

Life in the Desert

Contributed by pmuhammad.com
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The time soon came for the foster parents to set off for their desert home with their charges, so Halima made her farewells to Lady Amina who handed her beloved son up to her as she sat upon her donkey. Halima and her husband were quick to notice the multiple blessings that constantly came their way. Their donkey had always been the slowest ride because it was frail, and more recently showed signs of progressive lameness, but now it out-ran the others whilst the rest of the party looked on in amazement asking Halima if the donkey was the same one she had come with.

The Land of Bani Sa'ad

Before they reached the land of Bani Sa'ad, the vegetation had already become scant, but upon reaching it there was no vegetation in sight, the land was barren with signs of drought everywhere. However, Halima's sheep would wander off yet always return full. It was so noticeable that the others in her party told their shepherds to take their sheep and follow Halima's, however, hers always returned full but theirs did not and yielded abundant milk. The blessings never ceased to escape the attention of Halima's family and when they reached home their land became fertile once more as the palm trees bore an abundance of dates.

Al Shaima

Halima had an older daughter named Hudhafa, also known as Al Shaima. Al Shaima loved her new brother dearly and never had to wait to be asked to look after him. It was a very happy time for the entire family and Halima's foster child grew rapidly in strength and outgrew other children of similar age. Halima's tribe in particular was famous for speaking pure Arabic and many of its tribesmen had become famous on account of their eloquent speech and poetry; it was in such an environment that the young Muhammad learned the art of the precise diction of pure Arabic, however he did not learn how to read or write.

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The Return to Mecca

Halima never ceased to wonder at the growth and strength of her foster son and thought it was time for him to visit his mother in Mecca so preparations were made for the journey. When they reached Mecca Lady Amina was delighted to see and hold her son once more, but an epidemic had broken out and she feared for his safety so it was agreed that Halima should take him back with her to their desert home.

The Two Angels

Little Muhammad loved to play with his brothers but also enjoyed sitting alone by himself. Several months had passed since his return from Mecca when one day as his brothers were playing not far away among the sheep and he sat alone, two angels, having taken the appearance of men, dressed in pure white robes came to him with a golden bowl containing snow. Muhammad was neither afraid nor yet concerned when they miraculously opened his chest, felt around his heart, washed it, then sealed his chest and left leaving no trace whatsoever of an incision. His brothers saw the two men, and watched in awe what had happened and as soon as they left ran as fast as their legs could carry them to tell their mother.

Halima and her husband rushed to Muhammad and found him standing alone. His face looked somewhat pale and Halima held him gently in her arms and asked what had happened. He told them about the two men and how they had opened his chest and looked for something, but what it was they were looking for he told them he did not know. Halima looked at his chest but there were no signs of an opening whatsoever, nor yet were there any traces of blood. She looked for the two men, but there was no sign of them either.

The only difference she could find was that the small mark she had taken to be a birth-mark between his shoulders appeared to be raised a little more than usual. Halima and her husband questioned their sons repeatedly, but none deviated from the account they first related and were convinced that the boys had spoken the truth. Halima and her husband were extremely worried by the incident and feared that bad jinn were trying to harm their beloved foster son. Fearing for his safety, it was decided to return the young Muhammad to Lady Amina, so once again Halima set off with Muhammad to Mecca.

Halima's Decision

Halima decided not to tell Lady Amina the real reason for his early return but Lady Amina was quick to realize she was concealing something. At last Lady Amina persuaded Halima to tell her the real reason for her son's hasty return. Lady

Amina listened intently to the account of the opening of his chest and of Halima's fear that some bad jinn may be trying to harm him. Lady Amina comforted her and told her that no harm would come to him because she had been told that he was destined for an important role.

She also told Halima about her blessed pregnancy and of the light that had shone from her womb. After hearing this Halima's heart was at peace once more and greatly relieved to know her fears for her beloved foster child were unfounded. Lady Amina thanked Halima for the loving care she gave her son and once again Halima and her foster son returned to their home in the desert where he lived with his extended family until he reached five years old at which time he returned to live with his mother in Mecca.

The event of his chest opening was described in detail by Prophet Muhammad, (sa) in later years. He told his companions that the men were angels and when they opened his chest they were looking for a speck of black. Upon finding it they removed it and washed his heart in pure snow from the golden bowl then resealed his chest. He also said that each son of Adam, except Mary and her son, is touched by satan at birth.