

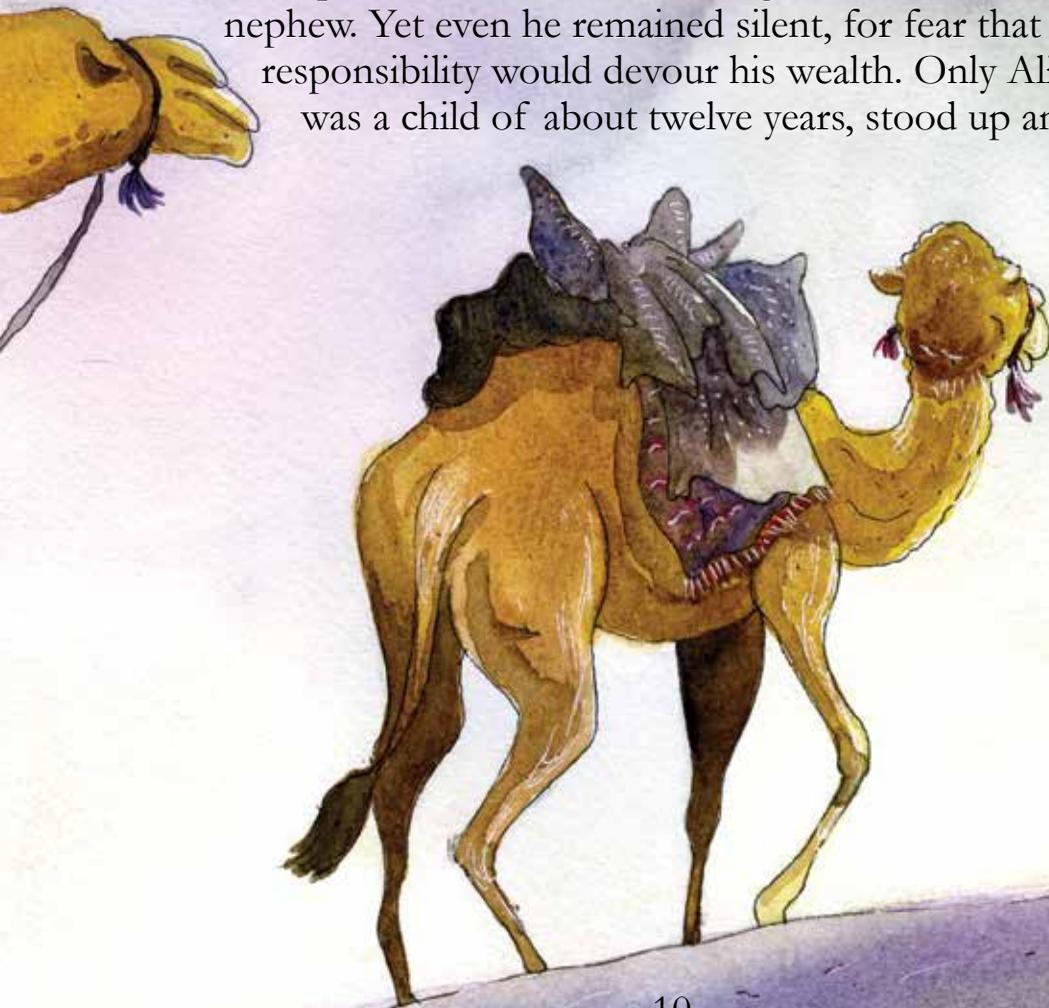
a very large family, the Prophet approached his uncle Abbas, who was the richest member of the Banu Hashim clan, saying, “Your brother Abu Talib has a very large family, and he is in a state of want as a result of this widespread poverty. Let us together lighten his burden and take into our homes some 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.

“Banu Abdul Muttalib,” the Prophet said, “I have been sent to you in particular, and to the whole of mankind in general. Who will swear allegiance to me and become my brother and companion? Who will fulfill my debts and my promises on my behalf? Who will look after my family affairs for me? He will be with me in heaven.”

The Prophet’s own family was not ready to accept responsibility for him. Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib, the Prophet’s uncle, was rich enough to look after his nephew. Yet even he remained silent, for fear that this responsibility would devour his wealth. Only Ali, who was a child of about twelve years, stood up and



Hashim clan, with the exception of Abu Lahab, were forced to live apart in a mountain ravine, called Shi'b Abi Talib.

The manner in which these people quietly endured all this cruel oppression was bound to have an effect on the conscience of others. And it did. Within three years, people like Abul Bakhtari, Hisham ibn Amr, Zubayr ibn Umayyah, Zamah ibn al-Aswad and Mut'im ibn Adi broke away from the ranks of the enemy, openly challenging this wrongful pact by which a boycott had been imposed on the Banu Hashim. The pact collapsed, and the Banu Hashim were rescued from their terrible plight.



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

