

The Golden Series of the Prophet's Companions

Bilal bin Rabah رضي الله عنه

The Mu'adhdhin

(Caller to Prayer)



By: Abdul Basit Ahmad

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بلال بن رباح رضي الله عنه - المؤذن

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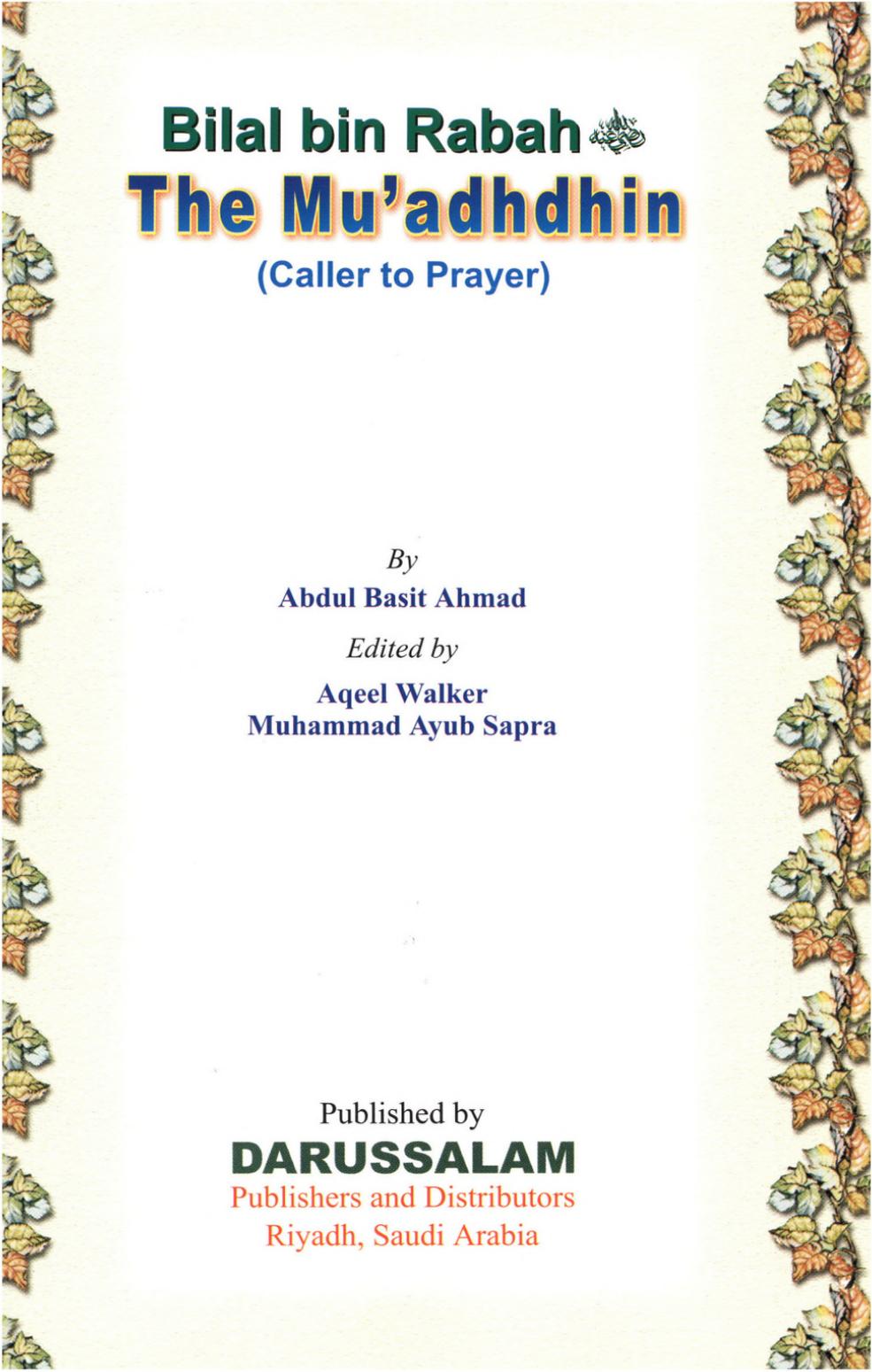
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Bilal bin Rabah 
The Mu'adhdhin
(Caller to Prayer)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

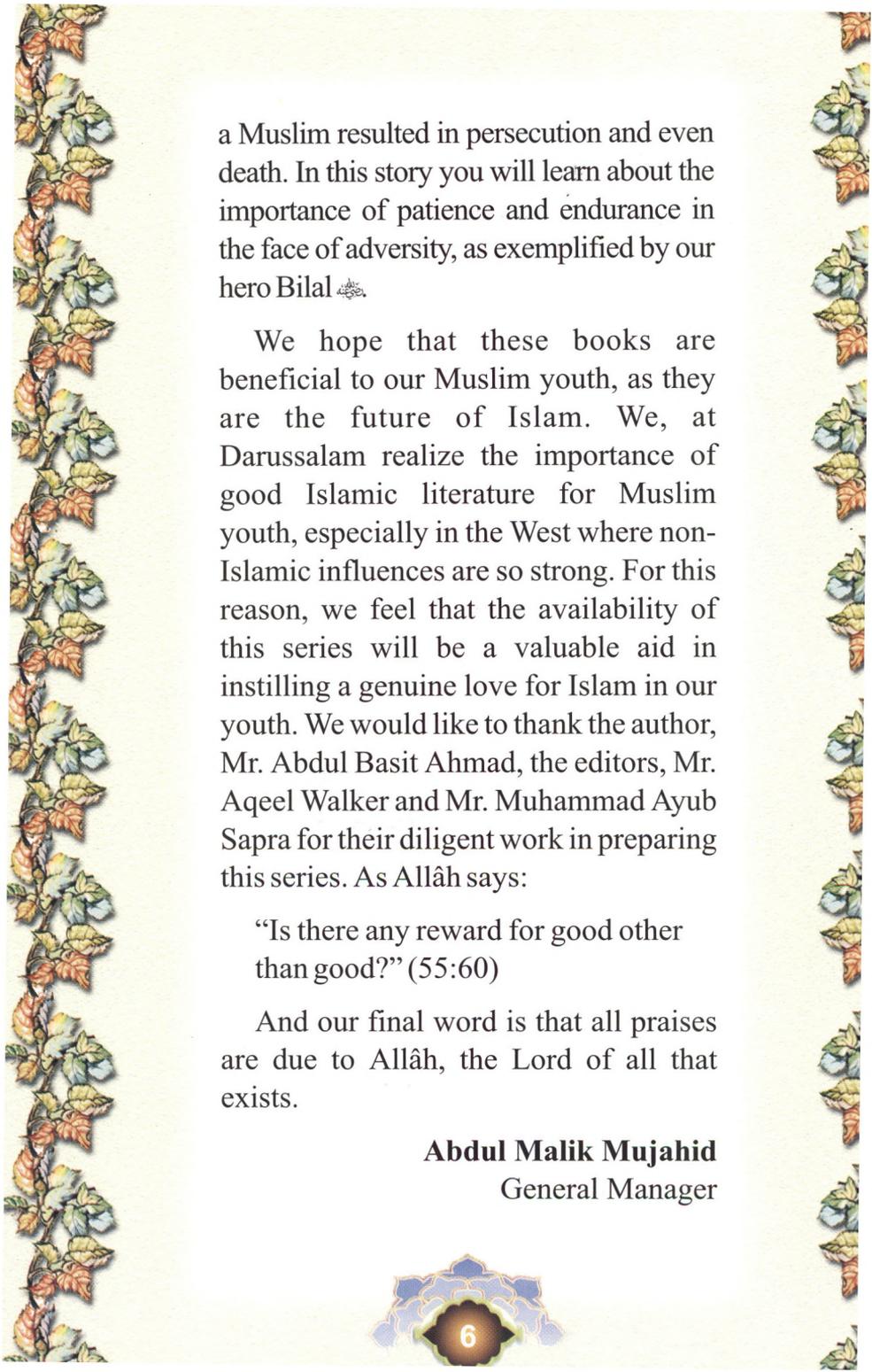
“Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allâh [i.e., they have gone out for *Jihâd* (holy fighting), and showed not their backs to the disbelievers]; of them some have fulfilled their obligations (i.e., have been martyred); and some of them are still waiting, but they have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

Publishers 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.

Darussalam is pleased to present this valuable series of books, *'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 youth and encouraging them to be good Muslims.

In the following story, titled *'Bilal bin Rabah ؓ – The Mu'adhdhin (Caller to Prayer)'*, you will read about one of the most famous Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Bilal bin Rabah ؓ. He was one of the earliest converts to Islam in Makkah and one of the slaves who accepted Islam at a time when becoming



a Muslim resulted in persecution and even death. In this story you will learn about the importance of patience and endurance in the face of adversity, as exemplified by our hero Bilal رضي الله عنه.

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 youth, especially in the West where non-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 youth. We would like to thank the author, Mr. Abdul Basit Ahmad, the editors, Mr. Aqeel Walker and Mr. Muhammad Ayub Sapra 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 word is that all praises are due to Allâh, the Lord of all that exists.

Abdul Malik Mujahid
General Manager

Foreword

Before the advent of Islam, the Arabian Peninsula and the whole world in general, lived in utter ignorance mixed with various forms of injustice and lack of any divine guidance.

Slave markets were common throughout the Arabian Peninsula especially at popular places. Being a commercial city and a point of attraction, Makkah was a central market of slave trade. Many slaves of different origins, especially those originating in Abyssinia could be found in the houses of the Makkans.

One of those slaves was our hero, Bilal bin Rabah ؓ. He was a dark skinned young man. He was brought from overseas to be a slave in the house of a Quraishite chief, Umayya bin Khalaf. All that is known about Bilal ؓ is that he was an Abyssinian. Like any other slave, he was the object of humiliation and oppression. He received all kinds of ill treatment from his master as well as from other people. He was not even treated as a human being. Anyone could freely call him the 'son of the black woman' without feeling any shame. Bilal ؓ spent a life of misery in the house of his master. He never tasted the true meaning of life and

always felt like a stranger amongst the people he worked for. He spent the whole day grazing his master's camels without showing any sign of discomfort or distress.

After the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was commissioned to proclaim the message of Islam, Bilal ؓ became a different person. As soon as he heard about the message of Islam, he showed interest and eagerness to learn more about the new religion. After full conviction that this was the true religion of Allâh, Bilal ؓ accepted Islam and became a fully dedicated Muslim. He followed the steps of the Prophet ﷺ and worked hard to support and spread the message of Islam. Bilal was greatly respected by his fellow Muslims. He held a very high position in Islamic history and became one of the prominent personalities in the history of Islam.

In the following pages, we are going to read more about this great man who, in spite of all tortures and whips of cruelty, kept steadfast to his faith, setting a unique example of endurance for all Muslims to follow.

Abdul Basit Ahmad

Introduction

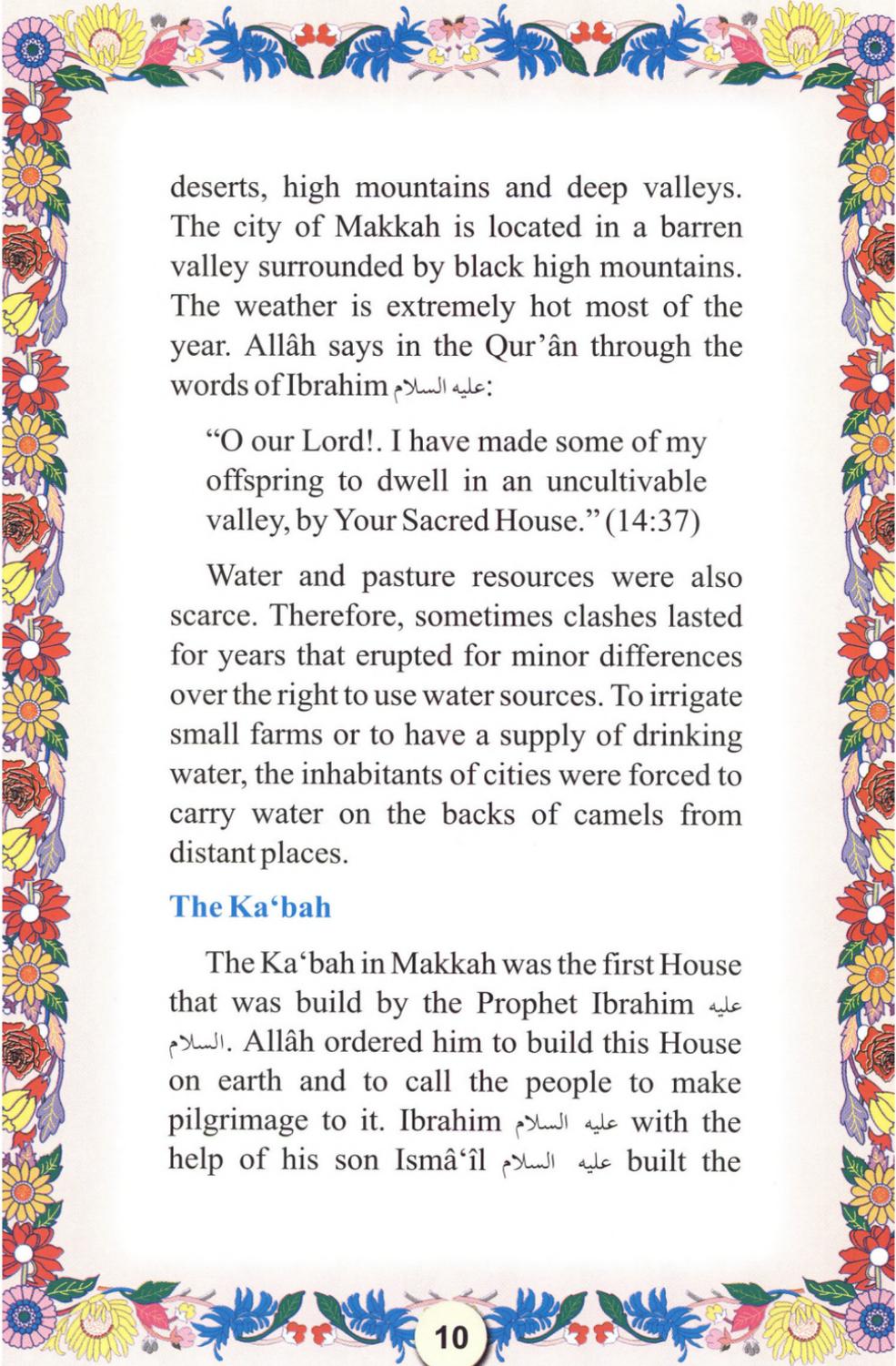
The Period of Ignorance

The period that preceded the rise of Islam is termed as the 'Period of Ignorance.' This term only applies to the Arabian Peninsula. It means that the people who lived during that period received no divine guidance since the time of the Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام. Therefore, they followed wrong ways of worship. They believed that worshipping idols was the right thing. They claimed that such idols would bring them closer to Allâh. The absence of guidance from Allâh made people practice numerous vices and injustices.

