



# THE GLORIOUS BIRTH OF OUR MASTER MUḤAMMAD ﷺ

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The birth of the Prophet ﷺ was showered with Divine honour, and overseen by Holy providence. Upon his ﷺ birth, Allah ﷻ revealed many miracles and wonders, as a foreshadowing of his prophethood, and a preparation for his Message, and a sign of his immense rank, and an indication that he ﷺ occupied an exalted status.

**One manifestation of this** was the light that shone out at the moment of his birth ﷺ. Imām Aḥmad narrated, on the authority of ‘Irbāḍ ibn Sariya ؓ, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Indeed, I was Allah’s Seal of the Prophets whilst Adam yet lay in his mould of clay.<sup>1</sup> I shall tell you of this: I am the answer to Ibrāhīm’s prayer, and the good news of ‘Isā, and the vision my mother saw, as indeed all the mothers of the Prophets saw.’

‘Irbāḍ ibn Sariya added: ‘When the mother of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ bore him, she saw a light that illuminated the palaces of the Levant.<sup>2</sup> So he ﷺ was the answer to the prayer Ibrāhīm ؑ made when he said: ‘Our Lord, and raise up among them a Messenger from amongst them, who shall convey unto them Your Revelations...’<sup>3</sup> And he ﷺ was the good news that ‘Isā ؑ conveyed when he said: ‘And (I am) a conveyer of the glad tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name is Aḥmad...’<sup>4</sup> And the light that appeared at the moment of his birth was seen by his mother with her own eyes, clearly and plainly, as the other narrations confirm.

<sup>1</sup> Qaṣṭalānī said: ‘This means when he lay on the ground, before the spirit had been breathed into him.’

<sup>2</sup> Also narrated by Bazzār and Ṭabarānī. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar said: ‘It was declared rigorously authentic by Ibn Ḥibbān and Ḥākim, and Aḥmad also narrated a similar Ḥadīth on the authority of Abū Umāma; and Ibn Ishāq narrated the like of it on the authority of Thawr ibn Yazīd, on the authority of Khālīd ibn Ma’dān, on the authority of several of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who said that Bostra in the land of Syria was illuminated by this light.’

<sup>3</sup> Qur’ān 2:129

<sup>4</sup> Qur’ān 61:6

Abū Nu‘aym narrated, on the authority of Umm Salama ؓ, that Āmina, mother of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, said: ‘On the night of his birth, I saw a light that illuminated the palaces of Syria so I could see them.’

Muḥammad ibn Sa‘d narrated, on the authority of several transmitters including ‘Aṭā ibn ‘Abbās, that Āmina bint Wahb said: ‘The moment he ﷺ came from me, a light emerged that illuminated everything from east to west, and then he ﷺ fell to the floor and knelt.’

‘Uthmān ibn Abī al-‘Āṣ narrated that his mother, the Companion Umm ‘Uthmān al-Thaqafiyya, whose name was Fāṭima bint ‘Abdullāh,<sup>5</sup> said: ‘When I attended the birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ I saw that the room where he was born was filled with light, and I saw the stars come nearer until I thought they would fall upon me. When Āmina bore him, a light shone forth from her that illuminated the room and the whole house, until I could see nothing but light.’<sup>6</sup>

In *al-Sīrat al-Shāmiyya*, it is reported that Shaykh Abū Shāma ؓ said: ‘The light that appeared at the moment of his ﷺ birth was famous amongst Quraysh, and oft-mentioned by them. It was to this light that ‘Abbās ؓ alluded in his poem when he said:

*Upon your birth, the earth was bathed in brightness,  
And by your light the far horizons shone.’*

The appearance of this light at the moment of his ﷺ birth was a sign of what would later come, and the light that would guide the world, and put an end to the darkness of disbelief. Allah ﷻ said: ﴿There has come unto you from Allah a light and a clear Scripture, by which Allah will guide those who seek His pleasure to paths of peace, and take them out of the darkness and into the light by His leave.﴾<sup>7</sup> And with this light which he brought from Allah, he illuminated minds, and gave life to dead hearts, and opened blind eyes and deaf ears.

**Another of the wonders that accompanied his birth ﷺ to foreshadow his Prophethood** was that narrated by Bayhaqī and Abū Nu‘aym, on the authority of Ḥassān ibn Thābit, the poet of the Prophet ﷺ: ‘I was a boy of seven or eight years,<sup>8</sup> possessed of full reason and able to understand what I saw and heard, when one day, a Jew shouted: “O hordes of Quraysh! Was any born to you this night?” They answered that they did not know, and so he said, “Find out, because this night the Prophet of this community was born.”’<sup>9</sup>

**Another of the wonders that accompanied his birth ﷺ to foreshadow his Prophethood** was the trembling and splitting of the palace of Khosrau, and the collapse of fourteen of its towers, in which state it has remained until the present day, as Ḥāfiẓ Zurqānī stated.

