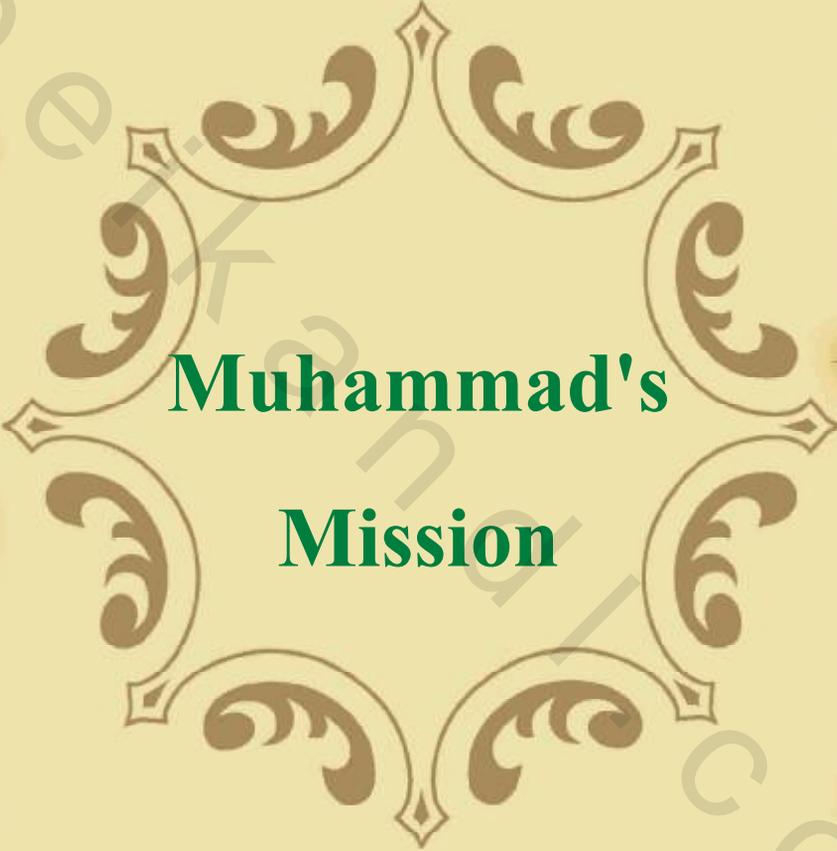


Life of the Prophet

(peace be upon him)

A decorative border consisting of eight stylized, symmetrical scrollwork elements arranged in a circular pattern around the central text.

Muhammad's

Mission

Written by:

Sameer Halaby

Cartoon:

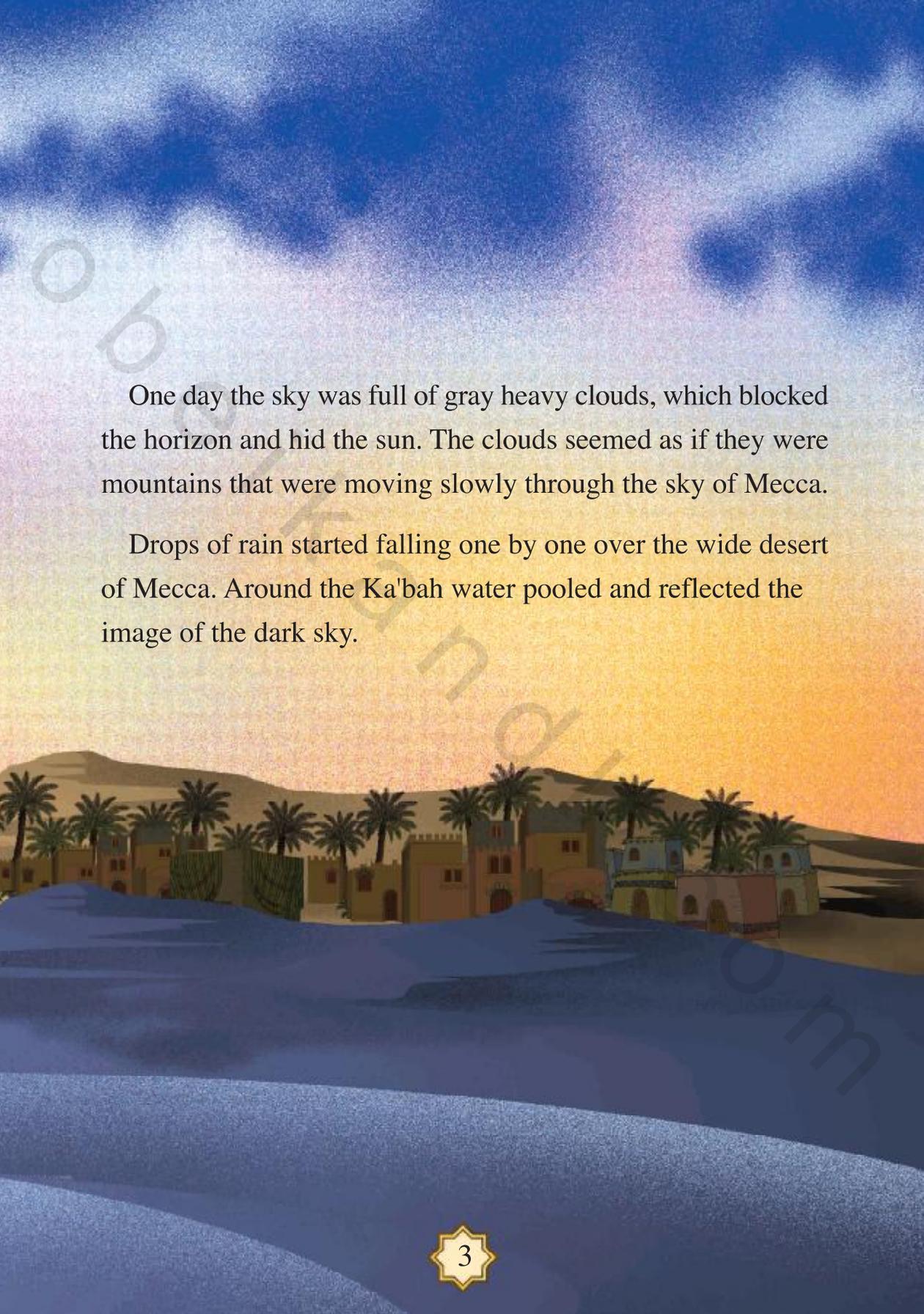
'Abd Al-Murdy Ubaid

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I.S.B.N.: 977-361-195-7

Graphics and Color Separation by: Assem Sayyid Ahmed



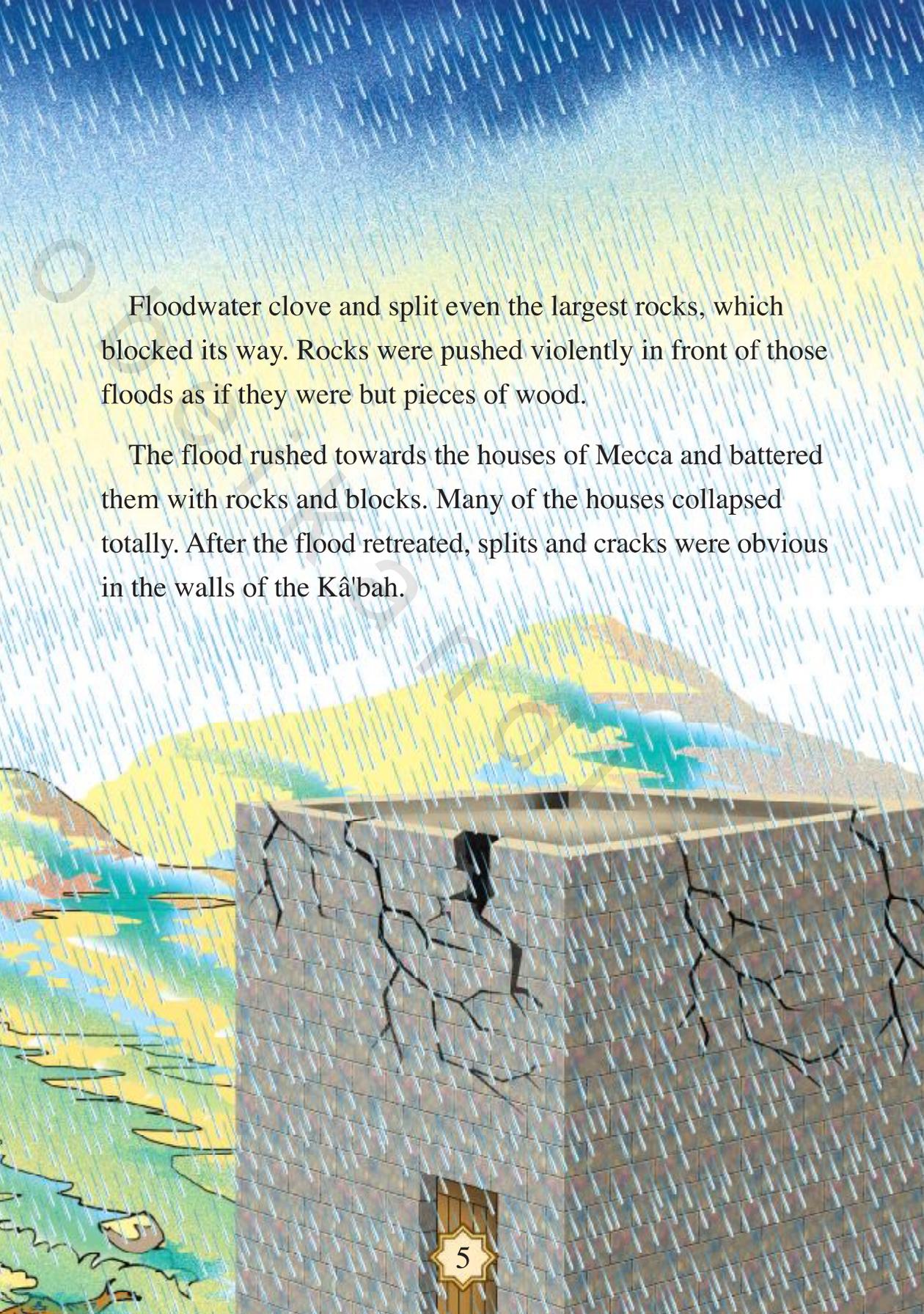
One day the sky was full of gray heavy clouds, which blocked the horizon and hid the sun. The clouds seemed as if they were mountains that were moving slowly through the sky of Mecca.

Drops of rain started falling one by one over the wide desert of Mecca. Around the Ka'bah water pooled and reflected the image of the dark sky.

The raindrops fell continuously. They were like threads, connecting the sky to the earth.

The rainwater started to flow down from the mountains surrounding Mecca. It rushed powerfully and violently and destroyed everything in its way. Its level rose till everything was submerged.





Floodwater clove and split even the largest rocks, which blocked its way. Rocks were pushed violently in front of those floods as if they were but pieces of wood.