The Arabian Peninsula

The Arabian Peninsula was inhabited by different Arab tribes. These tribes lived in cities and in the desert. The people of cities mostly worked as traders while desert bedouins followed their flocks everywhere in the desert in search of food and water.

The land mainly consists of sandy



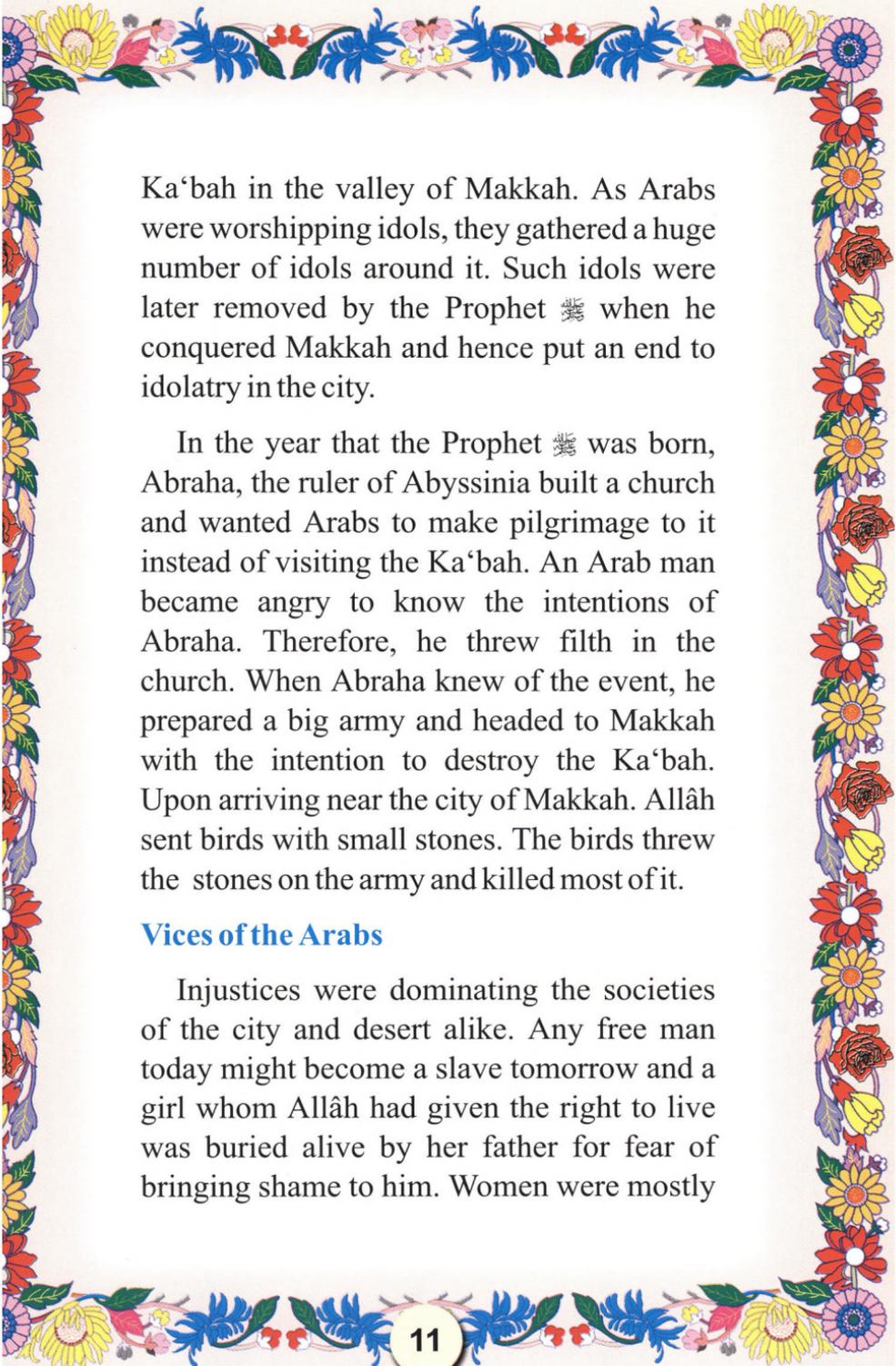
deserts, high mountains and deep valleys. The city of Makkah is located in a barren valley surrounded by black high mountains. The weather is extremely hot most of the year. Allâh says in the Qur'ân through the words of Ibrahim عليه السلام:

“O our Lord!. I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley, by Your Sacred House.” (14:37)

Water and pasture resources were also scarce. Therefore, sometimes clashes lasted for years that erupted for minor differences over the right to use water sources. To irrigate small farms or to have a supply of drinking water, the inhabitants of cities were forced to carry water on the backs of camels from distant places.

The Ka'bah

The Ka'bah in Makkah was the first House that was build by the Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام. Allâh ordered him to build this House on earth and to call the people to make pilgrimage to it. Ibrahim عليه السلام with the help of his son Ismâ'îl عليه السلام built the

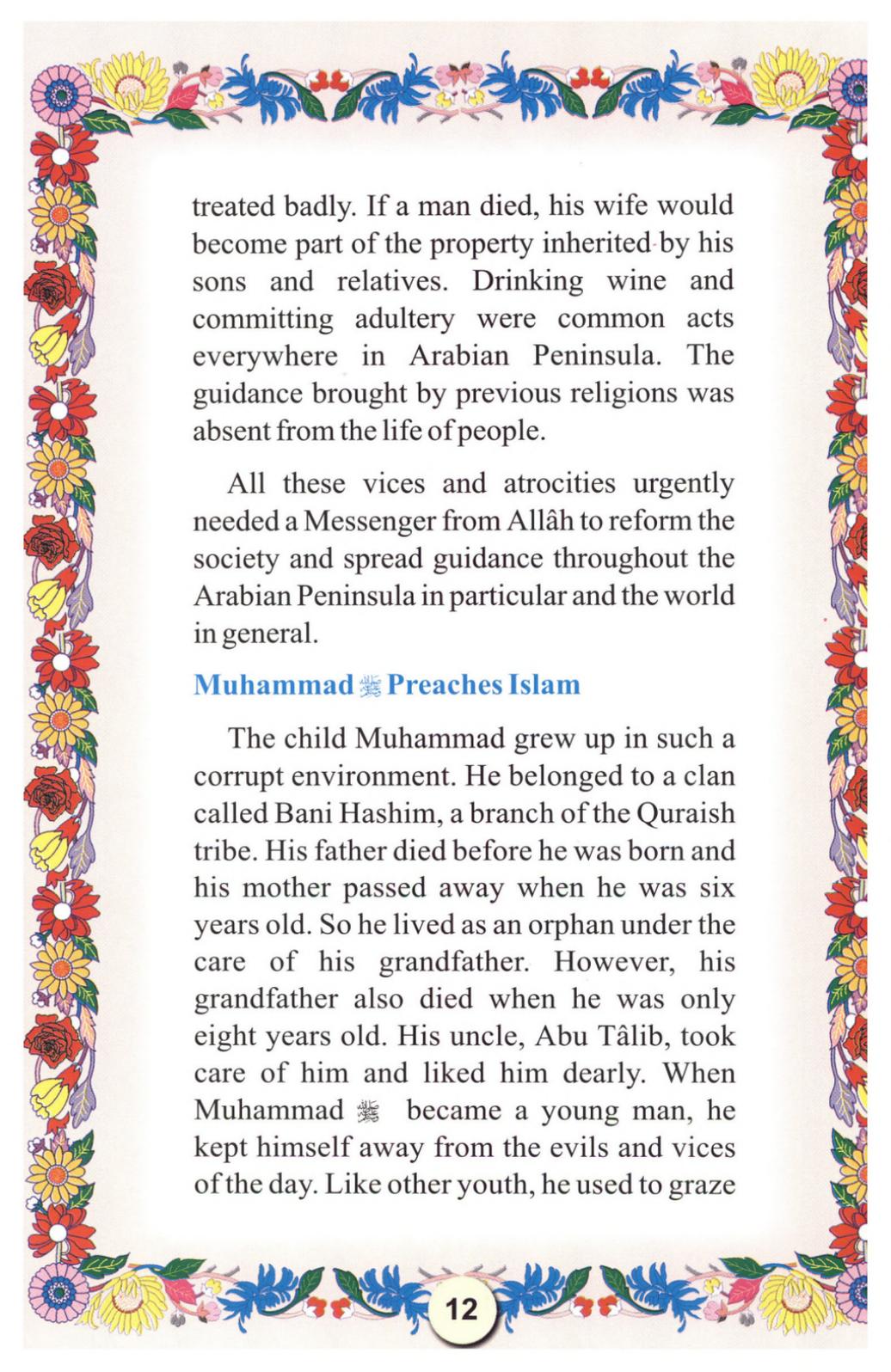


Ka'bah in the valley of Makkah. As Arabs were worshipping idols, they gathered a huge number of idols around it. Such idols were later removed by the Prophet ﷺ when he conquered Makkah and hence put an end to idolatry in the city.

In the year that the Prophet ﷺ was born, Abraha, the ruler of Abyssinia built a church and wanted Arabs to make pilgrimage to it instead of visiting the Ka'bah. An Arab man became angry to know the intentions of Abraha. Therefore, he threw filth in the church. When Abraha knew of the event, he prepared a big army and headed to Makkah with the intention to destroy the Ka'bah. Upon arriving near the city of Makkah. Allâh sent birds with small stones. The birds threw the stones on the army and killed most of it.

