The Cleansing of the Heart

**Did you know?** Paintings of Muhammad are extremely rare, and in the ones that do exist, Muhammad’s face is sometimes not shown. This is done out of respect because no one knows what Muhammad really looked like. Secondly, Muslims feel that all attention should be paid to Allah, at all times.

Muslims follow five duties, called the five pillars of Islam. They support Islam, just as real pillars keep a building standing straight. The first pillar says ‘There is no other God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet’. The other pillars are prayer, giving charity to the poor, fasting at Ramadan, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca.

According to legend, a very strange and extraordinary thing happened while Muhammad was living with Halima. One day, Muhammad was playing with his friends in the fields behind Halima’s house when two angels dressed in dazzling white came walking toward him. One was carrying a silver jug, the other a golden platter piled high with snow.

The two angles grabbed hold of Muhammad’s arms. One angel held him tightly, while the other took out a sharp knife. The angel cut open Muhammad’s chest and took out the boy’s heart. Though Muhammad could see what was happening, he did not feel any pain. Then the angel took a black speck from Muhammad’s heart and threw it far away. He washed the heart thoroughly in snow, to make it pure, and placed it back into the boy’s body.

Then the angel said, “Weigh him against 100 people.”

And they weighed him, and he was heavier worth more than 100 others

“Weigh him against 1,000 people,” the angel said.

And they weighed him, and he was heavier, worth, more than 1,000 others. Then the angels went away. When they were gone, Halima, Muhammad’s foster mother, came running up to find him. His friends had told her what had happened. To her relief, she found Muhammad safe and sound, although something about him, she could not quite tell what it was, had truly changed.
**David and Goliath**

**Did you know? When Saul died, David became King of Israel and ruled wisely for about 40 years. He made his capital in Jerusalem. The Books of Samuel in the Bible tell of his life and works. David is a very important person for the Jews. They believe that he was a great king, scholar, and poet who is thought to have written many of the Psalms. According to Jewish tradition, a special leader called the Messiah will come one day. He will be a descendant of King David.**

Long ago, when Saul was king of Israel, a great battle took place between the Israelites and the Philistines. Across the valley, the two sides faced each other. Their battle lines were drawn. Then, a gigantic man stepped forward - the mighty Goliath of Gath. Standing nearly twice as tall as other men, he wore a brass helmet on his head and a massive coat of chainmail. Brandishing a huge iron spear, too heavy for an ordinary man to carry, he threw down his challenge.

“Send your bravest soldier to fight me,” he boomed to the Israelites. “If he kills me, the Philistines will become your servants. If I kill him, you will serve us.”

The Israelites were terrified. Whatever should they do? Every morning and evening for 40 days, Goliath came out and made his challenge.

Nearby a shepherd boy named David was tending his father’s sheep. His three older brothers were in Saul’s army.

“David,” his father said on day, “take this bread and cheese to your bothers and bring me news of them.”

So David set off. Just as he reached his brothers, a hush fell and Goliath once more boomed out his challenge.

“They say the king has offered a reward,” one soldier said. “He’ll give great wealth and his daughter’s hand in marriage to the person who kills Goliath.”

David listening carefully. Then we went to see King Saul.

“I will kill the giant,” he said. “God will keep me safe.”

So Saul gave David his own helmet, a coat, and a find sword. But the armor was too heavy for David. Instead, he picked up his wooden staff and chose five smooth pebbles from a nearby brook. He took the sling he used for scaring off wild beasts as he watched the flocks and walked over to face Goliath.

The giant laughed when he saw David.

“What is this?” he sneered. “A boy come to fight me with sticks and stones?”

Slowly and calmly, David fit a pebble into his sling and hurled it at the giant. The stone hit Goliath on his forehead so heard that he fell face down on the ground. Then, David ran over and cut off the giant’s head.

Seeing their champion dead, the Philistines turned and fled while the Israelites cheered and shouted. And David went to live in King Saul’s palace and married the king’s daughter, Michal.