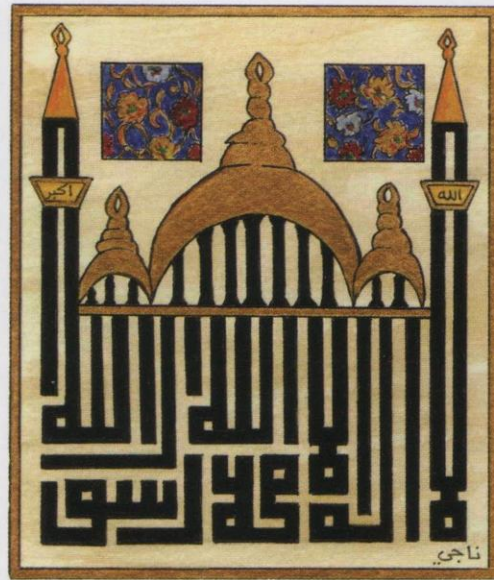


The Silver Dirham

The Power of the *Shahadah*



WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY
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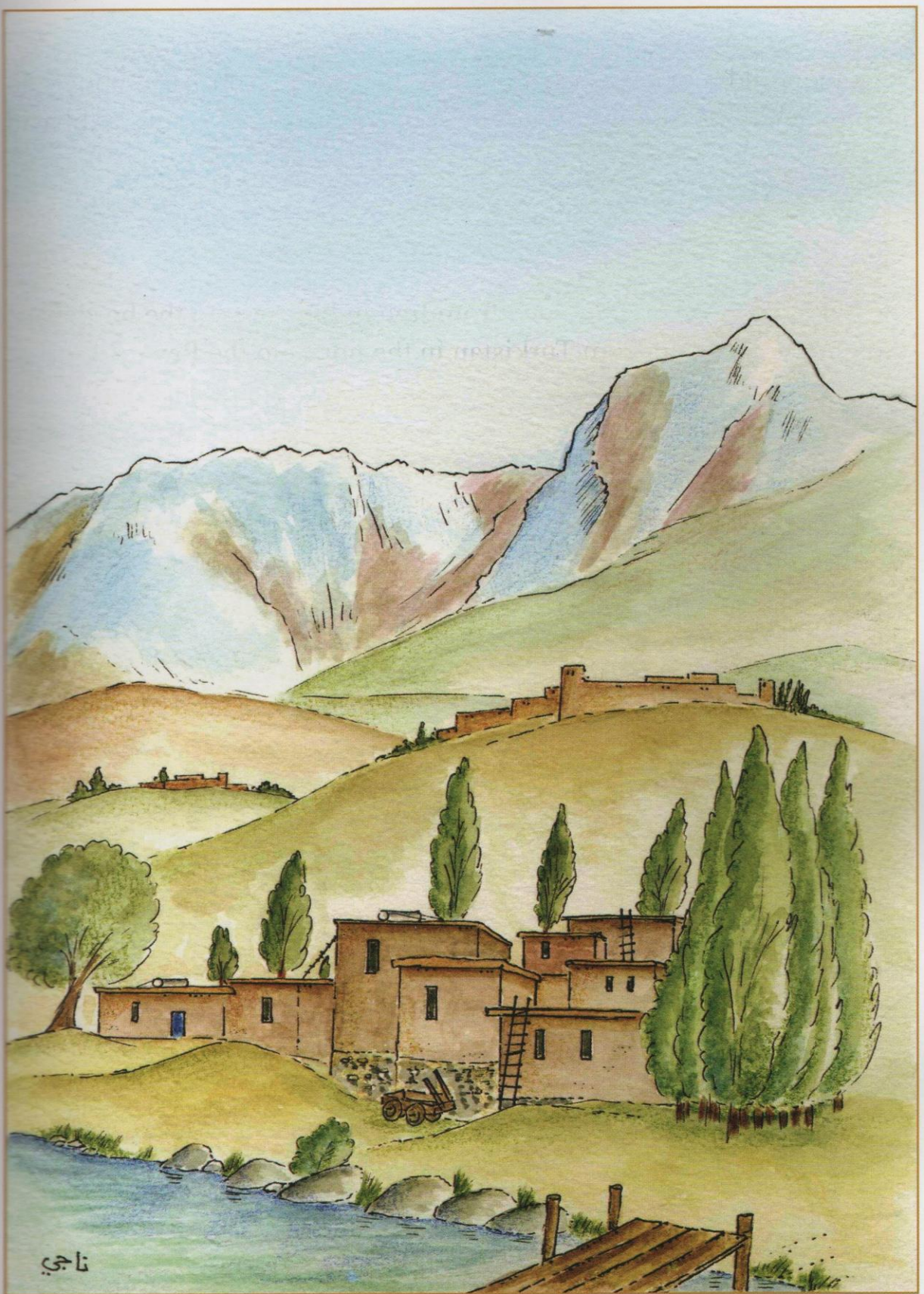
DARUSSALAM
GLOBAL LEADER IN ISLAMIC BOOKS

By the middle of the 9th century CE, the great ‘Abbasid empire had disintegrated into a series of provincial states ruled by former ‘Abbasid governors. Of the many breakaway principalities that weakened the central authority of the ‘Abbasid state in Baghdad, the Samanids of Central Asia were perhaps the most important.

The Samanid domains extended from Iraq in the west, to the borders of India in the east, and from Turkistan in the north, to the Persian Gulf in the south. Bukhara, the Samanid capital, became an important and thriving centre of Persian language and culture. The Samanids were *Sunni* Muslims who encouraged the spread of Islam in the territories to the north and east of their realm. Their merchants, for example, brought *Din al Haq al-Islam* to many Turkic tribes settled in western China.

In the 10th century CE, vast silver deposits were discovered in the mountains of Badakhshan, a remote area of northeastern Afghanistan, and in the Panjshir Valley in the Hindu Kush. The mad rush to find even more new seams of silver in many ways resembled the American gold rush of the 19th century. Soon, Samanid rulers were minting silver dirhams of a very high purity. These coins became the most widely circulated of any Islamic coins ever minted. Why was this?

During this period, Viking Norsemen from northern Europe began to move down the rivers of eastern Europe in order to meet Arab, Persian and Greek merchants. The Vikings had no currency of their own and no source of silver in the forests of Scandinavia. In their insatiable pursuit of silver, Viking merchants bartered for Samanid silver dirhams in market towns such as Bulghar on the Volga River in today’s Russia.



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