Vices of the Arabs

Injustices were dominating the societies of the city and desert alike. Any free man today might become a slave tomorrow and a girl whom Allâh had given the right to live was buried alive by her father for fear of bringing shame to him. Women were mostly

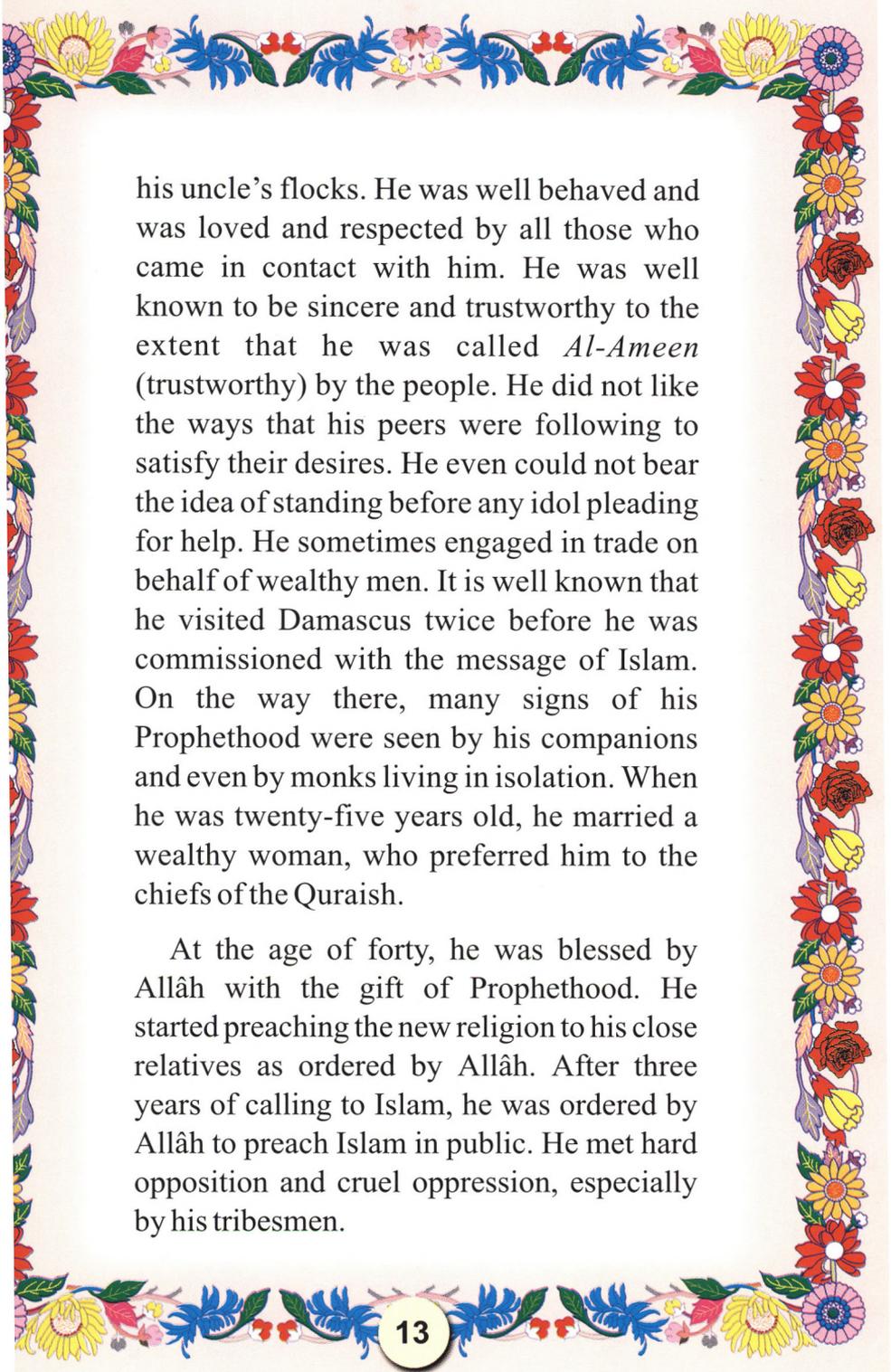
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treated badly. If a man died, his wife would become part of the property inherited by his sons and relatives. Drinking wine and committing adultery were common acts everywhere in Arabian Peninsula. The guidance brought by previous religions was absent from the life of people.

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.

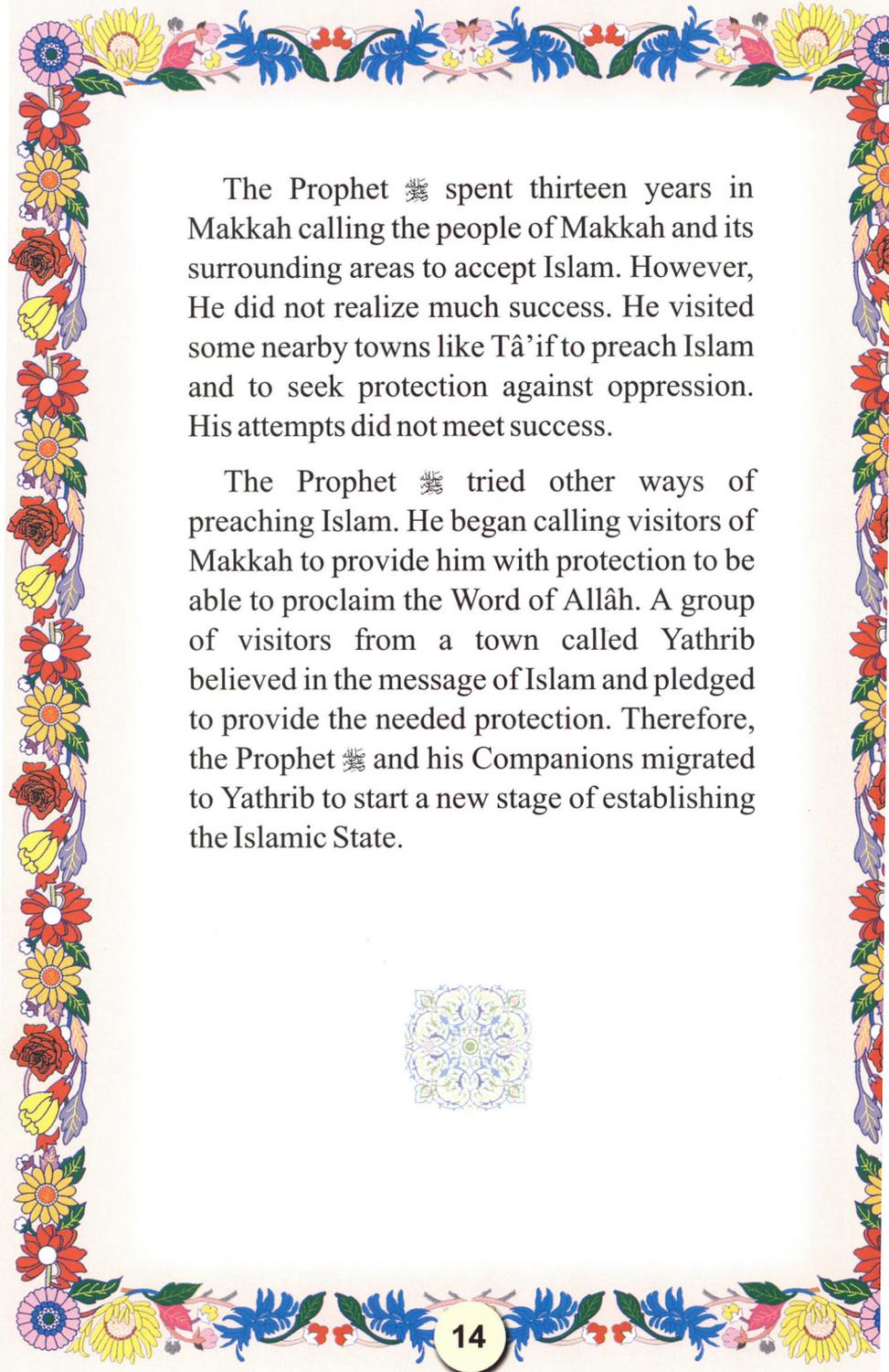
Muhammad ﷺ Preaches Islam

The child Muhammad grew up in such a corrupt environment. He belonged to a clan called Bani Hashim, a branch of the Quraish tribe. His father died before he was born and his mother passed away when he was six years old. So he lived as an orphan under the care of his grandfather. However, his grandfather also died when he was only eight years old. His uncle, Abu Tâlib, took care of him and liked him dearly. When Muhammad ﷺ 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 the people. He did not like the ways that his peers were following to satisfy their desires. He even could not bear the idea of standing 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 by 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.

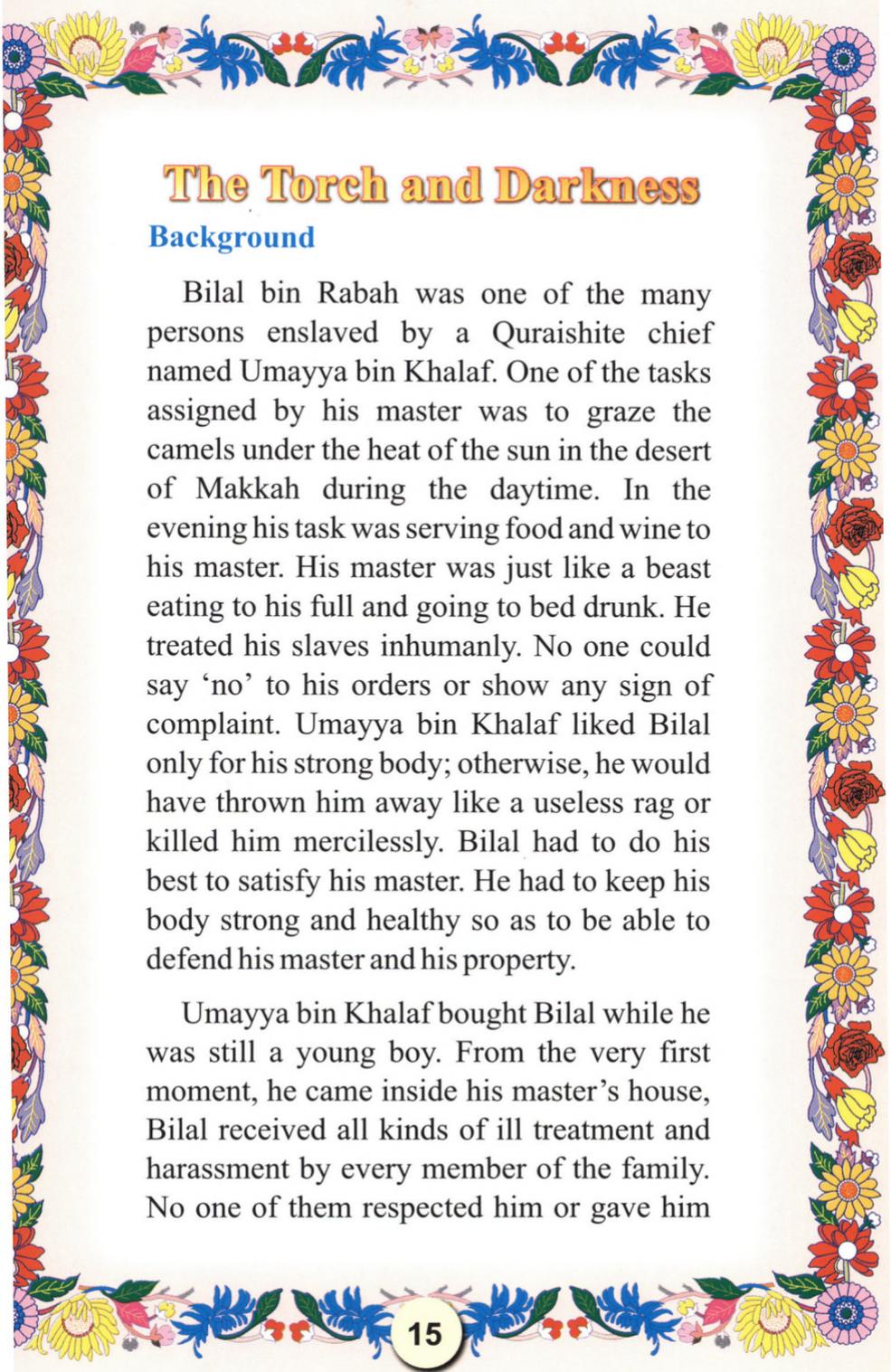
At the age of forty, he was blessed by Allâh with the gift of Prophethood. He started preaching the new religion to his close relatives as ordered by Allâh. After three years of calling to Islam, he was ordered by Allâh to preach Islam in public. He met hard opposition and cruel oppression, especially 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 tried other ways of preaching Islam. He began calling visitors of Makkah to provide him with 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. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions migrated to Yathrib to start a new stage of establishing the Islamic State.



