



The Clan of Banu Hashim

Before the days of Islam the Arabs grouped themselves in tribes, clans and families. The Quraysh were a powerful merchant tribe that controlled Makkah and also its Kabah when the religion of Islam was founded. At the time of the Prophet Muhammad's birth, the Quraysh ruled Makkah.

The Banu Hashim was an important branch of the powerful Quraysh tribe. It takes its name from Hashim, the great-grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad.

Abdul Muttalib belonged to the clan of Banu Hashim.

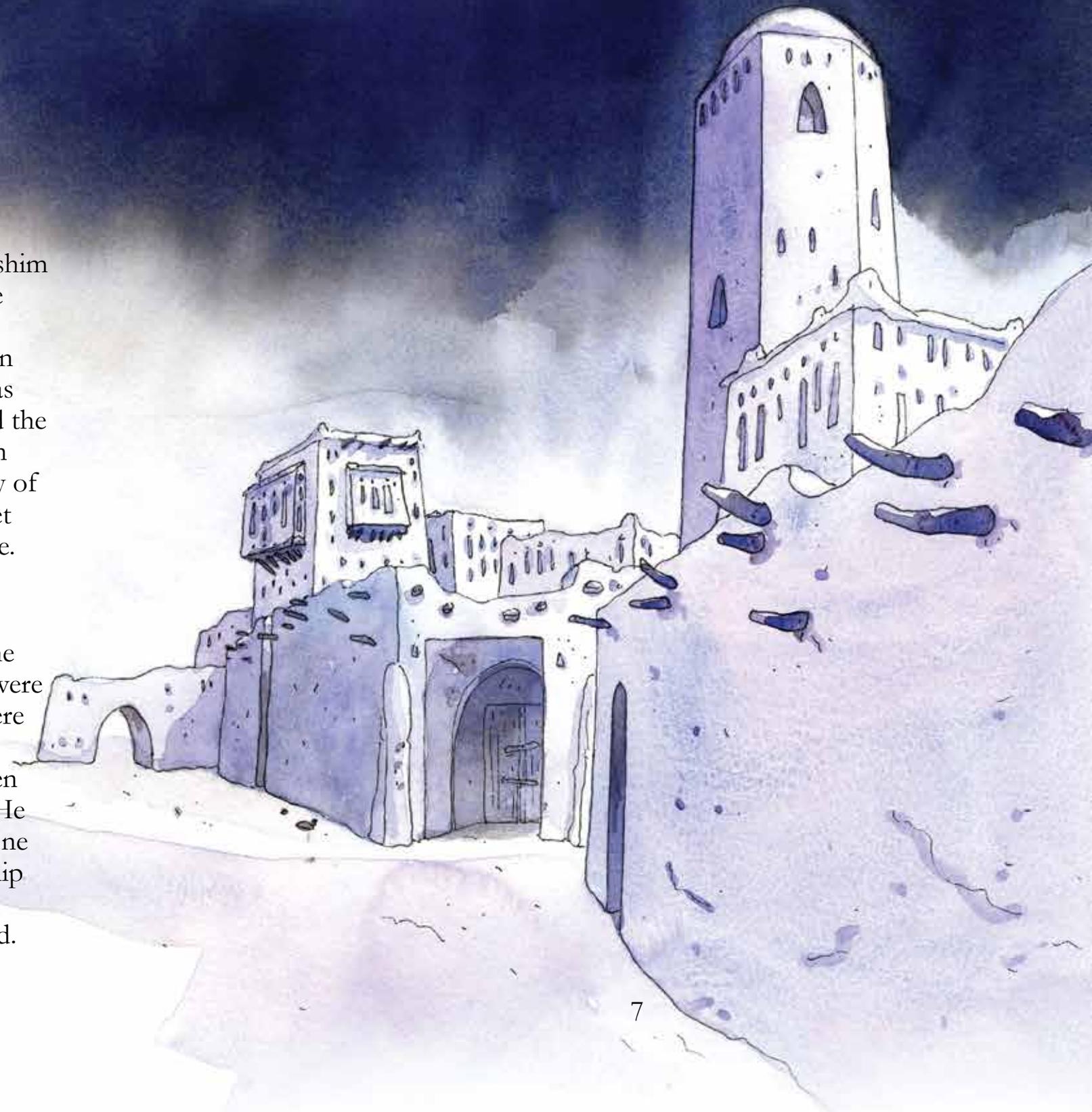
He was the Prophet's grandfather. He had ten sons; noteworthy among them were Abdullah, Hamza, Abbas, Abu Talib, and Abu Lahab. The house of Abdul Muttalib of Banu Hashim of Quraysh comprised a form of nobility in pre-Islamic Makkah, based upon their duty to act as stewards and caretakers of the pilgrims coming to Makkah to worship at the Kabah. This duty had been handed down to them from generation to generation.

