

*The Golden Series of the
Prophet's Companions*

Abu Dhar Al-Gifari رضي الله عنه

*Struggle
for Equality*

By: Abdul Basit Ahmad

DARUSSALAM

The Golden Series of the Prophet's Companions

Abu Dhar Al-Gifari 

STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY

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Abdul Basit Ahmad

Edited By
Aqeel Walker

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Abu Dhar Al-Gifari ﷺ

**STRUGGLE
FOR
EQUALITY**



In the Name of Allâh,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

“Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allâh [i.e., they have gone out for *Jihâd* (holy fighting), and showed not their backs to the disbelievers]; of them some have fulfilled their obligations (i.e., have been martyred); and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed (i.e., they never proved treacherous to their covenant which they concluded with Allâh) in the least.” (33:23)



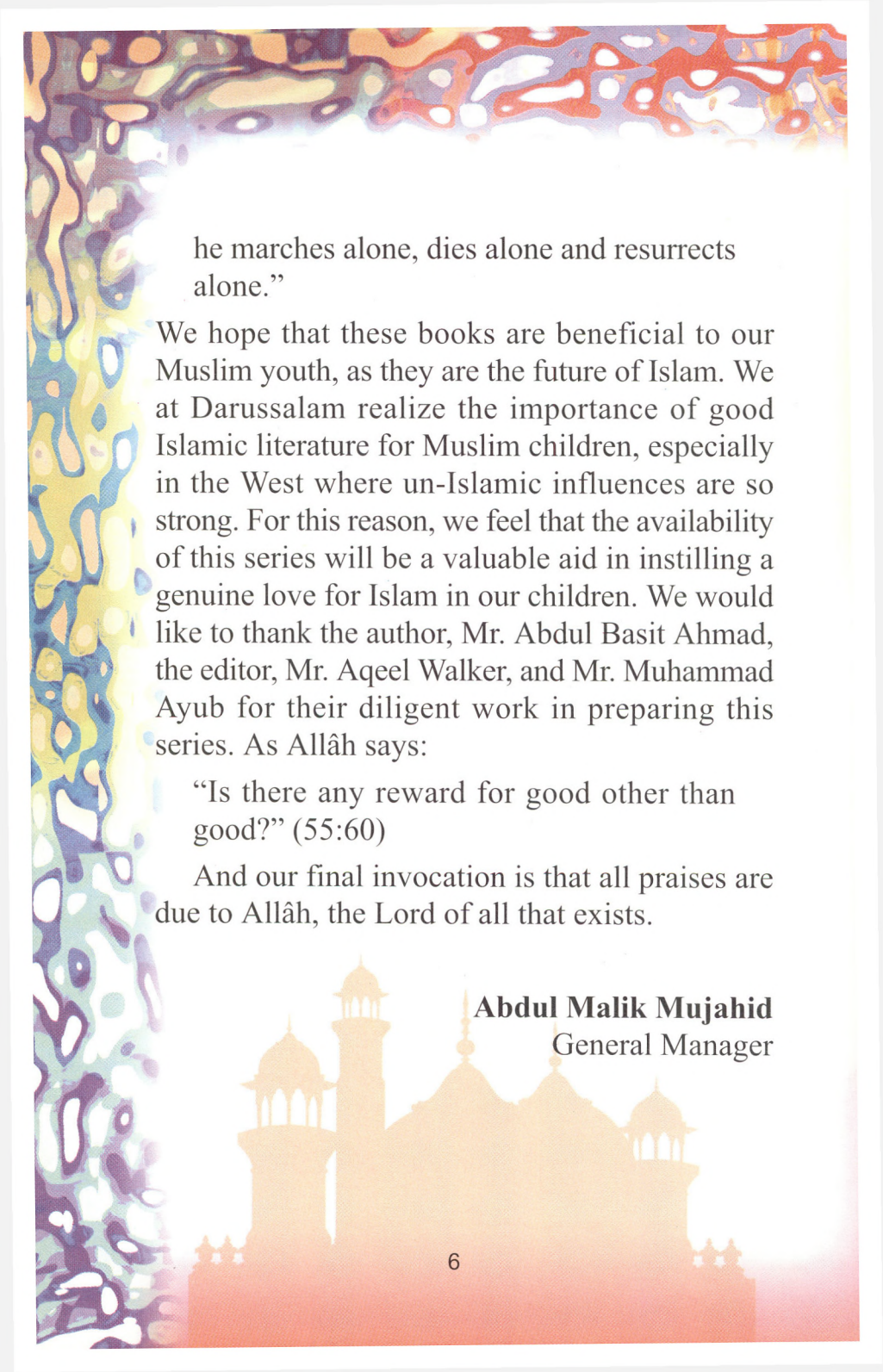
Publisher's Note

All praises are due to Allâh, the Lord of all that exists. May Allâh's peace and blessings be upon His final Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad, his family and his Companions.

Darrusalam is pleased to present a valuable series, '*The Golden Series of the Prophet's Companions*' to the Muslim youth. The purpose of these books is to enlighten our youth about the lives of the greatest heroes of Islam, the Prophet's Companions. Also, we wish to increase the enthusiasm of the Muslim youth for following and adhering to their religion. In this way, these books achieve two very important tasks: educating our children and encouraging them to be good Muslims.

The following story titled '*Abu Dhar Al-Gifari, Struggle for Equality*' is the life story of one of Islam's greatest heroes. He was unique in everything. He devoted all his life to the support of the poor and the needy. The Prophet ﷺ said about him:

“May Allâh have mercy on Abu Dhar for



he marches alone, dies alone and resurrects alone.”

We hope that these books are beneficial to our Muslim youth, as they are the future of Islam. We at Darussalam realize the importance of good Islamic literature for Muslim children, especially in the West where un-Islamic influences are so strong. For this reason, we feel that the availability of this series will be a valuable aid in instilling a genuine love for Islam in our children. We would like to thank the author, Mr. Abdul Basit Ahmad, the editor, Mr. Aqeel Walker, and Mr. Muhammad Ayub for their diligent work in preparing this series. As Allâh says:

“Is there any reward for good other than good?” (55:60)

And our final invocation is that all praises are due to Allâh, the Lord of all that exists.

Abdul Malik Mujahid
General Manager




Foreword

Great men always face challenges with patience and perseverance. Even though they might have to find their way through great hardships, their love for Allâh and His Messenger is so strong that nothing can turn them away from their path of struggle. Such people are not enchanted by the promises or terrified by the threats of oppressors. They find happiness in their fight against tyranny and injustice. They may lead a miserable worldly life, but they feel spiritually and morally satisfied and happy. Their battle against injustices give them peace of mind and spirit.

Those great men always look for a reward higher and greater than unimportant worldly pleasures. Therefore, they accept all hardships with endurance. In spite of the hardship that they live in and the alienation that they suffer, they continue their struggle for the better future of humanity.

One of those great men is our hero, Abu Dhar Al-Gifari رضي الله عنه. This Companion of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم devoted all his life to support of the poor and the



needy. He spent the early days of his life before embracing Islam robbing trade caravans during gloomy nights. However, he changed altogether when he received the bright light of Islam.

He was unique in everything. He, alone, left his tribe to listen to the divine teachings of Islam, alone he marched when his camel fell short behind the army and alone he spent the rest of his life until he passed away to meet his Lord and Creator.

He never bargained for the ideas and principles the Prophet ﷺ taught him and he never accepted compromises. The Prophet ﷺ said about him:

“May Allâh have mercy on Abu Dhar ؓ for he marches alone, dies alone and resurrects alone.”

This is Abu Dhar Al-Gifari ؓ whose story I hope we will read together to learn how true Muslims struggled on the way to establish justice and equality among all human beings and how they lived up to their true morals and values.

Abdul Basit Ahmad

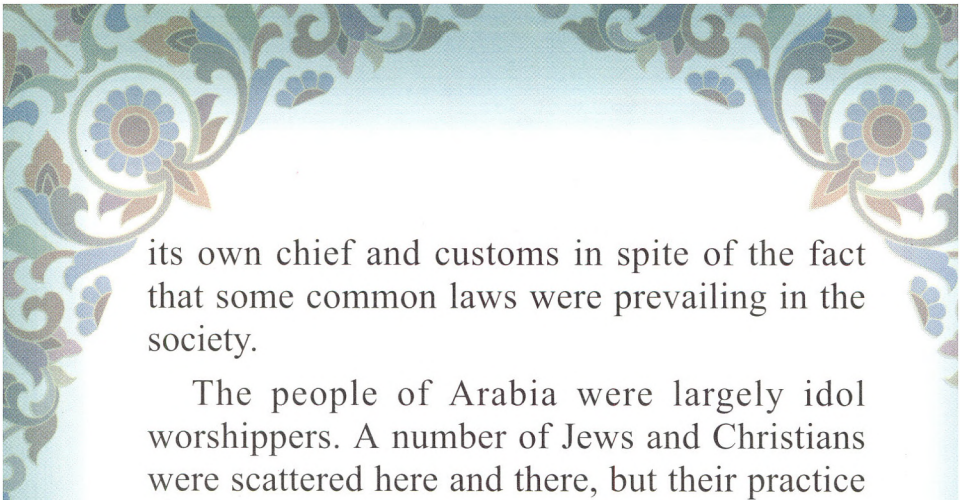


Introduction

Arabs before the rise of Islam

The Arab society in the Arabian Peninsula and surrounding areas mainly consisted of tribes and clans. Some of them lived in towns while most of them followed their flocks everywhere in the desert in search of food and water. These tribes were usually involved in wars amongst each other. Every tribe was invading and invaded by other tribes.