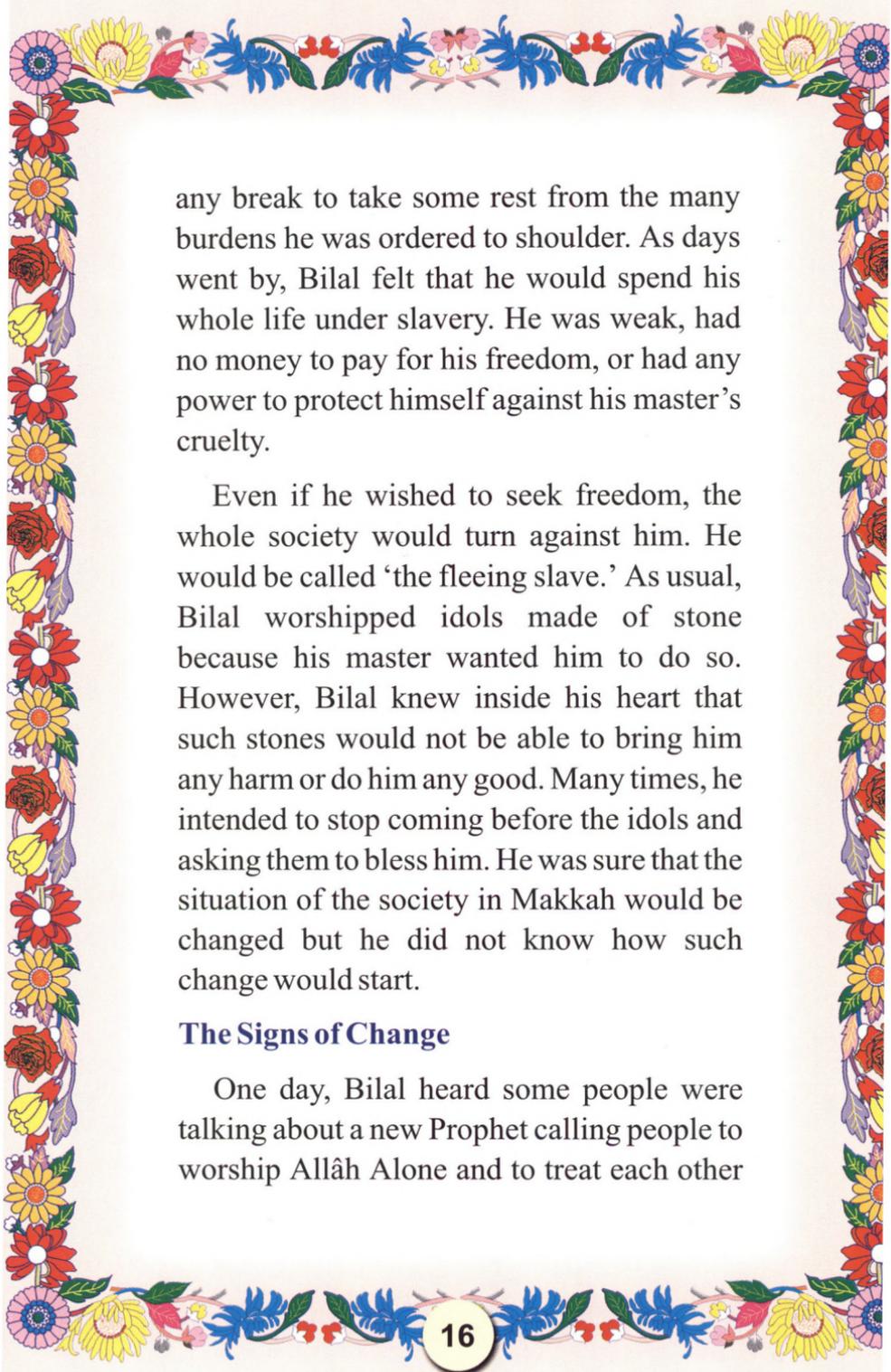


The Torch and Darkness

Background

Bilal bin Rabah was one of the many persons enslaved by a Quraishite chief named Umayya bin Khalaf. One of the tasks assigned by his master was to graze the camels under the heat of the sun in the desert of Makkah during the daytime. In the evening his task was serving food and wine to his master. His master was just like a beast eating to his full and going to bed drunk. He treated his slaves inhumanly. No one could say 'no' to his orders or show any sign of complaint. Umayya bin Khalaf liked Bilal only for his strong body; otherwise, he would have thrown him away like a useless rag or killed him mercilessly. Bilal had to do his best to satisfy his master. He had to keep his body strong and healthy so as to be able to defend his master and his property.

Umayya bin Khalaf bought Bilal while he was still a young boy. From the very first moment, he came inside his master's house, Bilal received all kinds of ill treatment and harassment by every member of the family. No one of them respected him or gave him

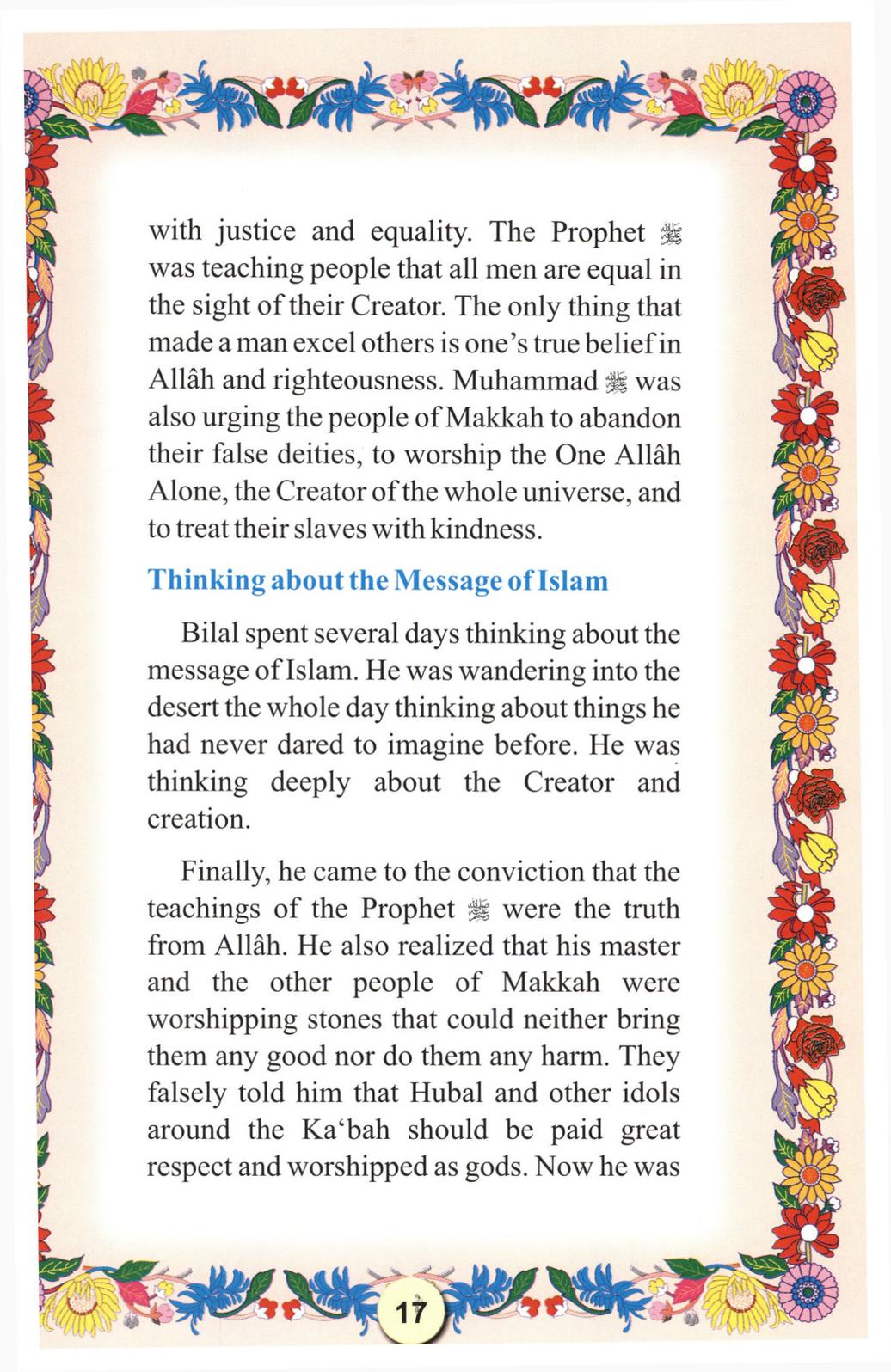


any break to take some rest from the many burdens he was ordered to shoulder. As days went by, Bilal felt that he would spend his whole life under slavery. He was weak, had no money to pay for his freedom, or had any power to protect himself against his master's cruelty.

Even if he wished to seek freedom, the whole society would turn against him. He would be called 'the fleeing slave.' As usual, Bilal worshipped idols made of stone because his master wanted him to do so. However, Bilal knew inside his heart that such stones would not be able to bring him any harm or do him any good. Many times, he intended to stop coming before the idols and asking them to bless him. He was sure that the situation of the society in Makkah would be changed but he did not know how such change would start.

The Signs of Change

One day, Bilal heard some people were talking about a new Prophet calling people to worship Allâh Alone and to treat each other

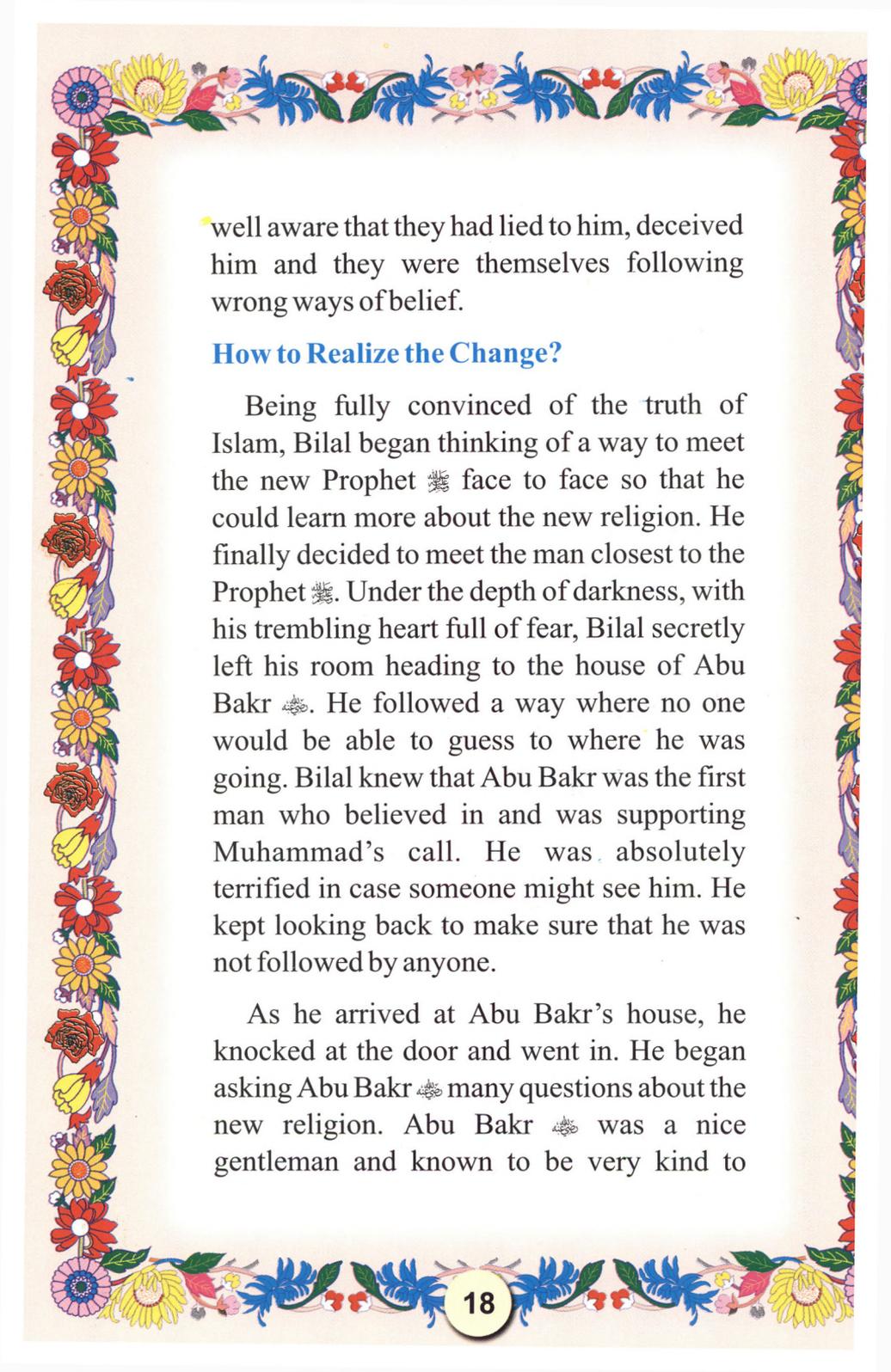
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with justice and equality. The Prophet ﷺ was teaching people that all men are equal in the sight of their Creator. The only thing that made a man excel others is one's true belief in Allâh and righteousness. Muhammad ﷺ was also urging the people of Makkah to abandon their false deities, to worship the One Allâh Alone, the Creator of the whole universe, and to treat their slaves with kindness.

Thinking about the Message of Islam

Bilal spent several days thinking about the message of Islam. He was wandering into the desert the whole day thinking about things he had never dared to imagine before. He was thinking deeply about the Creator and creation.

