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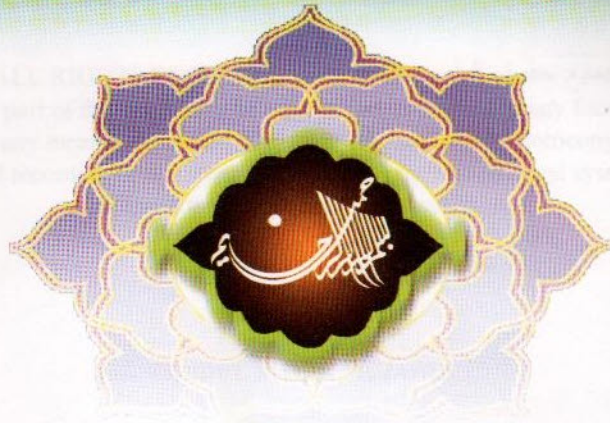
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Abu Dhar Al-Gifari ﷺ

**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 ؓ. This Companion of the Prophet ﷺ 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 Allāh 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.

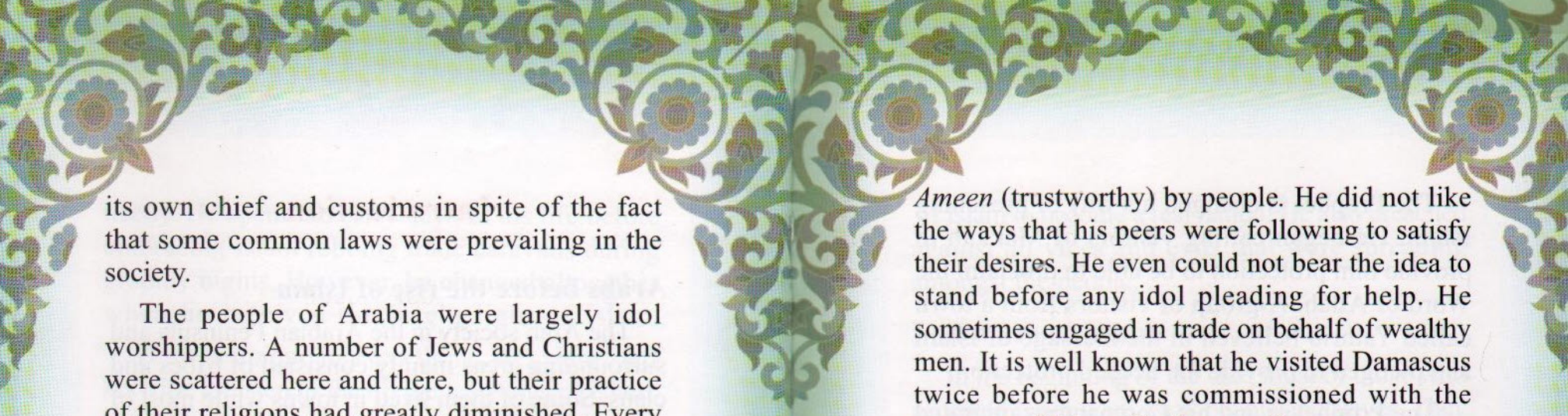
Abdul Basit Ahmad

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.

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.

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 ﷺ 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 ﷺ was very brave. He wanted to declare in public that he had accepted Islam. However, the

The Truthful Believer

Migration from Makkah

Many years had now passed since Abu Dhar ؓ had met the Prophet ﷺ. 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 ﷺ had already told him to stay at his tribe's place and continue his mission within his neighbourhood.

However, Abu Dhar ؓ 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 ﷺ and his followers felt that they would not be able to live in peace in Makkah. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ 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.

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.

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 ؓ finished these words, he closed his eyes and passed away. After some hours, a group of men led by Abdullah bin Masoud ؓ (a great Companion of the Prophet ﷺ) came to the side of the dead body and the mourning woman. Abdullah bin Masoud ؓ knew the deceased man. He addressed the dead body: "It was true what the Prophet ﷺ 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 ؓ opposed rulers for the way they treated the majority of Muslims. However, he never adopted violent ways of action.