THE CAREER OF ABU SUFYAN BEFORE AND
AFTER HIS CONVERSION TO ISLAM

BY

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BIBLIOGRAPHY
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### TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM - ARABIC to ENGLISH

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INTRODUCTION

When the Prophet of Islam began his mission in Makkah (Mecca) he was opposed by the leaders of the Quraysh. The more Islam gained ground the more the chiefs of the various Quraysh tribes combined in increasing their hostility to the Prophet and his followers.

Soon after the Prophet and his Companions migrated to Madīnah in 1 A.H./622 C.E., the Quraysh hostility turned into an armed conflict as a result of which the Quraysh lost almost all their first rank leaders. The mantle of leadership thus fell on Abū Sufyān, an influential Qurayshite representative of the second generation. By virtue of the fact that he was now the recognised chief of the Quraysh, Abū Sufyān was duty-bound to continue, for the next six years, the campaign of armed hostility against the Prophet.

Abū Sufyān's intense hatred of the Prophet and his vehement opposition against Islam was also manifested by his wife Hind and several prominent members of his own tribe, the Banū Umayyah. This relationship between Abū Sufyān and the Prophet became delicate and complicated when the former's daughter, Umm Ḥabībah, accepted Islam and became the wife of the Prophet.

However, Abū Sufyān's armed campaign succeeded neither in killing the Prophet nor in driving him and his Companions out of Madīnah, nor in checking the forward march of Islam. Finally, when the Prophet with his Companions made a triumphant entry into Makkah in the year 8 A.H./630 C.E., Abū Sufyān, having realised the
failure and futility of his mission, accepted Islam.

Although his acceptance of Islam on the eve of the Makkan conquest - less than three years before the death of the Prophet - did not give him much opportunity for a longer period of companionship with the Prophet, he was, nevertheless, accorded a significant degree of importance and distinction by the Prophet and his Companions.

However, despite the fact that he accepted Islam and fought in subsequent battles in the defence of Islam, Abū Sufyān's opponents cast doubts regarding his fidelity to Islam by accusing him of having accepted Islam only outwardly. These opponents maintained that Abū Sufyān's earlier dislike and inner hatred towards Islam did not cease to the end, and that his conversion to Islam was motivated more by pragmatic strategy than through sincerity. Reporters hostile to Abū Sufyān and to his tribe, Banū Umayyah deliberately circulated reports to discredit him. This has created in the early Islamic biographies and historical literature, a contradictory picture of Abū Sufyān.

It is a well known fact that the stories of tribal wars, poetry and history of the pre-Islamic days (al-Ayyām al-Jāhiliyyah) were based on oral transmission from generation to generation. The era of writing history, i.e., recording events in writing, began with the advent of Islam and soon gave rise to the development of various fully fledged sciences such as history, biography jurisprudence, Qur'anic commentaries, Hadith literature, etc. Thus, the original sources, all of which are in Arabic contain
biographical reports and historical events as they actually happened or as narrated by the original reporters who were concerned at the time more with the recording of events than with their evaluation. This means that although the present study is primarily a descriptive one, the research will be conducted through content analysis of the vast body of original reports, relevant materials and original sources all of which are available at our library. The veracity of reports having any bearing on the present study will be determined by examining the biographical literature containing personal details of the original reporters.

Students of history often ignore the Qur'an and Hadith as sources for the early period of Islamic history though these sources provide rich information for this period. As they have a direct bearing on the life of the Prophet and his Companions, no study of this period can be complete without reference to the Qur'an and Hadith literature.

Until now, no independent study of the character and career of Abû Sufyân, before and after his conversion to Islam, has been made anywhere. However, I came across two short biographies of Abû Sufyân in Urdu which have been published recently in Pakistan. One is Hazrat Abû Sufyân awr Unkî Ahliyyah (Abû Sufyân and his wife) by Mawlana Muhammad Nâfi'i. The other is Hashimi -Umawi Ta'allugât Awr Sirat-i-Abû Sufyân (Relations between the Umayyads and the Hashimites and the life of Abû Sufyân) 1.

1. Published by the Mawlana Muhammad Dhakir Academy, Manzur Printing Press, Lahore in 1983
by Sayyid Altaf Husayn Gilani.¹ Both the books are at introductory and elementary level and do not answer all the questions. Therefore, I have chosen to study Abû Sufyân, who as a chief of the Quraysh, led a series of battles against the Prophet, but who after accepting Islam, fought in its defence with equal zeal.

The aims of the present study are to determine the status of Abû Sufyân among the Quraysh leaders, investigate the reasons for his vehement opposition to the Prophet and his mission, examine the reasons for his subsequent conversion to Islam and to evaluate his career after his acceptance of Islam.

Chapter One deals with a study of the sources relevant to the topic of the thesis; Chapter Two gives a short biography of Abû Sufyân; Chapter Three describes the Prophet's mission and the negative response to the Quraysh; Chapter Four discusses Abû Sufyân's opposition to the Prophet of Islam; Chapter Five analyses the Reasons for Abû Sufyân's acceptance of Islam; and finally Chapter Six investigates Abû Sufyân's career after his acceptance of Islam.

I hope I have succeeded in making a humble academic contribution which will draw the attention of Islamists, locally and abroad.

¹. Published by Progress Books, Lahore, in 1987
I have followed the internationally accepted scheme of transliteration. However, a transliteration sheet has been included in the thesis as a guide.

The poems which were composed and recited by Abû Sufyân at different times are included in an Appendix at the end of the Thesis.
CHAPTER ONE

STUDY OF THE SOURCES

The primary sources for the life of Abû Sufyân are the historical materials collected by the early "Akhbâriyyûn" (historians) which are not available in their original written documents. These recorded materials were, however, available to the early historians such as Ibn Is håq (d. 150 A.H./767 C.E.), al-Wâqidî (d. 207 A.H./822 C.E.), Ibn Hishâm (d. 213 A.H./828 C.E.), Ibn Sa'd (d. 230 A.H./845 C.E.), Ibn Khayyât (d. 240 A.H./854 C.E.), Ibn Ḥabîb (d. 245 A.H./859 C.E.), Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276 A.H./889 C.E.), al-Balâdhurî (d. 279 A.H./892 C.E.), al-Ya'^qûbî (d. 284 A.H./897 C.E.), al-Ṭabarî (d. 310 A.H./922 C.E.), and al-Mas'ûdî (d. 345 A.H./956 C.E.).

These authors sifted through the collections of reports and then incorporated them in their chronicles.

Apart from the above-mentioned sources, other early sources for the study with which we are concerned are the literary works of Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (d. 328 A.H./940 C.E.) and Abû al-Faraj al-Iṣbahânî (d. 356 A.H./967 C.E.) which include passages from earlier writers whose works have not come down to us. The later works such as those of Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463 A.H./1070 C.E.), Ibn ʿAsâkir (d. 571 A.H./1176 C.E.), al-Suhaylî (d. 581 A.H./1186 C.E.), Ibn al-Athîr (d. 630 A.H./1233 C.E.), Ibn Kathîr (d. 774 A.H./1373 C.E.), and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852 A.H./1449 C.E.) are essentially based on the above-mentioned works. As they sometime contain additional information not found in the early sources, they form an important secondary source for our present study.
on the Ansâb (genealogies) are also rich sources and have been used for this study.

Among the sources cited in these works are the following:


Finally, the most important sources in relation to the period and the subject under discussion are, of course, the Qur'ân and the Hadîth literature which have direct bearing on the study as we will see later. Often students of History ignore the Qur'ân and Hadîth as sources for the early period of Islamic history which is inexcusable. The Qur'ân and Hadîth literature provide rich information for the early Islamic period. The Qur'ân and Hadîth have a direct bearing on the life of the Prophet and on his companions. No study of this period can be complete without
reference to the Qur'ân and Hadîth literature.

The early Muslim historiographers, in their compilations of Hadîth (Traditions of the Prophet), Sîrah (life of the Prophet), Maghâzî (military campaigns of the Prophet), Akhbâr (history), Nawâdir (historical anecdotes), Sîyar (biographies), Ansâb (genealogies) and Futuţât (conquests) reported every event with an "isnâd" (chain of narrators). As the early historians were concerned primarily with collecting reports and preserving events they recorded all types of reports transmitted to them, including contradictory versions of the same event. The "Râwi" (reporter) was expected to transmit a report as objectively as possible, without superimposing his own personal view.

However, during the first two centuries of Islam, Muslim historiography was constantly subject to social and political pressures due to the coming into being of political and theological groupings and factions such as the Shî'ah, the Khawârij, the Umayyad loyalists and their opponents. History came to be used as a weapon against political rivals and a medium of propagation of various religious ideologies. Consequently, it was but natural that a partisan or apologetic tone should permeate the narrations of early Akhbâriyyûn belonging to various groups. Every transmitter tilted his account of historical events in favour of the group he belonged to or sympathized with.

In the light of these influences on early Muslim historiography, the most difficult task that a researcher on any aspect of early
Islamic history faces is to determine the accuracy and authenticity of historical reports, as well as the objectivity and reliability of the reporters. In order to do this, he has to go through the monumental works on "al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil" (scrutinizing and ascertaining the validity of statements) and "Asmā' al-Rijāl" (biography of narrators).

Muslim scholars have laid down principles of "Riwayah" and "Dirāyah" on the basis of which transmissions can be investigated. For the purpose of our study both these criteria will have to be taken into consideration when determining the authenticity of reports.

In view of the extraneous influences on historical literature mentioned above, it must be borne in mind that the subject of our study, viz., Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb, was the father of Mu'āwiyah who

1. This principle involved the scrutiny of all persons included in the chain of narrators - what kind of men they were, what their pursuits were, what sort of character they possessed, how was their memory and power of understanding, whether or not they were reliable, whether they were men of superficial intelligence or of deep insight, whether they were men of learning or illiterate.

2. According to this principle a narration will not be accepted as authoritative if it is contrary to historical facts, reason, common experience, truth, and circumstantial evidence.
initiated the Umayyad Caliphate. Furthermore, Abû Sufyân also happened to be one of the most prominent chiefs of the Umayyad clan. It is, therefore, natural to expect that historians or reporters who held anti-Umayyad sentiments, especially the Shi'ah partisans should present Abû Sufyân in a rather unfavourable light. Therefore, special attention must be paid to this particular aspect when investigating a report on the basis of "Riwayah".

Let us now turn to some early major historians (Akhbâriyyûn) to determine their attitudes and leanings as well as their personal characteristics.

'Aṣim ibn 'Umar ibn Qatâdah ibn Nu'mân al-Ansârî al-Zafari (d. 120 A.H./737 C.E.): his patronymic was Abû 'Amr al-Madani. He was a specialist in Sirâh and Maghâzî. The Umayyad caliph, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-‘Azîz ordered him to teach Ḥadîth. Prominent critics of Ḥadîth literature such as Abû Zur'ah (d. 264 A.H./877 C.E.); Ibn Ma'in (d. 233 A.H./847 C.E.) and Ibn al-Qâṭtan (d. 198 A.H./813 C.E.) testified to his veracity.1 Al-Wâqidî, Ibn Hishâm, Ibn Sa'd and al-Ṭabarî all report on his authority.

   Ibn Hajîr, Taqrîb al-Tahdîhîb, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhab 'Abd al-Latîf, Cairo, 1975, vol 1, p 385
Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124 A.H./741 C.E.):
He was one of the greatest scholars of Hadith and Fiqh (jurisprudence) of his time. He is credited with having collected more than two thousand hadith. Many students attended his lectures and many wrote down his narrations. He even handed his manuscripts to several scholars. He was also one of the first to write an independent work on Maghazi. His school produced many persons who became experts in this science. According to al-Dhahabī, al-Zuhrī sometimes practised "tadlīs". Otherwise, all scholars of Hadith reporters ("Aṣḥāb al-Riḍāl") have almost unanimously testified in his favour and have called him truthful (Ṣādūq), reliable (Thiqah) and sound in the Hadith (Ḥasan al-Hadīth). Since the overwhelming majority of scholars have abso-

1. Mizān al-I’tidāl, vol 4, p40
2. This means that a transmitter narrated a "hadith" from an authority whom he met but from whom he did not learn that particular "hadith" but had learned it from someone else going through that authority. Thus, he did not mention the immediate authority and transmitted it from higher authority using a term which can be used for both direct and indirect learning.
solute confidence in al-Zuhri, al-Dhahabi's criticism is hardly acceptable. Al-Zuhri is quoted extensively by early Islamic historians including al-Baladhuri, al-Waqidi, al-Tabari and al-Mas'udi. He is simply indispensable.

Mūsā ibn 'Uqbah ibn Abī 'Ayyāsh al-Asadi (d. 141 A.H./758 C.E.): He was one of the two pupils of al-Zuhri - the other being Muḥammad ibn Ishāq - who acquired a great reputation in the science of Maghāzī. His book on Maghāzī, together with those of Ibn Ishāq and al-Waqidi laid the foundation on which later historians like al-Tabari, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d. 734 A.H./1333 C.E.) based their works. His Maghāzī is considered as the most authentic work on the subject. Prominent critics like Ibn Ma'īn, Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 A.H./855 C.E.) and Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 277 A.H./890 C.E.) regard his Hadīth as reliable.¹ Though his work is now extinct it has been frequently referred to by all the major writers on Sirah, such as Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabari, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Sayyid al-Nās and al-Zurqānī (d. 1122 A.H./1710 C.E.).

Muhammad ibn Ishâq (d. 150 A.H./767 C.E.): He has acquired the widest reputation in Maghâzi and Sîrah. He is said to have been the very first person to write on Maghâzi. As stated above, he was a pupil of Al-Zuhri. Although he was an expert in the science of Hadîth the scholars of Hadîth differed about his reliability in Hadîth. One objection against him is that he used to narrate reports from the Jews and the Christians. Ibn Ma'in and al-Nasâ'i (d. 303 A.H./915 C.E.) called him "reliable", Shu'bah (d. 160 A.H./776 C.E.) called him "truthful" and he and Ibn Hanbal regard him as "sound in Hadîth"; al-Madînî (d. 234 A.H./848 C.E.) classifies his Hadîth as authentic; only Mâlik (d. 179 A.H./795 C.E.) and Ibn al-Qattân have called him a liar. Furthermore, Ibn al-Qattân has charged him with having had Shi'ah leanings. ¹

Though complete reliance could not be placed on Ibn Ishâq in regard to Hadîth, he nevertheless enjoys high rank and good reputation in matters relating to Sîrah and Maghâzi.