Finally, he came to the conviction that the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ were the truth from Allâh. He also realized that his master and the other people of Makkah were worshipping stones that could neither bring them any good nor do them any harm. They falsely told him that Hubal and other idols around the Ka'bah should be paid great respect and worshipped as gods. Now he was

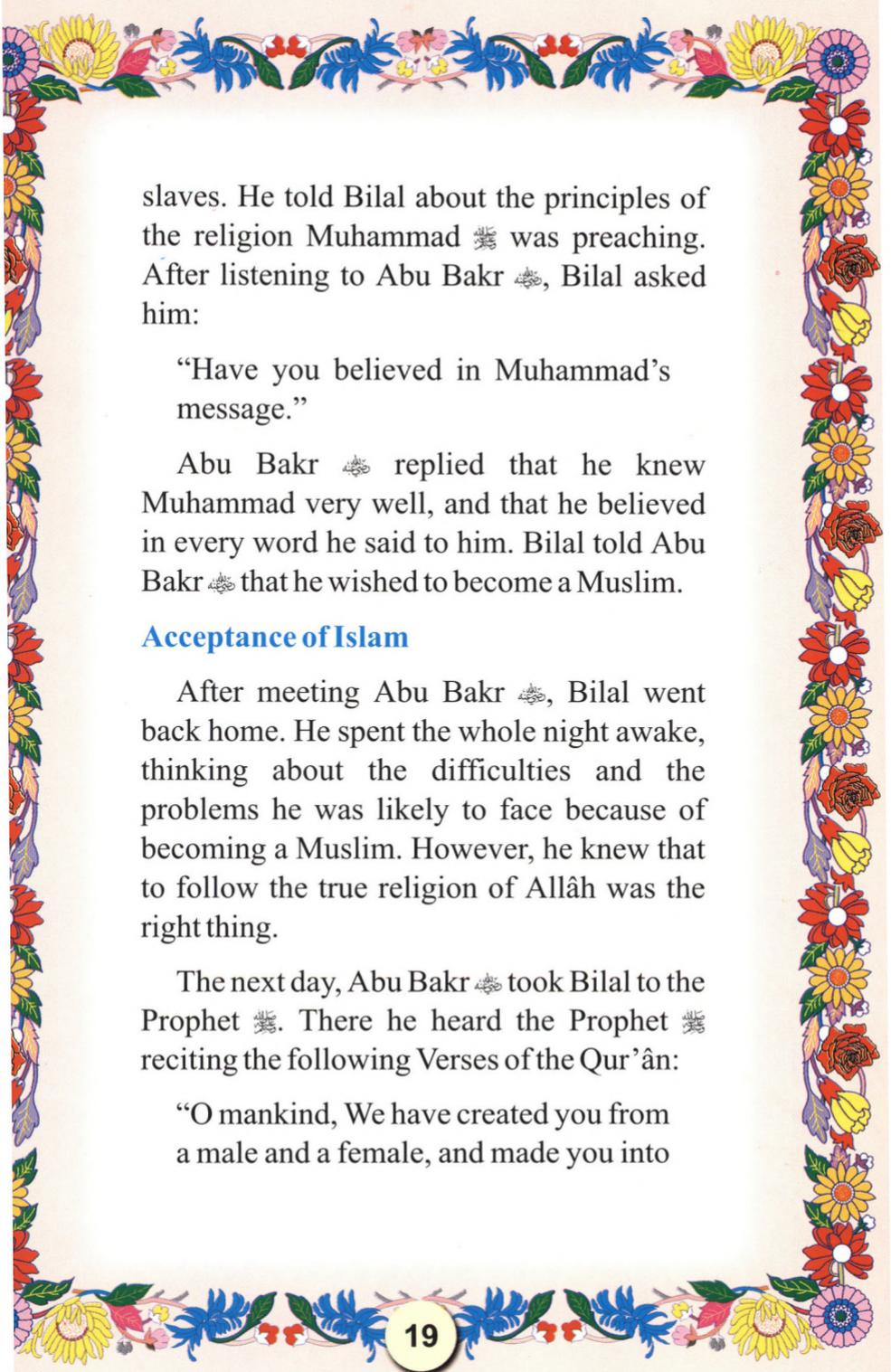


well aware that they had lied to him, deceived him and they were themselves following wrong ways of belief.

How to Realize the Change?

Being fully convinced of the truth of Islam, Bilal began thinking of a way to meet the new Prophet ﷺ face to face so that he could learn more about the new religion. He finally decided to meet the man closest to the Prophet ﷺ. Under the depth of darkness, with his trembling heart full of fear, Bilal secretly left his room heading to the house of Abu Bakr ؓ. He followed a way where no one would be able to guess to where he was going. Bilal knew that Abu Bakr was the first man who believed in and was supporting Muhammad's call. He was absolutely terrified in case someone might see him. He kept looking back to make sure that he was not followed by anyone.

As he arrived at Abu Bakr's house, he knocked at the door and went in. He began asking Abu Bakr ؓ many questions about the new religion. Abu Bakr ؓ was a nice gentleman and known to be very kind to



slaves. He told Bilal about the principles of the religion Muhammad ﷺ was preaching. After listening to Abu Bakr ؓ, Bilal asked him:

“Have you believed in Muhammad’s message.”

Abu Bakr ؓ replied that he knew Muhammad very well, and that he believed in every word he said to him. Bilal told Abu Bakr ؓ that he wished to become a Muslim.

Acceptance of Islam

After meeting Abu Bakr ؓ, Bilal went back home. He spent the whole night awake, thinking about the difficulties and the problems he was likely to face because of becoming a Muslim. However, he knew that to follow the true religion of Allâh was the right thing.

The next day, Abu Bakr ؓ took Bilal to the Prophet ﷺ. There he heard the Prophet ﷺ reciting the following Verses of the Qur’ân:

“O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into

nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily the most honourable of you with Allâh is that (believer) who has *At-Taqwâ.*” (49:13)

Bilal listened carefully to these great principles of equality among human beings. After hearing the *Âyât* (Verses) of the Qur’ân, he was even more eager to follow the religion of Islam. He immediately accepted Islam.

Contempt of Idols

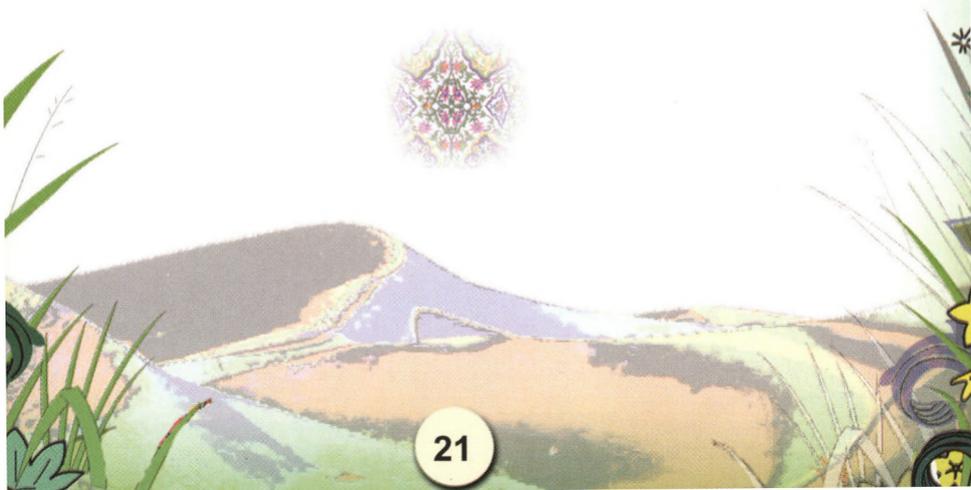
After embracing Islam, Bilal ﷺ went to the Ka‘bah. There he saw the silent and dumb idols around the Ka‘bah. He looked straight in their faces, talked to them and touched them. They were cold, senseless and even powerless. He asked himself how could he worship such stones or how could he ask them to bring him good and help him. He thought that it was very stupid of him to have believed in and worshipped those powerless stones that were themselves made by humans. For the first time he saw them as nothing more than dwarfs.

He stood in front of the biggest idol named

Hubal and talked to it. Of course, the idol did not replied to him. Bilal ﷺ was so disgusted with the false worship of idols that he felt like spitting on Hubal's face. He whispered to Hubal: 'You are but a piece of stone. It is a waste of time to stand before you. You are powerless.' He ended his whispering by spitting on Hubal's face.

Bilal left the Ka'bah knowing in his heart that the idols were not real deities that deserved to be worshipped. He knew that the real Creator of the universe was more powerful and greater than these stones.

Unfortunately, while Bilal ﷺ was at Ka'bah, there was a man watching how Bilal had spat on Hubal and refused to worship the greatest idol that most of the Arabs worshipped.



The True Believer

The next day, some of the Quraishite chiefs were sitting around the Ka‘bah talking amongst themselves. They were laughing and mocking the Prophet ﷺ and his religion. Umayya bin Khalaf was there chatting with Abu Jahl and plotting to stop the new religion.

Cruelty shows its ugly Face

As they were talking, a man came to Umayya and whispered something into his ear. This man was the same one who had been watching Bilal’s act towards the idol. Umayya became very angry at what he heard; his body shivered out of anger and his eyes became full of rage. He stood up and left the people he was sitting with. He could not believe that his slave would dare to spit on his god. He swore that he would take revenge against Bilal. He stood before Hubal and shouted that he would teach Bilal a very harsh lesson.

Umayya went back home like an angry bull and rushed inside Bilal’s room with a long whip



in his hand. There he found Bilal ﷺ sitting in a calm and serene mood. He questioned him with anger:

“Is it true that you abandoned our religion and believed this enchanted man, you son of the black woman?”

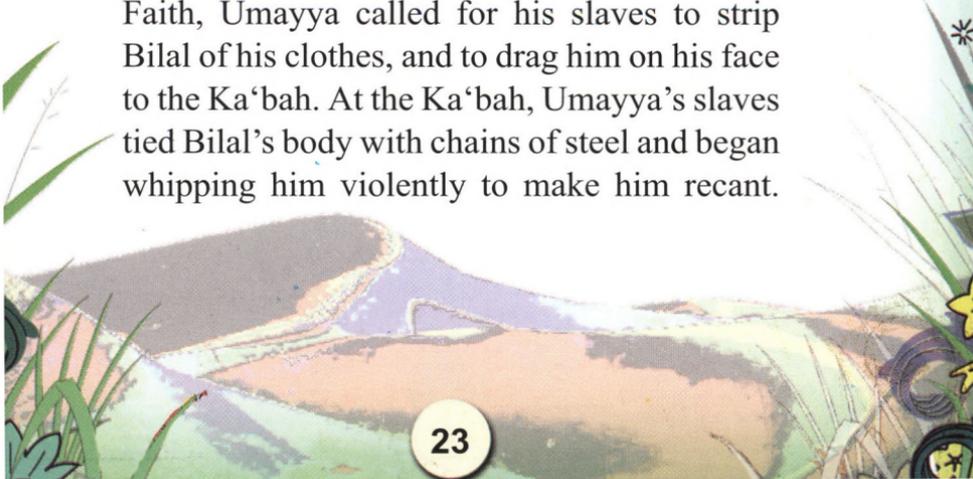
Bilal ﷺ replied in a confident tone:

“Yes, Allâh had guided me to the true Faith.”

Umayya was astonished to have such a reply. He stood with the whip in his hand trying to bargain with Bilal ﷺ. However Bilal would not accept anything. He asked him to abandon his new religion and to go back to the worship of the idols.

Allâh is One, Allâh is One

When finally realizing that Bilal was not going to accept anything in exchange for his Faith, Umayya called for his slaves to strip Bilal of his clothes, and to drag him on his face to the Ka‘bah. At the Ka‘bah, Umayya’s slaves tied Bilal’s body with chains of steel and began whipping him violently to make him recant.





With every blow of the whip, blood was streaming out of his body and leaving tear in his skin. Even though he was being tortured in this very cruel manner, Bilal ﷺ was very strong in his belief in the One true Allâh. He kept declaring: ‘Allâh is One, Allâh is One.’

For several days he received all kinds of punishment, but he did not show any sign of weakness. Every means of oppression was used to make Bilal ﷺ abandon his new Faith, but with every blow he said loudly and clearly: ‘Allâh is One, Allâh is One.’

Umayya realized that in spite of the torture inflicted on Bilal ﷺ, he would not change his conviction. Eventually, he tried a different way of punishment hoping that in no time Bilal would beg him for mercy. He ordered his slaves to take Bilal to the desert, wrap his body with steel chains and lay him with a huge rock on his chest under the scorching sun. However, Bilal was not heard asking for mercy or crying; the only words that he would say were: ‘Allâh is One, Allâh is One.’



Bilal ﷺ went through all types of sufferings and torture, but he kept steadfast to his belief in the One Allâh. He was an example for both slaves and free men. He showed the whole of humanity that nothing should be exchanged for the true religion, not even one's life.

Resistance

Bilal ﷺ had become a different man. He was not just a weak slave as people thought, but he was now a great man with a great will. Since he had accepted Islam, a new spirit of resistance filled his heart and gave him a power that he had never felt before.

One day, as Bilal was lying on the hot sand, under the blazing sun with a huge rock over him, his oppressors gathered round him waiting for him to finally abandon his Faith. They were asking him to say good things about their false deities in exchange for his freedom, but he was refusing to say anything but one word and that was: 'Allâh is One, Allâh is One.' They did not want to let him go without satisfying their arrogance. They asked him to follow and repeat

their words but Bilal ﷺ replied:

“I cannot say what you like me to say. I can only say, ‘Allâh is One, Allâh is One.’”

At sunset, there was a rope around Bilal’s neck. They dragged him through the streets of Makkah and asked children to stone and abuse him. Despite all pain and suffering, Bilal ﷺ kept steadfast to his Faith.

Day after day, the pagans increased their oppression on Bilal in the hope that he would finally abandon his Faith. Every day they asked him to say something good about their idols and to abuse Muhammad and his religion. However, Bilal exercised the utmost endurance and patience Allâh gave to him. His only words in the face of all torture were: “Allâh is One, Allâh is One.” Indeed he was a true believer.



The Freed Believer

Bilal's patience and endurance became known throughout Makkah and surrounding areas. Men, women, children, chiefs and slaves were all talking about the slave who embraced Islam and resisted all kinds of torture for the sake of the new light his eyes had seen.

He became an example of sacrifice and endurance. All the people of Makkah were amazed to see such a weak and powerless slave challenging the brutal treatment of his master. No one amongst the Makkans could imagine that Bilal ﷺ would insist on his position and continue his struggle in the face of such overwhelming cruelty.

