

A BIRTH NARRATIVE OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S)

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It may be interesting to look at Surabadi's birth narrative of the Prophet Muhammad. It is a part of his commentary on *Surah al-Najm* (the Star)¹ and is translated from his *Persian Commentary on the Quran* (excerpted from *The New Testament: An Islamic Perspective* by Jay R. Crook, pp. 243-4, ABC International Group). Safiyah, the daughter of 'Abd al-Muttalib and the Messenger's aunt, is telling the story:

“At that hour [of the Prophet's birth], all the surface of the earth became green with plants; all the trees put forth leaves and blossoms; and all the fountains of the earth flowed with water. All the afflicted found solace; all the sick found cure; all the perplexed found tranquility; and all the pregnant delivered their burdens. A cry filled the kingdom of the seven heavens and the earth: *'The unlettered Arabian Hashimite Prophet is born, the Seal of the Prophets!'* Without exception, all the idols of the world fell on their faces and the fires of the Magians were extinguished. Not a cross was left standing anywhere on earth. Not a temple of idol-worship was left that had not been shaken by earthquakes. The palace of Chosroes² was shattered, all the synagogues trembled, and all the demons were alarmed, (wondering) what had happened.

“Iblis trembled on his throne on an island in the sea and the throne was overturned. He fell from his throne with a loud cry; then he shouted so that all the demons of the world heard him and turned in his direction. His throne remained overturned for forty days. The demons shook with fear and asked: ‘What shall we do? What has happened?’ Iblis answered: ‘That person is born for whose sake I was ordered to prostrate myself before Adam. That person is born who is the cause of my falling into this state. That person is born for whose sake the two existences³ and the two worlds were created. *He shall change religions, he shall smash the false idols, he shall expel Satan, and he shall declare God, the Merciful, to be One!*’

“And all the wild beasts of the world turned to one another with the good news: ‘Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, is come!’”⁴

¹ Q. 53.

² A reference to the Sassanian palace at Ctesiphon, the ruins of which may still be seen southeast of Baghdad. It still boasts an unsupported brick vault (75 ft. in width), wider than any in Europe. (Pope, p. 54.)

³ “the two existences” (*kawnayn*): the present and the future, in one interpretation.

⁴ Surabadi, pp. 415-16.