The gloom that loomed over the Arabian Peninsula and the world in general before the rise of Islam killed nearly every virtue in the minds and hearts of human beings at that time. Human rights, for example, were not given any value. Slavery, burying girls alive and injustices were dominating the societies of the city and desert alike. Youth and old were spending their time in grazing animals or practicing trade during the daytime and seeking trivial pleasures during the night. The guidance brought by previous religions was absent from the life of people. There was no central government; rather, every tribe had



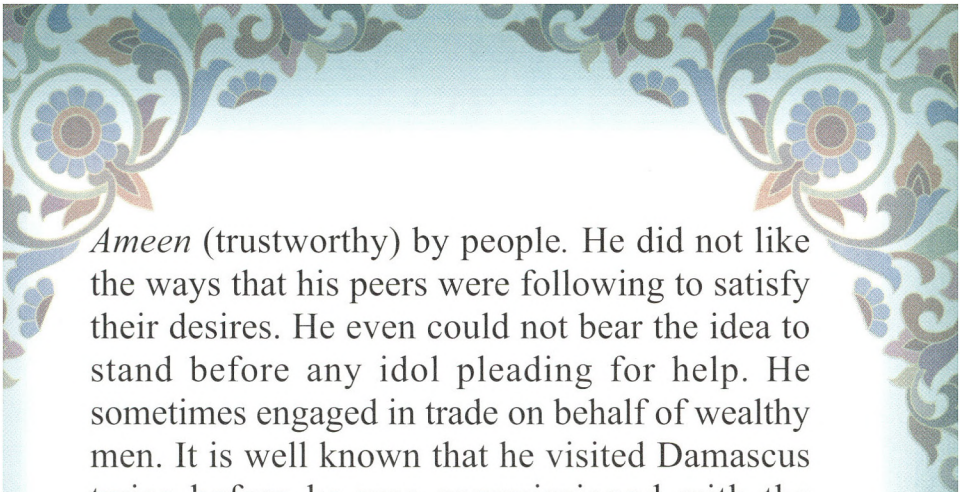
its own chief and customs in spite of the fact that some common laws were prevailing in the society.

The people of Arabia were largely idol worshippers. A number of Jews and Christians were scattered here and there, but their practice of their religions had greatly diminished. Every Arab tribe had its own deities and its own forms of worship. The Ka‘bah in Makkah was itself surrounded with hundreds of idols which were considered by Makkans as gods.

All these vices and atrocities urgently needed a Messenger from Allâh to reform the society and spread guidance throughout the Arabian Peninsula in particular and the world in general.

Advent of Islam

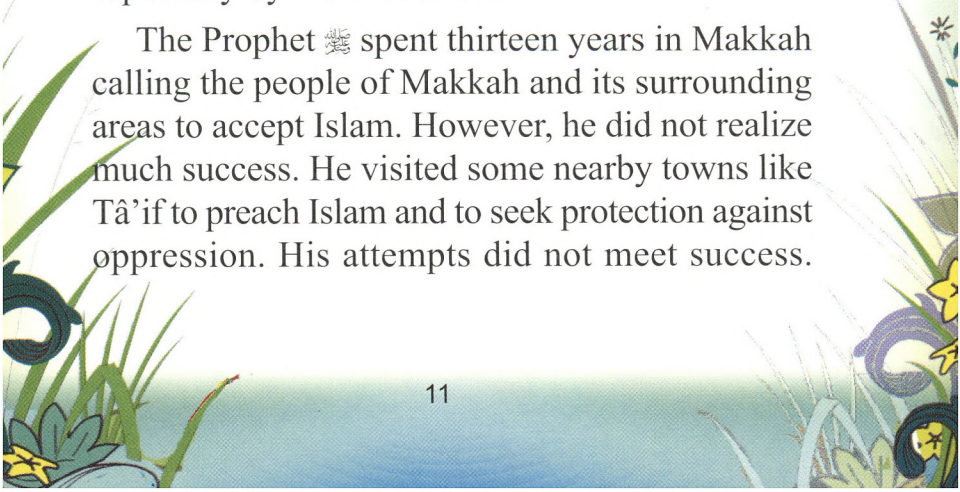
The child Muhammad ﷺ grew up in such an environment. When he became a young man, he kept himself away from the evils and vices of the day. Like other youth, he used to graze his uncle’s flocks. He was well behaved and was loved and respected by all those who came in contact with him. He was well known to be sincere and trustworthy to the extent that he was called *Al-*



Ameen (trustworthy) by people. He did not like the ways that his peers were following to satisfy their desires. He even could not bear the idea to stand before any idol pleading for help. He sometimes engaged in trade on behalf of wealthy men. It is well known that he visited Damascus twice before he was commissioned with the message of Islam. On the way there, many signs of his Prophethood were seen by his Companions and even monks living in isolation. When he was twenty-five years old, he married a wealthy woman who preferred him to the chiefs of the Quraish.

At the age of forty, he was blessed by Allâh with the gift of Prophethood. He started preaching the new religion to his close relatives as ordered by Allâh. After three years of calling to Islam, he was ordered by Allâh to preach Islam in public. He met hard opposition and cruel oppression, especially by his tribesmen.

The Prophet ﷺ spent thirteen years in Makkah calling the people of Makkah and its surrounding areas to accept Islam. However, he did not realize much success. He visited some nearby towns like Tâ'if to preach Islam and to seek protection against oppression. His attempts did not meet success.

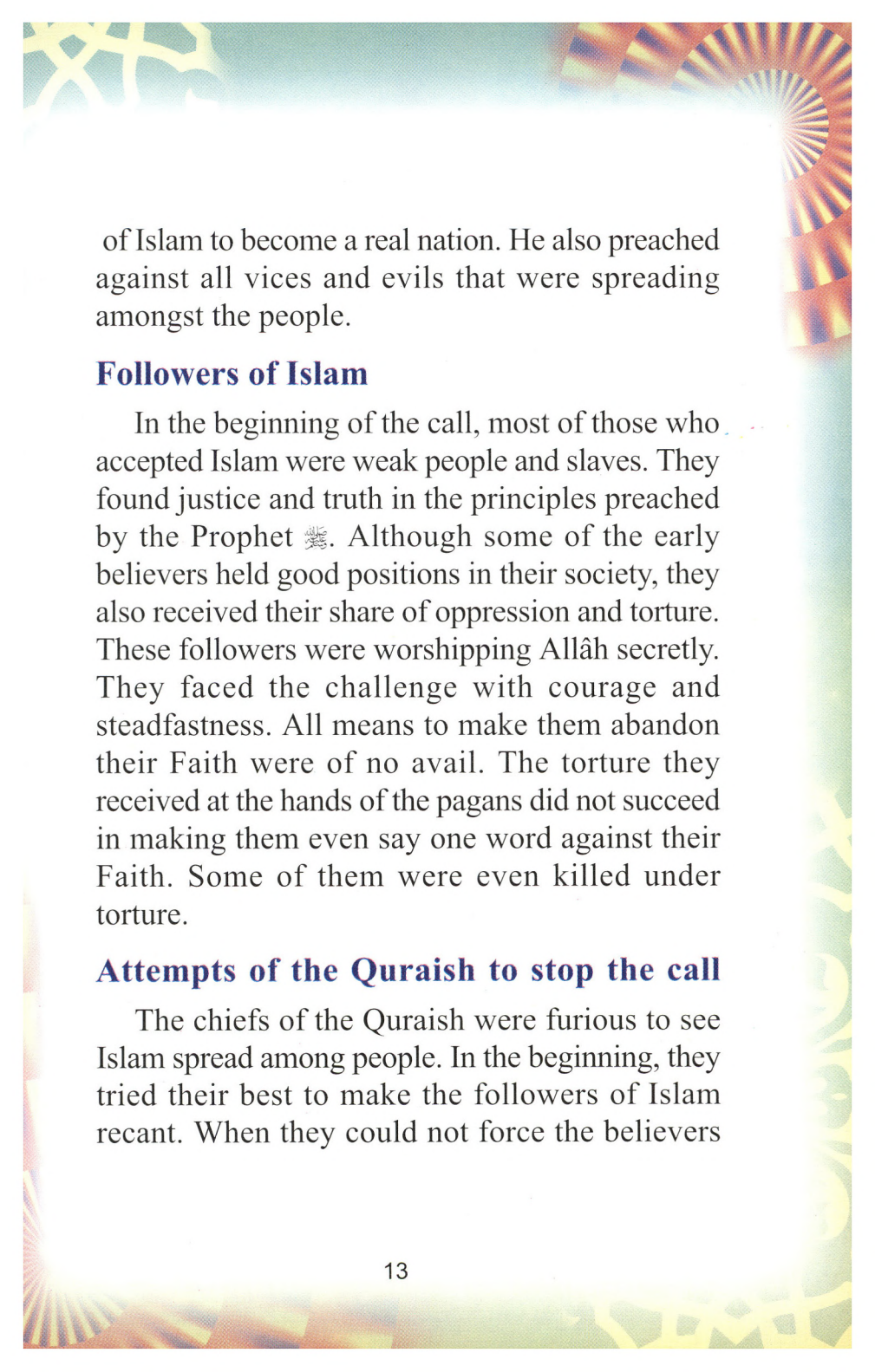


The Prophet ﷺ changed his way of preaching Islam. He began calling visitors of Makkah to provide him protection to be able to proclaim the Word of Allâh. A group of visitors from a town called Yathrib believed in the message of Islam and pledged to provide the needed protection.