One a very hot day, Umayya really wanted to torture Bilal ﷺ in an even harsher and more painful way. So, he took him to the desert, tied him up under the burning sun and instructed his slaves to put a huge rock on his chest. Bilal felt as if his soul would leave his body. At this difficult moment of Bilal's life, Umayya stood



over his body and ordered him to abandon his belief in the One Allâh. The only thing he heard Bilal ؓ saying was: ‘Allâh is One.’ Filled with anger, Umayya began whipping him to the extent that blood covered all Bilal’s face and body.

Dear and Invaluable

Abu Bakr ؓ heard about the heavy torture Bilal ؓ was receiving. He immediately met Umayya and asked him to sell Bilal ؓ to him. Umayya refused to set him free and angrily said to Abu Bakr ؓ:

“You are the one who spoilt him.”

Abu Bakr ؓ replied:

“What has he done? Is it a crime to believe in the True Allâh?”

However, Umayya said:

“He is my slave and I am free to treat him the way I like.”

Again Abu Bakr ؓ asked him to sell Bilal to him. Finally Umayya agreed to sell Bilal ؓ for

five ounces of gold. He sarcastically said to Abu Bakr ﷺ:

“Had you paid me one ounce of gold, I would have sold him to you.”

Abu Bakr ﷺ replied:

“Had you asked me one hundred ounces of gold for him, I would have paid the amount.”

Abu Bakr ﷺ went up to Bilal ﷺ and removed the rock from his chest. Bilal ﷺ stood up, and both he and Abu Bakr ﷺ went to the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Bakr ﷺ immediately declared Bilal a free man.

From that day on, Bilal ﷺ became a free Muslim worshipping Allâh as he liked. This was the very first application of Islamic teachings towards slaves. Abu Bakr ﷺ could have kept Bilal ﷺ as a slave under his control, but he preferred to show others and generations to come how a Muslim should behave towards other human beings.



Migration to Al-Madinah

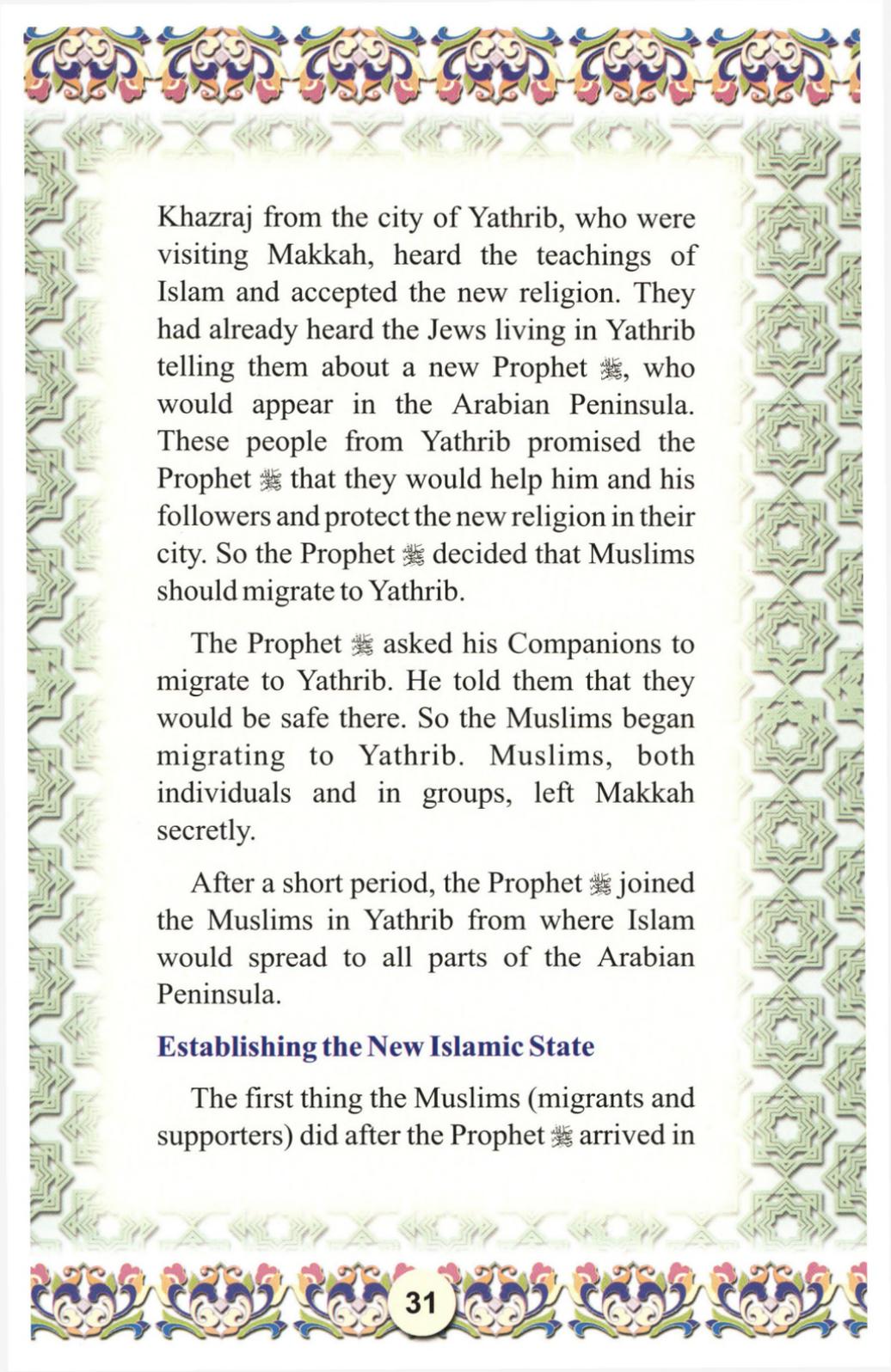
Bilal ؓ was now free to call others to the new religion. He was doing his best to make Islam known to all the Arabs from the tribes living around Makkah who were coming to visit the Ka'bah. Although he was still treated very badly by the pagans, he never felt weak in the face of the difficulties he was still facing.

Bilal ؓ knew that one day the religion of Islam would spread all over the world. Although he was poor and weak, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ treated him equal to the rich and powerful men.

The pagans of Makkah were adding to their efforts and using all means possible to stop the Muslims from spreading Islam. After thirteen years of struggle and hardships, the Prophet ﷺ decided that the only way to propagate Islam in the Arabian Peninsula was to move out of Makkah to another land.

A Chance to escape Torture

Some men from the tribes Al-Aws and Al-



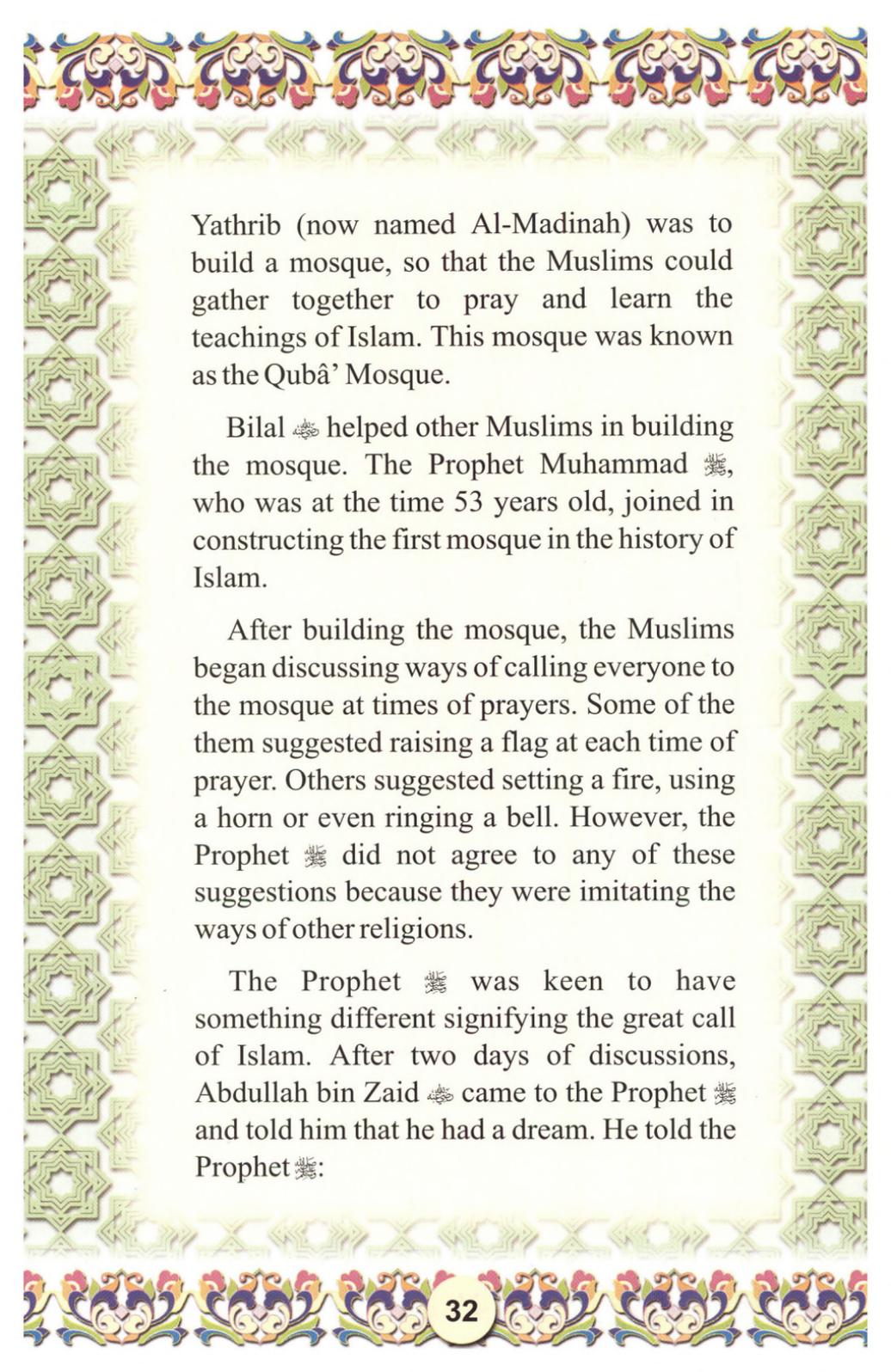
Khazraj from the city of Yathrib, who were visiting Makkah, heard the teachings of Islam and accepted the new religion. They had already heard the Jews living in Yathrib telling them about a new Prophet ﷺ, who would appear in the Arabian Peninsula. These people from Yathrib promised the Prophet ﷺ that they would help him and his followers and protect the new religion in their city. So the Prophet ﷺ decided that Muslims should migrate to Yathrib.

The Prophet ﷺ asked his Companions to migrate to Yathrib. He told them that they would be safe there. So the Muslims began migrating to Yathrib. Muslims, both individuals and in groups, left Makkah secretly.

After a short period, the Prophet ﷺ joined the Muslims in Yathrib from where Islam would spread to all parts of the Arabian Peninsula.

Establishing the New Islamic State

The first thing the Muslims (migrants and supporters) did after the Prophet ﷺ arrived in



Yathrib (now named Al-Madinah) was to build a mosque, so that the Muslims could gather together to pray and learn the teachings of Islam. This mosque was known as the Qubâ' Mosque.

Bilal ؓ helped other Muslims in building the mosque. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who was at the time 53 years old, joined in constructing the first mosque in the history of Islam.

After building the mosque, the Muslims began discussing ways of calling everyone to the mosque at times of prayers. Some of them suggested raising a flag at each time of prayer. Others suggested setting a fire, using a horn or even ringing a bell. However, the Prophet ﷺ did not agree to any of these suggestions because they were imitating the ways of other religions.

The Prophet ﷺ was keen to have something different signifying the great call of Islam. After two days of discussions, Abdullah bin Zaid ؓ came to the Prophet ﷺ and told him that he had a dream. He told the Prophet ﷺ:

“I dreamt that a man dressed in a green uniform carrying a bell passed by me. I asked him to give me the bell to use it for calling to prayer. The man suggested a better way. He told me that it was better to call for prayer as follows:

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللهُ أَكْبَرُ -
Allâh is the Greatest,
Allâh is the Greatest.

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللهُ أَكْبَرُ -
Allâh is the Greatest,
Allâh is the Greatest.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ ،
I bear witness that none has the
right to be worshipped but Allâh.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ -
I bear witness that none has the
right to be worshipped but Allâh.

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللهِ ،
I bear witness that Muhammad
is Allâh’s Messenger.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ مُحَمَّدًا رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ -

I bear witness that Muhammad
is Allâh's Messenger.

حَتَّى عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ ،

Come to prayer.

حَتَّى عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ -

Come to prayer.

حَتَّى عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ ،

Come to eternal success.

حَتَّى عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ -

Come to eternal success.