Ibn Ishâq's "Kitâb al-Maghâzi" was incorporated by Ibn Hishâm in his work of Sîrah, which is the recension of the former's work. Passages omitted by Ibn Hishâm are preserved in the works of al-Tabarî and al-Azraqi (d. 244 A.H./858 C.E.). Ibn Ishâq is one of ¹

the major sources for the life of the Prophet. Apart from al-Ṭabarî, Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Kathîr quote him extensively in their works.

Abû Ma'shar Najîh al-Madâni (d. 170 A.H./786 C.E.): Ibn Ma'în, al-Madînî, al-Nasâ'î, Ibn al-Qaṭṭân and al-Dâraquînî (d. 385 A.H./995 C.E.) describe him as "weak". Al-Bukhârî (d. 256 A.H./869 C.E.) has rejected his Hadîth. Nonetheless, Ibn Hanbal regards him as knowledgable in the science of Maghâzî. However, he is known to have had Shi'ah leanings.¹

Al-Wâqîdî and Ibn Sa'd have preserved his Kitâb al-Maghâzî in their works. Al-Ṭabarî has taken some information on the Prophet's life from his book.

Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Wâqîdî al-Aslami (d. 207 A.H./822 C.E.): He belongs to the early group of writers on the "Sirâh" and his famous book on the subject is "Kitâb al-Maghâzî" in which he has described the campaigns of the Prophet. He was appointed as a judge in Baghdad by the Abbâsid caliph al-Ma'mûn (198/813-218/833). In addition to Sirâh and Maghâzî, he also wrote on fiqh (jurisprudence) military conquests, history and events or episodes of people.

In regard to al-Wâqîdî's trustworthiness, several critics of Hadîth considered him to be reliable. Among them were: al-Darâwardî (d. 186 A.H./802 C.E.), Yazîd ibn Hârûn (d. 206 A.H./821)

C.E.), Muṣ'ab al-Zubayrī (d. 236 A.H./850 C.E.), and Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Saghānī (d. 270 A.H./883 C.E.). However, al-Waqīḍī has been condemned and rejected by the most prominent experts of Ḥadīth criticism. Ibn Ma'in called him "unreliable" whilst al-Dāraquṭnī called him "weak". Ibn Ḥanbal accused him of lying and making alterations in the traditions. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Nasā'ī, al-Madīnī and Ishāq ibn Râhwayh (d. 238 A.H./852 C.E.) all accuse him of fabricating Ḥadīth.

Al-Bukhārī classified him as "matrūk"¹ and Ibn 'Adī (d. 365 A.H. 975 C.E.) regarded his traditions as "unsafe". It is clear from this that al-Waqīḍī was not acceptable in Ḥadīth or in matters concerning religious injunctions. Despite this, he is regarded an an authority in the field of history, Maghāzī and Siyar.²

1. One whose narrations are not accepted and cannot be taken to verify a ḥadīth transmitted by other scholars.


15
Ibn Sa'd - the pupil of al-Waqidi - uses him as chief authority for his "Kitāb al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr", the foundation of which was the "Kitāb al-Tabaqāt" of al-Waqidi. A-Balādhurī, al-Tabarī and Ibn Kathīr also rely a great deal on al-Waqidi in their works.

Imām al-Shāfī'ī has quoted al-Waqidi on Maghāzī under "siyar al-Waqidi" in his Kitāb al-Umm.¹

'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Madā'ini (d. 225 A.H./839 C.E.): He was a pupil of Abū Ma'shar (mentioned above). Ibn 'Adī did not consider him to be very sound in Ḥadīth though Ibn Ma'in thought him to be reliable. Al-Nasā'ī has called him "matrūk". Though he is not counted among the scholars of Ḥadīth, he is regarded as a leading historian. His literary activity was very extensive and included works on the Sīrah, the Quraysh tribe (genealogy), conquests, the Caliphate as well as the history of poets and literature.² Al-Madā'ini is one of the major sources for the works of al-Balādhurī. Ibn Khayyāt has also transmitted directly from him.

Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī (d. 204 A.H./819 C.E.): He was a scholar of Kūfah. Authorities of Ḥadīth like al-Dāraquṭnī, al-Bukhārī and Ibn al-Qatṭân classified him as "matrūk". Ibn Sa'd called weak in Ḥadīth. Despite this, he

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¹ al-Shāfī'ī, Kitāb al-Umm, 2nd ed. ed Muḥammad Zuhrī al-Najjār, Dār al-Ma'rīfah, Beirut, 1973, vol 8, pp 269-276
was a noted historian and genealogist of his time. He is said to have written more than one hundred and fifty works. Though al-Kalbî may not be acceptable in Hadîth he cannot be ignored in historical materials though his reports will have to be collaborated through other sources.

Al-Kalbî is known to have belonged to the Rawâfi'd¹. Naturally, therefore, his reports concerning Abû Sufyân cannot be accepted uncritically. Many major historians quote al-Kalbî in their works, including Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Khayyât, Ibn Habîb, al-Balâdhuri and al-Ṭabarî.

Sa'id ibn al-Musay'ib al-Makhzûmî (d. 93 A.H./711 C.E.): He is considered to be an outstanding and distinguished scholar among the "Tâbi'ûn"² by critics like al-Madînî. Ibn Abî Ḥâtîm regarded him as the most reliable among the Tâbi'ûn in transmitting from

1. One of the sects of the Shî'ah who rejected the legitimacy of the caliphate of Abû Bakr and 'Umar and disassociated form 'Uthmân, believing that the prophet had explicitly designated 'Alî to succeed him. Mizân al-I'tidâl, vol 4, pp 304-305; Wafâyât, vol 5, pp 131-133; Lisân al-Mizân, vol 6, pp 196-197; Tahdîb al-Kamâl, vol 2, p405; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 6, p250

2. Sing. "Tâbi'i": one who did not meet the Prophet personally but was directly acquainted with a Şâhâbî (Companion of the Prophet) Tahdîb al-Kamâl, vol 1, pp 390-391; Taqrib, vol 1, pp 305-306; Wafâyât, vol 2, p 117; Kitâb al-Du'afâ', p311; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pp 128-132
Abū Hurayrah. Though Hadith reported by him is classified as "mursal"\(^1\), it is accepted as the most authentic of Mursal Hadith. He was also one of the great jurists of his time.\(^2\) Al-Balādhurī reports on his authority.

Ma'mar ibn Rāshid al-Azdi (d. 153 A.H./770 C.E.): His patronymic was Abū 'Urwah. He was one of the scholars of Kūfah. He compiled an original work on Hadith which is still available. Ibn Abī Ḥātim regarded him as "sound in Hadith", though he is known to have committed mistakes in some transmissions. In Ibn Ma'in's opinion, Ma'mar was the most reliable transmitter from al-Zuhrī. Al-Nasā'ī found him to be reliable and Ibn Hanbal thought him to be superior to other scholars. Ma'mar also wrote a book on Maghāzī. However, he is known to have had Shī'ah leanings.\(^3\) His reports, therefore, cannot be accepted without question, especially in relation to the Umayyad family. Al-Waqīdī quotes him in his Maghāzī.

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1. Transmission of a "tābi‘ī" from the Prophet directly, dropping the companion from the "isnād". This type of Hadith is regarded as weak owing to the discontinuity of the "isnād".


3 al-Mughnī, vol 2, p671

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18
Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn al-Ansārī (d. 110 A.H./728 C.E.): He was a jurist of Basrah. He was reputed for his great knowledge of tradition. He was among the most prominent Hadīth critics of his time. Ibn Sa'd described him as reliable and trustworthy.¹

Al-Baladhuri has reported many events on his authority.

Sarī ibn Ismā'īl al-Hamdānī al-Kūfī (d?): He was a cousin of al Sha'bi² (d. between 103 and 106 A.H./721-725 C.E.) and transmitted traditions on his authority. Ibn al-Qaṭṭān perceived him to be a liar. Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Nasā'ī said that he was abandoned (matrūk) in Hadīth.³ Therefore, his reports are not trustworthy. Al-Tabarī has quoted him often in his "Tārīkh".

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1. Tahdhib al-Kamāl, vol 2, pp 412-413; Taqrīb, vol 2, p 169; Wafayāt, vol 3, p 321; Kitāb al-Du'afā, p 312

2. The famous scholar of Hadīth who was also an authority on Maghāzī and Siyar.

Abū Sufyān's name was Šakhr.\(^1\) He was sometimes addressed as "Abū Hanzalah" (the father of Hanzalah) after the name of his son Hanzalah.\(^2\) However, he is better known by his title "Abū Sufyān".\(^3\)

\(^1\) Šakhr ibn Harb ibn Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams ibn "Abd Manāf ibn Qusayy ibn Kilāb ibn Murrah ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghālib ibn Fihr ibn Mālik ibn al-Nadr ibn Kinānah (Ibn Qutaybah, al-Ma'ārif; 2nd ed: ed. Tharwat 'Ukashah, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1969, p344)

\(^2\) Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Istī'āb fi Ma'rifat al-Ashāb, Maktabat al-Muthannā, Baghdad, 1328 A.H., vol 2, p191

\(^3\) There is no indication in the sources as to how he acquired this title.
Abū Sufyān was born ten years before the "Year of the Elephant".\(^1\) This means that he was ten years older than the Prophet, as confirmed by Ibn Ḥajar.\(^2\) Abū Sufyān was of medium height, extremely grave, short and stocky.\(^3\)

1. Arabic: "'Am al-Fīl". This was the year of the birth of the Prophet, coinciding with the year 570 of the Christian era. It is designated as the Year of the Elephant by historians because of the presence of elephants in the army of Abrahah, the Christian viceroy of the Yemen, who invaded Makkah in 570 C.E. with the object of destroying the Ka'bah so as to divert Arab pilgrimage and trade to Ṣan'ā' (Yemen), where he had erected a great cathedral for that purpose. Chapter 105 of the Qur'ān is named "al-Fīl" (the Elephant) after this incident.


Parents

Abū Sufyān was one of nine children of the chief of the Umayyad tribe, Ḥarb ibn Umayyah. The others were:
al-Fāri'ah, Umaymah, Umm al-Ḥakam, Fākhitah, Umm Jamīl, al-Ḍahyā; 'Amr and al-Ḥārīth.

1. She married the Prophet's paternal uncle, Abū Lahab, one of the staunchest enemies of Islam. (See Ibn Ḥazm, Jamharat Ansāb al-'Arab, 3rd ed. ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, Dār al-Ma'arif, Cairo, 1971, p72; al-Ma'arif, p125). Both Abū Lahab and his wife are mentioned in the Qur'ān (see Chapter 111).

2. Ibn Ḥazm gives his name as 'Umar (see Ansāb al-'Arab, p111). This is probably a typographical error. The name 'Amr is distinguished from 'Umar in writing by the addition of the Arabic consonant "w" to the former. This could have been omitted by mistake in this case.

3. He married the prophet's paternal aunt, Ṣafīyyah (see al-Ma'arif, p128; Ansāb al-'Arab, p111; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p27) Ḥarb ibn Umayyah's children are listed in Ansāb al-'Arab, p429 and Ansāb al-Ashrāf, vol 4A, p4.
Ḥarb ibn Umayyah had several wives. Abū Sufyān's mother was Ṣafiyyah bint Ḥazn ibn Bujayr ibn al-Ḥuzum ibn Ruwaybah ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Hilāl ibn 'Amir according to Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn al-Ṭhir and Ibn Khayyāt. Though Ibn Ḥajar gives her name as Ṣafīyyah bint Ḥarb al-Hilāliyyah and Ibn Qutaybah cites her name as Ṣafīyyah bint al-Ḥārith, the first name seems more likely as Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Khayyāt are greater authorities on genealogy and, therefore, more reliable.


2. al-Isābah, vol 2, pp 178-179.

3. al-Ma'ārif, p344.
In the battle of Fijār¹, Harb ibn Umayyah was the commander of the Quraysh and Kinānah tribes.² The contending parties eventually agreed to peace on condition that the party which had lost more men in the battle should be paid blood money by the one which had lost less. It was found that the Quraysh and Kinānah had killed twenty more men than their adversaries.

Harb was obliged, therefore to pay the blood money. He offered to pledge his son, Abū Sufyān, as a security till he could pay the required sum.³ As a result of this the name of Abū Sufyān became well-known at an early age of his life.

1. Of all the battles which had been waged in pre-Islamic Arabia, this was the most well known and fierce. It was fought between the tribes of the Quraysh and the Qays. This battle is known as "Fijār" because it was fought during the months when fighting was unlawful.


Abū Sufyān had eight wives during the course of his life. At the advent of Islam he had six wives. The names of his wives are mentioned in various sources as follows:

i) Ṣafīyyah bint Abī al-'Āṣ ibn Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams.

ii) Hind bint 'Utba ibn Rabī'ah ibn 'Abd Shams.

iii) 'Atikah bint Abī Uzayhir.

iv) Umm 'Amr bint Abī 'Amr ibn Umayyah.

v) Shamsah Hilāliyyah.

vi) al-Sa'bah bint al-Ḥadrāmī.

1. al-Iṣābah, vol 4, p358.
2. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p217.
3. ibid, p170.
4. Sirah, vol 1, p413.
6. ibid, p6.
vii) Zaynab bint Nawfal ibn Half ibn Qawwâlah of the Kinânah tribe according to Ibn Sa'd.¹

or

Hind bint Habîb ibn Nawfal ibn Ghanam ibn Fihr ibn Kinânah according to Ibn Khayyât.²

viii) Umayyah bint Sufyân ibn Wahb ibn al-Asyam ibn Kinânah, according to Ibn Sa'd³

or

Umaymah bint Sa'd ibn Wahh ibn Ashyam ibn Kinânah, according to al-Wâqidî.⁴

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   Ibn al-Athîr in his biography of Yazîd ibn Abî Sufyân also mentions the discrepancy with regard to his mother's correct name and cites the two names mentioned above (see Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 5, p491).
3. Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p217; Ansâb al-'Arab, pl11.
Umaymah bint Sa'id ibn Wahb ibn Ashyam al-Kināniyah according to Ibn Habīb¹ and al-Balādhurī.²

Abū Sufyān had sixteen children - eight sons and eight daughters. The names of his sons were:

'Amr, 'Anbasah, Hanzalah, Mu'āwiyyah, Muhammad, 'Utbah, Yazīd and Ziyād.³

1. Ibn Habīb, Kitāb al-Muhābbar, ed. Dr E L Shtater, Dār al-Afaq al-Jadīdah, Beirut, 1361 A.H., p410.²

2. al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, ed. Dr Muhammad Hamīdullah, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1959, vol 1, p312.
   Though there is no agreement as to Umaymah's father's name, it was either Sa'id Ibn Wahb or Sa'd ibn Wahb as the name "Sufyān" is only given by one authority. And though Ibn Habīb gives the name of his wife as "Umaynāh" this is most likely an error.