The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions migrated to Yathrib (Al-Madinah). From there, they could establish their State of Islam and propagate the message to the entire world.

Values and morals called to by the Prophet ﷺ

The first thing the Prophet ﷺ called people to adopt was to worship One Allâh. He told people that the idols they were worshipping were just stones made by them and that they did not deserve to be worshipped. These stones were not the real creators of this vast universe. They could not bring their worshippers any good or cause them any harm. The Prophet ﷺ urged people to stop burying their daughters alive. These little girls were given the right by Allâh to live and no one should deprive them of this sacred right. He also urged them to be just to their slaves and not to be hard on them. He invited different tribes to stop invading each




of Islam to become a real nation. He also preached against all vices and evils that were spreading amongst the people.

Followers of Islam

In the beginning of the call, most of those who accepted Islam were weak people and slaves. They found justice and truth in the principles preached by the Prophet ﷺ. Although some of the early believers held good positions in their society, they also received their share of oppression and torture. These followers were worshipping Allâh secretly. They faced the challenge with courage and steadfastness. All means to make them abandon their Faith were of no avail. The torture they received at the hands of the pagans did not succeed in making them even say one word against their Faith. Some of them were even killed under torture.

Attempts of the Quraish to stop the call

The chiefs of the Quraish were furious to see Islam spread among people. In the beginning, they tried their best to make the followers of Islam recant. When they could not force the believers




to give up their Faith, they began accusing the Prophet ﷺ of things that they themselves knew were untrue. They alleged that Muhammad ﷺ was a magician or a liar, although they themselves used to call him the trustworthy. However, all their attempts were of no avail. They followed another direction. They began negotiating with the Prophet ﷺ and his uncle to reach a compromise. They told the Prophet ﷺ that they would make him a king or give him all the money he might ask for. However, the Prophet ﷺ rejected all of their worldly proposals and continued preaching the message of Islam to all humanity.





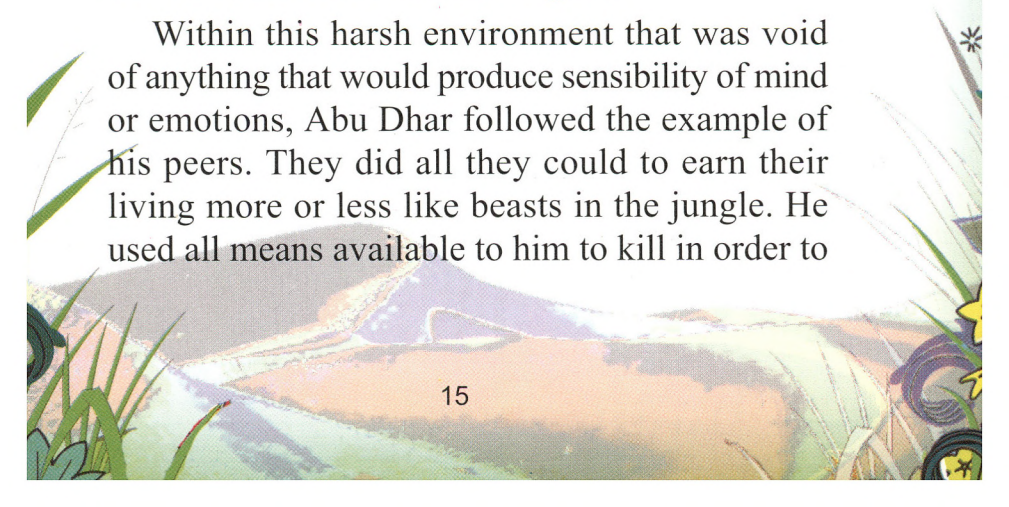
Migration to Guidance

Harsh desert ... harsh minds

Like roses amid thorns, Jundub bin Junada Al-Gifari (alias Abu Dhar ) grew amongst the Gifar tribesmen on the sandy deserts of Arabia. The members of the tribe were notorious for robbing trade caravans and invading weaker neighboring tribes. They lived in poverty and misery mingled with gloom of thought and utter ignorance. The sand dunes around their tents formed a barrier that they never attempted to break in search of a better and more meaningful life. Their past, present and future were but one, everlasting scene of hardships. All in all, their interests were focused on ways and tricks of how to rob others.

Stone idols were taken as gods

Within this harsh environment that was void of anything that would produce sensibility of mind or emotions, Abu Dhar followed the example of his peers. They did all they could to earn their living more or less like beasts in the jungle. He used all means available to him to kill in order to



survive. However, every time he went out in the desert, he was amazed by the bright stars that were glittering far above him, and wondered at the vast universe around him.

Like other tribal Arabs, the members of Gifar tribe visited Makkah every year to worship the idols of the Arabs and to trade with the inhabitants of Makkah. They took part in the rites that the Makkans performed hoping that their idols would forgive them the evils they had been doing throughout the past year.



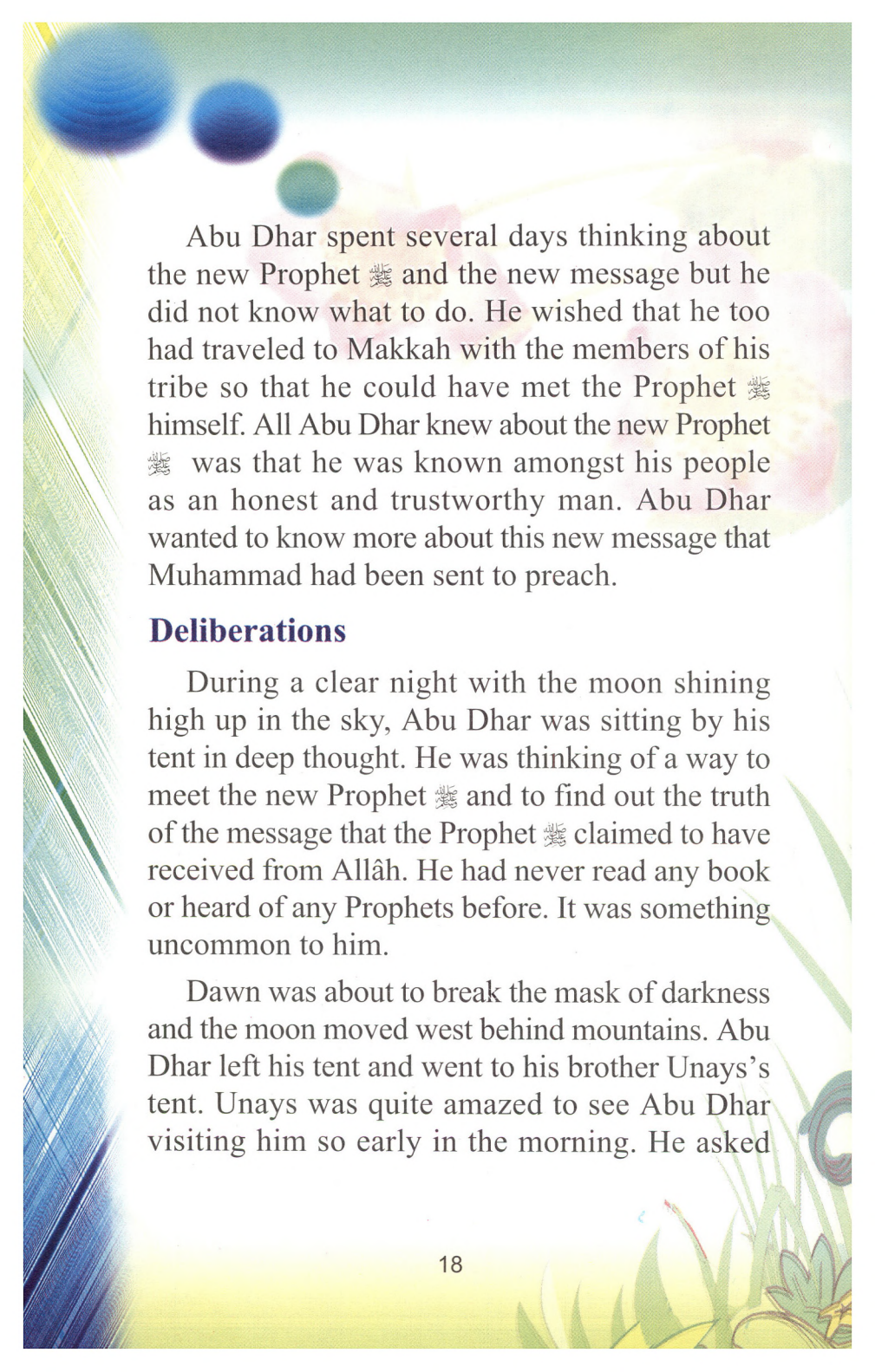
The Search for Guidance

First news about the Prophet ﷺ

During their last trip to Makkah they saw that a very strange thing had taken place there. A man from a high-ranking clan of the Quraish tribe named Muhammad claimed to have received divine revelation to preach the Oneness of Allâh.