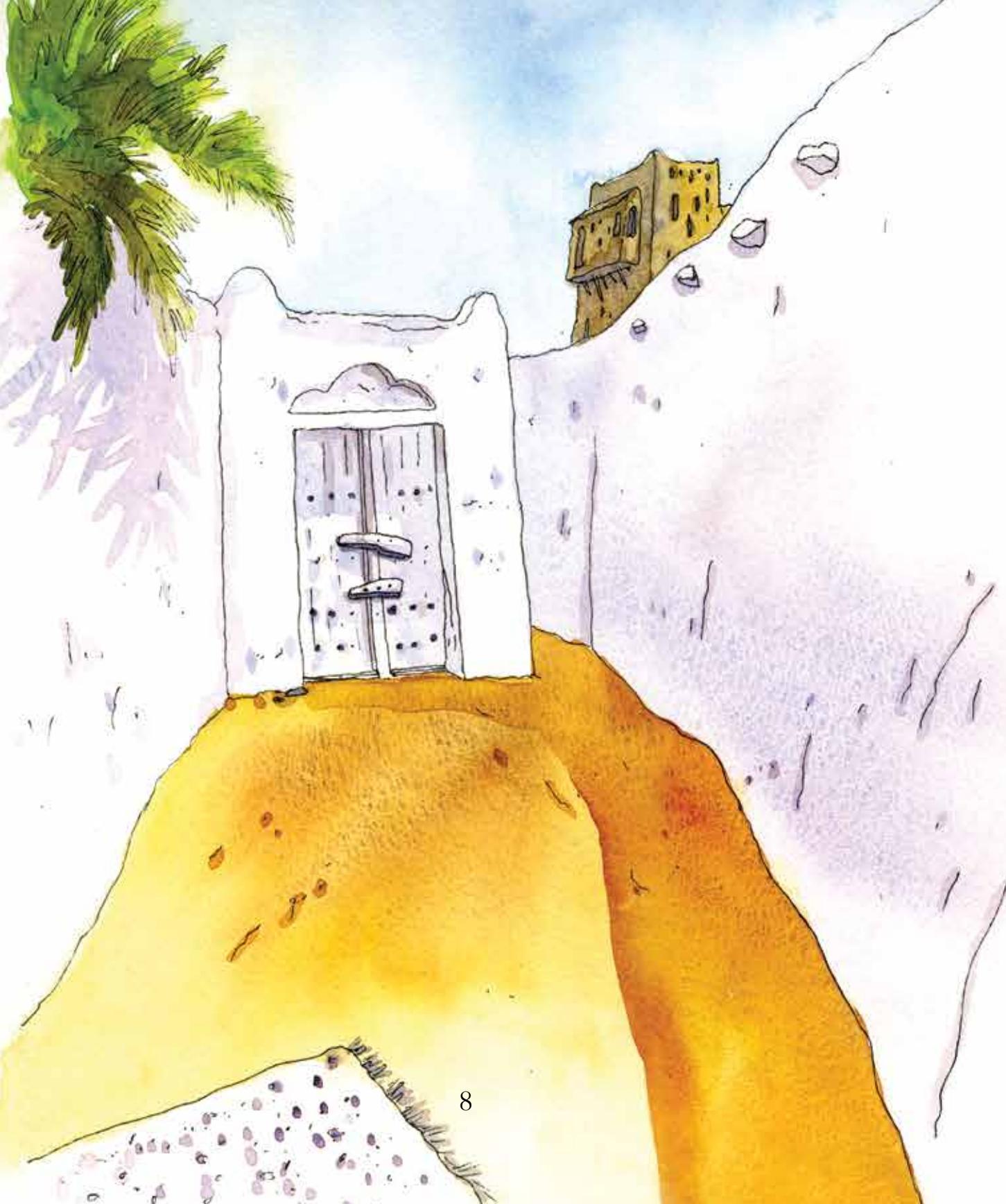
The Prophet's father, Abdullah, died before his birth; his mother, Amina, died some seven years later. After the death of his mother, the Prophet's grandfather took care of him. But two years later Abdul Muttalib also passed away in around 578 A.D.

