'"

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## THE SACRILEGIOUS WAR (124)

This war broke out when the apostle was twenty years of age. It was so called because these two tribes, Kināna and Qays 'Aylān, fought in the sacred month. The chief of Quraysh and Kināna was Harb b. Umayya b. 'Abdu Shams. At the beginning of the day Qays got the upper hand but by midday victory went to Kināna (125).

## THE APOSTLE OF GOD MARRIES KHADĪJA (126)

Khadija was a merchant woman of dignity and wealth. She used to hire men to carry merchandise outside the country on a profit-sharing basis, for Quraysh were a people given to commerce. Now when she heard about the prophet's truthfulness, trustworthiness, and honourable character, she sent for him and proposed that he should take her goods to Syria and trade with them, while she would pay him more than she paid others. He was to take a lad of hers called Maysara. The apostle of God accepted the proposal, and the two set forth until they came to Syria.

The apostle stopped in the shade of a tree near a monk's cell, when the monk came up to Maysara and asked who the man was who was resting 120 beneath the tree. He told him that he was of Quraysh, the people who held the sanctuary; and the monk exclaimed: 'None but a prophet ever sat beneath this tree.'

Then the prophet sold the goods he had brought and bought what he wanted to buy and began the return journey to Mecca. The story goes that at the height of noon when the heat was intense as he rode his beast Maysara saw two angels shading the apostle from the sun's rays. When he brought Khadija her property she sold it and it amounted to double or thereabouts. Maysara for his part told her about the two angels who shaded him and of the monk's words. Now Khadija was a determined, noble, and intelligent woman possessing the properties with which God willed to honour her. So when Maysara told her these things she sent to the apostle of God and—so the story goes—said: 'O son of my uncle I like you because of our relationship and your high reputation among your people, your trustworthiness and good character and truthfulness.' Then she proposed marriage. Now Khadija at that time was the best born woman in Quraysh, of the greatest dignity and, too, the richest. All her people were eager to get possession of her wealth if it were possible.

Khadija was the daughter of Khuwaylid b. Asad b. 'Abdu'l-'Uzzā b. Quṣayy b. Kilāb b. Murra b. Ka'b b. Lu'ayy b. Ghālib b. Fihr. Her mother was Fātima d. Zā'ida b. al-Aṣamm b. Rawāḥa b. Ḥajar b. 'Abd b. Ma'īṣ b. 'Āmir b. Lu'ayy b. Ghālib b. Fihr. Her mother was Hāla d. 'Abdu Manāf b. al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr b. Munqidh b. 'Amr b. Ma'īṣ b. 'Āmir b. Lu'ayy b. Ghālib b. Fihr. Hāla's mother was Qilāba d. Su'ayd b. Sa'd b. Sahn b. 'Amr b. Huṣayṣ b. Ka'b b. Lu'ayy b. Ghālib b. Fihr.

The apostle of God told his uncles of Khadija's proposal, and his uncle Ḥamza b. 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib went with him to Khuwaylid b. Asad and asked for her hand and he married her (127).

She was the mother of all the apostle's children except Ibrāhīm, namely 121 al-Qāsim (whereby he was known as Abu'l-Qāsim); al-Ṭāhir, al-Ṭayyib,<sup>1</sup> Zaynab, Ruqayya, Umm Kulthūm, and Fātima (128).

Al-Qāsim, al-Ṭayyib, and al-Ṭāhir died in paganism. All his daughters lived into Islam, embraced it, and migrated with him to Medina (129).

Khadija had told Warāqa b. Naufal b. Asad b. 'Abdu'l-'Uzzā, who was her cousin and a Christian who had studied the scriptures and was a scholar, what her slave Maysara had told her that the monk had said and how he had seen the two angels shading him. He said, 'If this is true, Khadija, verily Muhammad is the prophet of this people. I knew that a prophet of this people was to be expected. His time has come,' or words to that effect. Warāqa was finding the time of waiting wearisome and used to say 'How long?' Some lines of his on the theme are:

I persevered and was persistent in remembering  
An anxiety which often evoked tears. And  
Confirmatory evidence kept coming from Khadija.  
Long have I had to wait, O Khadija,  
In the vale of Mecca in spite of my hope  
That I might see the outcome of thy words.  
I could not bear that the words of the monk  
You told me of should prove false:  
That Muhammad should rule over us  
Overcoming those who would oppose him.  
And that a glorious light should appear in the land  
To preserve men from disorders.  
His enemies shall meet disaster  
And his friends shall be victorious.  
Would that I might be there then to see,  
For I should be the first of his supporters,  
Joining in that which Quraysh hate  
However loud they shout in that Mecca of theirs.  
I hope to ascend through him whom they all dislike  
To the Lord of the Throne though they are cast down.  
Is it folly not to disbelieve in Him  
Who chose him Who raised the starry heights?  
If they and I live, things will be done  
Which will throw the unbelievers into confusion.  
And if I die, 'tis but the fate of mortals  
To suffer death and dissolution.

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<sup>1</sup> Commentators point out that these are not names but epithets (The Pure, The Good) applied to the one son 'Abdullah.

THE REBUILDING OF THE KA'BA WHEN THE APOSTLE  
ACTED AS UMPIRE

Quraysh decided to rebuild the Ka'ba when the apostle was thirty-five years of age (T. fifteen years after the sacrilegious war). They were planning to roof it and feared to demolish it, for it was made of loose stones above a man's height, and they wanted to raise it and roof it because men had stolen part of the treasure of the Ka'ba which used to be in a well in the middle of it. The treasure was found with Duwayk a freedman of B. Mulayh b. 'Amr of Khuzā'a (130). Quraysh cut his hand off; they say that the people who stole the treasure deposited it with Duwayk.

T. 1135 (T. Among those suspected were al-Hārith b. 'Amir b. Naufal, and Abū Ihāb b. 'Aziz b. Qays b. Suwayd al-Tamīmī who shared the same mother, and Abū Lahab b. 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib. Quraysh alleged that it was they who took the Ka'ba's treasure and deposited it with Duwayk, a freedman of B. Mulayh, and when Quraysh suspected them they informed against Duwayk and so his hand was cut off. It was said that they had left it with him, and people say that when Quraysh felt certain that the treasure had been with al-Hārith they took him to an Arab sorceress and in her rhymed utterances she decreed that he should not enter Mecca for ten years because he had profaned the sanctity of the Ka'ba. They allege that he was driven out and lived in the surrounding country for ten years.)

Now a ship belonging to a Greek merchant had been cast ashore at Judda and became a total wreck. They took its timbers and got them ready to roof the Ka'ba. It happened that in Mecca there was a Copt who was a carpenter, so everything they needed was ready to hand. Now a snake used to come out of the well in which the sacred offerings were thrown and sun itself every day on the wall of the Ka'ba. It was an object of terror because whenever anyone came near it it raised its head and made a rustling noise and opened its mouth, so that they were terrified of it. While it was thus sunning itself one day, God sent a bird which seized it and flew off with it. Thereupon Quraysh said, 'Now we may hope that God is pleased  
123 with what we propose to do. We have a friendly craftsman, we have got the wood and God has rid us of the snake.' When they had decided to pull it down and rebuild it Abū Wahb b. 'Amr b. 'Ā'idh b. 'Abd b. 'Imrān b. Makhzūm (131) got up and took a stone from the Ka'ba and it leapt out of his hand so that it returned to its place. He said, 'O Quraysh, do not bring into this building ill-gotten gains, the hire of a harlot, nor money taken in usury, nor anything resulting from wrong and violence.' People ascribe this saying to al-Walīd b. al-Mughīra b. 'Abdullah b. 'Umar b. Makhzūm.

'Abdullah b. Abū Najīh al-Makkī told me that he was told on the authority of 'Abdullah b. Ṣafwān b. Umayya b. Khalaf b. Wahb b. Ḥudhāfa b. Jumāh b. 'Amr b. Huṣayṣ b. Ka'b b. Lu'ayy that he saw a son of Ja'da b. Hubayra b. Abū Wahb b. 'Amr circumambulating the temple, and when

he inquired about him he was told who he was. 'Abdullah b. Ṣafwān said, 'It was the grandfather of this man (meaning Abū Wahb), who took the stone from the Ka'ba when Quraysh decided to demolish it and it sprang from his hand and returned to its place, and it was he who said the words which have just been quoted.'

