

and make your wealth multiply. For did you ever see return someone who expired, or a dead person revived? The (eternal) abode is before you and thought is not what you express. Embellish and venerate your sanctuary and preserve it well; for to it glorious tidings will come. And from it will emerge a noble prophet.'

"Then he would say,

'Daytime and night, every day has a happening; the same to us whether by day time or night.

They both bring events when they arrive and their coverings over us bring many blessings.

The Prophet MuḤammad will come unexpectedly, and bring such news; believable indeed is their bearer.'

"Then he would say, 'By God, were I but part of them, by hearing and sight, by hand and foot, I would vigorously rise up like a camel, and charge into it like a stallion.'

"Then he would say, 'Would that I could witness the impact of his mission, when the tribe seeks the truth without vigour.'"

Between the death of Ka'b b. Lu'ayy and the mission of the Messenger of God (SAAS) there was a period of 560 years.

An Account of the re-digging of the well zamzam by 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim, its whereabouts having been lost from the period when Jurhum filled and levelled it, up to his own time.

MuḤammad b. Ishāq stated, "'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was sleeping in the sacred enclosure when he received a vision ordering him to dig up *zamzam*.

"'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was the first to begin digging it, according to what was related to me by Yazīd b. Abū Ḥabīb al-Miṣrī from Marthad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Yazani, from 'Abd Allāh b. Dhurayr al-Ghāfiqī, namely, that the last mentioned heard 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib, God be pleased with him, telling how 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib had been ordered to dig *zamzam*. 'Alī reported 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib as saying: 'I was sleeping in the sanctuary when a vision came to me and said, "Dig *ṭiba!*" "But what's *ṭiba?*" I asked. But it vanished.

"Next day when I again went to my bed and slept, he came again and said, "Dig *barra!*" "But what's *barra?*" I asked. But it vanished.

"Next day when I again went to my bed and slept, he came again and said, "Dig *al-maḍnūna!*" "But what's *al-maḍnūna?*" I asked. But it vanished.

"Next day when I again went to my bed and slept, he came again and said, "Dig *zamzam!*" "But what's *zamzam?*" I asked. "It will never fail or dry up; it

will water the grand pilgrim. It lies between the dung and the blood, near the nest of the crow with the white leg and the ants' nest.”

“The matter having been clarified and he having been directed to its location, and knowing that he had been spoken to in truth, he took up his pick-axe next day and went off in the company of his son al-Hārith b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, his only son at that time. So he dug down for it and when the coping stone appeared to ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib he let out a cry of praise for God. Quraysh therefore knew that he had achieved his purpose so they came and told him, ‘O ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, that is the well of our father Ishmael; we have a right to it, so make us partners in it with yourself.’ ‘I will do no such thing; I was specifically assigned to this without you; I was given it from among you all,’ he replied. They asked again, ‘Treat us fairly; we’ll not leave you alone till we share with you in it.’ ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib replied, ‘Then appoint someone of your choice for me to ask to adjudicate the matter with you.’ ‘The woman diviner of the Banū Sa’d b. Hudhaym,’ they suggested. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib agreed; the woman lived in the uplands of Syria.

“So ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib mounted up with a company of men of the Banū Ummaya, along with members of each tribe of Quraysh and they all left. The earth at that time was waterless and having travelled some distance ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and his friends had used up their water. They were so thirsty that they became convinced they were doomed. They therefore asked the other party for water, but they refused, saying, ‘We’re in a waterless desert and we fear for ourselves a similar plight that afflicts you.’ ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib then said, ‘I think each man should dig a grave for himself with the strength he has remaining, so that when anyone dies his friends can put him in the hole and cover him up, and so on till there is only one man left. Better the loss (without burial) of one than that of a whole company.’ ‘What you instruct is good,’ they agreed.