The flood rushed towards the houses of Mecca and battered them with rocks and blocks. Many of the houses collapsed totally. After the flood retreated, splits and cracks were obvious in the walls of the Kâ'bah.

The houses of Mecca seemed to be merely the remains of an old devastated town. Many men and women searched in the scattered debris for what was left of their own belongings that had not been ruined by floods.

In the aftermath, some of the leaders of Quraish gathered and consulted on the matter of rebuilding the Ka'bah.



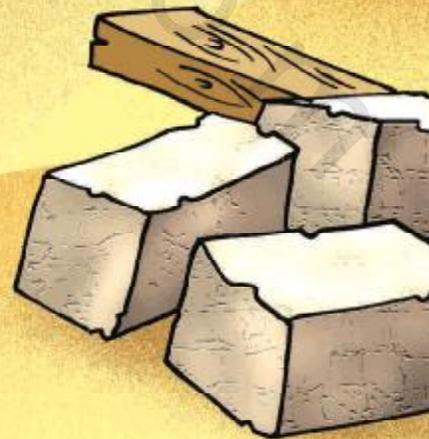
Many of the attendant leaders hesitated about bringing down the walls of the Ka'bah and rebuilding it. The Ka'bah had a superior and glorified status in their hearts. So it was not easy for them to decide to bring down the walls even if the aim was rebuilding and maintaining it.