Abū Wahb was the maternal uncle of the apostle's father. He was a noble of whom an Arab poet said:

If I made my camel kneel at Abū Wahb's door,  
It would start the morrow's journey with well filled saddle-bags;  
He was the noblest of the two branches of Lu'ayy b. Ghālib,  
When noble lineage is reckoned.  
Refusing to accept injustice, delighting in giving,  
His ancestors were of the noblest stock.  
A great pile of ashes lie beneath his cooking-pot,  
He fills his dishes with bread topped by luscious meat.<sup>1</sup>

Then Quraysh divided the work among them; the section near the door was assigned to B. 'Abdu Manāf and Zuhra. The space between the black stone and the southern corner, to B. Makhzūm and the Quraysbite tribes  
124 which were attached to them. The back of the Ka'ba to B. Jumāh and Sahm, the two sons of 'Amr b. Huṣayṣ b. Ka'b b. Lu'ayy. The side of the *hijr* to B. 'Abdu'l-Dār b. Quṣayy and to B. Asad b. al-'Uzzā b. Quṣayy, and to B. 'Adiy b. Ka'b b. Lu'ayy which is the Ḥaṭīm.

The people were afraid to demolish the temple, and withdrew in awe from it. Al-Walīd b. al-Mughīra said, 'I will begin the demolition.' So he took a pick-axe, went up to it saying the while, 'O God, do not be afraid<sup>2</sup> (132), O God, we intend only what is best.' Then he demolished the part at the two corners.<sup>3</sup> That night the people watched, saying, 'We will look out; if he is smitten we won't destroy any more of it and will restore it as it was; but if nothing happens to him then God is pleased with what we are doing and we will demolish it.' In the morning al-Walīd returned to the work of demolition and the people worked with him, until they got down to the foundation \*of Abraham.\* They came on green stones like camel's humps joined one to another.

A certain traditionist told me that a man of Quraysh inserted a crowbar between two stones in order to get one of them out, and when he moved the stone the whole of Mecca shuddered so they left the foundation alone. (T. so they had reached the foundation.)

I was told that Quraysh found in the corner a writing in Syriac. They could not understand it until a Jew read it for them. It was as follows: 'I am Allah the Lord of Bakka, I created it on the day that I created heaven

<sup>1</sup> Professor Affī reminds me that the second half of this verse is reminiscent of Imru'u'l-Qays (1. 12) where the fine fat flesh of the camel is compared with white silk finely woven.

<sup>2</sup> The feminine form indicates that the Ka'ba itself is addressed.

<sup>3</sup> Or 'two sacred stones'.

• . . . • Not in T.

and earth and formed the sun and moon, and I surrounded it with seven pious angels. It will stand while its two mountains stand, a blessing to its people with milk and water,' and I was told that they found in the *maqām* a writing, 'Mecca is God's holy house, its sustenance comes to it from three directions; let its people not be the first to profane it.'

Layth b. Abū Sulaym alleged that they found a stone in the Ka'ba forty years before the prophet's mission, if what they say is true, containing the inscription 'He that soweth good shall reap joy; he that soweth evil shall reap sorrow; can you do evil and be rewarded with good? Nay, as grapes cannot be gathered from thorns.'<sup>1</sup>

The tribes of Quraysh gathered stones for the building, each tribe collecting them and building by itself until the building was finished up to the black stone, where controversy arose, each tribe wanting to lift it to its place, until they went their several ways, formed alliances, and got ready for battle. The B. 'Abdu'l-Dār brought a bowl full of blood; then they and the B. 'Adiy b. Ka'b b. Lu'ayy pledged themselves unto death and thrust their hands into the blood. For this reason they were called the blood-lickers. Such was the state of affairs for four or five nights, and then Quraysh gathered in the mosque and took counsel and were equally divided on the question.