“So each man dug himself a hole, and they sat down to await death from thirst. But then ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib told his companions, ‘By God, our casting ourselves down by our own hands like this for death without searching the land and exerting ourselves is truly weakness; God may well provide us water somewhere in this land. Mount up!’ So they did so. But when ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib urged his mount up, a spring of sweet water burst up from beneath its hoof! ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib made exclamations of God’s greatness, as did his companions; he and they dismounted, drank, and filled their water flasks. Then ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib called the Quraysh tribesmen who had been watching all this, saying, ‘Come on over to the spring. God has given us water.’ So they came and drank, all filling their flasks. They then said, ‘Judgement has been made, by God, in your favour against us! We won’t ever dispute with you over *zamzam*. He who gave you this water in this desert is also He who gave you *zamzam*. So return to your drawing of water, it being your right.’

“So he and they all went back without consulting the diviner. And Quraysh gave ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib free access to *zamzam*.”

Ibn Ishāq stated, “And that is the account I heard on the authority of ‘Ali b. Abū Ṭālib concerning *zamzam*.”

He also said, “I heard someone relate a tradition that ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was told, when ordered to dig *zamzam*:

‘Then pray for abundant water without impurities to quench God’s pilgrims at all the sacred sites.

‘There’s nothing to fear so long as it provides.’

“Having been told so, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib went to Quraysh and said to them, ‘You should know that I have been ordered to dig *zamzam*.’ They asked, ‘And was it explained to you where it lies?’ When he responded in the negative, they told him, ‘Then go back to your bed where you had your vision. For if it in truth came from God, it will be made clear to you, whereas if it came from Satan, it will not reappear to you.’ ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib did return and slept and did receive a visitation, being told: ‘Dig *zamzam*. You will not regret if you do dig it. It is an inheritance from your most mighty Father. It will never fail or dry up. It will water the grand pilgrim. Like fleeing ostriches, it will never be divided. A truth-sayer vows it to a benefactor. It will be an inheritance and a secure contract. It is not as some things you might have known. And it lies between the dung and the blood.’”

Ibn Ishāq went on, “It is claimed that when this was said to ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, he asked, ‘Then where is it?’ He was then told that it was near the ants’ nest where the crow would peck the next day. But God knows whether that was so.

“Next day ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib went with his son al-Ḥārith, his only son at that time (al-Umawī added: ‘along with his servant Aṣram’) and found the ants’ nest and the crow pecking near by, between the two idols Isāf and Nā’ila, at which Quraysh would make sacrifice. So he brought his pick-axe to dig where he had been told. But Quraysh stood in his way saying, ‘By God, we’ll not allow you to dig down between our two idols to which we make sacrifice.’ ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib addressed his son al-Ḥārith, ‘Protect me so I can dig, for by God I shall carry on and do what I was ordered.’ When Quraysh realized that he would not back down, they made way for him to dig and left him alone. He had not been digging for long before the coping stone appeared and he acclaimed the greatness of God, knowing that truth had been spoken to him. Persisting in the digging, he found there two golden gazelles that Jurhum had buried, along with some white metal swords and some breast-plates.

“Quraysh then addressed him, ‘O ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, we have a right to share in this.’ ‘No,’ he replied, ‘but let us decide what is equitable between us. Let us use divinatory arrows over it.’ ‘What shall we do then?’ they asked. He replied, ‘I will make two arrows for the *ka’ba*, two for myself, and two for you. Whoever

has his arrows come out for something, that he shall have. Whoever has his arrows left behind gets nothing.' They agreed that this was fair. So he made two yellow arrows for the *ka'ba*, two black ones for himself, and two white ones for them. Then he gave the arrows to the diviner at the site of the idol Hubal, who was to cast them. And Hubal was the largest of their idols; that was why Abū Sufyān said at the battle of Uḥud, 'Arise, O Hubal!', referring to that idol. So 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib said a prayer to God."

Yūnus b. Bukayr recounted, from Muḥammad b. Ishāq, that 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib began saying:

"O God, You are the much-praised King; my Lord; You are the one who initiates and repeats,

The one who is firmly holding the rocky mountain; from You comes all that is new or that is old.

If You wish, You give inspiration as You want, to find the place of the ornaments and the steel.