Like everyone else, the members of the Gifar tribe listened to the message of Muhammad. However, they did not pay much attention to the new message because they could see how much the people of Makkah, especially the leaders of the Quraish, were against the new message. They could also see how much the followers of the new message were oppressed with all types of cruelty.

This time, Abu Dhar did not go to Makkah with the members of his tribe. When his tribesmen came back from Makkah they told different things about the new Prophet ﷺ. Their talk about the new Prophet ﷺ attracted Abu Dhar's attention. However, he was not satisfied with the things he heard. He was not sure what position to adopt toward this new Prophet ﷺ.

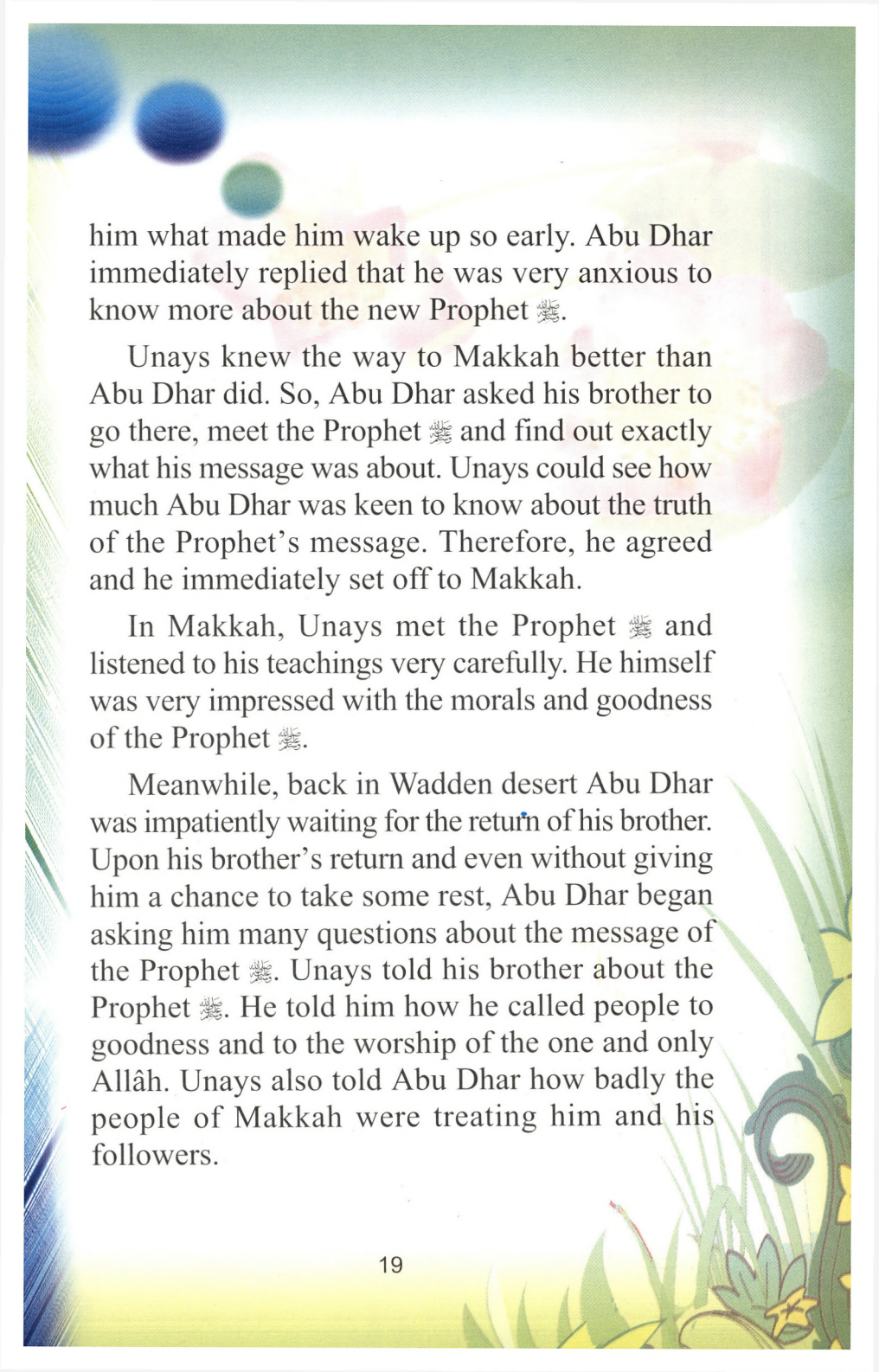


Abu Dhar spent several days thinking about the new Prophet ﷺ and the new message but he did not know what to do. He wished that he too had traveled to Makkah with the members of his tribe so that he could have met the Prophet ﷺ himself. All Abu Dhar knew about the new Prophet ﷺ was that he was known amongst his people as an honest and trustworthy man. Abu Dhar wanted to know more about this new message that Muhammad had been sent to preach.

Deliberations

During a clear night with the moon shining high up in the sky, Abu Dhar was sitting by his tent in deep thought. He was thinking of a way to meet the new Prophet ﷺ and to find out the truth of the message that the Prophet ﷺ claimed to have received from Allâh. He had never read any book or heard of any Prophets before. It was something uncommon to him.

Dawn was about to break the mask of darkness and the moon moved west behind mountains. Abu Dhar left his tent and went to his brother Unays's tent. Unays was quite amazed to see Abu Dhar visiting him so early in the morning. He asked



him what made him wake up so early. Abu Dhar immediately replied that he was very anxious to know more about the new Prophet ﷺ.

Unays knew the way to Makkah better than Abu Dhar did. So, Abu Dhar asked his brother to go there, meet the Prophet ﷺ and find out exactly what his message was about. Unays could see how much Abu Dhar was keen to know about the truth of the Prophet's message. Therefore, he agreed and he immediately set off to Makkah.

In Makkah, Unays met the Prophet ﷺ and listened to his teachings very carefully. He himself was very impressed with the morals and goodness of the Prophet ﷺ.

Meanwhile, back in Wadden desert Abu Dhar was impatiently waiting for the return of his brother. Upon his brother's return and even without giving him a chance to take some rest, Abu Dhar began asking him many questions about the message of the Prophet ﷺ. Unays told his brother about the Prophet ﷺ. He told him how he called people to goodness and to the worship of the one and only Allâh. Unays also told Abu Dhar how badly the people of Makkah were treating him and his followers.

The trip to Makkah

However, Abu Dhar was still not satisfied with the news his brother had brought to him. He decided to travel to Makkah himself. Abu Dhar left his tent while it was dark for a long journey to Makkah. The night was calm and the stars were unusually bright. All alone Abu Dhar was sitting on his camel riding over rocky roads towards Makkah to meet the man whom he heard so much about.

After two days of travel, Abu Dhar arrived in Makkah. He spent a few days recovering his strength after such a tiring and long journey.

One pleasant morning, Abu Dhar went to the Ka'bah. He asked people where he could meet Muhammad ﷺ. They pointed to a man sitting with his back to the Ka'bah wall. Abu Dhar approached the Prophet ﷺ, greeted him and sat beside him.

Listening with open heart

Abu Dhar's brother had already told him that some of the people in Makkah claimed that Muhammad's message was nothing but poetry. Hence, they called him a poet. Abu Dhar asked

Muhammad ﷺ to chant some poetry. Muhammad ﷺ replied that he had nothing to do with poetry. He stressed that what he had was a revelation from Allâh. It is called the Qur'ân. Abu Dhar asked the Prophet ﷺ to recite some Verses of the Qur'ân to him. The Prophet ﷺ began reciting some Verses of the Qur'ân. Abu Dhar listened attentively and thoughtfully to what the Prophet ﷺ was reciting. As soon as the Prophet ﷺ finished reciting the Qur'ân, Abu Dhar's heart was filled with love of the Prophet ﷺ and the message of Islam. He accepted Islam without any hesitation and immediately pronounced:

“I bear witness that there is no real deity but Allâh and that Muhammad is Allâh's Messenger.”