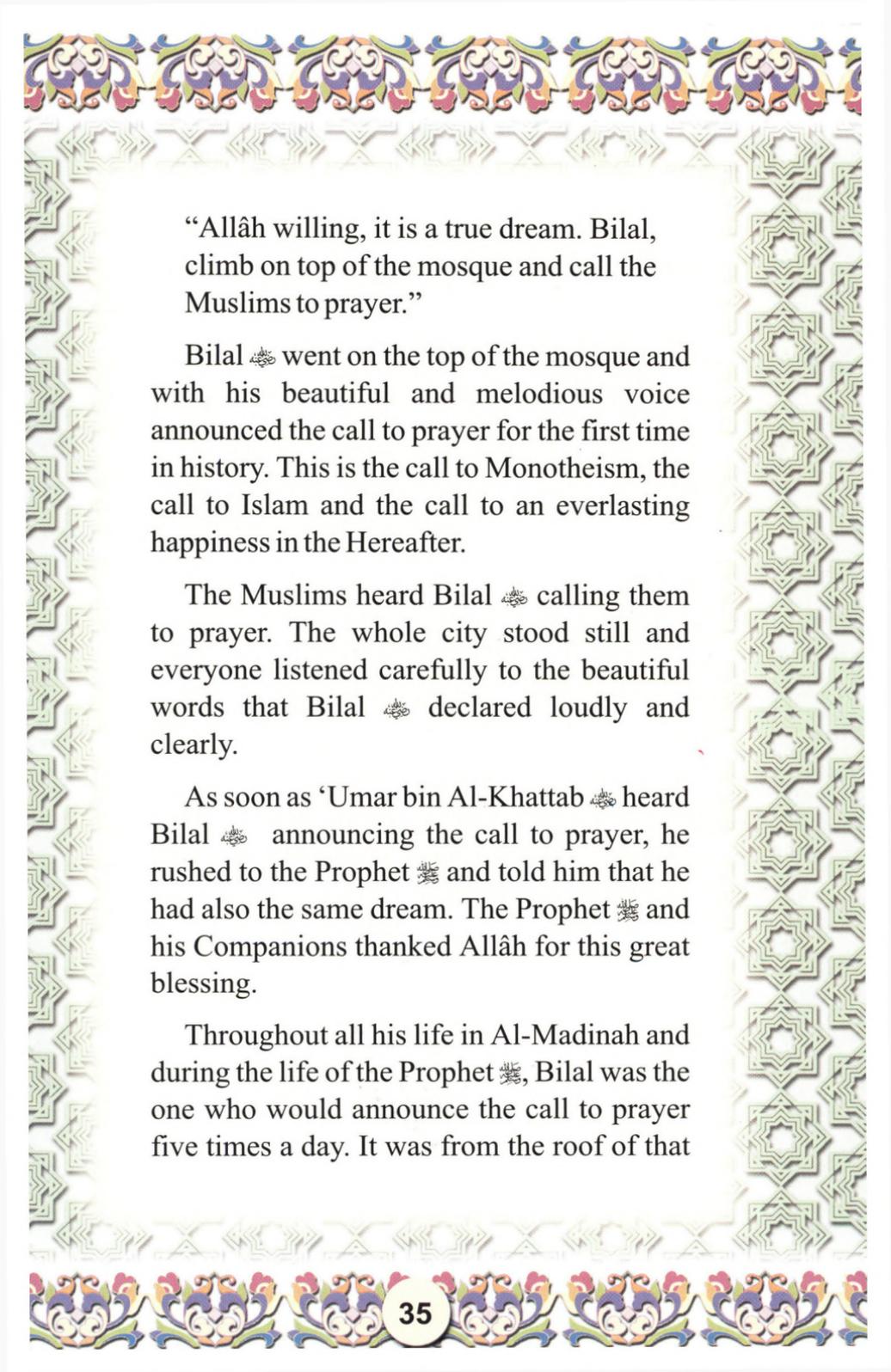
اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ -

Allâh is the Greatest,
Allâh is the Greatest.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ -

None has the right to be
worshipped but Allâh.”

The Prophet ﷺ happily listened to Abdullah's
dream and said:



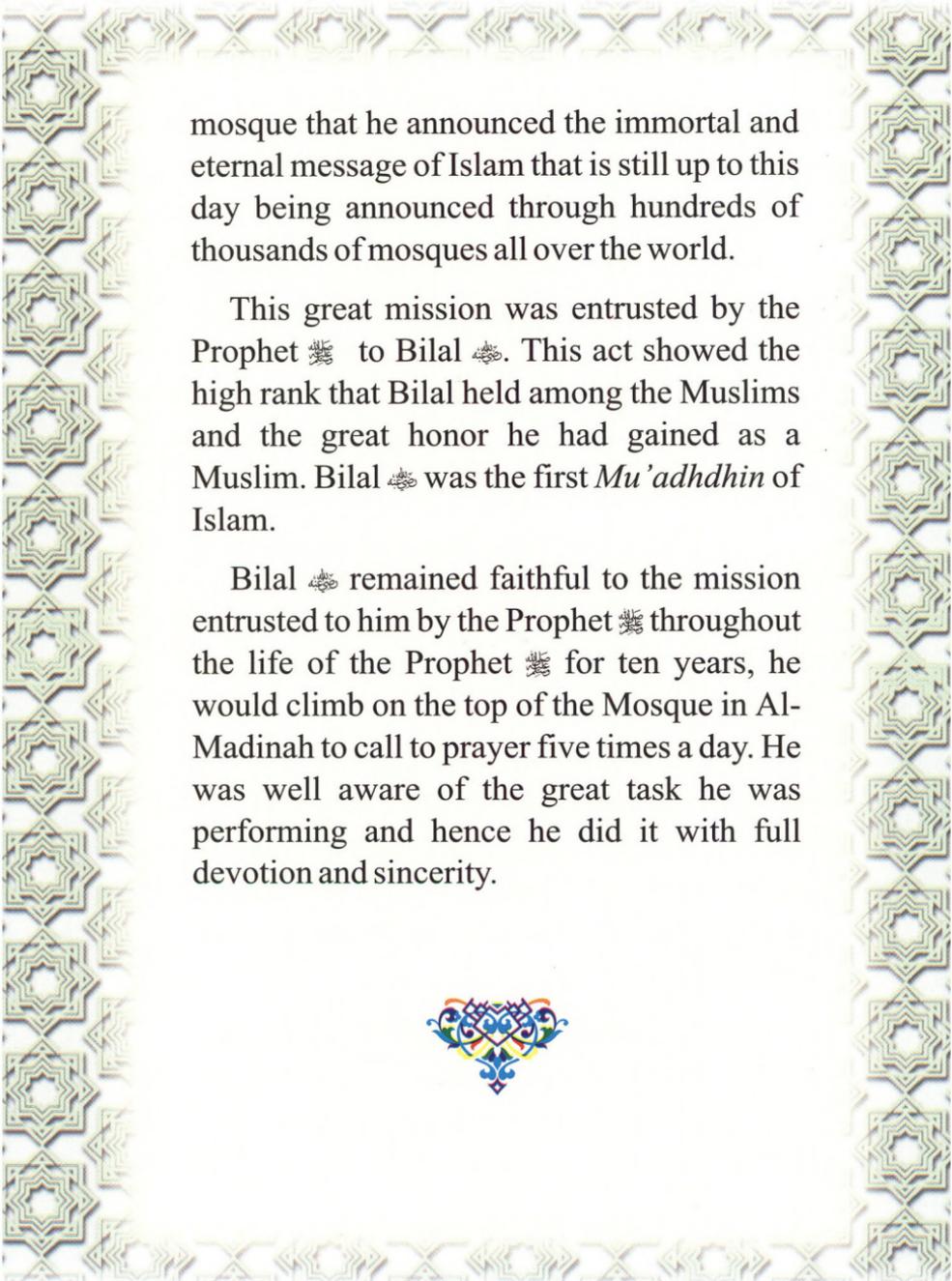
“Allâh willing, it is a true dream. Bilal, climb on top of the mosque and call the Muslims to prayer.”

Bilal ؓ went on the top of the mosque and with his beautiful and melodious voice announced the call to prayer for the first time in history. This is the call to Monotheism, the call to Islam and the call to an everlasting happiness in the Hereafter.

The Muslims heard Bilal ؓ calling them to prayer. The whole city stood still and everyone listened carefully to the beautiful words that Bilal ؓ declared loudly and clearly.

As soon as ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab ؓ heard Bilal ؓ announcing the call to prayer, he rushed to the Prophet ﷺ and told him that he had also the same dream. The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions thanked Allâh for this great blessing.

Throughout all his life in Al-Madinah and during the life of the Prophet ﷺ, Bilal was the one who would announce the call to prayer five times a day. It was from the roof of that



mosque that he announced the immortal and eternal message of Islam that is still up to this day being announced through hundreds of thousands of mosques all over the world.

This great mission was entrusted by the Prophet ﷺ to Bilal ؓ. This act showed the high rank that Bilal held among the Muslims and the great honor he had gained as a Muslim. Bilal ؓ was the first *Mu'adhdhin* of Islam.

Bilal ؓ remained faithful to the mission entrusted to him by the Prophet ﷺ throughout the life of the Prophet ﷺ for ten years, he would climb on the top of the Mosque in Al-Madinah to call to prayer five times a day. He was well aware of the great task he was performing and hence he did it with full devotion and sincerity.



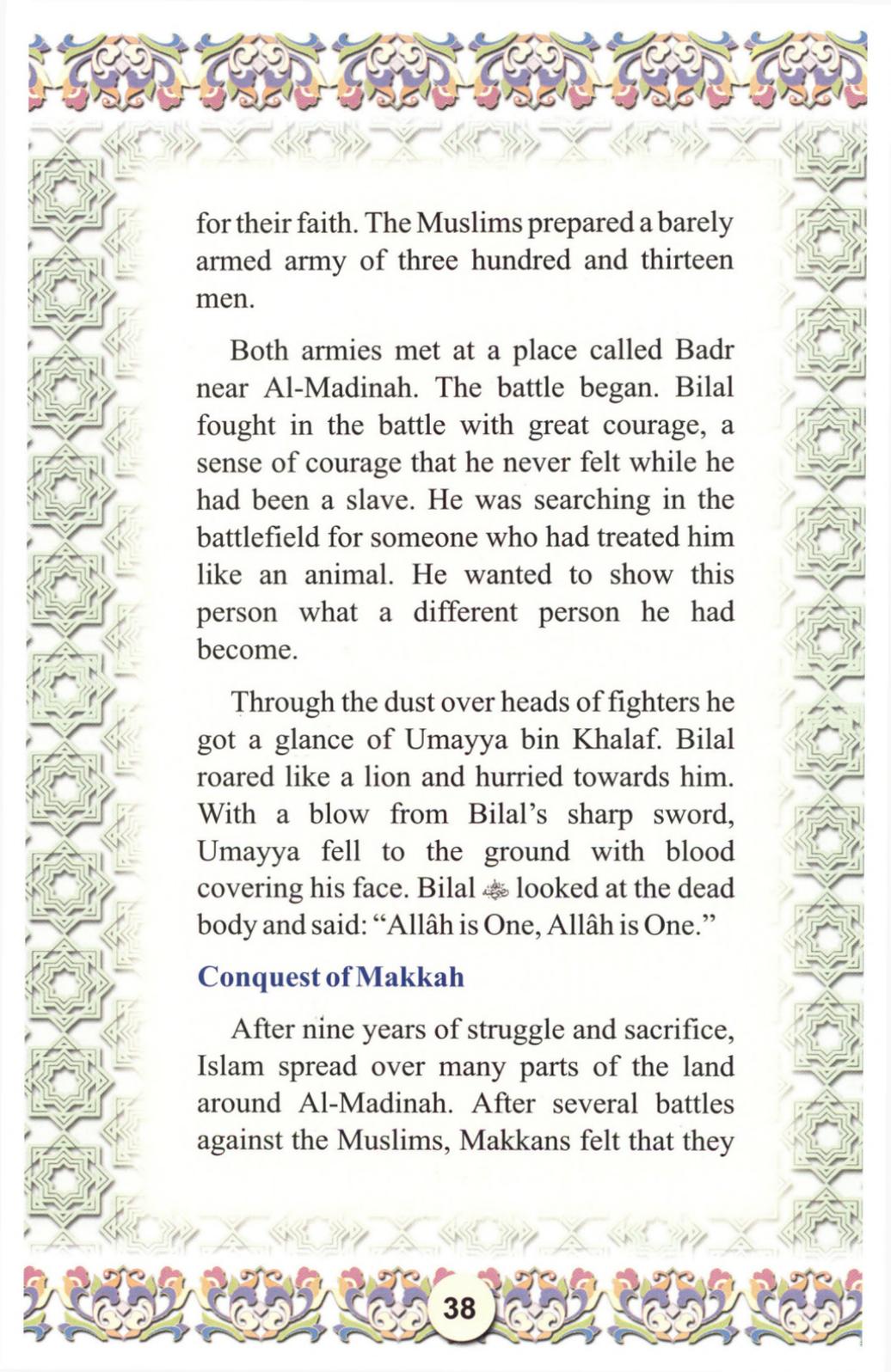
The Day of Revenge

The Caravan

It was the second year after the Muslims had migrated to Al-Madinah. They began patrolling outside Al-Madinah for security purposes. They received the news of a Quraish caravan nearby. They went towards it to check it but Abu Sufyan knew of the plan and changed his way. Hence, the caravan escaped the clash. Abu Sufyan sent a message to Makkah warning the rest of the Quraish that their caravan was in danger. The Quraish chiefs were very angry that the Muslims were threatening their economical interests. Therefore, they organized a heavily armed army of about one thousand fighters and headed toward Al-Madinah to put an end to Islam and its followers.