So make clear today what You wish; I have made a vow to Him who decides
Give it, O my Lord, to me, and I'll not go back."

"The diviner cast the arrows and the two yellow ones went towards the gazelles, giving them to the *ka'ba*, the two black ones came out for the swords and armour, making them for 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, but the two arrows for Quraysh remained behind. So 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib hammered down the two swords into a door for the *ka'ba* into which he incorporated the two golden gazelles. This was, so they say, the first decoration of gold the *ka'ba* had."

Thereafter 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib took charge of providing water from *zamzam* to the pilgrims. And Ibn Ishāq and others relate that Mecca had many wells in it prior to the appearance of *zamzam* at the time of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Ibn Ishāq, moreover, enumerated and named them, and told their whereabouts in and around Mecca as well as those who dug them. His account of this concludes, "*Zamzam* overshadowed all the other wells, their customers preferring to go to it, because of its proximity to the holy mosque, the superiority of its water over the rest, and its having been the well of Ishmael, son of Abraham. The 'Abd Manāf tribe expressed because of it a superiority over all Quraysh as well as all the other Arabs."

It is established in the *ṣaḥīḥ* collection of Muslim in the material relating to the adoption of Islam by Abū Dharr, that the Messenger of God (ṢAAS) said the following about *zamzam*: "It is the taste supreme. It is the cure of disease."

The Imām Aḥmad (Ibn Hanbal) said, "'Abd Allāh b. al-Walīd related to us, on the authority of 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mu'nil, from Abū al-Zubayr, from Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh, that the Messenger of God (ṢAAS) said, 'The water of *zamzam* is for what is drunk from it.'"

Ibn Māja related this also, from a *ḥadīth* of ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Muḍmil. They spoke it and gave its wording as: “The water of *zamzam* is for what is drunk to it.” Suwayd b. Sa‘īd related it from ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak, from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abū al-Mawālī, from Muḥammad b. al-Munkadir, from Jābir, from the Prophet (ṢAAS) who said, “The water of *zamzam* is for what is drunk to it.” However, Suwayd b. Sa‘īd is a weak link. The tradition as preserved from Ibn al-Mubārak from ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Muḍmil is as given above. Al-Ḥākim related it from Ibn ‘Abbās in the form “The water of *zamzam* is for what is drunk to it.” And this is questionable. But God knows best.

Similarly, Ibn Māja and al-Ḥākim relate that Ibn ‘Abbās said to a man, “When you drink from *zamzam* face the *ka‘ba* and repeat the name of God. Then breathe deeply three times and drink from it until you are full. When finished, give praise to God. For the Messenger of God (ṢAAS) said, ‘The evidence of the differences between us and the hypocrites is that they do not drink to the fill from the water of *zamzam*.’”

And it is related from ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib that he said, “O God, I do not allow a person to wash with it; it is for people to drink *ḥillun*, ‘freely available’, *wa*, ‘and’, *ballun*, ‘allowed’.”⁵¹

Some learned scholars report this from al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib but in fact it came from ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib himself, for it was he who restored *zamzam* as stated above. But God knows best.

Al-Umawī wrote in his *Maghāzī* work as follows: “Abū ‘Ubayd related to us, Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd informed us, from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥarmala, that the last mentioned said that he heard Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab relate that ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim remarked when he dug *zamzam*, ‘I do not allow a person to wash with it; it is freely available and allowed for a person to drink it.’ To that purpose he had two basins for it, one for drinking, the other for the prayer ablution. At that point he said, ‘I do not allow a person to wash with it, deeming it inappropriate for the mosque to be washed in.’”

According to Abū ‘Ubayd, al-Asma‘ī stated that his saying *wa ballun* is an *itbā‘*,⁵² “corroboration of the preceding word”, *ḥillun*. But Abū ‘Ubayd objected that an *itbā‘* cannot occur with the *waw* of conjunction (*wa* meaning “and”) but it is used because, as Mu‘tamir b. Sulaymān had indicated, *ballun* in the language of Ḥimyar means *mubāḥ*, i.e. “allowed”.