Immediate action

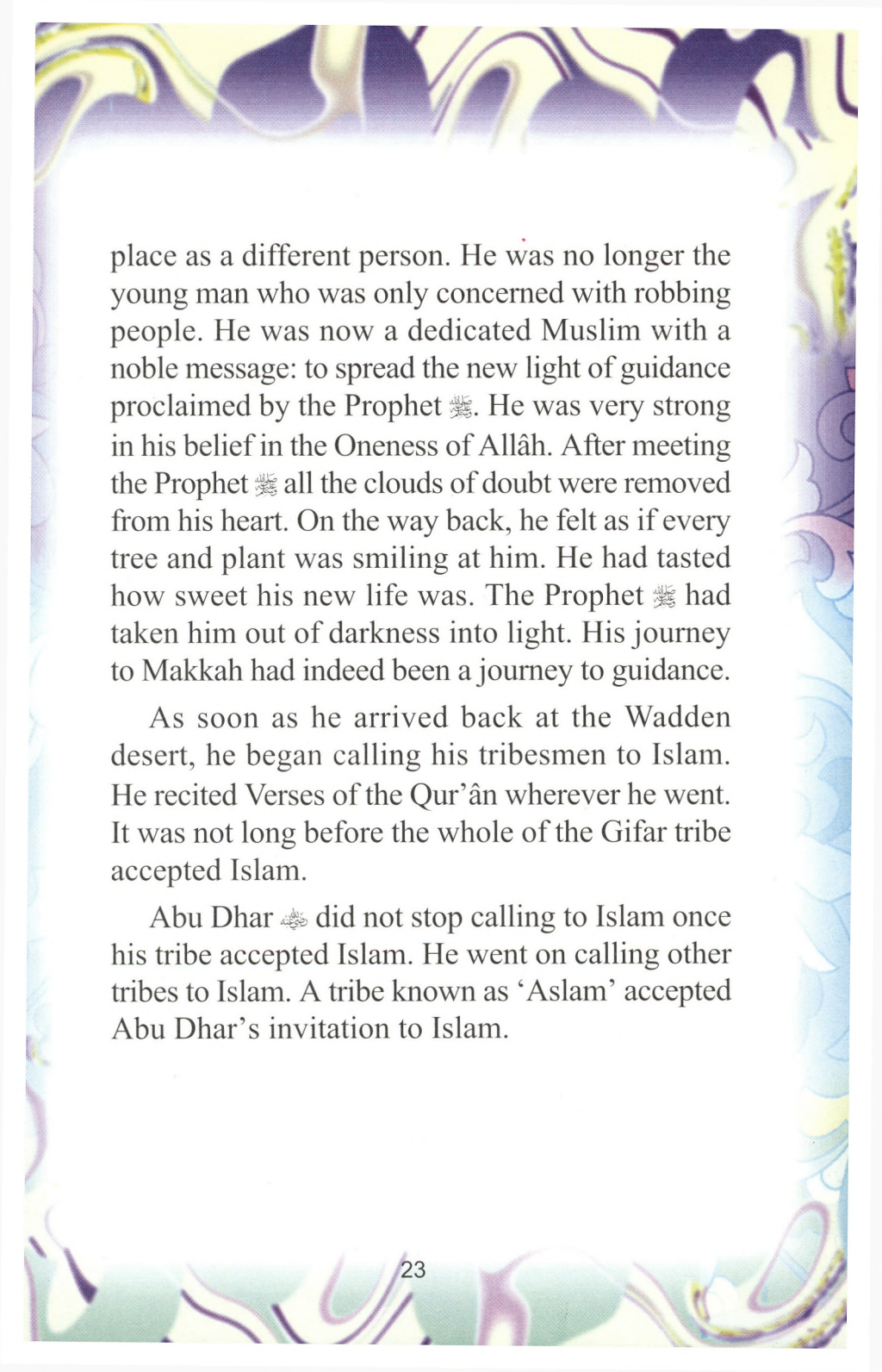
Abu Dhar ؓ already had an idea of the hardships that the Prophet ﷺ and his followers were suffering while calling people to Islam. He also knew about the Quraish's attempts to stop Islam from spreading among tribes of Arabia. Abu Dhar ؓ was very brave. He wanted to declare in public that he had accepted Islam. However, the

Prophet ﷺ warned him not to do so. He knew that Abu Dhar ؓ would be treated badly. Abu Dhar ؓ insisted on declaring his acceptance of Islam in public. He went to a gathering where the chiefs of the Quraish were sitting, and very loudly declared that he had become a Muslim. No sooner did he utter his last words than they jumped on him and began beating him very harshly. Had it not been for Al-Abbas ؓ, the Prophet's uncle, they would have killed him. Al-Abbas ؓ recognized Abu Dhar ؓ and protected him. He told the men that Abu Dhar ؓ was from Gifar tribe by whose place their caravans usually passed. The chiefs of the Quraish dispersed and left Abu Dhar ؓ alone.

The Prophet ﷺ took Abu Dhar ؓ home. He asked him to go back to his tribe and invite them to Islam. He told him to worship One Allâh Alone, to be honest and truthful and to stop robbing people. He ordered him not to leave his tribe's place until he received further news from the Prophet ﷺ.

The preacher ... not the robber

Abu Dhar ؓ left Makkah back to his tribe's



place as a different person. He was no longer the young man who was only concerned with robbing people. He was now a dedicated Muslim with a noble message: to spread the new light of guidance proclaimed by the Prophet ﷺ. He was very strong in his belief in the Oneness of Allâh. After meeting the Prophet ﷺ all the clouds of doubt were removed from his heart. On the way back, he felt as if every tree and plant was smiling at him. He had tasted how sweet his new life was. The Prophet ﷺ had taken him out of darkness into light. His journey to Makkah had indeed been a journey to guidance.

As soon as he arrived back at the Wadden desert, he began calling his tribesmen to Islam. He recited Verses of the Qur'ân wherever he went. It was not long before the whole of the Gifar tribe accepted Islam.

Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه did not stop calling to Islam once his tribe accepted Islam. He went on calling other tribes to Islam. A tribe known as 'Aslam' accepted Abu Dhar's invitation to Islam.

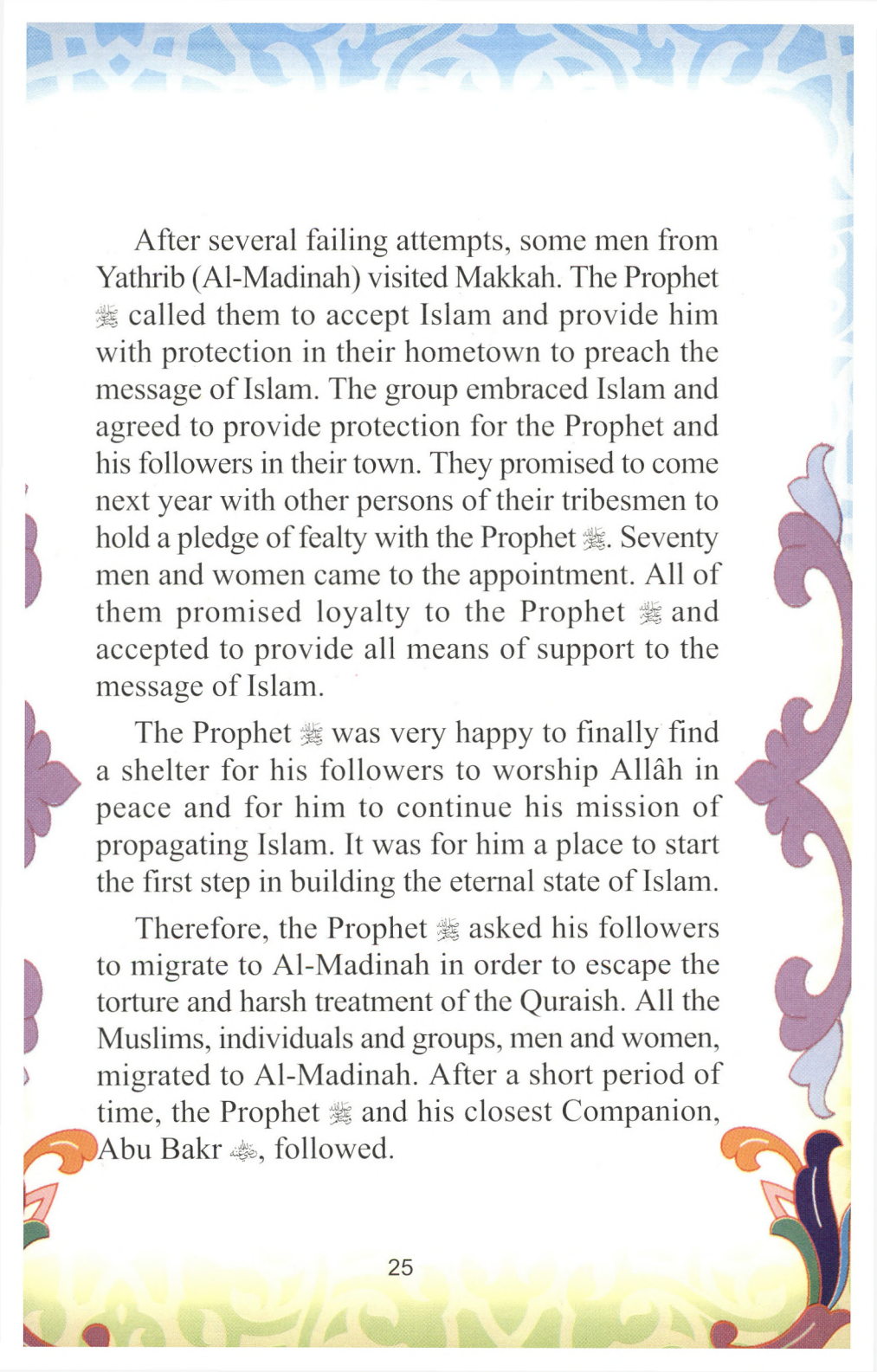
The Truthful Believer

Migration from Makkah

Many years had now passed since Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه had met the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. He was kept informed of how the Muslims were being oppressed at the hands of non-Muslims. He wanted to take action to support them. However, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had already told him to stay at his tribe's place and continue his mission within his neighbourhood.

However, Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه did not keep himself away of the events taking place in Makkah. He always received news about the advance of Islam and the hard situation Muslims were suffering in Makkah. He also received information about the latest revelations and taught them to the Muslims around him.

After long and harsh oppression by the Quraish, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his followers felt that they would not be able to live in peace in Makkah. Therefore, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم did his best to find a refuge where he and his followers could carry out their duty of preaching Allâh's Message to humanity.



After several failing attempts, some men from Yathrib (Al-Madinah) visited Makkah. The Prophet ﷺ called them to accept Islam and provide him with protection in their hometown to preach the message of Islam. The group embraced Islam and agreed to provide protection for the Prophet and his followers in their town. They promised to come next year with other persons of their tribesmen to hold a pledge of fealty with the Prophet ﷺ. Seventy men and women came to the appointment. All of them promised loyalty to the Prophet ﷺ and accepted to provide all means of support to the message of Islam.

The Prophet ﷺ was very happy to finally find a shelter for his followers to worship Allâh in peace and for him to continue his mission of propagating Islam. It was for him a place to start the first step in building the eternal state of Islam.

Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ asked his followers to migrate to Al-Madinah in order to escape the torture and harsh treatment of the Quraish. All the Muslims, individuals and groups, men and women, migrated to Al-Madinah. After a short period of time, the Prophet ﷺ and his closest Companion, Abu Bakr ؓ, followed.

In the new land, the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions could establish their state on firm foundations of brotherhood and mutual cooperation among *Muhajirûn* and *Ansar* (Migrants and Supporters). They shared needed resources and worked hard to set their feet firm in Al-Madinah.

Muslims' reunion

Abu Dhar ؓ and his tribesmen received news that the Prophet ﷺ and his followers had escaped the oppression of the Quraish and migrated to Al-Madinah. Abu Dhar ؓ and his fellow Muslims were ordered by the Prophet ﷺ to come to Al-Madinah. Abu Dhar ؓ felt very happy. He was so anxious to meet the Prophet ﷺ again. All the Muslim tribesmen prepared themselves to join the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions in building the new state of Islam in Al-Madinah.

One bright morning, the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions were at the outskirts of Al-Madinah. From a distance they saw a caravan heading towards them. At first, they thought that these were people coming to attack them. However as the caravan came closer and closer to them the Prophet ﷺ recognized the leader of the caravan. He was Abu Dhar ؓ, the man whom he had not

seen for so many years. It was a very surprising and happy moment for the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. The Prophet ﷺ hugged Abu Dhar ؓ and praised him for his efforts in calling Arabs to Islam. He told his Companions:

“No one walking on the earth and under the sky is more truthful than Abu Dhar!” (Ibn Mâjah)

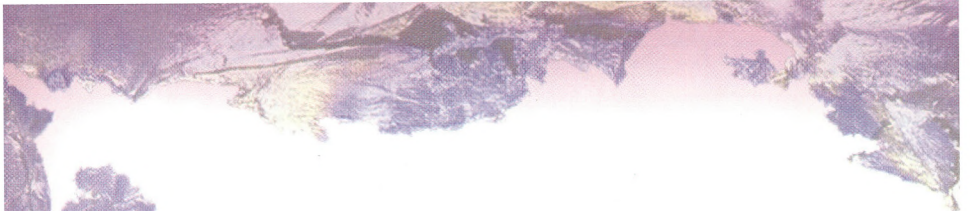
As truthful as ever

Abu Dhar ؓ was very keen to spread the message of Islam to everyone. He wanted everyone to be guided to the true religion of Allâh. The Prophet ﷺ could foresee that Abu Dhar ؓ would face difficulties in his life because of his truthfulness and honesty. The Prophet ﷺ once asked him: “What would you do if you see rulers treat Muslims badly?” Abu Dhar ؓ replied:

“By Allâh, I will use my sword.” The Prophet ﷺ said to him: “But if you exercise patience until you meet me in the Hereafter it would be better for you.”

Total devotion to Islam

In Al-Madinah, Abu Dhar ؓ continued to live

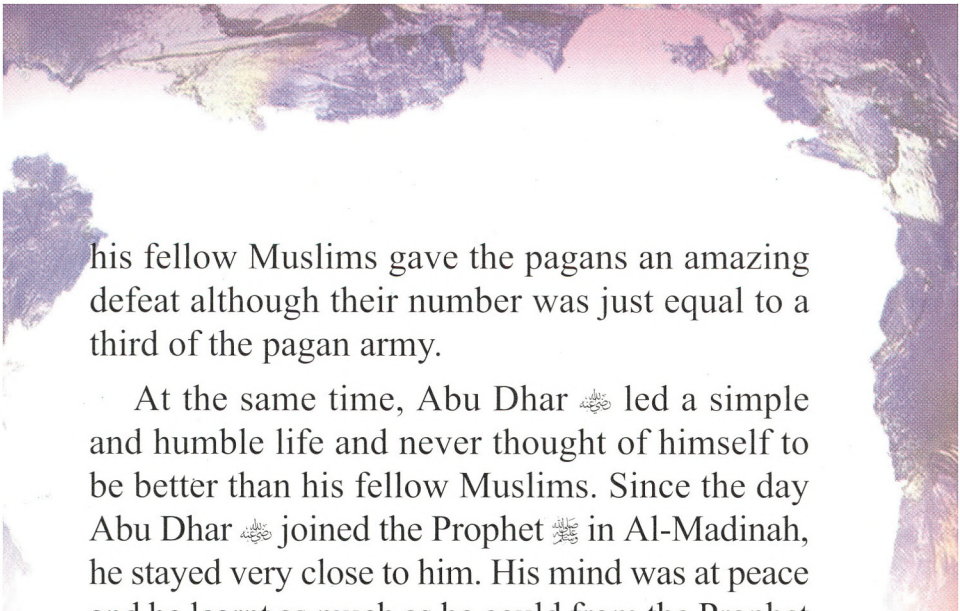


as a good Muslim doing things to please Allâh. He shared in building the new state of Islam through all means possible.

Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه was sure that the disbelievers would not let Muslims live in peace. In the second year after migration to Al-Madinah, the Quraish felt the threat Islam was posing to their trade with Syria. They had to follow roads of caravans near to Al-Madinah where Muslims were. The Muslims were waiting for any chance to restore their property which they left behind in Makkah when they were forced by the Quraish to migrate to Al-Madinah.

Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه joined the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his Companions in every battle they fought to protect the last divine message revealed by Allâh through the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم to all human beings. The Quraish prepared a big army to stop the threat of Islam to their power. They headed to Al-Madinah dreaming of bringing the Muslims back to Makkah to kneel before their false gods.

At a place called Badr, both Muslim and pagan armies met. A fierce battle took place between the two sides. Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه fought bravely. He and



his fellow Muslims gave the pagans an amazing defeat although their number was just equal to a third of the pagan army.

At the same time, Abu Dhar ؓ led a simple and humble life and never thought of himself to be better than his fellow Muslims. Since the day Abu Dhar ؓ joined the Prophet ﷺ in Al-Madinah, he stayed very close to him. His mind was at peace and he learnt as much as he could from the Prophet ﷺ. He was always asking questions about new revelations and commandments that added to the purity and truthfulness of his soul.

Abu Dhar ؓ spent most of his time in the mosque. He had no private house to live in. He also dedicated all his time for worship and learning. Although he tasted the bitterness of defeat in Uhud battle, he was sure that one battle would not mean the loss of war against ignorance and idolatry.

After some years, he accompanied the Prophet ﷺ in his march to Makkah to put an end to idolatry and vices in the Arabian Peninsula. He saw in black and white the idols fall down forever. He also saw how much the Prophet ﷺ was kind to those who opposed and oppressed him. His eyes

were filled with tears of joy to see Islam rule the land which had been blemished with evils of all kinds.

Marching alone!

The Prophet ﷺ felt the danger that Romans in the north were posing to the new Islamic state. Therefore, he decided to show them how strong Islam had become.

It was summer time with the blazing sun and burning soil daring anybody to move out of his house. The Prophet ﷺ urged his Companions to prepare for a journey that was thought to be nearly impossible to some of them. In that particular year, crops were scarce and resources very dire. However, all Muslims did their best to equip the army heading to Tabuk to deter the Romans.

Abu Dhar ؓ was too poor to have a horse or a camel to share in the excursion. He came to the Prophet ﷺ with tears in his eyes asking him to provide him with a camel or a horse to join the army. The Prophet ﷺ told him that he had no camel or horse to give him. Abu Dhar ؓ did not know what to do. The army left Al-Madinah and Abu Dhar ؓ was also left behind. He was so sad not

to be able to join the army. After a while, he decided to catch up with the army. He took his sword and shield and marched on foot.

The marching army had to take some rest on the way to Tabuk. Some men saw a man within the mirage of hot desert. They told the Prophet ﷺ that someone was following them at a distance.

The Prophet ﷺ liked Abu Dhar ؓ dearly. He was sure that Abu Dhar ؓ would keep true to his faith and would not miss the chance to share in every effort in support of Islam.

