

Chapter Twenty-Three

Chapter in relation to what became apparent during the era of the Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ being fostered in terms of signs and miracles

1. Imam Ibn Ishaq (d. 151 AH), Imam Ibn Rahaway (d. 238 AH), Imam Abu Ya'la (d. 458 AH), Imam Tabarani (d. 360 AH), Imam Baihaqi (d. 458 AH), Imam Abu Nu'aym (d. 430 AH) and Imam Ibn Asaakir (d. 571 AH) الرِّضْوَانُ extracted a narration from the chain of Sayyiduna 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمَا who stated that the foster mother of the Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "I came to Makkah with the women of Bani Sa'd. They were seeking young children to be fostered¹ in the year known as the Shahbaa (drought). I came to a four-legged animal² and the child of ours and a camel was with us. By Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) it did not give us even one drop of milk. We did not sleep during that night. Meanwhile our child did not find in my chest anything that would suffice for him (no milk) nor could we find any nourishment in our camel. So we came to Makkah. By Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was presented to every woman but each woman rejected when it was said that his father had passed away. By Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) every female companion of mine had taken a child to foster apart from myself. So when I could not find anyone else, I said to my husband, "By Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), I dislike that I return amongst my companions whilst I do not have any child to foster. I will go to that boy whose father has passed away and I will take him (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ)." So I went and took the Prophet (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ). As soon as I took him (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and I set off with him (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) on my camel, my chest brought forth for him (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) whatever amount of milk he (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) wished, he drank until he (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was fully saturated and his brother drank until his thirst was quenched. My companion (my husband) went towards our camel and it was filled with milk so he milked the camel and he drank and I drank till we were saturated and we spent that night in the best of ways. My husband said, 'O Halimah (رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهَا), I can see that you have taken a blessed soul. Did you see how we spent the night with goodness and blessings since we took him?' Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) continued to increase us in goodness then we left returning to the places of our abode. By Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), my four-legged animal had cut across such amount of distance that no other four-legged animal that was nearby (had crossed). To the extent that my female companion said, "Wow is this the four-legged animal that you set out with?" I said, "Yes, by Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) it is the same four-legged animal." They said, "There is a great matter for her." Until we came to the land of Banu Sa'd and I did not know any lands more barren than it. However now my sheep would graze and would return fully saturated with milk. We would take what we wished and the people around us were in such a state that their sheep would not even provide a drop of milk. Their sheep would roam hungry. They said to their shepherds; "Woe upon you! Where do the sheep of Halimah (رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهَا) graze? Graze with her." They would graze their sheep with my sheep. Their sheep would return without any drop of milk. My sheep would roam fully saturated with milk. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) continued to show us blessings that we would recognise until two years passed. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) had grown to be such a child that no child was similar to him (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ). By Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), he had reached two years in age in such a way that he (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was a child that was fully eating. We brought him (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to his mother and we were very attached to him (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) due to what we had seen from the blessings. When his (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) mother (رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهَا) saw him, we said to her, "O Madam! Allow us to return with this son of ours for one more year, for indeed we fear in relation to him (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) due to the plague of Makkah. By Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) we were continuously requesting this from her (رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهَا) until she agreed. So we brought him (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) with us and we kept him (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) with us for two or three months."

¹ This was the custom at the time.

² We used this term out of respect. It was a female donkey.