3. al-Ma'ārif, pp 344-345.
Al-Baladhuri has given the same list as above, but has excluded the name of Ziyād. The reason for this omission will be discussed shortly.

The names of Abū Sufyān's daughters were:

Āminah, Hind, Juwayriyyah, Maymūnah, Ramlah, Sakhrah, Umm Habibah and Umm al-Hakam.

As Umm Habibah's real name was Ramlah, she was referred to as Ramlah al-Kubra (senior) to distinguish her from the other Ramlah who was called Ramlah al-Sughra (junior).

1. see Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, pp 4-6.

2. al-Ma'ārif, p344; Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, pp 5-6.

3. ibid; ibid
The following is a complete list of the names of Abū Sufyān's wives with their respective offsprings:

i) Safiyyah = Aminah, Hanzalah, and Umm Habibah

ii) Hind = Juwayriyyah, Muawaiyyah, Umm al-Hakam and 'Utbah

iii) 'Atikah = 'Anbasah and Muḥammad

vi) Umm 'Amr = 'Amr¹, Hind and Sakhrah

v) Shamsah = Maymūnah

vi) Zaynab or Hind = Yazīd

vii) Umaymah = Ramlah al-Šuğhrā²

Ziyād

The above list does not include the name of Ziyād. This is because Ziyād was an illegitimate son born from Abū Sufyān's affair in this pre-Islamic days with a woman called Sumayyah. She was at the time married to a man called 'Ubayd. Therefore Ziyād used

1. According to Ibn Ḥazm, 'Amr was the son of Hind (see Ansāb al-'Arab, pl11). This is unlikely, else how would 'Umm 'Amr have acquired that name?

to be called Ziyād ibn 'Ubayd\(^1\). Ziyād accepted Islam during the caliphate of Abū Bakr\(^2\). Since Sumayyāh had a husband Abū Sufyān could not openly proclaim Ziyād as his son. Later, Ziyād came to be popularly known as "Ziyād ibn Abīh\(^3\) (i.e., Ziyād, the son of his father) because of the dispute regarding the identity of his father. Whilst Abū Bakrah, the son of 'Ubayd and Sumayyāh and, therefore, brother of Ziyād as well as other people denied that Ziyād was the son of Abū Sufyān\(^4\), Ziyād himself acknowledged Abū Sufyān as his father\(^5\). When the Prophet's wife, 'A'ishah, once

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2. Tārikh Dimashq, vol 5, p409.

3. Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, vol 7, pt 1, p70; al-`Iqd, vol 5, p5.

4. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 1, p493; vol 4A, pp 175, 191, and 194

wrote to Ziyād she addressed him as Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān1 showing that she accepted this relationship.

Ziyād's kinship with Abū Sufyān was finally established during the caliphate of Mu'āwiyyah, his brother. Abū Sufyān's daughter, Juwayriyyah, testified that her father had claimed Ziyād as his son. Another witness claimed to have heard 'Alī ibn Ṭālib - the fourth Caliph of Islam - saying that Ziyād was indeed the son of Abū Sufyān2. Mu'āwiyyah accepted Ziyād as his brother on the basis of this evidence. Though Abū al-Yaqūţān3 claimed that Ziyād's mother was Asmā' bint al-A'war, al-Baladhurī rejected this report.4 The above evidence proves that Ziyād was indeed the son of Abū Sufyān.

1. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 1, p71.
3. He lived in Kūfah and is considered weak in Hadīth by Ibn Ma'īn, al-Nasā'i, al-Dāraquṭnī, and Ibn Ḥanbal. He is also known to have had Shi'ah pretensions (Mīzān al-I'tidal, vol 3, p50; Tahdhib al-Kamāl, vol 2, p219).
4. See Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, p169; and al-Ma'ārif, p346.
Ziyād became a scribe of al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, the governor of Kūfah, then of Abū Mūsā ak-Ash'arī, the governor of Basrah during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb¹ (13 A.H./634 C.E.-24 A.H./644 C.E.). He continued to serve as a scribe to the new governor of Kūfah, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Āmir, during the caliphate of 'Uthmān.² (24 A.H./644 C.E. - 35 A.H./656 C.E.). When 'Alī became the caliph (r. 35 A.H./656 C.E. -40 A.H./661 C.E.), Ziyād was appointed as scribe to 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās, the governor of Basrah and then as governor of Persia.³ Later, his brother, Muʿāwiyyah, the first Umayyad caliph (r. 40 A.H./661 C.E. - 60 A.H./679 C.E.) made him governor of Basrah, and when al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah died, then over Basrah as well as Kūfah.⁴ Ziyād died in Kūfah in 53 A.H.⁵ (672 C.E.).

2. al-Muḥabbar, p378.
3. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, p165; According to al-Ṭabarī, Ziyād was appointed to collect the kharāj (land tax) from the people of Basrah (see Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, Series 1, p3448).
Mu'awiyyah

Of Abū Sufyān's sons, Mu'awiyyah is the best known. Al-Wāqīḍī reports on the authority of Muṣ'ab al-Zubayrī (d. 236 A.H./850 C.E.) that Mu'awiyyah had accepted Islam in the year when the Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah was signed but that he had concealed this from his father who had once punished him when he found him showing an interest in the call of Islam. Al-Balādhrī has cited al-Wāqīḍī's report. In his biography of Mu'awiyyah, Ibn Sa'd also states that Mu'awiyyah had concealed his acceptance of Islam and only disclosed it to the Prophet on the day of the Conquest of Makkah.

This, however, is extremely unlikely. Had Mu'awiyyah accepted Islam before the Conquest of Makkah, he would in all probability

1. He was a well-known historian and genealogist of Baghdad (Taqrīb, vol 2, p252; Mizān al-I'tīdāl, vol 4, p120; Tahdhib al-Kamal, vol 3, p32).
have made this known to the Prophet or to someone among his com­
panions even if it had to be done secretly for fear of his
father. In that case he would not have been included among the
"Ṭulaqā'". 1

Mu'āwiyyah participated in the Expedition of Ḥunayn and of Tā'if.
'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as governor of Damascus. When
'Umar died 'Uthmān not only retained him but made him governor of
the whole of Syria. He remained in this position for twenty
years. When the fourth caliph 'Alī died (in 40A.H./661 C.E.), he
became the first caliph of the Umayyad dynasty. He ruled as
caliph for twenty years till he died in 60A.H. 2 (679 C.E.).

'Utbah participated in the battle of Jamal (36 A.H./656 C.E.)
with 'A'ishah, the wife of the Prophet. When she was defeated,
'Utbah fled from the battle. 3 He went to Syria where he remained
for a while. 4 He participated with Mu'āwiyyah in the battle of
Siffin. 5 Later he returned to Madīnah.6

1. Those Makkans who were pardoned by the Prophet on the day of
the Conquest of Makkah and who subsequently entered the fold
of Islam.
4. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p3219.
6. ibid, p4.
Al-Balâdhurî refutes the claim that 'Utbah was appointed as governor of Madinah after the death of 'A'îshah\(^2\) (17 A.H./638 C.E. during the caliphate of 'Umar). He accepts the report on the authority of Hishâm al-Kalbî that Mu'âwiyyah appointed 'Utbah as governor of Makkah, then of Tâ'if\(^2\) and later of Egypt.\(^3\)

'Amr fought with the Quraysh at Badr and was captured by the Muslims during the battle. He was subsequently ransomed by Abû Sufyân in exchange for a Muslim captive.\(^4\)

Yazîd embraced Islam on the day of the Conquest of Makkah. He participated in the Battle of Hunayn. The first Caliph, Abû Bakr, had appointed him as one of the commanders of the army to Syria and used to consult him on important matters. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb appointed him as governor of Damascus. He continued

\(^1\) Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, p421.  
\(^2\) ibid, vol 4A, pp 30 and 135.  
\(^3\) ibid, p4.  
\(^4\) Al-Ma'ârif, p344.
in this office till his death in 18 A.H./639 C.E. In the battle of Yarmūk in 15 A.H./636 C.E. Abū Sufyān fought under the command of Yazīd. 

Hānẓalah was killed in the battle of Badr as a disbeliever by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālīb. 

'Anbasah was appointed by Muʿāwiyyah as governor of Makkah and later of Ṭā'if as well.

Umm Habībah

The best known of Abū Sufyān's daughters is Umm Ḥabībah. She was married to ʿUbayd Allah ibn Jahsh and migrated with him to Abyssinia when the Quraysh intensified their persecution of the Muslims in Makkah. There ʿUbayd Allah became a Christian but she remained a Muslim. ʿUbayd Allah subsequently died in Abyssinia. On hearing about this, the Prophet sent ʿAmr ibn Umayyah al-Ḍāmīrī to the negus in Abyssinia proposing marriage to Umm Habībah. The negus fixed her dower at 400 dinars and Khālid ibn Saʿīd ibn al-

3. al-Maghāzī, vol 1, p47.
'As married her to the Prophet in proxy.¹ There is no agreement as to the year of this marriage. According to Ibn Sa'd, on the authority of al-Waqidî, it took place in 7 A.H.² Al-Tabari, on the other hand, records the marriage as one of the events which took place in 6 A.H., on the authority of Hishâm al-Kalbi.³ This date is corroborated by Ma'mar ibn Muthannâ⁴ (d 209 A.H./824


2. Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p70.

3. Târîkh al-Tabarî, S1, p1570.

4. He was a genealogist, historian and grammarian of Baṣrah. He wrote about 200 books on the Qur'ân, Hadîth, conquests, battles, the Khârijites, etc. (Mu'jam al-Udabâ', vol 19, pp 154-162).
C.E.), Ibn Mandah (d. 511 A.H./1118 C.E.)\(^2\) and Ibn Khayyāt.\(^3\) Al-
Mas'ūdi has accepted the date of the marriage as 6 A.H.\(^4\) This is
more likely the correct date.

The following is a list of the remaining daughters of Abū Sufyān
with their respective husbands:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daughter</th>
<th>Husband</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hind</td>
<td>al-Ḥārith ibn Nawfal ibn al-Ḥārith ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sākhrah</td>
<td>Sa'id ibn al-Akhnas ibn Shariq a-Thaqafī.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Juwayriyyah| i) al-Sā'ib ibn Abī Ḥubaysh ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib ibn Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza ibn Qusayy.  
|            | ii) 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Umayyah al-Aṣghar ibn 'Abd Shams.       |

1. He was a well known traditionist. He wrote a history of
Isfahān and on companions of the Prophet (Wafayāt, vol 5, p217).
2. Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Maktabat al-Ma'ārif
Beirut, 1966, vol 4, p144
3. Tārīkh Ibn Khayyāt, vol 1, p41
4. al-Mas'ūdi, Murūj al-Dhabab wa Ma'ādin al-Jawhar, ed Charles
Pellat, University of Lebanon, Beirut, 1966, vol 3, p29

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Maymūnah
i) 'Urwaḥ ibn Máṣ'ūd ibn al-Mu'attib al-Thaqafī.
ii) al-Mughfrah ibn Shu'bah al-Thaqafī.

Umm al-Ḥakam
i) 'Iyād ibn 'Abd Ghanam al-Fihārī.

Ramlah
i) Muḥammad ibn Abī Hudhayfah ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabi'āh ibn 'Abd Shams ibn 'Abd Manāf.
ii) Sa'id ibn 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān ibn Abī al-'Ās ibn Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams ibn 'Abd Manāf.
iii) 'Amr ibn Sa'id al-Ashdaq ibn Sa'id ibn al-'Ās.

Âminah
i) Ḥuwaytīb ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzā ibn Abī Qays ibn 'Abd Wudd ibn Nadr ibn Mālik ibn Ḥiṣl ibn 'Āmir ibn Lu'yāy.
ii) Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf al-Jumāhī.
iii) 'Abd Allah ibn Mu'awiyyah


Al-Baladhuri has erroneously listed Umaymah as the daughter of Abū Sufyān in place of Aminah (see vol 1, p440). Again he has incorrectly named al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah as the husband of Aminah (see vol 4A, p5). Al-Mughirah was in fact married to Maymūnah as he has correctly stated in vol. 1 (see p441).

Ibn Hishām and al-Tabari name 'Urwah ibn Mas'ūd as the husband of Aminah (see Sirah, vol 2, p483: Tārikh al-Tabarī, S 1, p1672). 'Urwah was in fact the first husband of Maymūnah.

Umm al-Ḥakam was the only Qurayshite woman to apostasize. She was one of six women who returned to Makkah after migrating to Madīnah with the Muslims. She was at the time married to 'Iyād. Later she married 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Uthmān and re-embraced Islam when the Thaqif tribe to which her husband belonged, accepted Islam (al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr al-Manthur fi al-Tafsir al-Ma'thûr, ed. Muhammad Amin Damāj, Beirut, n.d. vol 6, p205).
As for Abū Sufyān's wives, there is very little information about them except for Hind bint 'Utba ibn Rabī'ah. It is reported that a chief and a poet of the Quraysh, Musāfīr ibn 'Amr ibn Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams ibn 'Abd Manaf loved her and composed a poem about her in order to please her. But when he proposed marriage to her, she turned him down as his wealth did not impress her. So Musāfīr spent the rest of his life grieving for her till he finally died heartbroken.¹

According to Ibn Sa'd and al-Baladhurī, Hind first married Hafṣ ibn al-Mughirah ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Umar ibn al-Makhzūm.² When Hafṣ was killed, Abū Sufyān and Suhayl ibn 'Amr³ proposed to

¹ Sirah, vol 1, p150.
² Ibn Ḥabīb says that she married al-Fākīh ibn al-Mughirah before she married Hafṣ (see al-Muḥabbar, p437). Ibn 'Abd Rabbīh agrees that she married al-Fākīh but makes no mention of Hafṣ (see al-'Iqd al-Farīd, vol 6, p96).
³ Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p170; Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, p43
⁴ He is the man who agreed to the terms of the Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah on behalf of the Meccans.
Hind told her father: "I am a woman who is in charge of my own affairs. So do not marry me to a man until you have presented him to me." He agreed to that. So when Abū Sufyān and Suhayl proposed to her, he described the qualities of Suhayl, then of Abū Sufyān without naming either of them. When he had finished, she asked him not to name her first suitor as she did not like him but she preferred the second one and requested for his name. She learnt that it was Abū Sufyān and married him.²

When Abū Sufyān married Hind he fed his guests with camel meat and wine on the first day, mutton and a drink made from dried grapes on the second day, and poultry and a drink made from honey on the third day.³

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2. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p171; al-'Iqd al-Farīd, vol 6, pp 87-88. See also Abū'Alī al-Qālī, Kitāb al-Amālī, ed Ismā'īl Yūsuf Diyāb, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyyah, Cairo, 1926, vol 2, pp 104-105


43
Suhayl ibn "Amr, whose proposal Hind had rejected, was very disappointed and composed a poem in which he lamented his loss. When Abū Sufyān heard that he said that he was prepared to do anything to please Suhayl, barring divorce. When Suhayl persisted in belittling him, Abū Sufyān composed a poem in which he scorned Suhayl's pretensions to high status and dignity and accused him of being devoid of bravery and courage.¹

Hind is described as a woman of independant character and pride; of discretion and intelligence.²

In the Battle of Uhud, some of the Quraysh women accompanied their men. Hind was one of them. She was determined to avenge the death of her father who was killed in the Battle of Badr by Hamzah, uncle of the Prophet. Besides, he was also responsible for the death of her uncle, Shaybah and Abū Sufyān's son, Ḥanẓalah³ (whose mother was Safiyyah). She promised freedom to a slave, Wahshī ibn Harb, if he killed Hamzah. She had sworn that

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1. Al-‘Iqd al-Farīd, vol 6, p88. see Appendix A(a) for text of poem
2. Usd al-Ghabah, vol 7, p292
3. Sirah, vol 1, pp 708-709
if Hamzah was killed, she would eat his liver. When Wahshi killed Hamzah, he tore open his stomach, took out his liver and brought it to Hind. She chewed it but could not swallow it, so the spat it out. Then she mutilated his body and made a garland from parts of his body.  