Abū ‘Ubayd then said, “Abū Bakr b. ‘Ayyāsh related to us, from ‘Āsim b. Abū al-Nujūd, that he heard Zirr (say) that he heard al-‘Abbās state, ‘I do not allow a person to wash in it.’” And ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī related to us, as did

51. Discussion of these words *hillun wa ballun* follows in the text. Also, another meaning of the word *ballun* is “for wetting”.

52. In Arabic grammar *itbā‘* is intensification by repetition of a word with its initial consonant changed.

Sufyān, from 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alqama, that the last mentioned heard Ibn 'Abbās say the same."

And this tradition relating back to both of them is true; it has them so saying in their own era with the purpose of informing and establishing what 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib had specified when he dug it; thus it does not contradict the preceding account. But God knows best.

The rights to providing water for the pilgrims remained with 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib as long as he lived, thereafter passing to his son Abū Ṭālib for a period. Then it so happened that he became impoverished for a while and went into debt to his brother al-'Abbās for 10,000 from one year to the next. Abū Ṭālib spent the money on matters relating to watering the pilgrims, and when the next year arrived he had nothing left. So he asked his brother for a loan of 14,000 to the following year, at which time, he promised, he would repay the total debt. But al-'Abbās agreed only on condition that if Abū Ṭālib did not repay it, control of the well would transfer to himself. To this Abū Ṭālib agreed.

When the next year arrived Abū Ṭālib had nothing to give to al-'Abbās and so he relinquished control of the well to him. Thereafter it went to 'Abd Allāh, al-'Abbās' son, then to 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, to Dāwūd b. 'Alī, to Sulaymān b. 'Alī and to 'Isā b. 'Alī. Then al-Manṣūr took it over and entrusted its control to his *mawlā*, his freed slave, Abū Ruzayn. Al-Umawī gave this account.

An Account of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's vow to sacrifice one of his sons.

Ibn Ishāq stated, "It is claimed that when 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib received such opposition from Quraysh over the digging of *zamzam*, he vowed that if ten sons were born to him who grew up and protected him, he would sacrifice one of them for God at the *ka'ba*.

"Eventually he had ten sons grown up whom he knew would give him protection. Their names were al-Ḥārith, al-Zubayr, Ḥajl, Ḍirār, al-Muqawwim, Abū Lahab, al-'Abbās, Ḥamza, Abū Ṭālib, and 'Abd Allāh. He assembled them and told them of his vow and asked them to honour his pledge to God, Almighty and All-glorious is He. They obeyed, and asked him what he wanted them to do. He asked each of them to take an arrow, write his name on it and return to him.

"They did so and he went with them inside the *ka'ba* to the site of their god Hubal where there was the well in which offerings to the *ka'ba* would be placed. There, near Hubal, were seven arrows which they would use for divining a judgement over some matter of consequence, a question of blood-money, kinship, or the like. They would come to Hubal to seek a resolution, accepting whatever they were ordered to do or to refrain from."

The outcome was that when ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib came to seek judgement with the arrows from Hubal, the one with the name of his son ‘Abd Allāh came forth. He was his youngest boy and the one he loved most, but ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib took his son ‘Abd Allāh by the hand, drew out his knife, and went up to Isāf and Nā’ila⁵³ to sacrifice him. At this Quraysh left their meeting-places and asked him what he intended to do. When he replied that he was going to sacrifice ‘Abd Allāh, they, along with ‘Abd Allāh’s brothers, said, “By God, do not sacrifice him without seeking forgiveness for him; if you do this men will keep bringing their sons to sacrifice and how could that go on?”

Yūnus b. Bukayr related from Ibn Ishāq that al-‘Abbās was the one who drew ‘Abd Allāh out from beneath his father’s foot when he had placed it on him to sacrifice him. And it is said that he scarred his face so badly that it remained visible there till he died.

Thereafter Quraysh advised that ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib should go to the Hijāz where there was a woman diviner who had an attendant spirit, and that he should consult her. “That”, they said, “is the best you can do. If she then orders you to sacrifice him, do so; but if she tells you to do something that provides you a way out, then accept it.”