The Prophet ﷺ looked behind the mirage and said: "Be Abu Dhar." The men around the Prophet ﷺ were surprised to hear these words. How could Abu Dhar ؓ walk all this distance to catch up with the army! The man was coming closer and closer to the army. Yes! He was Abu Dhar ؓ and nobody else. He was the man to walk alone in support of Islam and Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ was so happy to have Abu Dhar ؓ within the army. He praised his perseverance and prayed to Allâh to save him from the heat of Hell-fire.

Separation!

Time passed very quickly. At last, Abu

Dhar ﷺ had to live the moment that he feared to come. The Prophet ﷺ had fulfilled his message and had to leave his Companions to spread Allâh's teachings on their own. He fell ill for several days and then passed away like any other human being. Abu Dhar ﷺ felt very sad and wept bitterly to see the Prophet ﷺ pass away. However, he knew that every living soul had to die. He also knew very well that he had a role to play in order to keep true to what the Prophet ﷺ had taught him.

Continued struggle

Abu Dhar ﷺ continued his struggle to spread the message of Islam beyond the borders of Arabia. He joined the Muslim army to the lands of the Roman and Persian Empires. He fought many battles in support of Islam.

Islam spread over many lands, east, north and south under the rule of Abu Bakr ﷺ, the first Caliph, and 'Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ, the second Caliph.

Riches spoil morality

As Muslims dispersed over land, they became rich. Many of them began to get a little too involved

in worldly matters. Even some rulers started treating Muslims in an incorrect manner and favored themselves over others. They began collecting wealth for themselves and forgot about helping others in need.

Standing against corruption

Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه could not keep silent towards such corruption and abuse of power. He began preaching to the rulers to be just to the people and to distribute the wealth and resources among Muslims on an equal basis.

Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه was deeply saddened by the way some of the people were using wealth to satisfy their desires while other people were living in poverty and leading a difficult life.

He did not spare one minute of his life to warn the people of the consequences of their greed for wealth. Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه was very honest and truthful. Nothing could bribe him into keeping silent against the corrupt rulers. He stood like a firm mountain in the face of the storm. Every time rulers were trying to keep him silent, he was always recalling the Prophet's words to him commanding him

to preach to Muslims in a peaceful manner and to keep away from violence.

The Prophet ﷺ had known the strong position and zeal of Abu Dhar ؓ from the first moment he became a Muslim. That is why he had advised him to be patient in case he might be harmed by those whom he was fighting against for their extravagance.

Endurance and only endurance

Abu Dhar ؓ always reminded people of the days during the life of the Prophet ﷺ when they would gather together in the mosque and share the little amount of food they had. He was always telling them that the Prophet ﷺ entered the mosque one night and saw Abu Dhar ؓ lying on the ground. He called him and said: “I always see you sleeping here.” Abu Dhar ؓ replied: “I do not have a house other than this mosque.” The Prophet ﷺ sat beside him and asked: “What if they dismiss you out of it?” Abu Dhar ؓ said: “I will move to Damascus.” The Prophet ﷺ then asked: “What if they dismiss you out of it?” Abu Dhar ؓ replied: “I will come back to this mosque.” The Prophet ﷺ then asked: “What if they dismiss you out of

it again?” Abu Dhar ﷺ replied: “I will fight them until I die.”

The Prophet ﷺ praised his perseverance. However he commanded him to live with them in peace and obey their orders until he and the Prophet ﷺ meet again on the Day of Judgement.



The True Follower

Abu Dhar ؓ was very keen to learn as much as he could from the Prophet ﷺ. Not only did he want to gain knowledge but he also wanted to put that knowledge into practice. In other words, he was a true follower of the religion of Islam and a sincere disciple to the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ.

Abu Dhar ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ told him:

“Uphold to seven commandments: Stay close to the poor by looking after them and helping them; do not look down on those below you with contempt, nor look up to those above you with grudge; do not beg anything from anybody; be kind to your relatives; say the truth even if it is bitter; do not fear anybody while doing something that pleases Allâh and always say: Allâh is All-Powerful and All Capable.”

Once, Abu Dhar ؓ went inside the mosque. He saw the Prophet ﷺ sitting there. He asked him: “What is prayer?” The Prophet ﷺ replied:

“It is goodness, perform it as much as you

can.” Abu Dhar ؓ then asked: “What are the best deeds?” The Prophet ﷺ replied: “To believe in Allâh and fight for His sake.” Abu Dhar ؓ further asked: “Who is best among believers?” The Prophet ﷺ replied: “Those who have the best morals.” Abu Dhar ؓ asked again: “Who is most peaceful among believers?” The Prophet ﷺ said: “Those who are peaceful in words and actions towards other Muslims.” Abu Dhar ؓ then said: “Advise me!” The Prophet ﷺ said: “Be pious and self restrained for this is the crown of all goodness; Do not talk much, for silence is better than saying trivial things; Keep close to the poor, kind to your relatives and speak the truth even if it is bitter.”

Abu Dhar ؓ acted according to these commandments. He spent most of his life struggling for the support of the poor against the greed of the rich. He always kept humble before all people whether they were from high class or low class families. He asked Allâh for help whenever he faced difficulties. He spoke the truth which brought him many bitter tastes of life.

Things Begin to Change

Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه led a straight forward and simple life. He was very strong in his belief in Islam, and was always ready to fight against evil without being the least bit afraid. After the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had passed away, the Islamic State became larger and wealthier. As we have already mentioned, some of the Muslims became attracted to the riches of the State and did their best to collect as much as they could for themselves. At the same time, there were Muslims suffering poverty.

Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه against abuse of wealth

Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه hated the way some of the Muslims were getting too involved in satisfying their worldly desires and pleasures. He felt sad seeing orphans with tears on their cheeks but no food in their stomachs. He could not keep silent in the face of the flooding greed that had affected the life of the Muslims.

Therefore, Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه decided to wage his sacred war against the greedy rich in support of the poor. Not only did he feel sympathy for the poor, but he also led a very simple and humble

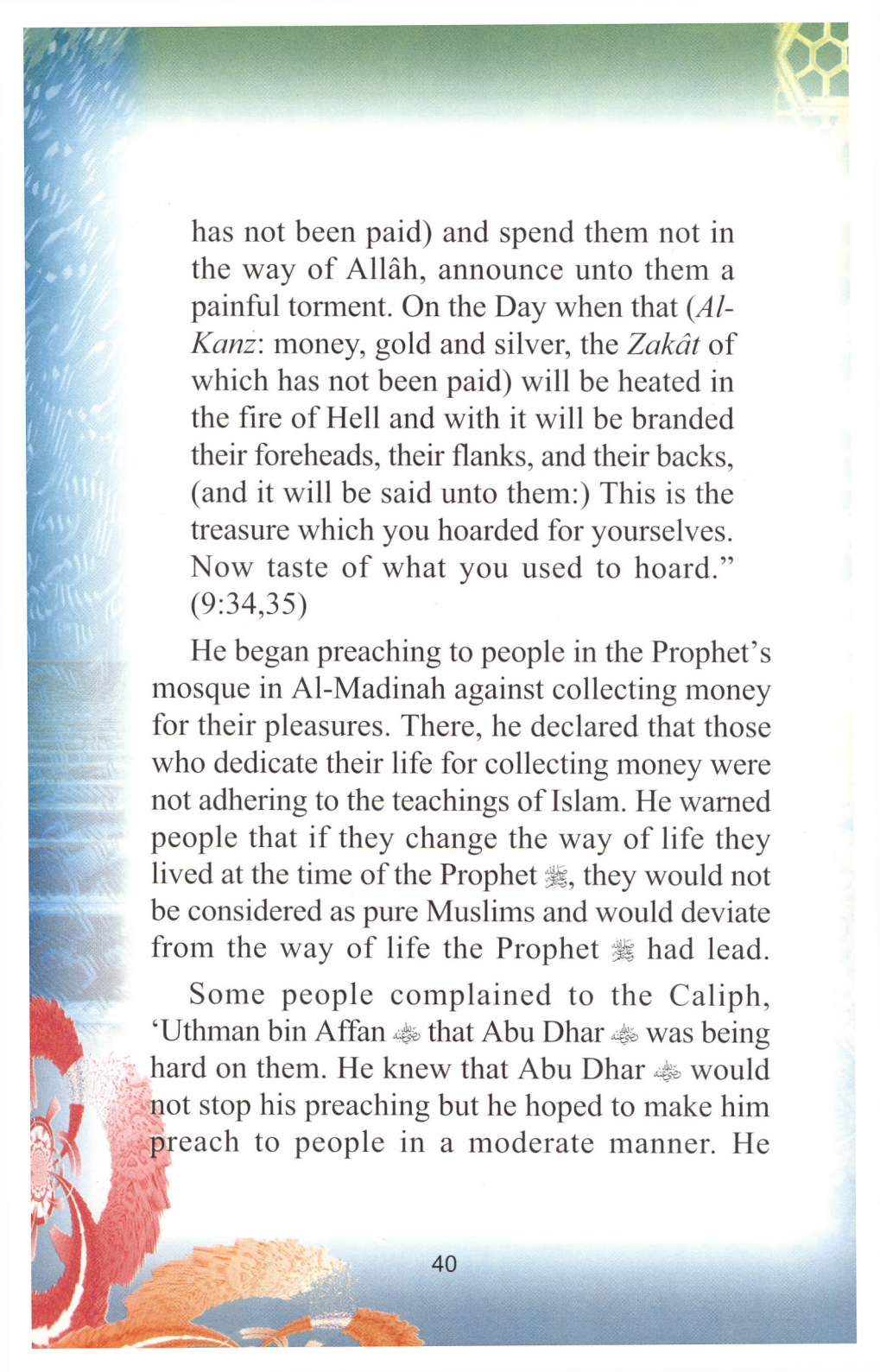
life and applied their way of living to himself.

Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه felt the wide gap between the life of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the life of people after his death. He found himself a stranger in Al-Madinah and hence he left to join the Muslim army outside the Arabian Peninsula. He rejected all attempts to hold any post in the growing Islamic empire.

Equality should be the rule

After ‘Umar’s death, Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه went back to Al-Madinah to face the conspiracies plotted against Islam. He began calling people to leave aside their quest for worldly things, which he feared would take them away from the true and pure Islam. He tried his best to make people aware of the fact that collecting money more than they needed would take them away from the main purpose for which they were created; namely to worship Allâh and deal with each other as true Muslims. He urged the Muslims to spend their money in the way of Allâh and to help the poor and the needy. He was always reciting the following Verse of the Qur’ân:

“And those who hoard up gold and silver
(*Al-Kanz*: the money, the *Zakât* of which



has not been paid) and spend them not in the way of Allâh, announce unto them a painful torment. On the Day when that (*Al-Kanz*: money, gold and silver, the *Zakât* of which has not been paid) will be heated in the fire of Hell and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, (and it will be said unto them:) This is the treasure which you hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard.” (9:34,35)

He began preaching to people in the Prophet’s mosque in Al-Madinah against collecting money for their pleasures. There, he declared that those who dedicate their life for collecting money were not adhering to the teachings of Islam. He warned people that if they change the way of life they lived at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, they would not be considered as pure Muslims and would deviate from the way of life the Prophet ﷺ had lead.

Some people complained to the Caliph, ‘Uthman bin Affan ؓ that Abu Dhar ؓ was being hard on them. He knew that Abu Dhar ؓ would not stop his preaching but he hoped to make him preach to people in a moderate manner. He

summoned Abu Dhar ؓ to discuss with him the conditions of the Muslims. The discussion between the two Companions of the Prophet ﷺ ended with a firm position by Abu Dhar ؓ that he would continue his message as he considered proper, but in a peaceful manner as he was ordered by the Prophet ﷺ.

The prophecy came true!

‘Uthman ؓ felt that the people should not be addressed in this way. He had known Abu Dhar’s hard way of preaching. Therefore he asked him to leave to Damascus. Abu Dhar ؓ obeyed the Caliph and left to Damascus. However, he continued there his way of preaching to the people. Many complaints against Abu Dhar’s preaching were raised to Mu‘awiyah ؓ, the ruler of Damascus. He discussed with him a more lenient way of preaching, but Abu Dhar ؓ refused to change his way of preaching. He even blamed Mu‘awiyah ؓ for having more than one kind of food on his table.

Mu‘awiyah ؓ was aware that Abu Dhar ؓ would not change his way. Therefore, he decided to send him to a place other than Damascus. He ordered him to accompany the Muslim army and

preach to them to be kind to the people they might conquer. However, every time Abu Dhar ؓ came back to Damascus, he declared with full power and firmness that: “The poor and the needy should be cared for.” He always reminded people of the days when the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions lead a humble and simple life.

Mu‘awiyah ؓ was doing his best to cool down the tense preaching of Abu Dhar ؓ but he failed to make the man give in to his orders. Therefore, he sent a letter to ‘Uthman ؓ telling him that Abu Dhar ؓ would not cool down his preaching against the riches that people earned through legal ways.

Back to Al-Madinah

‘Uthman ؓ ordered Mu‘awiyah ؓ to send Abu Dhar ؓ to Al-Madinah. The people of Damascus who liked Abu Dhar ؓ did not want him to leave their city. However, Abu Dhar ؓ, drawing on the advice of the Prophet ﷺ, told them he had to obey the orders of the Caliph, for he was preaching peacefully.

In Al-Madinah, the meeting between Abu Dhar and ‘Uthman ؓ did not succeed in making Abu Dhar ؓ cool down his strong attack against the

rich and their negligence of the poor. He told ‘Uthman ؓ that those who complained against him did not like him to tell the people about their bad morals and the way they were using their wealth.

Abu Dhar ؓ led a poor life. He was among a group of people who had no houses, families or property to live in. He used to sit in the mosque where people brought them food. He dedicated all his time to learning the Qur’ân and Prophet’s sayings. The state of Islam had become very large and several nations accepted Islam as their religion. The state became rich with resources earned from the conquered lands. Abu Dhar ؓ considered taking more than one kind of food in one meal as a deviation from the right way of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions.

Voluntary exile

‘Uthman ؓ asked Abu Dhar ؓ to keep himself away from the people, but Abu Dhar ؓ refused to stop preaching against what he believed to be corruption. ‘Uthman ؓ kindly asked Abu Dhar ؓ to stay with him but Abu Dhar ؓ again refused ‘Uthman’s proposal and said: “I am in no need to live your life.” At last, Abu Dhar ؓ asked ‘Uthman

ﷺ to allow him to live at a place called Rabaza, all alone. ‘Uthman ﷺ allowed him to go there.

At Rabaza, Abu Dhar ﷺ led a humble and simple life and dedicated all his time to worship and prayer. One day, Abu Dhar ﷺ received news from some people in Koufa asking him to support them in their revolt against ‘Uthman ﷺ. For some reason they were upset with ‘Uthman ﷺ. Abu Dhar ﷺ, with his usual truthful and strong tone told them that even if ‘Uthman ﷺ would crucify him, he would still not rebel against him, and if ‘Uthman ﷺ asked him to go anywhere he would have no option but to obey the Caliph as he was originally ordered by the Prophet ﷺ.

Abu Dhar ﷺ was a truthful and loyal man. He led his life as a great example for the Muslims to follow. He followed every piece of advice given to him by the Prophet ﷺ.



The Humble and Poor Muslim

At Rabaza, Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه led a very humble life, all alone and isolated from people. He devoted all his time to worship and calling to the true and pure Islam. Nothing could attract him to wasteful worldly pleasures.

Some of his old friends visited him now and then. They tried their best to give him some money for his living, but he was always rejecting such gifts. He told those who wanted to give him money to improve his life style:

“I have a goat to milk, a wife to serve me, a cloak to dress in. Nothing else is needed.”

A friend once asked him to improve his lifestyle. Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه said to him in return that it was better for him to continue his life as he did during the time of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Even when his wife asked him to move to Iraq so that they might earn their living, he refused to go there. He said to her: “If I go to Iraq, the people there will make me get involved in this trivial life and I will have to carry burdens which I would not like to have on doomsday.”

The Lonely End

Although Abu Dhar ؓ had kept himself isolated from other people, in all his loneliness he found companionship with Allâh and the peace that he was searching for.

Days passed slowly, as Abu Dhar ؓ became a weak old man. He realized that all his friends and companions had died and he felt like a stranger in this isolated world.

One day he fell ill and felt that he was going to die. All alone and isolated, his wife sat beside his bed staring at his weak body. A tear rolled out of her eyes onto Abu Dhar's face. The dying man opened his eyes and exclaimed: "Don't you know that every human being is going to die?" She replied: "I am crying because we do not have anything to make a burial shroud for you?" He assured her saying: "I heard the Prophet ﷺ saying:

"One of you will one day die lonely in the desert but will be buried by a group of believers."

All those who were with the Prophet ﷺ when he said these words had died. I am the only

one of them still alive. Don't you see I am dying in this desert? Look towards the road and you will see that a group of believers will come to us. Verily I had never lied nor am I known to be a liar.

As Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه finished these words, he closed his eyes and passed away. After some hours, a group of men led by Abdullah bin Masoud رضي الله عنه (a great Companion of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) came to the side of the dead body and the mourning woman. Abdullah bin Masoud رضي الله عنه knew the deceased man. He addressed the dead body: "It was true what the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said about you; You walk alone, die alone and will be resurrected alone."

This was the man who dedicated all his life for the support of the poor and the needy. He fought against the people who had greed for wealth and were extravagant right until the very end of his honorable life. He led a life in which he was not the least bit attracted to the luxuries of this life.

Indeed at Rabaza, he was buried alone to be resurrected alone on Doomsday.

It is true that Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه opposed rulers for the way they treated the majority of Muslims. However, he never adopted violent ways of action.

He remained peaceful in his struggle and used words, not swords, to preach his principles.

Muslims in the present time should follow the example of Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه in their struggle against injustice and tyranny. Words should be the only means used to advise Muslims and people. Allâh says:

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and nice preaching.”

When you get older, remember Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه whom Islam taught to be obedient to Muslim rulers, but at the same time strong in his struggle for the good of the Muslims.

May Allâh be pleased with Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه, the man who dedicated all his life and efforts to make equality prevail among all human beings.