Al-Baladhuri and Ibn Sa'd report that after the Muslims had conquered Makkah in 8. A.H. the Prophet had instructed that four women, including Hind should be put to death. Though other sources do not mention this, it is understandable considering that Hind was guilty of mutilating Hamzah's body and mutilation is regarded as a crime in Islam. However, it appears that the Prophet forgave her when she accepted Islam.

Al-Tabari reports that on the day of the Conquest of Makkah, women of Makkah including Hind came to the Prophet to accept Islam. Hind disguised herself because she was fearful that if the Prophet recognised her, he would order her to be killed for her

1. Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt 1, pp 5-7

2. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 1, p357; Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p98

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mutilation of Hamzah's body in the battle of Uhud.¹ Hind informed Abū Sufyān that she wished to take a pledge of Islam at the hands of the Prophet.²

When the Prophet asked the women to pledge not to associate partners with Allah, Hind did not dare speak lest the Prophet recognised her and ordered her execution. However, when the other women accompanying Hind also refused to speak, she was obliged to answer. She said: "how can you demand from women something which you do not demand from men?"

The Prophet looked at her and asked the woman to pledge not to steal. Hind answered: "O Messenger of Allah, Abū Sufyān is a stingy man. He does not give me to spend what is enough to suffice me and my child. Therefore I take of his wealth without his knowledge. Am I doing anything wrong by doing that?"

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1. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, s. 1, p1643
2. Usd al-Ghābah, vol 7, p293
The Prophet replied: "Take from his wealth what suffices you and your child without blame."¹

When Abū Sufyān who was watching the proceedings heard this he said: "Whatever you have taken is past. Whatever remains is permissible for you." The prophet laughed at that as he now recognised Hind. He called her and asked: "Are you Hind?"
She replied: "Allah forgives what is past."²

   Muslim, Sahīh, ed Muhammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Baqī, Beirut, 1955 vol 3, p1338;
   Ibn Mājah, Sunan, ed Muhammad Fu'ād `Abd al-Baqī, `Isa al-
   Bābī al-Halabī, Beirut, 1952, vol 2, p769;
   al-Nawā'ī, Sunan, ed Hasan Muḥammad al-Mas'ūdī, Dār Iḥyā al-

2. Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, p1643, Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p4
When the Prophet asked the women to pledge not to commit adultery, Hind answered: "Does a free woman commit adultery?"

When he took a pledge from them not to kill their children, she said: "You have killed them on the day of Badr."¹

It is reported that when Abū Sufyân and Hind had embraced Islam, the Prophet did not threaten them or instill fear in them, but treated them with affection and kindness.²

Wealth and Status

The Quraysh of Makkah were engaged in trade with Syria during the summer and Yemen during the winter. This is referred to in the Qur'ān.³

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1. Tarīkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1643; Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p4


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The merchants travelled to these areas in caravans and included some wealthy men of the Quraysh and some of their leaders.\(^1\) Abū Sufyān was one of the merchants who used to travel to Syria and other places. He supplied the merchants in Makkah with goods which he bought with his own money and the money of the Quraysh.\(^2\) Abū Sufyān's trade was in olives and skin.\(^3\) He appears to have been a successful trader.\(^4\) In regard to his wealth it is reported that during the period of his trade with Syria he had an estate at Balqā' called "Qubbāsh" and was known to have been respected for his wealth.\(^5\)

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1. Ansāb al-Ashrāf, vol 1, p59; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p43
2. Usd al-Ghabah, vol 6, p148
3. al-Ma'ārif, p575
Abū Sufyān was one of seventeen men who could write at the advent of Islam. A man by the name of Bishr ibn 'Abd al-`Ibādī taught Abū Sufyān and Abū Qays ibn 'Abd Manāf ibn Zuhrah to write. They in turn taught it to the people of Makkah.

Abū Sufyān was the chief of the Banū `Abd Shams and one of the nobility of the Quraysh. He was appointed chief because of his wisdom. Ibn Hazm describes him as wealthy and niggardly, but greatly loved by his people. It is said that the Quraysh were pleased with his leadership.

There is no doubt that Abū Sufyān enjoyed a position of respect and honour. Once the ruler of Yemen presented the Makkans with ten sheep with the condition that the most honourable Qurayshite should slaughter them. This honour fell upon Abū Sufyān.

1. Futūḥ al-Buldān, pp 471-472
2. al-Ma'ārif, p553
3. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 4, pt 1, p12; Sīrah, vol 1, p417
4. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, p110
5. Ansāb al-`Arab, p80
6. al-Muhabbar, p338
7. al-`Iqd al-Farid, vol 2, pp 201, 287
another occasion a Yemenite requested that his camel be slaughtered by the most respected man in Makkah. Again Abū Sufyān was accorded this privilege. This shows that he enjoyed the distinction of being the most respected member of Makkan society.

A further illustration that Abū Sufyān was held in high esteem by his people is the fact that he was often appointed to arbitrate in their disputes. It will suffice here to quote the following instances:

Hamzah ibn Abd al-Muttalib was passing a group of Banū Makhzūm when one of them insulted a woman of the Banū Manāf. So Hamzah struck him so severely that he died. Then he informed Abū Sufyān about it. Abū Sufyān approached the Banū Makhzūm and offered them three animals as blood-money for the deceased. But they declined it. When they came the next day to Abū Sufyān to demand the three animals, he told them that now they would get only two animals. Again they declined the offer but returned a day later to demand the two animals. This time Abū Sufyān said that they would only

1. Ansāb al-Āshraf, vol 4A, p9
2. al-Muḥabbār, p132
get one animal. Once again they refused to accept his offer though they returned the following day to indicate their acceptance. However, Abū Sufyān now informed them that they would not receive any blood-money as they had declined it each time it was offered to them.¹

Abū Sufyān undertook to mediate between the tribes of Banû Manâf and Banû Makhzûm in order to avoid bloodshed between them.

Once Abū Jahl slapped Fātimah, the daughter of the Prophet, when she was still a child. She saw Abū Sufyān and complained to him. He returned with her to Abū Jahl, held the latter's hands and said to her:

"Slap him! May Allah disfigure his face." (i.e. disgrace him)

So she slapped Abū Jahl who complained that Abū Sufyān had been overtaken by inconsistency in his behaviour. Nonetheless, Fātimah informed the Prophet about what had happened and he responded:

"O Allah, do not forget it. (i.e., this act of goodness) of Abū Sufyān."²

2. ibid, p7
Ibn'Abd Rabbih also mentions an occasion when Abû Sufyân prevented bloodshed between two clans of the Quraysh. He asked them whether they would be satisfied merely with the fulfilment of their rights or whether they preferred something better than that. When they asked him what could be regarded better than the fulfilment of rights, he replied that it was forgiveness. Thereupon, the people made a truce and sued for peace.¹

Al-Jâhiẓ reports of a battle between the Banû Khuzâ'ah and Banû Makhzûm and Quraysh before Hijrah. The two parties were on the point of destroying each other when Abû Sufyân arrived and prevailed upon them to stop fighting. Thereupon they departed.²

The incidents cited above indicate that Abû Sufyân played a significant role as arbitrator in various disputes. That his mediation was accepted and his decisions adhered to show him to be a man who wielded considerable influence and authority.

1. al-'Iqd al-Farîd, vol 2, p188
Death

There are conflicting reports about the year and place of death of Abû Sufyân. Though some reports suggest that he died in Syria and that his son, Mu'âwiyyah, led the funeral prayer for him, it is generally agreed that he died in Madînah and that 'Uthmân led the funeral prayer. Again there is uncertainty about the exact year of his death. The years 30 A.H., 31 A.H., 32 A.H., 33 A.H., and 34 A.H., have all been mentioned.

1. Futûh al-Buldân, p135; Usd al-Ghabâh, vol 6, p149


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His age when he died is said to have been sixty-eight, eighty-eight or ninety-three.\textsuperscript{1} Bearing in mind that Abû Sufyân was ten years older than the Prophet, it means that when the Prophet died in 10 A.H. (632 C.E.) at the age of sixty-three, Abû Sufyân was seventy-three years old. Accordingly, in 31 A.H. (651 C.E.) he would be about twenty years older thus making him ninety-three. This tallies with the date preferred by most historians.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} Fufih al-Buldân, p135; Usd al-Ghabah, vol 3, p11; vol 6, p149; Târikh Dimashq, vol 6, p409

CHAPTER 3

THE PROPHET'S MISSION AND THE NEGATIVE RESPONSE OF THE QURAYSH

Three years after the first Revelation (Wahy), God commanded the Prophet to proclaim the teachings of Islam openly.¹ When the Prophet began preaching Islam openly and condemned idolatry, some respectable persons from among the Quraysh complained to Abū Ṭālib² who pacified them by mild words and sent them away.³ However, as the Prophet would not desist from performing his prophetic mission, they approached Abū Ṭālib again and insisted that he put an end to his nephew's activities. To alienate them and to arouse their enmity was too much for Abū Ṭālib and yet he was reluctant to desert his nephew. And when he realised that the Prophet was determined to convey his message despite all odds, he promised to continue protecting him.⁴ As Abū Ṭālib refused to yield to the demand of the Quraysh, they began to put pressure on the Prophet persecuting him in various ways.⁵

1. See Qur'ān, 15:94 and 26:214-216
2. the paternal uncle and guardian of the Prophet; he was the seniormost member of the Hāshimites.
3. Sīrah, vol 1, pp 264-265; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pl174; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 134-135
4. Sīrah, vol 1, pp 264-266; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1174-1179
5. For details see Sīrah, vol 1, p355; Sahīh al-Bukhārī, vol 1, p71, vol 3, p22; Musnad, vol 4, p63; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pl186
Undaunted by the persecution of the Quraysh, the Prophet continued preaching Islam. Uthbah ibn Rab'ah, one the prominent leaders of Makkah approached the Prophet with several offers, viz., leadership of Makkah, marriage with any lady of his choice in Makkah, or inordinate wealth in return for giving up his mission. Naturally, the Prophet refused all these offers.¹

The Companions of the Prophet, too, did not escape persecution. As Islam gradually spread the Prophet and his leading companions faced increasing resistance from the Quraysh whose wrath and anger fell heavily on those helpless persons who had no protectors and helpers.² Among them were slaves, some strangers who had migrated to Makkah and persons belonging to tribes who were weak and had no influence and status. These helpless Muslims were beaten and subjected to all sorts of torture and humiliation.³

1. Sirah, vol 1, pp 293-294

2. ibid, pp 317-321

3. Sirah, vol 1, p205; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1179 and 1181; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt 1, pp 162, 164-166

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There were several reasons for the negative response of the Quraysh to the Prophet's mission. To begin with, they were incensed by the Prophet's denunciation of idolatry. For ages they had looked upon their idols to administer to their needs. They were naturally offended by Islam which hit at their ancestral beliefs and customs.\(^1\) Many influential Quraysh leaders were guilty of the worst type of immoralities.\(^2\) When the Prophet severely condemned their immoral habits, they felt that he was waging a personal vendetta against them. The Quraysh also feared the destruction of their power, prestige and influence as Islam was gaining ground. They were seriously concerned about losing their position of leadership to the Prophet.

Furthermore, the Quraysh had developed a natural hatred for the Christians ever since Abrahah, the Christian ruler of Yemen, had come to demolish the Ka'bah.\(^3\) As they felt that certain things were common to Islam and Christianity, this led them to believe that the Prophet wanted to establish some form of Christianity.

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1. See Qur'an, 21:98; Tārikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1174-1178

2. See Qur'an, 68: 10-14

3. see f.n.1, Chapter Two, p23
Their hostility to him on this ground is, therefore quite understandable.

Finally, there was a great deal of rivalry between the two leading branches of the Quraysh, the Banû Hâshim and Banû Ummayyah for leadership of the Quraysh tribe. Since the Prophet belonged to the Banû Hâshim, the Banû Ummayyah were among his staunchest opponents as they believed that Muḥammad's claim to prophethood was intended to establish the dominance of the Banû Hâshim.

