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The Elephant

Abraham is said to have arrived on the outskirts of town with an army of sorts. But what made him formidable was his ride. The viceroy was mounted on a mighty elephant. And thus far, although grossly misdated, the story is almost plausible. Abyssinia is today's Ethiopia, so its viceroy could well have been mounted upon the mightiest of land mammals. What's not reasonable is that there isn't enough food or water to sustain an elephant in the Arabian Desert, at least for the beast to be more of an asset than liability.

Details aside, the story gets good at this point. *Ishaq:26* **"Mahmud [the elephant] bowed down whenever it was asked to face Mecca. Then Allah rallied a flock of birds, each carrying a pea-like stone in its beak and in each claw. Everyone who was hit died."** They were instantly dissolved, their flesh falling from their bones. **"Abraham's fingers fell off one by one."** Naturally proud of his achievement, Allah, with some help from his pal Muhammad, recounted his stirring victory in the Qur'an. *Qur'an 105:1* **"Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant? Did He not make their treacherous plan go wrong, ending in confusion? He sent against them hordes of flying creatures, pelting them with stones of baked clay. He turned them into stalks of straw devoured."** A Hadith describes the nature of the disease: **"Whoever was struck by a pebble started scratching his body, tearing his flesh."**

History suggests that the Abyssinian brigade was actually done in by smallpox. Even Islam agrees, in effect calling their god a braggadocios liar: *Ishaq:27* **"Utba told me that he was informed that this year was the first time that measles and small pox had been seen in Arabia."** And while that's hardly miraculous, the Islamic Tradition affirms a shocking reality. Sixty years before the first Muslim tread the planet, Allah was a pagan god, and the Ka'aba, the center of Islamic worship, was a pagan shrine, giving Allah and his House a history that isn't the least bit flattering. Desperate to prove Allah was real, Muslims attributed this bizarre tale to their anemic deity. Good thing they did. As it turned out, this peculiar story became Allah's only miracle.

When Abdul Muttalib, Muhammad's grandfather, Meccan king and Ka'aba custodian, heard of the approaching men, he told Allah and his pantheon that they were on their own. *Ishaq:24* **"Allah, you know that we do not wish to fight, for we do not have the ability.... A man protects his house, so You protect Your House. Don't let their craft overcome Your craft tomorrow.... Deliver up the black barbarians."** Tabari adds: **"But if You want to leave and change our qiblah [the direction the Meccan idolaters faced in prayer seventy-five years before Muhammad insisted it was an Islamic requirement], You may do as You please."** On his exodus, Muttalib may have said something like, "As for me, I'm out of here. I know that the family business is a scam. It's been nice, but we can always stack a new pile of rocks when the invaders are gone."

Contrary to the Muslim revisionists, pre-Islamic Arabs were lovers, not fighters. Muttalib is alleged to have told the Quraysh, **"If we offer no resistance, there will be no cause for bloodshed."** Knowing that they

were out muscled, and being merchants, not militants, the Meccans, at Muttalib's suggestion, scampered out of town and headed for the hills, letting their gods fend for themselves. This should give us pause because it means that it must have been Islam that turned these pacifists into warriors.

Early Muslims, in an effort to commemorate Allah's magnificent achievement, tell us that Muhammad was born in the Year of the Elephant. They say it is proof he was a prophet. But that's a problem. If Muhammad was born in 552, the year history says Abrahah moved north, he would have been seventy years old when he married his favorite wife, the six-year-old Aisha. And if Muslims need to falsify an event to make Muhammad appear prophetic, what does it say about the veracity of their religion?

However, there was a ray of hope in Mecca. Four Arabs had come to recognize that it was high time to stop worshiping stones. The rest of the world had long since gone monotheistic, thanks to the Jews and Christians. These religious leaders, called Hanifs, were natural monotheists. *Ishaq:99*
"Waraqah Naufal, Ubaydullah Jahsh, Uthman Huwayrith, and Zayd Amr were of the opinion that their people had corrupted the religion of Abraham, and that the Stone they went around was of no account. 'It could not hear, nor see, nor hurt, nor help.' They told their people, 'Find yourselves a religion, for by God, you have none.'"

While much of this was encouraging, one line completely destroys Muhammad's credibility and murders Allah. These Hanifs not only inspired the first score of Qur'anic surahs, they served as Muhammad's link to the notion that Islam was the religion of Abraham. Yet these men said, **"the Stone they went around was of no account. It could not hear, see, hurt, or help."** That Stone was Allah's. A generation before Allah's Messenger stole Islam from Qusayy's heirs, Arabs in his hometown had figured it out. Their moon rock was no better than moonshine - a source of money and false hope, nothing more.