



# The Year of the Elephant

In 570 AD, the year the Prophet ﷺ was born, a very important event took place in Mecca. This was the year in which a tyrannical King marched onto the Arabian Peninsula, seeking to destroy the famous Ka'ba, located in the city of Mecca in the Hijaz. At that time, different groups of people with different religions lived in Arabia. These included Jews and Christians, but also pagan Arab tribes who worshiped idols. One of these tribes, called the Quraysh, was in control of Mecca and in charge of keeping the Ka'ba safe.

The Ka'ba was an important religious centre for idolaters even before Islam. People from different lands travelled to visit this sacred place, but not to worship Allah. Rather, they came to worship the statues that were placed in and around the Ka'ba. As a result, Mecca became a popular and wealthy city, since many people paid money to go there and offered tribute to the idols. The Quraysh also became wealthy and very powerful, as they benefited from the trade that naturally grew in the city because of its growing population .

Some distance to the south of Mecca was the land of Yemen. This was an area controlled by a Christian king called Abraha. Long before, Abraha was a just and brave military general who defended Christians when they were massacred by other Jewish rulers of Yemen. However, when Abraha himself became king, he started executing the Jews just like they did to the Christians, and therefore became tyrannical himself.