To escape these indignities and intolerable persecutions the Prophet advised them to migrate to Abyssinia which was then a Christian kingdom ruled by a Christian ruler who was known for his justice and equity. In the fifth year of Prophethood a small number of Muslims migrated to Abyssinia where owing to the protection of Najâshî they lived in peace and security. The Quraysh then sent two envoys to the king with a request for the repatriation of the emigrants. However, after listening to the

1. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

2. The Arabs used to call him "Najâshî" (Negus in English) which means a king in the Abyssinian language.

3. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 321-322; Târîkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1181, 1183
brief description of Islam by the Prophet's cousin, Ja'far ibn Abí Tālib, he refused to extradite the Muslims and assured them of his full protection.¹

When these Muslim emigrants heard that Muslims in Makkah had become secure against the attacks of the Quraysh, most of them decided to return to Makkah. When they were near the city, they came to know that the report was false. Some of them returned to Abyssinia and others entered Makkah secretly.² The Quraysh now began to persecute even more severely those persons who had returned from Abyssinia. So they had to migrate to Abyssinia again, this time in greater numbers. This larger group lived in Abyssinia until the Prophet's migration to Yathrib when they eventually joined him again.³

In the sixth year of the Prophet's mission, 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb, one of the strongest opponents of Islam declared his conversion to Islam.⁴ The conversion of 'Umar changed the situation all at

1. Sīrah, vol 1, pp 333-337; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, p1189
2. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, p1194; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1 p138
3. Tabaqāt ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 138-139; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī S 1, p1198

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once. He proclaimed Islam openly. The Quraysh put pressure on him, but he faced it with firmness, and ultimately he was able to offer prayers near the Ka'bah along with other Muslims. Until then the Muslims did not pray openly near the Ka'bah for fear of persecution and torture by the Quraysh.¹

The Quraysh, having failed to check the onward march of Islam, now sought a new strategy; they agreed among themselves to a written pact in which they resolved to boycott Banû Hâshim (the tribe to which the Prophet belonged) completely, prevent any intermarriage with them and stop all commercial relations.² Consequently the Prophet and the whole of Banû Hâshim were confined within a valley known as the Shi'b Abî Ṭâlib at some distance from Makkah. For about three years they suffered great hardships.³

Ultimately their enemies themselves felt pity for them and proposed to annul the agreement. This brought an end to the siege and the Prophet and his family - the Banû Hâshim - were permitted to return to their homes.⁴

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1. Sirah, vol 1, p342; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 3, p193
2. Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 139-140; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1189; Sirah, vol 1, pp 350-351, 375-376
3. For details see al-Suhayli, al-Rawd al-Unuf, Cairo, 1972, vol 2, p127
4. Sirah, vol 1, pp 374-37; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1196-1198; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p141
Not long after the end of the boycott the Prophet lost his uncle and protector, Abū Tālib, as well as his faithful wife and helpmate Khadijah. Soon thereafter the Quraysh became more cruel and merciless in their persecution of the Prophet. Having despaired of the people of Makkah the Prophet decided to go to Ta'if to preach Islam. For several days he stayed there inviting the people to Islam, but to no purpose. Not only did they repudiate his call but ridiculed him, pelted him with stones and obliged him to flee from the city.

When the Quraysh came to know about this expedition they increased their hostilities to the Prophet. Nothing, however, could dissuade him from continuing his call. At every season, whenever the tribes of Arabia came to Makkah to perform pilgrimage, he approached them and preached Islam among them.

The Prophet also attended fairs held at different places in Arabia, where tribes from different regions assembled. Here he appealed to the people to give up idolatry and accept the sovereignty of Allah. It is reasonable to expect that since the Prophet and his followers were being subjected to relentless

1. Sirah, vol 1, p418; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, pl1; vol 1, pt 1, p141; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S-1, pl199
2. Sirah, vol 1, p419; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1199-1200; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 141-142
3. Sirah, vol 1, p423; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1204-1206; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p145
persecution at the hands of the Quraysh in Makkah, he was hoping for an opening in some other quarter where his call might receive a more favourable response. It was on one of these occasions in the tenth year of his prophethood that the Prophet met a group of the Khazraj tribe of Yathrib. They responded favourably to his invitation to embrace Islam. One reason for this is that the Jews of Yathrib used to threaten them and the Aws - the other Arab tribe of Yathrib - that soon a Prophet would arise among the Arabs who would destroy them and ally himself to the Jews. The group, after listening to the Prophet, decided to acclaim him before the Jews did.

In the following year twelve men from both the Aws and Khazraj tribes came from Yathrib and entered into an alliance with the Prophet known as the "first convenant of al-'Aqabah" when they took a pledge called "Bay'at al-Nisā'" (Pledge of Women). This convenant was very significant in that if the Prophet succeeded in uniting the Aws and Khazraj tribes, who were avowed enemies of each other and fought many battles against each other, it would

1. This was the original name of Madīnah; it came to be known as Madīnat al-Nabī (the city of the Prophet) on his settling here after his migration, and later became simply Madīnah
2. Sīrah, vol 1, pp 428-429; Tārikh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1209-1210; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 146-147
3. Tārikh al-Tabarī, S 1, p1210; Sīrah, vol 1, pp 428-429
4. Sīrah, vol 1, p431; Tārikh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1211-1213; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 147-148

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establish him in a very strong position in Arabia. After this convenant, Islam spread rapidly in Yathrib.¹

A year later (622 C.E.) seventy two persons from among those who came to perform the pilgrimage from Yathrib met the Prophet secretly at night. They concluded a pact with the Prophet - known as the "second convenant of 'Aqabah" when they took a pledge called "Bay'at al-Ḥarb" (Pledge of War) in which they undertook to protect the Prophet from his enemies if he chose to migrate to Madīnah.² This was indeed a master stroke of the Prophet for apart from concluding an alliance by which the Muslims would help one another to prevent as well as repel injury and aggression, migration to Madīnah would afford the Muslims a measure of peace and security against the evil designs of the Quraysh. Furthermore, Madīnah lay on the trade route of the Quraysh to Syria. The choice of Madīnah was, therefore, very strategic. The Muslims would be in a position to cut off the trade route of the Quraysh. Since the Quraysh were essentially traders it was vital for them to ensure that the trade route remained open.

Subsequently, the Prophet ordered his Companions to migrate to Yathrib. When the Quraysh came to know of this it increased their hostility still further. Migration to Yathrib would render

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¹. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1216-1217; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt 1, p83
². Sirah, vol 1, p454; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1217-1220; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p149
the Muslims safe against attack and give them freedom to practise their new faith, to preach it to others, and to welcome new "converts" under their protection. The Quraysh now renewed their persecution and wherever they had the power, they sought either to force the Muslims to recant, or to prevent their escape by confining them. The Muslims, nonetheless, continued migrating secretly and gradually most of them left Makkah.¹

When the Quraysh saw that a large number of Muslims had escaped their clutches they convened a general meeting and decided to kill the Prophet.²

The Quraysh feared that even if they were to succeed in keeping the Prophet in Makkah, they were still exposed to the danger of being attacked by the people of Yathrib in defence of their Prophet. On the other hand, if they allowed the Prophet to migrate to Yathrib who could predict what the situation would turn out to be throughout the Arabian peninsula if the tribes of Aws and Khazraj became united under his leadership? The Quraysh were apprehensive that the people of Yathrib, under the leadership of the Prophet, might seek to attack Makkah or at least, cut

1. Sirah, vol 1, pp 468-471; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1224-1228; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p152
2. Sirah, vol 1, pp 480-482; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1229-1231; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p153

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their trade route to Syria. Hence, they decided to kill the Prophet. The Quraysh expected that after his death, his cause would soon be buried and forgotten and that those who migrated to Yathrib would return to their tribe, their former religion and their "gods", and that the Quraysh would once more resume their leadership which they had lost to the Prophet.

However, the Prophet came to know of the intentions of the Quraysh and set out for Yathrib unharmed.\(^1\) Despite their determination to prevent him from leaving Makkah and their efforts to capture him\(^2\), the Prophet reached Yathrib safely.

The Quraysh, mortified at the "escape" of the Prophet and his Companions from Makkah began to make preparations on a large scale for an all out attack on Madīnah. They were convinced that unless the Muslims were dislodged from Madīnah and the trade route to Syria secured again, the future would continue to be threatening and victory of the Prophet would be a most disturbing possibility.

In the meanwhile the Prophet came to know that the Quraysh were making preparations to attack Madīnah to wrest control of the

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1. Sirah, vol 1, pp 482-485; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1232-1236; Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'īd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 153 ff
2. Sirah, vol 1, p486; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pl239
city from his hands in order to protect the trade route. They had written a letter to 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy\(^1\) warning him to either kill or drive the Prophet out of Madīnah, else they would destroy Madīnah as punishment for having given asylum to the Prophet and his Companions from Makkah.\(^2\) The Quraysh regarded the granting of refuge to the Prophet, their enemy, as an act of hostility on the part of the Ansār. Therefore, the Prophet had to devise a plan to protect himself and his followers. To meet this threat he took two measures. The first was to close the trade route to Syria with a view to force the Quraysh to make peace. The second was to conclude pacts for peace with the neighbouring tribes. This eventually led to a series of battles between the Quraysh and the Muslims of Madīnah. Despite their efforts, however, the Quraysh failed to defeat the Muslims. Finally, the Prophet and his Companions marched on Makkah and conquered it in 8 A.H./630 C.E. This signalled an end to the hostilities between the two parties and the Quraysh then embraced Islam en-masse.

The details of these incidents and events will be discussed in the next chapter as Abū Sufyān became the focal point of opposition to the Prophet, especially after the Battle of Badr.

1. He was the chief of the Aws tribe before the migration of the Muslims to Madīnah and was to be elected as the "king" of the city when the arrival of the Prophet put paid to all his hopes. He later pretended to accept Islam but in reality was an arch enemy of the Muslims. He became the leader of the "Munāfiqūn" (Hypocrites) in Madīnah.

2. Širah, vol 1, p448; al-Muḥabbār, p271
CHAPTER 4

ABU SUFYAN'S OPPOSITION TO THE PROPHET OF ISLAM

A. FROM THE ADVENT OF PROPHETHOOD TO BADR

Journey with Umayyah ibn Abi Salt to Syria

The Arabs in general were familiar with the idea of an expected Prophet through Jewish and Christian traditions. Umayyah ibn Abi Salt al-Thaqafi, a tribal chief and famous poet of Ta'if, was one of those who predicted the rise of a Prophet among the Arabs through his reading of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.¹

At the time of Muḥammad's announcement of his prophethood Abū Sufyān was away on a trade journey to Syria and Umayyah ibn Abi Salt was with him. In one of the villages of Syria a Christian informed him that a Prophet had appeared among the people of Makkah.² When Umayyah mentioned this to Abū Sufyān the latter asked him for a description of the Prophet. Umayyah thereupon proceeded to describe some qualities of the awaited Prophet, as well as the general earthquake which was to herald the advent of

1. al-Ma'ārif, p60
the Prophet. On hearing that the Prophet would be a young man, Abū Sufyān's immediate response was that if God did send a prophet he would be an old and noble man.¹

This reaction of Abū Sufyān indicates that the Arabs had some vague criteria of prophethood which included possession of wealth, social status and seniority in age. Apart from the other reasons for the Quraysh opposition to the Prophet discussed in chapter three they also objected to him because he possessed neither wealth nor position of eminence in his native city, and was a comparatively young man, whilst there were several senior men with wealth and status in Makkah and Ṭā'if.²

It is not surprising, therefore, that Umayyah ibn Abī Ṣalṭ then asked Abū Sufyān the following questions: who was the noblest man in Makkah? who was the wealthiest man in Makkah?, and, who was the most senior in age? To each question Abū Sufyān replied: 'Utbah ibn Rabī'ah.³ This explains why when Abū Sufyān returned

1. al-Bidayah, vol 2, pp 222-223; Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah, vol 1, p470; Ma'ruf al-Arnawut, Sayyid Quraysh, 3rd ed; Dār al Kalam, Beirut, 1971, vol 1, pp 11-17
2. See Qur'ān, 6:53; 11:27; 25:41; 43:31
3. he was the chief of Makkah and father-in-law of Abū Sufyān Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah, vol 1, p470
to Makkah a few months later from a trade journey to Yemen and was informed by his wife, Hind, that Muḥammad (S.A.W.S.) had claimed to be a Messenger of Allah, he was completely taken aback and incredulously retorted "this man is false". This shows that it was inconceivable for Abū Sufyān - as it was for other Quraysh leaders - that Muḥammad (S.A.W.S.) could be a Prophet since he did not possess the necessary "qualifications" from their point of view.

Soon thereafter Abū Sufyān left again for Yemen for trade. On the way he called on Umayyah ibn Abī Ṣalṭ to inform him that the Prophet had made his appearance in Makkah and that he was Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh. When Umayyah acknowledged that Muḥammad (S.A.W.S.) fitted the description of the awaited Prophet and advised Abū Sufyān to follow him, Abū Sufyān asked him what prevented him from following the Prophet in that case. Umayyah replied that he feared the taunting of the women of his tribe as he had told them that he was the expected Prophet. Furthermore, he was not prepared to accept anyone other than a member of his own tribe - Banū Thaqīf - as a Prophet. What this indicates is that Abū Sufyān was anxious and eager to know how others reacted to Muḥammad's claim to prophethood.

1. This is an abbreviation of the Arabic "ṣallallāhu alayhi wa sallam" meaning, "may Allah bless him and grant (him) peace"

2. al-Bidāyah, vol 2, p223; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 6, pp 395-396

3. al-Bidāyah, vol 2, pp 223-224
When Abū Sufyān returned to Makkah and saw that the Prophet's companions were being assulted and humiliated on account of their acceptance of Islam he said to himself: "Where is his army of angels?"¹ This thought crossed his mind because in his description of the Prophet to Abū Sufyān, Umayyah had mentioned that most of the Prophet's army consisted of angels. This shows that Abū Sufyān was comparing Muhammad (S.A.W.S.) with Umayyah's description of the awaited Prophet.

Journey with al-'Abbas to Yemen

On one of his trade journeys to Yemen, Abū Sufyān accosted al-'Abbas, the Prophet's paternal uncle who was travelling with him, about his nephew's claim to prophethood. Apparently al-'Abbas had been away on trade when Muhammad (S.A.W.S.) announced his prophethood and had not heard of it as yet. When he denied any knowledge of this claim, Abū Sufyān produced a letter addressed to him from his son, Hanzalah, informing him that Muhammad (S.A.W.S.) had announced publicly that he was the Messenger of Allah and was inviting the Makkans openly to Islam. When al-'Abbas said that he found his nephew to be honest and truthful, Abū Sufyān cautioned him against making a hasty judgement. Abū Sufyān said that whilst the family of 'Abd al-Muttalib (father of al-'Abbas and grand-father of the Prophet) had experienced both fortune and misfortune, this claim to prophethood in the view of the Quraysh would prove to be a misfortune for them. Al-'Abbas

¹. al-Bidāyah, vol 2, p223
replied that it might, in fact, be a blessing for them.1

Abū Sufyān was here perhaps alluding to the power and influence wielded by 'Abd al-Muttalib which had made his family prominent at that time in Makkah and the subsequent loss of their prominence and influence after his death. Abū Sufyān's family, the Umayyads, thereafter gained prominence. Abū Sufyān probably expected that Muhammad's claim to prophethood would be rejected by the Quraysh in general, thereby reducing the influence of the Banū al-Muttalib even further. Al-'Abbās, obviously, thought otherwise.