So they left for Medina, where they found that the diviner whose name was Sajāh, as Yunus b. Bukayr reported from Ibn Ishāq, was at Khaybar. They rode off again and went to her and sought her advice, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib telling her of the whole problem regarding him and his son. She told them: “Leave me today, until my attendant spirit comes and I can ask him.”

They left her and ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib prayed to God. Next day they went back to her and she informed them that she had had a message. “How much is the blood-money you prescribe?” she asked. “Ten camels,” they told her, that being then the case. “Then go back to your land and present your man as an offering and do the same with ten camels. Then cast arrows to decide between him and them. If the divining arrow points to him then add to the number of camels until your god is satisfied; if it points to the camels, then sacrifice them in his place. That way you will please your god and save your man.”

So they went back to Mecca and, when they had agreed to do as she had said, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib said prayers to God. Then they offered up ‘Abd Allāh and the ten camels as sacrifice and cast the arrow. It came out against ‘Abd Allāh so they added ten more camels and tried once more. Again it came out against him and they added ten more, then kept on doing so until the camels reached one hundred in number. When they next cast the arrow it came out for the camels. At that point the men of Quraysh told ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who was standing near Hubal praying to God, “It’s all over! Your God is pleased, O ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib.” It is

53. Two idols referred to earlier.

claimed that he then replied, "No, not until I cast the arrows three times." So they did cast three times, the arrow always indicating the camels, which were slaughtered and left there for anyone to take without hindrance. And Ibn Hishām reported "And it is said, for any wild beast to take as well."

It is otherwise related that when the number of camels reached 100 the arrow was still against 'Abd Allāh, so they added another 100, making 200, and the same thing happened. Likewise it did with 300. It was then that the arrow came out against the camels, whereupon 'Abd al Muṭṭalib slaughtered them. But the first account is the true one. Though God knows best.

Ibn Jarīr related, from Yūnus b. 'Abd al-A'qā, from Ibn Wahb, from Yūnus b. Yazīd, from al-Zuhrī from Qabiṣa b. Dhu'ayb that Ibn 'Abbās was asked for advice by a woman who had vowed to sacrifice her son at the *ka'ba*. He told her to sacrifice 100 camels instead and related to her the above account about 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. She then asked 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar but he gave her no legal decision, simply refraining from doing so. The problem then reached Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, who was the governor of Medina. He said, "Neither of them gave a correct decision." He then ordered the woman to perform whatever acts of charity she could, forbidding her from sacrificing her son and not ordering her to slaughter any camels. And the people accepted Marwān's judgement in the matter. But God knows best.

*An Account of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's marriage of his son 'Abd Allāh to
Āmina bint Wahb al-Zuhriyya.*

Ibn Ishāq stated: "'Abd al-Muṭṭalib then left, holding his son 'Abd Allāh by the hand. They passed, it is claimed, a woman of Banū Asad b. 'Abd al-'Uzzā b. Quṣayy who was named Umm Qattāl; she was the sister of Waraqa b. Nawfal b. Asad b. 'Abd al-'Uzzā b. Quṣayy and had been there at the *ka'ba*. She stared into the face of 'Abd Allāh and asked him where he was going. 'With my father,' he replied. 'If you will have me now,' she said, 'you can have the like number of camels that were sacrificed for you!' 'But I am with my father, and I may not oppose him or leave him,' he answered."

'Abd al-Muṭṭalib took him further on till they reached Wahb b. 'Abd Manāf b. Zuhra b. Kilāb b. Murra b. Ka'b b. Lu'ayy b. Ghālib b. Fihr who was at that time leader of Banū Zuhra in both age and honour. He agreed to marry to 'Abd Allāh his daughter Āmina, who was then the woman most highly regarded among his people.

It is claimed that 'Abd Allāh consummated the marriage then and there, and that she conceived the Messenger of God (ṢAAS). Afterwards he left her and passed again by the woman who had made a proposition to him. He asked her,