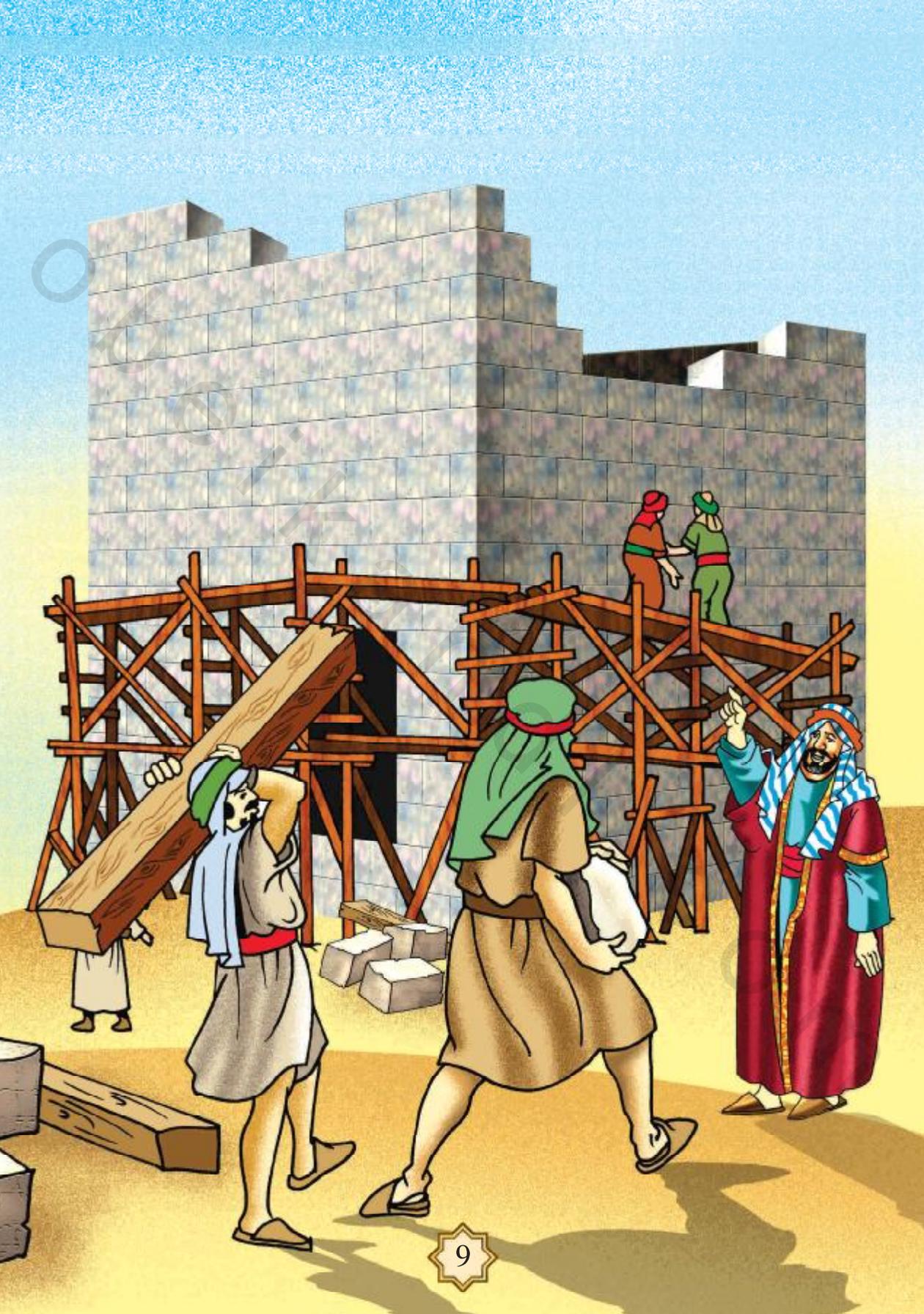


However, the leaders of Mecca had no choice in the end but to carry out this valiant plan, even though they were preoccupied with feelings of fear and dread.