A traditionist alleged that Abū Umayya b. al-Mughīra b. 'Abdullah b. 'Umar b. Makhzūm who was at that time the oldest man of Quraysh, urged them to make the first man to enter the gate of the mosque umpire in the matter in dispute. They did so and the first to come in was the apostle of God. When they saw him they said, 'This is the trustworthy one. We are satisfied. This is Muhammad.' When he came to them and they informed him of the matter he said, 'Give me a cloak,' and when it was brought to him he took the black stone and put it inside it and said that each tribe should take hold of an end of the cloak and they should lift it together. They did this so that when they got it into position he placed it with his own hand, and then building went on above it.

Quraysh used to call the apostle of God before revelation came to him, 'the trustworthy one'; and when they had finished the building, according to their desire, al-Zubayr the son of 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib said about the snake which made the Quraysh dread rebuilding the Ka'ba:

126 I was amazed that the eagle went straight  
To the snake when it was excited.  
It used to rustle ominously  
And sometimes it would dart forth.  
When we planned to rebuild the Ka'ba  
It terrified us for it was fearsome.  
When we feared its attack, down came the eagle,  
Deadly straight in its swoop,

<sup>1</sup> A strange place in which to find a quotation from the Gospel; cf. Mt. 7. 16.

It bore it away, thus leaving us free  
To work without further hindrance.  
We attacked the building together,  
We had its foundations' and the earth.  
On the morrow we raised the foundation,  
None of our workers wore clothes.  
Through it did God honour the sons of Lu'ayy,  
Its foundation was ever associated with them,  
Banū 'Adiy and Murra had gathered there,  
Kilāb having preceded them.  
For this the King settled us there in power,  
For reward is to be sought from God (133).



## THE PROPHET'S MISSION

When Muhammad the apostle of God reached the age of forty God sent him in compassion to mankind, 'as an evangelist to all men'.<sup>2</sup> Now God had made a covenant with every prophet whom he had sent before him that he should believe in him, testify to his truth and help him against his adversaries, and he required of them that they should transmit that to everyone who believed in them, and they carried out their obligations in that respect. God said to Muhammad, 'When God made a covenant with the prophets (He said) this is the scripture and wisdom which I have given you, afterwards an apostle will come confirming what you know that you may believe in him and help him.' He said, 'Do you accept this and take up my burden?' i.e. the burden of my agreement which I have laid upon you. They said, 'We accept it.' He answered, 'Then bear witness and I am a witness with you.'<sup>3</sup> Thus God made a covenant with all the prophets that they should testify to his truth and help him against his adversaries and

<sup>1</sup> The passage quoted is John 15. 23 ff. It is interesting to note that the citation comes from the Palestinian Syriac Lectionary and not from the ordinary Bible of the Syriac-speaking Churches. The text is corrupt in one or two places; e.g. the phrase 'puffed up with pride and think that they will overcome me'. *Baṭirū* is an obvious corruption of *naṣarū*, which agrees with the Syriac and underlying Greek. *Waṣannū* seems to be another attempt to make sense of the passage. The next word I am unable to explain. The most interesting word is that rendered 'Comforter' which we find in the Palestinian Lectionary, but all other Syriac versions render 'paraclete', following the Greek. This word was well established in the Hebrew- and Aramaic-speaking world. The *menahhemana* in Syriac means the life-giver and especially one who raises from the dead. Obviously such a meaning is out of place here and what is meant is one who consoles and comforts people for the loss of one dear to them. This is the meaning in the Talmud and Targum. It ought to be pointed out that by the omission of the words 'that is written' before 'in the law' quite another meaning is given to the prophecy. The natural rendering would be 'the word that concerns the Nāmūs must be fulfilled'. To Muslims the Nāmūs was the angel Gabriel. Furthermore, the last words are translated as the ordinary Arab reader would understand *tashukku*; but in Syrian Arabic it could bear the meaning of the Gospel text 'stumble'. See further my article in *Al-Andalus*, xv, fasc. 2 (1950), 289-96.

<sup>2</sup> Sūra 34. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Sūra 3. 75.

they transmitted that obligation to those who believed in them among the two monotheistic religions.