Battle of Badr

The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions heard of the Quraish's plan and decided to protect their city against the overwhelming attack. The Prophet ﷺ consulted with his Companions and finally they decided to fight



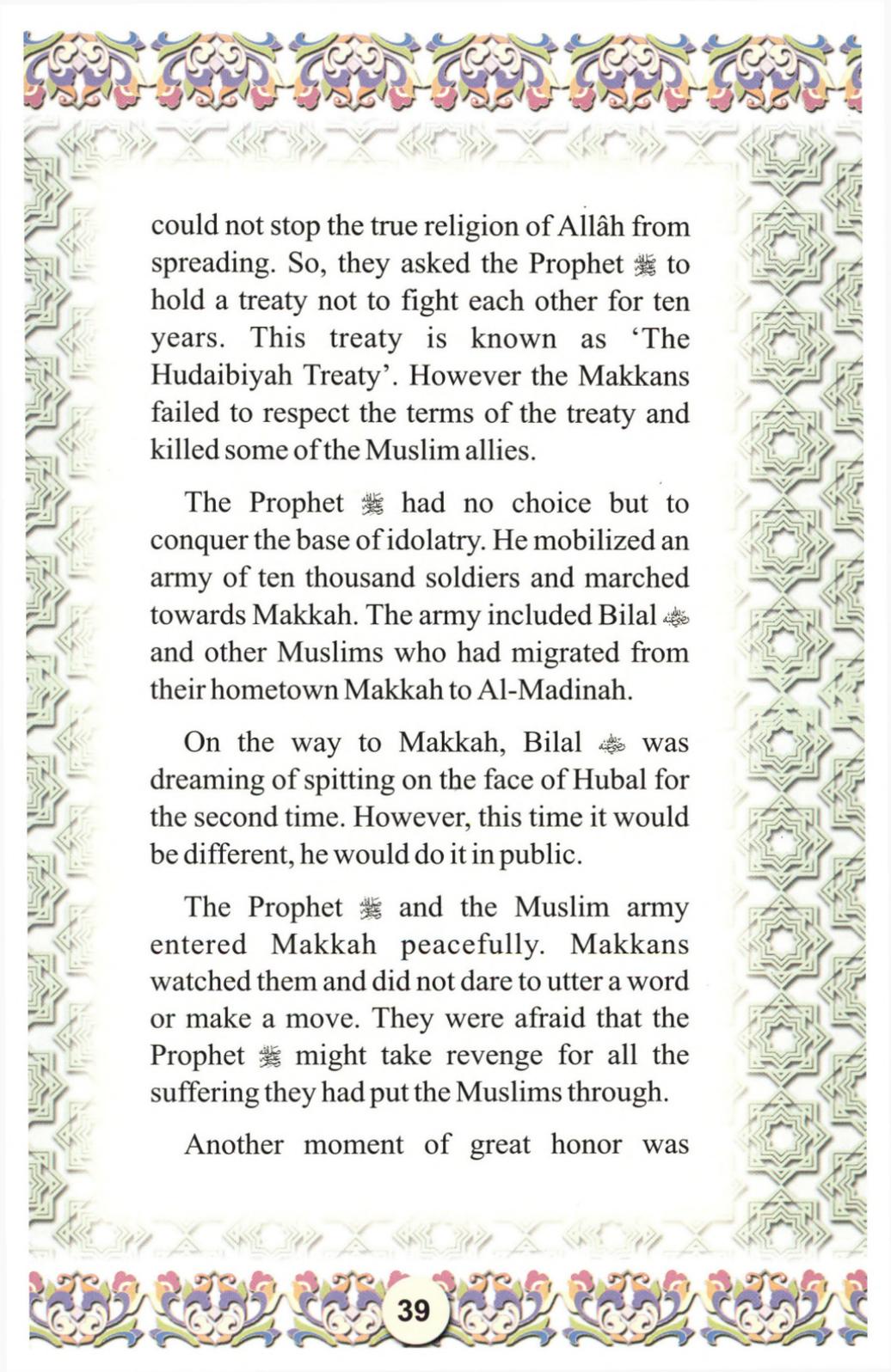
for their faith. The Muslims prepared a barely armed army of three hundred and thirteen men.

Both armies met at a place called Badr near Al-Madinah. The battle began. Bilal fought in the battle with great courage, a sense of courage that he never felt while he had been a slave. He was searching in the battlefield for someone who had treated him like an animal. He wanted to show this person what a different person he had become.

Through the dust over heads of fighters he got a glance of Umayya bin Khalaf. Bilal roared like a lion and hurried towards him. With a blow from Bilal's sharp sword, Umayya fell to the ground with blood covering his face. Bilal ﷺ looked at the dead body and said: "Allâh is One, Allâh is One."

Conquest of Makkah

After nine years of struggle and sacrifice, Islam spread over many parts of the land around Al-Madinah. After several battles against the Muslims, Makkans felt that they



could not stop the true religion of Allâh from spreading. So, they asked the Prophet ﷺ to hold a treaty not to fight each other for ten years. This treaty is known as ‘The Hudaibiyah Treaty’. However the Makkans failed to respect the terms of the treaty and killed some of the Muslim allies.

The Prophet ﷺ had no choice but to conquer the base of idolatry. He mobilized an army of ten thousand soldiers and marched towards Makkah. The army included Bilal ؓ and other Muslims who had migrated from their hometown Makkah to Al-Madinah.

On the way to Makkah, Bilal ؓ was dreaming of spitting on the face of Hubal for the second time. However, this time it would be different, he would do it in public.

The Prophet ﷺ and the Muslim army entered Makkah peacefully. Makkans watched them and did not dare to utter a word or make a move. They were afraid that the Prophet ﷺ might take revenge for all the suffering they had put the Muslims through.

Another moment of great honor was

awaiting Bilal ؓ. As soon as the Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah, he asked Bilal ؓ to go to 'Uthman bin Talha to bring the key of the Ka'bah. Bilal ؓ brought the key and entered with the Prophet ﷺ inside the Ka'bah. There he saw Hubal with its broken hand. He took an axe and hit the dumb idol. The head of the idol fell down to end the time of ignorance and idolatry. All the idols that were in the vicinity of the Ka'bah were destroyed. The worship of the One true Allâh gained victory over the worship of false and dumb idols.

The Prophet ﷺ stood with Bilal ؓ and addressed the congregation who were filled with fear and astonishment. They thought for a while that the Prophet ﷺ would take revenge on all those who caused him and his followers misery during their struggle in Makkah. However, the Prophet ﷺ, who had been known to them for his kindness and humbleness, instead addressed them in very gentle words:

“Go, you are free! You are all sons of Adam, equal in rights and duties.”

These kind words made all the chiefs of the Quraish embrace Islam. They knew that the Prophet ﷺ was a man of honesty and truthfulness.

On this great day of victory over paganism, the Prophet ﷺ asked Bilal ؓ to go on top of the Ka'bah and announce the call to prayer. The whole city listened to the beautiful words of Monotheism as the sweet voice of Bilal flew through the streets of Makkah.

Some Makkans, who still had some grudges against Islam and looked at others with contempt, did not like to see Bilal ؓ on top of the Ka'bah calling to prayer. One man said:

“It was good that my father had died before seeing this slave go on top of the Ka'bah.”

Another one added:

“Could Muhammad ﷺ not find anyone other than this black raven to call to prayer.”

Immediately, the following Verses of the Noble Qur'ân were sent down by Allâh to the Prophet ﷺ. They told those ignorant men about a fact that they

should admit:

“Verily the most honored of you with Allâh is that (believer) who has *At-Taqwâ*.” (49:13)

The Dignified Muslim

Bilal ؓ lived as a pious, humble and righteous man. The Prophet ﷺ appointed him as the custodian of the treasury. Bilal ؓ never gave up his mission to call to prayer. He was entrusted with this great function all through the life of the Prophet ﷺ. He was also the man who was commissioned to call Muslims to fight in the way of Allâh.

Towards the last days of the Prophet’s life, Bilal ؓ stayed close to him and proved himself to be a true and devout follower. He joined the Prophet ﷺ in everything he did for the victory of Islam.

When the Prophet ﷺ performed the Farewell pilgrimage with thousands of Muslims, Bilal ؓ was with him, listening to the last words of the Prophet ﷺ declaring that the message of Islam had now become complete

and perfect. Bilal ؓ felt his body shiver for he knew that soon he would lose the man whom he loved more than he loved himself.

Upon returning to Al-Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ fell ill. Bilal ؓ looked at the Prophet's face with his eyes full of tears and whispered: 'May I be in your place.' The Prophet ﷺ smiled and hugged Bilal ؓ.

Some days later, the Prophet ﷺ passed away and Abu Bakr ؓ was selected as Caliph (ruler). Time to call to prayer was due. The Muslims were waiting to hear Bilal's voice but Bilal ؓ did not call to prayer. He went to Abu Bakr ؓ and told him that he would prefer to go fighting for the sake of Allâh.

Abu Bakr ؓ urged Bilal ؓ to stay close to him and continue his mission as a *Mu'adhdhin*. Bilal ؓ accepted to stay in Al-Madinah but did not like to continue his role as a *Mu'adhdhin*. He did not want to give the *Adhân* for anyone other than the Prophet ﷺ.

As soon as Abu Bakr ؓ passed away, 'Umar bin Al-Khattab ؓ was

selected as Caliph. ‘Umar ﷺ asked Bilal ﷺ to give the *Adhân* but Bilal ﷺ refused. He asked ‘Umar ﷺ to allow him to go to fight for the cause of Allâh. ‘Umar ﷺ, however, did not allow him to go because he wanted him to be with him in Al-Madinah. ‘Umar ﷺ, the second Caliph, gave Bilal ﷺ the high status which he had at the times of the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr ﷺ.

Bilal ﷺ was not accepting to stay longer in Al-Madinah, he wanted to go out and fight for the cause of Allâh. He once had heard the Prophet ﷺ saying:

“The best thing a believer should do is to fight for the cause of Allâh.”

Bilal ﷺ wanted to fight because he knew that those who fight for the cause of Allâh were better than those who sit at home.

Once again, he asked ‘Umar ﷺ to allow him to leave Al-Madinah to fight against disbelievers. This time ‘Umar ﷺ gave in to Bilal’s great desire of wanting to fight for the cause of Allâh. He allowed him to join the Muslim army led by Abu ‘Ubaidah bin Al-

Jarrah in Damascus.

Bilal ؓ left to Damascus and lived there. He did his best to spread the teachings of Islam. Bilal ؓ joined his fellow Muslims in conquering Al-Quds (Jerusalem). ‘Umar ؓ visited the sacred city to conclude a treaty with the Christian inhabitants of the city. At the time of prayer he asked Bilal to give the *Adhân*. Bilal ؓ immediately climbed up the stairs of Al-Aqsa Mosque and gave the *Adhân*. All the people listened to the *Adhân* by Bilal. They all had been longing to hear this voice. Bilal ؓ recalled the times when he gave the *Adhân* during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ and started weeping.

The Prophet’s Companions joined him in weeping. Bilal’s voice reminded them of the golden days during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ. The early Muslims, who were weak and poor, had never imagined that the call to prayer would at any day be heard over the land of Jerusalem. Everyone shed tears in these happy moments.

The Eternal Freedom

After spending a few days with ‘Umar ؓ in Jerusalem, Bilal ؓ left back to Damascus. One night he dreamt of the Prophet ﷺ blaming him for his long stay away from Al-Madinah. Bilal ؓ woke up very upset and immediately left Damascus to Al-Madinah.

As soon as he arrived there, he went to the Prophet’s Mosque, stood in front of the Prophet’s grave with his eyes full of tears and his tongue pronouncing with weak tone: ‘Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allâh.’

Bilal ؓ sat in the Mosque for a long time recalling the pleasant days during the life of the Prophet ﷺ. Some of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ asked him to give the *Adhân*. Bilal gave the *Adhân* and the whole city listened to the voice that refreshed their memory of historical days.

After a few days, Bilal ؓ left Al-Madinah back to Damascus. Days passed by very quickly and Bilal ؓ became an old man. He fell ill and died.

He was buried in Damascus.

Bilal's life was the life of a man, who suffered greatly as a slave, struggled greatly as a free Muslim, and then crossed the bridge of death to be in the company of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions forever in the Hereafter. Bilal ؓ was the *Mu'adhdhin* of the Prophet ﷺ alone. It is reported that he only gave the *Adhân* twice after the Prophet ﷺ had passed away.

A true Muslim had no choice but to follow the example of Bilal ؓ in announcing the eternal anthem of Islam. It is a duty on all of us to listen to the call of prayer and remember the first day when Bilal ؓ climbed over the roof of the first mosque in Islam to announce that Allâh is the Greatest. Not only this, but also we should positively respond to the call by going to the mosque to pray every time.

Hundreds of thousands of mosques are now spread all over the world. They are not built just for decoration, rather, they were built for a purpose; that is to go to when we hear the call to prayer and perform it as ordained by Allâh.

May Allâh's mercy and blessings be showered on Bilal ؓ who gave generations to come an example of endurance and steadfastness in the face of oppression and injustice.