At the same time Abū Sufyān's cautioning of al-'Abbās could reflect a sense of anxiety and concern on his part for the future of the Umayyad family. For they could stand to lose their influence if Muhammad's claim to prophethood was accepted and confirmed by the people of Makkah, especially by his close companions like al-'Abbās.

A few days later while they were still in Yemen, 'Abd Allāh ibn Hudhafah, who had accepted Islam, arrived in Yemen. The news of his arrival spread quickly among the people of Yemen. It so happened that Abū Sufyān was present at a meeting addressed by one of the rabbis of the Jews. When the rabbi asked him for more information about the Prophet, he replied that though he did not wish to denounce Muḥammad (S.A.W.S), he did not accept Muḥammad's

1. al-Iṣbahānī, Kitāb al-Aghānī, Costatasumas, Cairo, 1925, vol 6, p350
claim to prophethood because there were others who were better than him.¹ This proves again that in Abū Sufyān's eyes, Muhammad (S.A.W.S.) did not "deserve" to be a Prophet, because he did not fulfil the requirements which he and other Arabs had in mind.

On the following day Abū Sufyān and al-'Abbās both attended the session of the Jews. This time al-'Abbās answered the rabbi's questions about the Prophet - whether he was honest and truthful, and whether he was literate. When al-'Abbās informed him that the Prophet was known as "al-Amīn" (the trustworthy) by the Quraysh, and that he could not write, the rabbi exclaimed that this was the end of the Jews. Later, al-'Abbās asked Abū Sufyān whether he was now willing to believe in the Prophet after having witnessed the rabbi's reaction. Abū Sufyān replied that he would not believe in him till he saw horses emerging from Kada'.² When al-'Abbās asked him what he meant by that he said that horses never entered Makkah from the direction of Kada'.³ This seems to imply that the acceptance of Islam was the furthest thing from his mind at the moment.

1. al-Aghānī, vol 6, p350

2. A mountain in the upper region of Makkah from where the Prophet entered Makkah at its conquest in 8. A.H./630 C.E.

3. al-Aghānī, vol 6, p351

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Abū Sufyān, Abū Jahl and the Prophet

One day when the Prophet was passing Abū Sufyān and Abū Jahl in Makkah the latter remarked that it was strange that a young man instead of one of the elders should emerge as a prophet. Abū Sufyān observed that the Prophet was from among those who were lower than them in status. The Prophet, who overheard their remarks, came up to them and warned Abū Jahl that while he might find it a cause for laughter now, he would find it a cause for weeping later. As for Abū Sufyān, the Prophet remarked, he had not become angered at Allah or at his Messengers, but at the ancestry of the Prophet.¹ This indicates that the Prophet was well aware that Abū Sufyān's refusal to accept his prophethood was primarily because he did not belong to the Umayyad family, who in Abū Sufyān's eyes, were the noblest among the Quraysh.² Had the Prophet been an Umayyad, Abū Sufyān would have probably found it much easier to accept him.

Fear of Loss of Status

We have mentioned in chapter three that one of the reasons for the opposition to the Prophet by the Quraysh leaders was their fear that they would lose their influence and authority to him.

² cf Abū Sufyān's conversation with Umayyah ibn Abī Šālt earlier in this Chapter 74
once he was accepted by the generality of the people. Abū Sufyān shared this fear of the Quraysh leaders and told the Prophet frankly that though he had known him to be honest and truthful, he had to oppose him because Islam would put an end to distinction based on noble rank and with that his own status will also disappear.¹

This fear of loss of prestige was certainly uppermost in Abū Sufyān's mind. That is why when he learnt that Khalid ibn Sa'id ibn al-'Ās² had accepted Islam he said to him, "you have destroyed your noble rank."³

Tribal Rivalry

Another matter which disturbed all the Quraysh leaders including Abū Sufyān was the tribal rivalry (alluded to in the previous chapter) which was the norm of tribal life in the Arabian peninsula before Islam. Accordingly, there was an age-long rivalry between Abū Sufyān's tribe, the Banū Umayyah, and the Prophet's

1. Ansāb al-Ashrāf, vol 4A, p9
2. He was among the Muslims who migrated to Abyssinia. There he contracted the Prophet's marriage to Umm Habibah. He also acted as the mediator between the Prophet and the Banū Thaqīf tribe when the latter embraced Islam.
tribe, the Banû Hâshim - the two leading tribes of the Quraysh. Although historians generally claim that there was a special rivalry between the two, this does not seem to be the case as is evident from the following facts: Abû Sufyân's brother, al-\~Harith, was married to the Prophet's paternal aunt, Safiyyah, and his sister Umm Jamîl was married to the Prophet's paternal uncle, Abû Lahab, as we have noted earlier; the Prophet's paternal uncle was a bosom friend of Abû Sufyân, one of the Prophet's greatest opponents was his own paternal uncle, Abû Lahab, etc. Had any person other than a Hâshimite claimed the prophethood, the Quraysh leaders in general would have opposed him too because the rank of prophethood was the most high and prestigious rank even among the pagan Arabs. As we will see later, the Quraysh at one stage did offer the Prophet the position of the ruler of Makkah. Had the Prophet accepted it, the matter would have ended there. Thus, it was not any special rivalry between them. It was a normal rivalry which existed between the various tribes in that tribal society.

The rivalry between the Banû Umayyah and the Banû Hâshim can be traced back to the distant ancestor of the Quraysh, Qusayy ibn Kilâb who had attained great fame and prominence as the custodian of the Ka'bah. At the time of Qusayy's death, his son, 'Abd Manâf, secured the leadership of the Quraysh and Hâshim, the son

1. Sirah, vol 1, pp 124, 130; Târikh al-\~Tabari, S 1, pp 1089-1090; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 37, 39
2. Sirah, vol 1, p132; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p42

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of 'Abd Manāf, assumed the custodianship of the Ka'bah. It was, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the son of Hāshim, who, by his seniority and influence, had made the Hāshimites supreme. On his death, however, there was none among them to command such influence. As a result, the leadership of the Quraysh passed on to Abū Sufyān's father, Harb ibn Umayyah, who was the grandson of 'Abd Shams, the brother of Hāshim. This meant that the Umayyads now enjoyed dominance over the Hāshimites.

When the mantle of prophethood fell on Muḥammad (S.A.W.S.) the Banū Umayyah realised that this would restore the honour and prestige of the Banū Hāshim. This became one of the reasons for their opposition to the Prophet. Though Abū Sufyān did not succeed to the office of his father, he was, nonetheless, the chief of the Banū Umayyah. In the light of the above, his opposition to the Prophet is understandable. Any other leader in his position would have acted in the same way.

This explains why Abū Sufyān severely rebuked 'Uthmān ibn

1. Sirah, vol 1, p135; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p44
2. Sirah, vol 1, p142; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 48, 51
3. al-Muḥabbar, p165
4. Tabaqāt ibn Sa'd, vol 4, pt 1, p12
'Affān 1 a member of the Umayyad family for accepting Islam 2.

As for Abū Sufyān's personal regard for the Prophet there were occasions when Abū Sufyān showed great respect toward the Prophet. Once when he was returning with his wife, Hind, and his son, Mu'āwiyyah, from Syria he met the Prophet, who was on foot, near Makkah. He instructed Mu'āwiyyah to dismount and let the Prophet ride. When Hind protested, Abū Sufyān said, "yes, he (viz., the Prophet) is better than you, me and your son". On hearing that the Prophet requested them to

1. 'Uthmān held a position of dignity and honour in Makkan society. Therefore, the Quraysh leaders were furious when he embraced Islam. As a result of the subsequent persecution, he migrated to Abyssinia with his wife, Ruqayyah, daughter of the Prophet. When she died in Madīnah after the migration of the Muslims to Madīnah, he married Umm Kulthūm, another daughter of the Prophet. He later became the third Caliph of Islam (Tabaqāt ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt 1, pp 37 - 29)

2. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, p7
accept Islam.1 Though neither Abū Sufyān nor Hind acceded to his request, this incident illustrates that Abū Sufyān did have respect and a soft spot for the Prophet but at the same time was hesitant to recognise him as the Prophet.

Beginning of Active Opposition

Nonetheless, when the Quraysh leaders went to see Abū Ṭālib, the Prophet's paternal uncle and guardian, to seek his help in preventing his nephew from continuing his mission, Abū Sufyān was among them.2 This shows that despite his personal respect for the Prophet, where it involved the Prophet's mission, Abū Sufyān was as opposed to it as any of the other Quraysh leaders. That is why he was again amongst the Quraysh leaders when they decided to confront the Prophet directly and try to draw him into an argument which would give them a pretext to act against him.3

The recitation of the Qur'ān was so attractive to the Arabs that even those who did not believe in it, used to enjoy listening to it.4 One night Abū Sufyān decided to go and listen to the Prop-

1. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, p7
2. Sirah, vol 1, pp 264-265
3. ibid, p295
4. see Qur'ān, 17:47
het reciting the Qur'ān at home. He spent the whole night listening to him. Unknown to him, Abū Jahl and al-Akhnas ibn Shāriq were also doing the same thing. As they departed for home they bumped into each other unexpectedly and chided each other for what they had done. They then undertook not to return for fear of being spotted by one of their rank and file.¹

However, on the following night all three returned separately, without telling each other, to listen to the Prophet and again met each other in the morning on the way home. They repeated their undertaking not to return, but the same thing happened on the third night as well. This time they gave a firm promise to each other not to come back. Later, al-Akhnas visited Abū Sufyān at home to ask him for his opinion about what they had heard the Prophet reciting. Abū Sufyān replied that while there were things which he knew and understood, there were also things which he neither knew nor understood.² In contrast to this when Abū Jahl was asked for his opinion he said that he would never believe in the Prophet.³

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¹ The Quraysh had often requested the Prophet not to read the Qur'ān loudly because they feared the effect it would have on the youth. That is why they prevented the youth from listening to the Qur'ān.

² Sirah, vol 1, pp 315-316

³ ibid, p316
Abū Sufyān's response here indicates that unlike other leaders of the Quraysh like Abū Jahl who simply dismissed the message of the Qur'ān, he was at least prepared to reflect on what he had heard. It could be reasonably surmised from this that Abū Sufyān was not inherently hostile toward Islam but opposed it nonetheless because of his loyalty to the Quraysh tribe.

On another occasion some of the Quraysh leaders who used to listen to the Prophet's recitation of the Qur'ān were discussing the Prophet. Abū Jahl said that the Prophet was possessed. Abū Lahab accused him of being a sorcerer. Huwaytib ibn 'Abd al'Uzza called him a poet.¹ Al-Nadr ibn al-Ḥārith said that he did not understand what Muḥammad was saying though he saw his lips moving. Abū Sufyān's reaction was: "I do not regard some of what he says as true".² Here again we note that Abū Sufyān was certainly less hostile than the other Quraysh leaders.

This might explain why, in spite of Abū Sufyān's opposition to the Prophet, his name is not mentioned among those who were known to be most vehement in their enmity and hostility against the

1. cf Qur'ān, 68:51; 10:2; 52:30; 21:5

2. Nawawi, Marāh Libid, Dar Iḥyā al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, Cairo, 1376 A.H., vol 1, p488
Prophet and the Muslims. Rather, Abū Sufyān is said to have been one of those leaders who were not as cruel and tyrannical as the other chief of the Quraysh.\footnote{1} Despite this, however, his opposition was no less than the others.

As mentioned in chapter three, after the Prophet's wife, Khadijah, and his uncle and mentor, Abū Tālib had died the Quraysh had become bolder in their persecution of the Prophet. When the Quraysh chiefs and leaders had finally decided to kill the Prophet, Abū Sufyān was also present at the Dār al-Nadwah (Council Chamber).\footnote{2} This shows that Abū Sufyān went along with the Quraysh in all their decisions, including such a momentous decision as killing the Prophet. Abū Sufyān had hardly any choice. He had to go along with his colleagues otherwise he would have lost his position. It is as well to note that several noted commentators of the Qur'ān have included Abū Sufyān among the "a'immat al-kufr" (leaders of disbelief) mentioned in the Qur'ān\footnote{3} for his role in the opposition to Islam after Badr.

\footnotesize

1. Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 133-134; al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, vol 2, p76
2. Sirah, vol 1, pp 480-482; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, sl, pp 1229-1231

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After the Prophet had managed to elude the Quraysh and reached Madinah safely, Abū Sufyān wrote to the people of Madinah protesting against their granting of refuge and shelter to Muhammad (S.A.W.S.), the enemy of the Quraysh.¹ This alerted the Prophet to the dangers posed by the Quraysh to the Muslims even in Madinah as was mentioned in chapter three.

In chapter three we also discussed the fear of the Quraysh that the Muslims in Madinah would cut off their trade route to Syria as this trade route passed near Madinah which was now in the hands of the Muslims.² The Prophet fully realized that the Quraysh would do everything in their power to wrest the control of Madinah from the Muslims. He, therefore, expected the Quraysh to attack Madinah at any time.

**Events leading to the Battle of Badr³**

The Prophet’s fear proved true and soon the outskirts of Madinah

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1. *al-Muhābbar*, p271; *Sirah*, vol 1, p448

2. *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, vol 3, p53

3. Badr was a village at a distance of about 80 miles from Madinah
was attacked by Kurz ibn Jâbir from Makkah.\textsuperscript{1} This alerted the Prophet and he now started sending reconnaissance parties to gather information about the Quraysh. The Kurz incident was a very serious one. The Quraysh also instigated the Arab tribes to be hostile to Islam.\textsuperscript{2}

In the eight month after the Hijrah (migration to Madinah) the Prophet sent a reconnaissance party under the command of 'Ubaydah ibn al-Hârith ibn al-Mu'talib to Râbigh which was on the route to Makkah. This expedition came across Abû Sufyân and his party at Ḥyâ in the valley of Râbigh. Though a light skirmish took place between the two parties, the Makkans quickly dispersed and went their way.\textsuperscript{3}

The Quraysh were, nonetheless, seeking an opportunity to attack Madînah as their trade route was now at the mercy of the Muslims. Ever since the Muslims has migrated to Madînah the Quraysh left no stone unturned in their efforts to dislodge the Muslims from Madînah. Abû Sufyân's letter threatening to attack Madînah for

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{1} Tarîkh al-Tabâri, S 1, p1269
\item\textsuperscript{2} Sirâh, vol 2, p560
\item\textsuperscript{3} al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p10; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p2
\end{itemize}
granting asylum to the Prophet has already been mentioned above. The Quraysh also threatened to kill Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, the chief of the 'Aws tribe of Madīnah when he came to Makkah for pilgrimage.¹

This intense enmity and hatred of the Quraysh was inflamed when the sariyyah under the command of 'Abd Allah ibn Jahsh - sent by the Prophet to gather information about the movements of the Quraysh - became involved in a skirmish with a small caravan of the Quaysh in which 'Amr ibn al-Hadramî was killed and two of his colleagues were taken as captives. This incident caused to incite the entire tribe of the Quraysh who demanded vengeance from the Muslims.²

The killing of 'Amr ibn al-Hadramî was, in fact, one of the main causes of the first major battle between the Muslims and the Quraysh, viz., the Battle of Badr in 2 A.H./624 C.E.³ Just about the same time Abū Suṭyān became party to the events leading to the battle. He was returning from Syria with a trade caravan when the rumour reached him that the Muslims were preparing to plunder the caravan. As he approached Madīnah he questioned all

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1. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol 3, p53
2. Tārīkh al-Tabarî, S1, pp 1273-1279; Tabaqāt ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt 1, p284
3. Tārīkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1284; Sirah, vol 1, p622
the riders he met on the way. When one of them informed him that
the Prophet was mobilizing his Companions against him he sent
Damdam ibn 'Amr al-Ghifārī to Makkah informing the Quraysh about
the situation, and seeking their assistance to protect the
caravan.