(T. One whom I do not suspect told me from Sa'id b. Abū 'Arūba from T. 1142 Qatāda b. Di'āma al-Sadūsī from Abū'l-Jald: 'The Furqān came down on the 14th night of Ramaḍān. Others say, No, but on the 17th; and in support of this they appeal to God's word: 'And what we sent down to our servant on the day of al-Furqān, the day the two companies met'<sup>1</sup> which was the meeting of the apostle and the polytheists at Badr, and that took place on the morning of Ramaḍān 17th.)

Al-Zuhri related from 'Urwa b. Zubayr that 'Ā'isha told him that when 151 Allah desired to honour Muhammad and have mercy on His servants by means of him, the first sign of prophethood vouchsafed to the apostle was true visions, resembling the brightness of daybreak, which were shown to him in his sleep. And Allah, she said, made him love solitude so that he liked nothing better than to be alone.

'Abdu'l-Malik b. 'Ubaydullah b. Abū Sufyān b. al-'Alā' b. Jāriya the Thaqafite who had a retentive memory related to me from a certain scholar that the apostle at the time when Allah willed to bestow His grace upon him and endow him with prophethood would go forth for his affair and journey far afield until he reached the glens of Mecca and the beds of its valleys where no house was in sight; and not a stone or tree that he passed by but would say, 'Peace unto thee, O apostle of Allah.' And the apostle would turn to his right and left and look behind him and he would see naught but trees and stones. Thus he stayed seeing and hearing so long as it pleased Allah that he should stay. Then Gabriel came to him with the gift of God's grace whilst he was on Ḥirā' in the month of Ramaḍān.

Wahb b. Kaisān a client of the family of al-Zubayr told me: I heard 'Abdullah b. al-Zubayr say to 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr b. Qatāda the Laythite, 'O 'Ubayd tell us how began the prophethood which was first bestowed on the apostle when Gabriel came to him.' And 'Ubayd in my presence 152 related to 'Abdullah and those with him as follows: The apostle would pray in seclusion on Ḥirā' every year for a month to practise *taḥannuth* as was the custom of Quraysh in heathen days. *Taḥannuth* is religious devotion. Abū Ṭālib said:

By Thaur and him who made Thabīr firm in its place

And by those going up to ascend Ḥirā' and coming down (147).<sup>2</sup>

Wahb b. Kaisān told me that 'Ubayd said to him: Every year during that month the apostle would pray in seclusion and give food to the poor that came to him. And when he completed the month and returned from his seclusion, first of all before entering his house he would go to the Ka'ba and walk round it seven times or as often as it pleased God; then he would go back to his house until in the year when God sent him, in the month of

<sup>1</sup> Sūra 5. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Thaur and Thabīr are mountains near Mecca. The poem is given on p. 173; cf. Yāq. i. 938.

Ramaḍān in which God willed concerning him what He willed of His grace, the apostle set forth to Ḥirā' as was his wont, and his family with him. When it was the night on which God honoured him with his mission and showed mercy on His servants thereby, Gabriel brought him the command of God. 'He came to me,' said the apostle of God, 'while I was asleep, with a coverlet of brocade whereon was some writing, and said, "Read!" I said, "What shall I read?" He pressed me with it so tightly that I thought it was death; then he let me go and said, "Read!" I said, "What shall I read?" He pressed me with it again so that I thought it was death; then he let me go and said "Read!" I said, "What shall I read?" He pressed me with it the third time so that I thought it was death and said "Read!" I said, "What then shall I read?"—and this I said only to deliver myself from him, lest he should do the same to me again. He said:

"Read in the name of thy Lord who created,  
Who created man of blood coagulated.  
Read! Thy Lord is the most beneficent,  
Who taught by the pen,  
Taught that which they knew not unto men."<sup>1</sup>