The palace did not split because of a defect in its construction, since its construction in Iraq was carried out proficiently, and it was built with large bricks and plaster, its breadth one hundred cubits and its height the same.

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<sup>5</sup> Zurqānī said that Abū ‘Umar [Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr] and others counted her as being among the Companions.

<sup>6</sup> Zurqānī said: ‘It was narrated by Bayhaqī, Ṭabarī, and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, and the author of *Faṭḥ al-Bārī* ascribed it to Ṭabarānī, and said that it is attested to by the Ḥadīth of ‘Irbāḍ ibn Sariya (which we have just mentioned).’ (vi.426)

<sup>7</sup> Qur’ān 5:15-16

<sup>8</sup> Zurqānī said: ‘they say that he lived until the age of one hundred and twenty, as did his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather before him; he died in the year 54 AH.’

<sup>9</sup> Narrated by Ḥākim, and also by Ya‘qūb ibn Sufyān with a sound chain of transmission. (*Faṭḥ al-Bārī*)

The caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd wanted to demolish it because he had heard there was a great treasure buried beneath it, but he was unable to do so. This is because Allah ﷻ decreed that it remain a sign of His Prophet ﷺ for all the ages.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr devoted a special section of his *Bidāya* to the signs and wonders that appeared on the night of the Prophet's ﷺ birth, mentioning among them: the appearance of light as he ﷺ was born, and his falling to the ground, kneeling, and raising his head to the sky, and the light that was seen in the house in which he was born, and the way the stars drew near, and the splitting of the palace of Khosrau and the collapse of its towers, and the extinguishing of the fires, and the vision of the High Priest of the Zoroastrians.

He then added: 'And there were more signs besides these.' He then went on to list all the proofs for these events and their multiple chains of transmission.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar also mentioned a number of signs of Prophethood that were revealed before the mission began, and then said, 'And as for the signs of his Prophethood ﷺ that appeared at his birth ﷺ,' and then mentioned the Ḥadīths that chronicle the appearance of the light. He then said:

There is also the Ḥadīth of Makhzūm ibn Hānī' al-Makhzūmī, who narrated from his father – who lived to the age of one hundred and fifty – that on the night when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was born, the palace of Khosrau split twain, and fourteen of its towers fell, and the fires of Persia went out after having been lit for a thousand years,<sup>10</sup> and the waters of Lake Sāwa dried up, and the Zoroastrian High Priest dreamt of wild camels leading Arabian horses across the Tigris and spreading through the land. When Khosrau awoke, he was frightened by what had happened (i.e. the rupture of the palace and so on), and so he asked the scholars of his kingdom about it, and they sent a message to Saḫīh... (the story goes on)

Ḥāfiẓ 'Asqalānī also mentioned this, and ascribed it to Bayhaqī, Abū Nu'aym, Kharā'itī, Ibn 'Asākir and Ibn Jarīr. The only reason we have mentioned that this was narrated by all these great Ḥadīth masters is to provide a definitive argument against those whose hearts are diseased or astray, and to increase the certainty and strength of those who were already certain of these matters.

**One of the wonders that foreshadowed his Prophethood ﷺ and occurred even before his birth** was the story of the Owners of the Elephant, and how Allah ﷻ sent dense clouds of birds to attack them one by one, each bird finding its mark, not missing a single one of them, and how Allah ﷻ destroyed them and crushed them.

And all of this was for no reason other than to protect the Sacred House which would become the Qibla for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his followers, and their place of prayer and pilgrimage, standing firm for them until the Day of Resurrection.

Because of this, Allah ﷻ mentioned this story in the Noble Qur'an, and revealed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to remind him of this great favour, and how He ﷻ charged Himself with defending this Sacred House, which one day would be the place of prayer and pilgrimage for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; and so He said: ﴿Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant?﴾<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The fires were kept burning as a religious rite of the pagan Zoroastrians. [t]

<sup>11</sup> Qur'an 105:1

**The date of his birth ﷺ:** He ﷺ was born in the Year of the Elephant fifty days after the incident took place, on the twelfth day of *Rabi' al-Awwal* at the break of dawn, according to the opinion of the majority of the scholars.

The day was a Monday, as is borne out by the Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, on the authority of Abū Qatāda, in which it was mentioned that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was asked about the merits of fasting on Mondays, to which he replied, 'That is the day I was born, and the day I was sent.' (Or 'the day I received Revelation.')

Aḥmad narrated in his *Musnad* that Ibn 'Abbās said: 'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was born on a Monday, and received the Revelation on a Monday, and left Mecca to emigrate to Medina on a Monday, and entered Medina on a Monday, and raised the Black Stone and put it in its place on a Monday.'

This refers to the day Quraysh rebuilt the Ka'ba, and argued as to which of them should be the one to lift the Black Stone, as we mentioned earlier.