When Damdam reached Makkah he warned the Quraysh that the Muslims
were heading for Abū Sufyān's caravan. Immediately the Quraysh
prepared an army and proceeded towards Madīnah in order to
protect the caravan.¹ When the Muslims in Madīnah heard that the
Quraysh were marching with a formidable army the Prophet set out
with his men to meet the Quraysh army. The two armies met at
Badr.²

When Abū Sufyān arrived at Badr he asked Majdī ibn 'Amr al-Juhānī
- who was guarding the water of the well of Badr—whether he
noticed anyone in the vicinity. Majdī told him about Basbas ibn
al-Juhānī and 'Adī ibn Abī al-Zaghbā'—whom the Prophet had sent
before his arrival to gather information at Badr. Abū Sufyān
picked up the camel dung from the spot where they had stood and
crumbled it. He recognised the fodder as that of Yathrib (al-

¹ Sirah, vol 1, pp 607, 609; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1292, 1295; al-Maghāzī, vol 1, p31; Tabaqāt ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p7
² Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1288-1289; Musnad, vol 1, p117
see also Qur'ān 8:7-8
Madinah), and quickly departed from there.² No doubt Abū Ṣufyān must have concluded that the Prophet was intending to intercept his caravan.

Abū Ṣufyān, fearing interception, did not take the normal route back to Madīnah but kept close to the coast. When he realized that the caravan was safe, he sent a message to the Quraysh asking them to return to Madīnah as their men and goods were secure. But they refused to heed his call. Abū Jahl spurred them on.² This indicates that Abū Ṣufyān was concerned only with the safety of his caravan when he requested for help from the Quraysh and was not seeking an armed confrontation. The Quraysh's refusal to withdraw resulted in the Battle of Badr which ended in defeat for the Makkans. They lost seventy men on the battlefield and seventy were taken as captives by the Muslims.³

Impact of Quraysh defeat on Abū Ṣufyān

Inspite of the fact that Abū Ṣufyān was not present at the Battle of Badr he also felt the humiliation of the defeat. Many of his close companions as well as some of his kith and kin, including his son, Hanzalah; father-in-law, 'Utbah; brother-in-law,

1. Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, pp 617-618; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, vol 3, p1305; al-Maghāzī, vol 1, pp 40-41; Sahīh Muslim, vol 3, p1510
2. Sirah, vol 1, p618; Al-Maghāzī, vol 1, p43; Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa'd vol 2, pt 1, p7; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1306-1307
3. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p11, al-Maghāzī, vol 1, pp 93, 96

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MAP OF THE BATTLEFIELD OF BADR

LEGEND
1. MODERN FORT
2. BADR TOWN
3. DATE PALM GROVE
4. MOSQUE OF 'ARISH
5. PRIVATE HUTS
6. PUBLIC CEMETERY
7. MARTYRS' CEMETERY

SCALE
0 1 2 3 4 KILOMETRES

Road to Mecca

Road to Medina
Caravan of 'Amr b. Al-Aas

Red Sea

NORTH

Coronation of 'Ubayd Allah

Courtesy: Hamidullah, Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad
Walid and 'Utbah's brother - Shaybah, had been killed in the Battle. This naturally infuriated him and his remark, "a day for the day of Badr and war has alternate success" shows that he was contemplating revenge. He undertook not to anoint his head or enjoy the company of women until he had taken his revenge on the Prophet and his Companions.

When the Quraysh army returned defeated from the battle with feelings of despondence and dejection Abū Sufyān urged them not to mourn for their dead, but to display courage and strength. They might yet avenge their defeat.

The above reflects a transformation in Abū Sufyān's attitude toward the Muslims. Although he opposed the Prophet and went along with the Quraysh in all their decisions before the Battle of Badr, this was more due to tribal loyalty than to personal enmity as

1. Sirah, vol 1, pp 708-709; Tabaqāt ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p11; Al-Maghāzī, vol 1, p148
2. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol 3, p60
3. Sirah, vol 2, p44; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1364-1365; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p20; al-Maghāzī, vol 1, p121
4. al-Maghāzī, vol 1, p121
mentioned earlier in this chapter. That is why he sometime showed a kind of reluctance and hesitation to confront the Muslims - first at Râbih, then at Badr. However, after he was appointed as the chief of the Quraysh when most persons of status and rank among the Quraysh had lost their lives at Badr,¹ he became intensely hostile toward the Prophet and his Companions.

B. FROM BADR TO KHANDAQ

Henceforth Abû Sufyân led the opposition to the Muslims and led the Quraysh in the subsequent expeditions and battles against the Muslims. When some Muslims who had remained behind in Makkah at the time of the Migration decided to join the Muslims in Madînah,² Abû Syfyan and his men pursued them. When they caught up with them, they brought them back to Makkah and imprisoned them and persecuted them.³ Following upon this the Muhâjirûn (Emigrants) in Madinah wrote to the Muslims in Makkah informing them about the revelation of a verse chastising those Makkan Mus-


2. This was in response to the revelation of verses chastising them for not migrating despite being in a position to do so and promising them refuge and reward from Allah if they left Makkah (Qur'ân, 4:97-100; see Tafsîr al-Tabarî, vol 4, pt 5, pp 151-153)

3. al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p73
lims whose faith had weakened in the face of persecution and oppression.¹ Thereupon the Makkan Muslims set out again for Madīnah, and again Abū Sufyān and his men pursued them. Though some Muslims managed to escape others were captured and severely persecuted and tortured.² This shows a definite change in Abū Sufyān’s attitude toward the Muslims.

Abū Sufyān’s animosity toward the Muslims after the Quraysh defeat at Badr became so intense that he refused to pay ransom for his son ‘Amr, who was one of the captives of Badr in the hands of the Muslims.³ Besides, he did not wish to humiliate himself further by offering ransom to the Prophet, his enemy.

However, when Sa’d ibn Nu’mān ibn Akkāl, an elderly Muslim went to Makkah for pilgrimage, Abū Sufyān detained him in retaliation for his captive son. Then Abū Sufyān challenged Sa’d’s family to try to release him from his detention.⁴ Consequently, they approached the Prophet and requested him to release ‘Amr in exchange to Sa’d. The Prophet agreed and the exchange was made.⁵

1. Qur‘ān, 29:10
2. al-Maghāzī, vol 1, p74; Tafsīr al-Tabarī, vol 10, pt 20, pp 85-86
3. Sīrah, vol 1, p650; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, p1345; al-Maghāzī, vol 1, pp 129-130; al-Ma‘ārif, p344
4. see Appendix A (b) for text of poem
5. Sīrah, vol 1, pp 650-651; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1345-1346
In the following pages the armed conflict and confrontation between the Quraysh and the Muslims will be traced in order to assess the role of Abū Sufyān from the time he assumed the leadership of the Quraysh to the year of the Conquest of Makkah (8 A.H./630 C.E.)

**Expedition of Sawīq**

As mentioned earlier, Abū Sufyān had taken a pledge to avenge the defeat of the Quraysh at Badr. He mobilized his men soon after Badr and incited them to attack Madīnah and destroy the tribes of ‘Aws and Khazraj who had embraced Islam.

Abū Sufyān left with two hundred men and went to the quarters of the Banū al-Naḍīr, one of the Jewish tribes living on the outskirts of Madīnah at the time. Sallām ibn Mishkam, the chief of the tribe welcomed him and gave him some information about

1. Sawīq: a kind of mush made of barley or wheat. In this expedition, the Muslims found plenty of provisions (sawīq) which the Quraysh had discarded in order to lighten their burden as they were fleeing back to Makkah. Hence the name of the expedition.

2. The poem recited by Abū Sufyān inciting his men to war appears in Appendix A (c)

3. *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, S 1. p1366
the Prophet. Abū Sufyān then proceeded with his men to al-Urayd - a valley near Madīnah where they burnt some palm trees. They came across an Ansārī and his companion and killed them both. As soon as the Prophet heard about the attack, he and some of his Companions chased Abū Sufyān and his party who managed to escape and reach Makkah safely. Thus Abū Sufyān felt that he had avenged the defeat at Badr and had fulfilled his pledge.

**Expedition of Zayd ibn Hārithah**

By now there was virtually a state of war between the Quraysh and the Muslims. As the Quraysh now feared taking their normal route to Syria via Madīnah for fear of attack by the Muslims, they decided to embark on another route via Najd and Iraq. About six months after the expedition of Sawiq, Zayd ibn Hārithah led an expedition to al-Qaradah, a place situated in Najd at that time.

Meanwhile Abū Sufyān was on his way to Syria with a trade cara-

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1. Abū Sufyān recited a poem in relation to this expedition in which he eulogised Sallām ibn Mishkam for his hospitality and generosity (al-Aghānī, vol 6, p356; Sīrah, vol 2, pp 45-46). For full text of poems see Appendix A (d) and (e).

van. Zayd ibn Hārithah and his party intercepted this caravan and seized the merchandise.\textsuperscript{1} Abū Sufyān and the other Quraysh leaders escaped.\textsuperscript{2}

**Battle of Uhud\textsuperscript{3} (3 A.H./625 C.E.)**

It is a well known fact that after the Battle of Badr, the Makkan were full of zeal for taking revenge. When the mourning for the dead was over, those who had lost their close relatives at Badr approached Abū Sufyān. They requested him to use the profits from the sale goods of the to prepare an army against the Prophet. He readily agreed, saying that he was also seeking vengeance for Hanzalah's death.\textsuperscript{4}

The following verse was revealed in relation to the sale of the caravan's merchandise for the purpose of waging war against the Muslims:

1. *Sirah*, vol 2, p50; *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî*, S1, pp 1374-1375
2. *Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, vol 3, pt 1, p31
3. This is the name of a hill close to Madīnah, on its north side.
4. *Sirah*, vol 2, p60; *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî*, S 1, p1384; *Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, vol 2, pt 1, p25; *al-Maghāzî*, vol 1, pp 199-200
Lo! those who disbelieve spend their wealth in order that they may debar (men) from the way of Allah. They will spend it, then it will become an anguish for them, then they will be conquered. All those who disbelieve will be gathered unto Hell.¹

Some Quraysh leaders decided that their women would accompany them in the Battle of Uḥud. When someone approached Abū Sufyān objecting to this decision, he answered that he would not oppose the Quraysh as he was one of them; he was prepared to go along with them in whatever they did.²

Abū Sufyān set out, accompanied by his two wives, Hind and Umaymah and a Quraysh army consisting of three thousand soldiers.³

When the Quraysh army was near Madīnah, Abū Sufyān sent a message to the Ansār beseeching them to let the Quraysh deal with the Prophet in return for their own security. But they refused the offer.⁴

When the Battle of Uḥud eventually got underway the Muslims rushed into the heart of the Quraysh army and shook the enemy with their fearless attacks. The Quraysh fell back and the

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¹ Qur'an, 8:36; see Tafsīr al-Tabarī, vol 6, pt 9, pp 159-160
² al-Maghāzī, vol 1, p202
³ ibid, ibid
⁴ Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, p1398
battlefield was clear. When the Muslims thought that the battle was over, they began to collect the booty from the battlefield. At this juncture the archers who had been posted at the mountain pass in the rear to prevent the Quraysh from attacking the Muslims from the rear left their posts to join their colleagues in retrieving the booty.¹ Seeing this, Khālid ibn al-Walīd, who until then was an unbeliever, attacked the Muslims from the rear. Since the Muslims were preoccupied with the booty, their ranks were disorderly and the Quraysh took a heavy toll on Muslim lives. Seventy Muslims were killed in the Battle of Uhud.

At the same time the Quraysh raised a cry that the Prophet had been killed. This cry spread confusion among the ranks of the Muslims and many of them lost the courage to fight.² When 'Abd Allāh ibn Qamī'ah, a renowned Quraysh warrior, claimed that he was the one to have killed the Prophet, Abū Sufyān expressed great satisfaction and jubilation.³ In this confusion the Prophet had accidentally fallen into a ditch and therefore he was hidden from the eyes of the people. So Abū Sufyān believed

1. See Qur'ān 3:152


3. al-Maghāzī, vol 1, p236

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Qami'ah, climbed the mountain and shouted, "is Muḥammad there?"
The Prophet told the Companions not to reply. Abū Sufyān then
shouted again calling Abū Bakr and 'Umar. When he got not reply
he shouted that all had been killed, then added, "O Hubal,1 glory
to thee". On hearing this 'Umar could no longer restrain himself
and shouted, "O enemy of Allah, we are all alive" and raised the
cry of Allah is Most High and Great.

Abū Sufyān said, "we have al-"Uzzā2 with us and you do not have
it". The Companions replied: "Allah is our Lord, and you have
no Lord."