Ṭ. 1150 So I read it, and he departed from me. And I awoke from my sleep, and it was as though these words were written on my heart. (Ṭ. Now none of God's creatures was more hateful to me than an (ecstatic) poet or a man possessed: I could not even look at them. I thought, Woe is me poet or possessed—Never shall Quraysh say this of me! I will go to the top of the mountain and throw myself down that I may kill myself and gain rest. So I went forth to do so and then) when I was midway on the mountain, I heard a voice from heaven saying, "O Muhammad! thou art the apostle of God and I am Gabriel." I raised my head towards heaven to see (who was speaking), and lo, Gabriel in the form of a man with feet astride the horizon, saying, "O Muhammad! thou art the apostle of God and I am Gabriel." I stood gazing at him, (Ṭ. and that turned me from my purpose) moving neither forward nor backward; then I began to turn my face away from him, but towards whatever region of the sky I looked, I saw him as before. And I continued standing there, neither advancing nor turning back, until Khadija sent her messengers in search of me and they gained the high ground above Mecca and returned to her while I was standing in the same place; then he parted from me and I from him, returning to my family. And I came to Khadija and sat by her thigh and drew close to her. She said, "O Abū'l-Qāsim,<sup>2</sup> where hast thou been? By God, I sent my messengers in search of thee, and they reached the high ground above Mecca and returned to me." (Ṭ. I said to her, "Woe is me poet or possessed." She said, "I take refuge in God from that O Abū'l-Qāsim. God would not treat you thus since he knows your truthfulness, your great trustworthiness, your fine character, and your kindness. This cannot be, my dear. Perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Sūra 96. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> The *kunya* or 'name of honour' of Muhammad.

you did see something." "Yes, I did," I said.) Then I told her of what I had seen; and she said, "Rejoice, O son of my uncle, and be of good heart. Verily, by Him in whose hand is Khadija's soul, I have hope that thou wilt be the prophet of this people." Then she rose and gathered her garments about her and set forth to her cousin Waraqa b. Naufal b. Asad b. 'Abdu'l-'Uzzā b. Quṣayy, who had become a Christian and read the scriptures and learned from those that follow the Torah and the Gospel. And when she related to him what the apostle of God told her he had seen and heard, Waraqa cried, 'Holy! Holy! Verily by Him in whose hand is Waraqa's soul, if thou hast spoken to me the truth, O Khadija, there hath come unto him the greatest Nāmūs (Ṭ. meaning Gabriel) who came to Moses aforetime, and lo, he is the prophet of this people. Bid him be of good heart.' So Khadija returned to the apostle of God and told him what Waraqa had said. (Ṭ. and that calmed his fears somewhat.) And when the apostle of God had finished his period of seclusion and returned (to Mecca), in the first place he performed the circumambulation of the Ka'ba, as was his wont. While he was doing it, Waraqa met him and said, 'O son of my brother, tell me what thou hast seen and heard.' The apostle told him, and Waraqa said, 'Surely, by Him in whose hand is Waraqa's soul, thou art the prophet of this people. There hath come unto thee the greatest Nāmūs, who came unto Moses. Thou wilt be called a liar, and they will use thee spitefully and cast thee out and fight against thee. Verily, if I live to see that day, I will help God in such wise as He knoweth.' Then he brought his head near to him and kissed his forehead; and the apostle went to his own house. (Ṭ. Waraqa's words added to his confidence and lightened his anxiety.)

Ismā'il b. Abū Ḥakīm, a freedman of the family of al-Zubayr, told me on Khadija's authority that she said to the apostle of God, 'O son of my uncle, are you able to tell me about your visitant, when he comes to you?' He replied that he could, and she asked him to tell her when he came. So when Gabriel came to him, as he was wont, the apostle said to Khadija, 'This is Gabriel who has just come to me.' 'Get up, O son of my uncle,' she said, 'and sit by my left thigh'. The apostle did so, and she said, 'Can you see him?' 'Yes,' he said. She said, 'Then turn round and sit on my right thigh.' He did so, and she said, 'Can you see him?' When he said that he could she asked him to move and sit in her lap. When he had done this she again asked if he could see him, and when he said yes, she disclosed her form and cast aside her veil while the apostle was sitting in her lap. Then she said, 'Can you see him?' And he replied, 'No.' She said, 'O son of my uncle, rejoice and be of good heart, by God he is an angel and not a satan.'

I told 'Abdullah b. Ḥasan this story and he said, 'I heard my mother Fāṭima, daughter of Ḥusayn, talking about this tradition from Khadija, but as I heard it she made the apostle of God come inside her shift, and thereupon Gabriel departed, and she said to the apostle of God, "This verily is an angel and not a satan."'