

Chapter Seventeen

Chapter on how your Lord عَزَّوَجَلَّ dealt with the people of the Elephant in the year of the birth of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ out of honour for him and his city

1. Imam Ibn Sa'd (d. 230 AH), Imam Abi Dunya (d. 281 AH) and Imam Ibn Asakir (d. 571 AH) عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّضْوَانُ extracted a narration from Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn 'Ali who stated that, "The arrival of the people of the Elephant occurred in the middle of the month of Muharram so there were fifty nights between the event of the elephant and between the Mawlid (blessed birth of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

2. Imam Al-Baihaqi (d. 458 AH) and Imam Abu Nu'aym (d. 430 AH) عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّضْوَانُ extracted a narration of Sayyiduna Ibn 'Abbas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا who stated, "The people of the Elephant set off until when they reached close to Makkah, (Sayyiduna) 'Abdul Muttalib (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) faced them and he said to their king: 'What brought you to us? Why did you not send a message so that we would bring to you everything you wanted?' The king said, "I was informed of this house which is such that no one enters it except he is in safety (peace) so I came to scare its people." (Sayyiduna) 'Abdul Muttalib (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said to him, "Indeed we will bring to you whatever you want so return." However, he refused and was adamant to enter and he carried on travelling towards the House of Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). (Sayyiduna) 'Abdul Muttalib (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) went back and stood upon a mountain and said, "I can't witness the destruction of this House and its people." Then he recited this stanza:

*O Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ)! Indeed, every worshipped one has a sanctified place so protect Your sanctified place.
Their power will never overcome Your Power. O Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ)! So fulfil what You will.*

Something similar to a cloud appeared from the side of the ocean until birds created a shadow over them. The elephants began to yell at them (the army of the king) and made them like the left-over devoured leaves of palms.

3. Sayyiduna Sa'eed bin Mansoor (d. 227 AH) and Imam Al Baihaqi (d. 458 AH) عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّضْوَانُ extracted a narration from Sayyiduna Ikrimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in relation to the Statement of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ "...flocks of birds"¹. He said, "They came from the area from (around) the ocean. They had heads like wild animals. They had never been seen before that nor after that. They had affected the skins of the people similar to chicken pox. This was the first time that chicken pox had been seen."

¹ Surah Al-Feel. Surah No:105. Verse:3.



4. Sayyiduna Sa'eed bin Mansoor (d. 227 AH) رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ extracted a narration from Ubayd Ibn Umayr al-Laythi who stated, "When Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) willed to destroy the people of the elephant, he sent birds to them which rose from the ocean which were like iron hooks and which were (piebald) both black and white. Every bird from them had three stones with it. One stone was on their beak and two stones were on their feet. Then they came and made lines over their heads. Then they screamed and let go what was in their feet and in their beaks. There was no stone that fell upon a man except that it left from the other side. If it fell on his head, it would come out from his bottom. If it fell on a part of his body, it would come out from the other side. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) sent a severe wind so the birds struck their feet and increased their severity until they were all destroyed."

5. Imam Baihaqi (d. 458 AH) and Imam Abu Nu'aym (d. 430 AH) عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّضْوَانُ extracted a narration from the chain of Sayyiduna Ibn 'Abbas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا who stated the people of the elephant descended upon Safaah². (Sayyiduna) 'Abdul Muttalib (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) came to them and said, "Indeed this is the House of Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) will not give control to anyone over it." They said, "We will not return till we demolish it." (Sayyiduna) Ibn 'Abbas (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) said, "They would not try to send the elephants forward except that they would come back. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) sent flocking birds and gave to them black stones with clay upon them. When the birds came in line with them, they threw the stones upon them. Not a single one of them remained without being afflicted with a rash. Whenever one of them would scratch his skin, his flesh would fall off."

6. Imam Abu Nu'aym (d. 430 AH) عَلَيْهِ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ extracted a narration from Sayyiduna Wahb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who stated, "There was a female elephant with them. One of the elephant's moved forward and it was hit with the stones. So the female elephant returned."



² A place between Hunayn and Makkah.