a very large family, the Prophet approached his uncle Abbas, who was the richest member of the Banu Hashim clan, saying, “Your brother Abu Talib has a very large family, and he is in a state of want as a result of this widespread poverty. Let us together lighten his burden and take into our homes some of his children.” Abbas agreed and took into his care Jafar, and the Prophet took Ali. Besides their own daughters, Ali, who was still a boy of five years, lived with the Prophet and Khadijah in the same house.

Ali embraces Islam

Ali, the son of Abu Talib and cousin of the Prophet, came into the Prophet’s house while he and Khadijah were praying. He asked his cousin what they were doing. The Prophet told him that this was Allah’s religion, the path that Allah had chosen Himself. It was to call people to this path that He had sent His prophets to the world. “Believe in One Allah,” the Prophet said, “He has no partner. Worship Him alone. Forsake the idols Lat and Uzza.” “I have heard nothing of this nature before today,” Ali replied.





“I cannot make a decision until I have talked the matter over with my father, Abu Talib.” But the Prophet did not want anyone to know about his secret until the time had come for it to be made public. “Ali,” he said. “If you are not ready to become a Muslim, keep the matter to yourself.” Ali waited for one night, then Allah turned his heart towards Islam. He went back to the Prophet early in the morning. “What was it that you were telling me yesterday?” he asked. “Bear witness that there is none worthy of being served save Allah. He is One. He has no partner. Forsake Lat and Uzza, and disown all those who are set up as equals with Allah.” Ali did this and became a Muslim. Then, in fear of Abu Talib, he used to come and see the Prophet secretly. Ali kept his Islam a secret; he did not tell anyone about it.” Ali was then the first youth to enter Islam.

Banu Hashim invited to accept the Faith

When the Prophet felt it his duty to preach in public, he became very conscious of the greatness of this task, realizing that it would require his undivided attention. He hoped that his family would look after him financially so that, freed from having to look for a livelihood; he would be able to concentrate on his preaching work. He called Abdul Muttalib’s family together in his own house. There were about thirty family members at the time. The Prophet told them / what his true mission in life now was. He asked for their support, so that he would be free to discharge his prophetic duties.

torment. Together with the Prophet, other Muslims were also persecuted in Makkah. But his mission continued to attract more and more people, and finally the message of Islam reached the people of Madinah, the majority of whom accepted Islam and agreed to give aid to the Muslims. Thus, one by one, the Muslims started emigrating to Madinah.

The Prophet's Migration and Ali's Role

Finally in 622 A.D. came the Prophet's turn. The Quraysh realized this and contrived to kill the Prophet. However, the Prophet knew exactly what was going on. Quietly, he continued his preparations. On the night of the Hijrah, the Prophet confided his plan to Ali and asked him to cover himself with his green mantle from Hadramawt

and to sleep in his bed. He further asked him to tarry in Makkah until he had returned all things left with the Prophet to their rightful owners. Just before dawn, the Prophet left without being noticed.

When Ali reached Madinah the Prophet was staying at the house of Kulthum ibn Hadm. Ali went to Prophet's house to meet him. There he met the Helpers (Ansar) and other immigrants (Muhajirin). Not only did the Ansar accommodate the emigrants in their homes; they treated them as brothers and sisters, and shared their possessions with them. And they did all this, fully conscious of the fact that their action involved much more than economic sacrifice. They knew full well that what they were doing would arouse the hostility of the most powerful factions