A short time after that the work commenced to rebuild the Ka'bah. The honored people of Quraish were themselves participating in the work. They cooperated in bearing and carrying pieces of wood and bricks with a great deal of enthusiasm.

The building rose until it neared completion. Then they argued about who would put the Black Stone in its place. Everyone and every tribe wanted to win the honor. They had a hot discussion over the matter and they were about to fight with each other. In the end, they reached an agreement. They decided that they would accept the judgment of the first one that entered the room.





The first one to enter was Muhammad bin 'Abdullâh (peace be upon him). They all exclaimed happily, "This is the most honest person. We accept his judgment."

When they asked him, he spread out his garment and put the Black Stone in it, then said, "Let a representative of every tribe hold one of the edges of the garment." When they took the Stone to its place, he picked it up and put it into its place himself.

This perceptive idea of Muhammad (peace be upon him) allowed them to avoid a dangerous fight between the different Arab tribes. It seemed that Almighty Allah was preparing him for a superior position and presenting a symbol of blessed glad tidings in the person of Muhammad (peace be upon him) by achieving agreement among the different Arab tribes through his wise suggestion. Due to his suggestion, love, agreement and harmony prevailed among the Arab tribes. In fact, Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not interested in simply enjoying himself. He was not a fun-loving sort of person like the rest of the young men of Mecca. Rather he was interested in staying secluded and alone in the cave of Hirâ' in the mountains near Mecca. He would stay there for contemplation and as an expression of piety.





Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to stay in the cave of Hirâ' for entire nights to honor, glorify and revere Allah. One day while Muhammad (peace be upon him) was there in this cave, he suddenly found someone standing before him. He was very much afraid of him. This was the angel Jibrîl (Gabriel, peace be upon him). He embraced Muhammad (peace be upon him), saying: "Read!" Muhammad (peace be upon him) answered, "I cannot read." Jibrîl repeated the command many times until he got a different answer from Muhammad (peace be upon him), "What should I read?" Angel Jibrîl said,

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

which means, "Read! In the Name of your Lord Who had created (everything)." (Al-'Alaq, 96:1)

It was a tremendous surprise for Muhammad (peace be upon him), so he felt very frightened. At once he came back to Mecca.

He came to his wife Khadîjah covered in sweat. He went to his bed, trembling. He asked his wife to cover him. Lady Khadîjah covered him compassionately. She alleviated and eased his fear. Then he told her what had happened to him in the cave. Lady Khadîjah reassured and him gave him confidence. Later she asked him to accompany her to her cousin Waraqah bin Nawfal.



Waraqah stared at Muhammad (peace be upon him) for a long time before he, in an impassioned voice, said, "This was the angel Jibrîl who was sent by Allah to Mûsâ (Moses) and 'Îsâ (Jesus)." He paused for a moment and looked at the sky before saying, "If only I had been a strong young man who could stand by you and help you spread your call for your religion!" Hearing the words of Waraqah, Muhammad (peace be upon him) became calm. He returned to his house full of pleasure and happiness.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) kept visiting the cave and staying there in great longing and yearning for the return of Angel Jabrîl. Jabrîl came to him once again and gave him the glad tidings that he had been granted Prophethood and the Mission. The Prophet (peace be upon him) started calling people to Islam secretly. In the beginning, the first Muslims used to gather in the house of Al-Arqam bin Abu Al-Arqam.

The light of Islam started to shine in the sky of Mecca and the Quraish became anxious about the spread of this new religion, which was why they tortured everyone believing in Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The first group of Muslims bore different forms of painful tortures, which were beyond human abilities to withstand. For three years the Prophet (peace be upon him) called people to Islam in secrecy. Then Allah ordered him to call to Islam publicly. Islam then started a new stage of its development.

