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THE ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ZAM ZAM WATER

Millions of people whilst on pilgrimage yearly to Mecca pay homage to the well of Zam Zam and treat its water with reverence by making ablutions, drinking and even taking it home as a sacred gift. This is done in full faith of its sanctity as well as it being health promoting and source of cure for many a sickness. But perhaps few are aware of its original history and full significance.

According to Islamic history, Abdul Muttalib the Prophet's grandfather in the course of discharging his duties as the chief of the traditional office for entertaining the pilgrims to Mecca, had once received in a vision, the heavenly assignment of digging the well of Zam Zam which for centuries had been choked up and even its site was not remembered. He made diligent search for the site of the well in the vicinity of the Kaa'ba and at length succeeded in discovering the masonry work. Aided by his son Harith, Abdul Muttalib in spite the opposition of the Quraish, dug deeper and deeper till he came upon the original source of water.

The plentiful flow of fresh water from the well was a great triumph to Abdul Muttalib. Hitherto, with considerable troubles, water was procured from the wells scattered all over Mecca and stored in cisterns near the Kaa'ba for the pilgrims. Now all other wells were deserted and this alone resorted to, on account of its water being the best in taste and purity.

As regards the origin of Zam Zam, popular tradition says that its water first began to sprout from the ground underneath with the strokes of the heels of baby Ismael, when his father Hazrat Ebrahim with Allah's command deserted along with his mother Hajar in the wilderness, while she ran to and fro between the hills of Safa and Marwa in search for water at the deceptive sights of fleeting sands. So swift was the water springing out that Hajar got scared lest her baby would be swept away. She uttered 'Zam Zam' meaning 'stop stop'. This utterance appears to have given the name to the well and Muslims refer to it by this name till this day. It has been held sacred and has since acquired additional sanctity sharing in the sacredness of the Kaa'ba and its rites.

Historians have mentioned the miraculous nature of this well that even when there is the greatest drain on its waters in the middle of Haj season, the level of the Zam Zam continues the same. The taste of the water has been mentioned to be sweet and heavy comparatively with the water of other wells around in Mecca. The following ahadith and information about Zam Zam translated from Sarfaraz Weekly March 1981 issue would throw further light on the significance of its water. The Prophet of Islam is reported to have said:

"The water of Zam Zam is feed to one's satisfaction as well as cure for one's malady"

"Zam Zam is enough to satisfy for whatever aim one drinks, whether for cure of illness, whether for satisfying one's hunger or for quench of thirst"

The fire of hell and the water of Zam Zam cannot get together at one place.

Besides it has numerous benefits."

From the foregoing traditions, the superiority and sanctity of Zam Zam water over all other worldly waters is evident depending upon one's faith. However one becomes even more convinced of its high status and medicinal benefits when he reads the analysis of this water. An Egyptian medical man made his research on this water and declared it to contain the following chemical contents:

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| 1) Magnesium sulphate | 2) Sodium Sulphate   | 3) Sodium Chloride |
| 4) Calcium Carbonate  | 5) Potassium nitrate | 6) Hydrogen        |
| 7) Sulphur            |                      |                    |

These named contents of the water are well known in the medical circle for their nutritious and medicinal values for cure of various ailments among which are the indigestion, diabetes, stomach acidity, gall-stone etc.

Zam Zam water is said to be so clean with germ killing element in it that when preserved in bottle remains intact and pure for a considerably long time without development of any bacteria.

Undoubtedly the grandeur and supremacy of Zam Zam is a divine blessing for mankind resulting from the profound acts of obedience and sacrifices in the way of Allah by the members of banu Hashim and their ancestors hazrat Ebrahim, Bibi Hajar and their son Ismael.