Abū Sufyān then said: "This day is the answer to the day of Badr.
The soldiers have mutilated the dead. I have not given these or-
ders, but I did not feel sorry for it when I came to know of it.3

1. The name of the biggest idol of the pagan Arabs which was
installed on the roof of the Ka'bah

2. The name of the idol worshipped by the Quraysh and Kinānah
tribes; al-Lāt, Manāt and al-'Uzzā were called "the daugh-
ters of Allah" by the Quraysh (al-Kalbi, Kitāb al-Asnām, 2nd
ed., ed., Ahmad Zāki Pāshā, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, Cairo,
1924, pp 26-28; see Qur'ān, 53:19-21)

3. Şahīh al-Bukhārī, vol 2, p256; vol 3, p79; Musnad, vol 1,
p288; vol 4, p293; Sirah, vol 2, p93; Tārikh al-Tabarī, S 1,
p 1410; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p33; al-Maghāzī, vol 1 pp 296-297
MAP OF THE BATTLEFIELD OF UHUD

Courtesy: Hamidullah, Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad
Abū Sufyān no doubt felt satisfied that the Quraysh defeat at Badr had now been avenged. His feeling of vengeance was so intense that not only did he feel elated when the rumour of the Prophet's death reached him, but felt absolutely no remorse at the mutilation of the bodies of the Muslims who had fallen in the battle. The mutilation of Hamzah's body by Abū Sufyān's wife, Hind, as already mentioned in Chapter two.

As Abū Sufyān felt that he had avenged the Badr defeat,¹ he left the battlefield quickly without pursuing the Muslims to Madīnah. When Abū Sufyān and his army arrived at Rawḥā'² on their way back to Makkah they decided to return to finish off the Muslims. The Prophet, in the meanwhile had set off in pursuit of the Makkans. When he arrived at Hamrā' al-Asad³ the chief of the Khuzā'ah tribe, Ma'bad ibn Abī Ma'bad, on hearing of the misfortunes of the Muslims at Uhud came to sympathize with him. Then he met Abū Sufyān at Rawḥā' and told him that he had just seen the Muslims coming with such great preparations that it would not be possible to oppose them. That dissuaded Abū Sufyān and he returned to Makkah.⁴

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1. Abū Sufyān later composed a poem in which he vented his satisfaction at the turn of events at Uhud (see Appendix A [f])
2. A place forty miles from Madīnah
3. A place about eighty miles from Madīnah
Execution of Khubayb and Zayd

About this time a few persons from the tribes of 'Udal and Qârah came to the Prophet, requesting him to depute some Muslims to teach their people about Islam. Thereupon the Prophet sent with them ten persons. When they reached Rajî the tribesmen conspired to kill the Muslims. Thus seven of the original party of Muslims were killed and the remaining three were captured. One of them was subsequently killed along the way, whilst Khubayb ibn 'Adî and Zayd ibn al-Dâthinah were sold at Makkah. When Khubayb was crucified, Abû Sufyân was present at the scene.

Meanwhile Zayd ibn al-Dâthinah was purchased by Sâfîn ibn Umayyah who intended killing him in revenge for the loss of his father, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, one of the arch enemies of the Prophet, at the Battle of Badr. Some of the respected leaders of the Quraysh, including Abû Sufyân, gathered to witness the execution.

When Abû Sufyân asked Zayd whether he would not have been happy had the Prophet been killed in his place, Zayd replied that leave alone the question of killing the Prophet, he would not even like a thorn to be pricked in the feet of the Prophet.

When Abû Sufyân was leaving the battlefield of Uḥud, he had promised to meet the Muslims the following year again at Badr.

1. A place between 'Usfân and Makkah
2. Sirah, vol 2, pp 172-173; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, 39-40

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The Prophet had accepted the challenge. However, when the appointed time approached, Abū Sufyān postponed the campaign saying that the time was inappropriate for war as there was a drought.¹

Abū Sufyān's attempt to instill fear in the hearts of the Muslims by threatening to overwhelm them with great numbers and Allah's reassurance to the Muslims of His favours are mentioned in the following verses of the Qur'ān:

Those unto whom men said: Lo the people have gathered against you, therefore fear them. The threat (of danger) but increased the faith of them and they cried: Allah is sufficient for us. Most excellent is He in Whom we trust. So they returned with grace and favour from Allah and no harm touched them. They followed the good pleasure of Allah and Allah is of infinite bounty. It is only the devil who would make (men) fear his partisans. Fear them not; fear Me; if ye are true believers.²


2. Qur'ān, 3:173-174; see Tafsīr al-Ṭabarî, vol 3, pt 4, pp 118-122

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As time passed, the Quraysh became more and more determined to annihilate the Muslims in Madinah. When they realised that they could not deal with the Muslims on their own, they decided to form a grand alliance to achieve their objective. In the meanwhile the Jewish tribe of Banū al-Nadīr, after having been exiled by the Prophet from Madīnah after the Battle of Uhud on account of their violation of the Madīnah Charter, had joined other Jewish tribes settled at Khaybar.¹ From here they began to conspire against the Muslims. When some of their chiefs travelled to Makkah to invite the Quraysh to join them in their alliance against the Prophet, this provided them with a golden opportunity. Abū Sufyān's immediate response was, "welcome; the most beloved people to us are those who help us against Muḥammad."

This statement of Abū Sufyān indicates how desperate he had become in his bid to eliminate the Prophet and secure Madīnah for the Quraysh. This led to the formation of a grand alliance consisting of the Quraysh, the Jewish tribe of Banū al-Nadīr and their allied tribes.

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¹ A place about two hundred miles to the north of Madīnah

² Sirah, vol 2, p214; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, p1464; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p47; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, pp 441-442

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The Quraysh, the Banū al-Nadîr and their allies marched to Madīnah in 5 A.H./627 C.E. Abū Sufyān led the Quraysh army. When they were close to Madīnah, Abū Sufyān sent Ḥuyayy ibn Akhtab, the chief of the Banū al-Nadîr, with a message to the Jewish tribe of Banū Qurayzah, asking them to break off their covenant (viz., the Madīnah Charter) which they had entered with the Prophet. Ḥuyayy pleaded with the Banū Qurayzah till they eventually agreed to break the covenant.

When the Prophet came to know that the Quraysh were marching with their allies to Madīnah, he consulted his Companions. At the

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1. Azāb (sing. Hizb) means allies or confederates. Chapter 33 of the Qur'ān is named after this battle and deals with the battle in great detail

2. Sirah, vol 2, pp 214-215; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1463, 1465; Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p47; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, pp 441, 443

3. Though the Jewish tribes of Banū Qaynuqā' and Banū al-Nadîr had been exiled from Madīnah due to their violation of the Madīnah Charter, the Banū Qurayzah were still in Madīnah at the time.

4. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p48; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, pp 454-456

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suggestion of Salmān al-Fārisī¹ a trench² was dug on the side of the city which was unprotected. The allies attacked Madīnah fiercely but could not penetrate into the city because it was fortified by rows of houses and orchards on three sides and by trenches on the remaining side. Therefore, they were obliged to lay siege to Madīnah.³

As Abū Sufyān was deprived of an open battle, he wrote a letter to the Prophet saying that the Quraysh had marched to Madīnah with the intention of annihilating him but had found him reluctant to meet them in battle, preferring to take refuge behind the trenches. He promised the Prophet another day like the day of Uhud.⁴

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1. Formerly of Isfahān in Iran; he was a Magian but his constant search for the true faith brought him to Madīnah where he embraced Islam.

2. The Arabic form of trench is "Khandaq"; hence this battle is also known as the Battle of Khandaq.


4. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 1, p 344; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, p 492
MAP OF THE BATTLE OF
KHANDAQ
(DITCH)

JAWS OF THE MODERN
WALLED TOWN OF MECCA

Courtesy: Hamidullah, Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad
In his reply the Prophet asked Abū Sufyān to renounce idol-worship. Soon Allah would settle the matter between them in favour of the Muslims.¹

The siege of Madīnah became protracted. Eventually the severity of the weather, the stormy winds, the scarcity of provisions for so many for so long and the termination of the alliance between the Quraysh and the Jews combined to dislodge the Allies from their positions. The siege was raised after nearly a month.²

Thus the grand alliance also failed to achieve the objectives which the Quraysh had been trying to achieve for so long. Abū Sufyān now realised the futility of continuing battles after battles and felt that some sort of understanding had to be reached with the Prophet to avoid further loss of lives and disruptions of the economic life of Makkah. The yearly battles had become a costly adventure which they Quraysh could not afford any longer. This forced Abū Sufyān to rethink his whole position towards the Muslims.

1. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 1, p344; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, p492-493

CHAPTER FIVE

REASONS FOR ABU SUFYAN'S ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAM

In this chapter we will examine those events which occurred after the Battle of Khandaq in 5 A.H./627 C.E. to see how Abu Sufyan's traditional hostility toward the Muslims had abated and how these events paved the way for his eventual acceptance of Islam.

The Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah

The Muslims feared that although the alliance at Khandaq had ended in a fiasco, there was no guarantee that they would not face perhaps a bigger alliance in the future. They felt threatened by the Quraysh in the south (viz Makkah) and the Jews in the North (viz Khaybar). To begin with, they did not have the required resources to deal with both enemies simultaneously. Furthermore, if they marched against one enemy the other could have easily attacked Madīnah. The only alternative for the Prophet was to conclude a truce with one enemy and then deal with the other. There was not much point in entering into a treaty with the Jews as they had frequently violated the terms of the Madīnah Charter which the Prophet had concluded with them as soon as he arrived in Madīnah in 1 A.H./622 C.E.¹ The best alternative for the Prophet was, therefore, to conclude a treaty with the Quraysh which would leave him free to deal with the Jewish threat from Khaybar.

¹. Tārikh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1360, 1448, 1449, 1472: Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, pp 19, 41, 48
In 6 A.H./628 C.E. the Prophet, accompanied by fourteen hundred Companions set forth toward Makkah ostensibly to perform the "umrah" or lesser pilgrimage. When the Quraysh heard about the march of the Muslims they sent Khālid ibn al-Wālīd with two hundred men to intercept them. But the Prophet outwitted him and encamped at al-Hudaybiyyah - a place situated to the north-west of Makkah.¹

Negotiations between the Prophet and the Quraysh then commenced. The Quraysh sent several delegations to the Muslim camp to inquire into the Prophet's objectives. When they were eventually convinced that the Muslims did not come to fight but for the purpose of performing the pilgrimage, they realised that any attack on the Muslims would be regarded by all Arabs as a treacherous act of aggression which the Muslims would be perfectly entitled to repel with all power at their disposal. The result of such a conflict would be that the security of passage to Makkah for pilgrimage and the prosperity of the Makkans which resulted from trade with the pilgrims would be jeopardized. In any event the Quraysh were no longer interested in a full-scale war. They had thus far fought three major battles against the Muslims - without success. In the process they had depleted their resources and

¹ Sirah, vol 2, pp 308-310; Ṭārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1528-1534; Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, pp 69-70
lost many men, including most of their leaders. They were looking for a respite from the threat to their trade route. They were, therefore, favourable inclined towards peace. These factors made the negotiations possible.

After several emissaries were exchanged between the two parties, the Prophet sent 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān to negotiate with the leaders of the Quraysh. However, Abū Sufyān was not present in Makkah at the time. He was away on trade to Syria where his encounter with Heraclius (mentioned below) took place. That is why his name does not appear anywhere in the negotiations. His absence at this very crucial time for the Quraysh put them at a disadvantage as they were left without their leader.

Eventually a treaty was concluded between the Muslims and the Quraysh in 6 A.H./628 C.E. The Quraysh thereby acknowledged that the Prophet was now an entity and also recognised that the Muslims were an established community in Madīnah and Islam an established religion. Many senior members of Makkan society naturally felt that the Truce was in reality the end of the Quraysh domination. Soon after the Truce Khālid ibn al-Walīd and 'Amr ibn al-'Ās, two noted generals of the Quraysh army, had accepted Islam.¹

1 Sirah, vol 2, p 315; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1 pp 1542-1545; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p 70; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, pp 600-605
2 al-Maghāzī, vol 2, p 792
3 Ibid, p 745
When Abū Sufyān saw the Muslims from Madīnah becoming reconciled to the Makkans and mixing freely with them as a result of the Truce, he was demoralised. This was because he, too, like the other Quraysh leaders must have felt that the Truce signalled a new era - the diminished power of the Quraysh coupled with the ascendancy of Islam. He probably realised the futility of continuing his resistance against Islam and the Prophet.

Abū Sufyān in the court of Heraclius

The Truce provided the Prophet the much needed respite in order to concentrate on his mission of conveying the message of Islam. He sent epistles to the Byzantine emperor, the Persian emperor, the ruler of Egypt and the chiefs of the Arabian tribes inviting them to Islam. The Prophet's envoy, Diḥyā al-Kalbī, delivered the Prophet's letter to the Ghassānīd ruler, Hārīth, to forward it to the Byzantine Emperor who was in Jerusalem at the time. On receiving the letter, the Emperor issued an order to find a man from Arabia and bring him to the court. It so happened that Abū Sufyān - with other Arab traders - was in Syria at the time. So he was brought before the Emperor together with his companions.

1. Tārikh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, p1540
2. Ghassān was a Christian Arab tribe in Syria under Byzantine suzerainty.
3. The emperor from 610 C.E. to 641 C.E. was Heraclius
4. Tārikh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1559-1562; Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1 pt 2, pp 16-17
When the Emperor, Heraclius, asked them who among them was the nearest relative of the Prophet, Abū Sufyān claimed that he was. There then ensured a dialogue between Abū Sufyān and Heraclius in which the Emperor enquired from him the following matters about the Prophet: his lineage, type of followers, his truthfulness, success in war, and his basic teachings. Although Abū Sufyān had not yet embraced Islam, he answered all the questions honestly and truthfully. Heraclius responded to Abū Sufyān's description with the following remark:

"I knew that he (the awaited Messenger of God) was going to appear, but I did not know that he would be from among you; if I could reach him, I would certainly undertake to meet him. If I were with him, I would certainly wash his feet."

This sympathetic and favourable reaction toward the Prophet on the part of Heraclius no doubt set Abū Sufyān thinking. His mind probably wandered back to his earlier trip to Syria when he had learnt for the first time from Umayyah ibn Abī Salt that the expected Prophet had appeared in Makkah. Subsequently he had witnessed the reaction of alarm of the Jewish rabbi in Yemen when

al-'Abbas' description of Muḥammad (S.A.W.S.) corresponded with that of the expected Prophet.¹

If the Jews and Christians could acknowledge that Muḥammad (S.A.W.S.) fitted exactly the description of the awaited Prophet, could he, therefore, not be truly the Messenger of God as he claimed?

When the courtiers and patriarchs began to raise a hue and cry after Heraclius had read out the Prophet's letter to him inviting him to accept Islam, Abū Sufyān suddenly had a feeling that Islam would eventually triumph and that Allah would make him also enter the fold of Islam.²

This indicates that apart from having discarded any notions of continuing his opposition to the Prophet, he was now actually contemplating accepting Islam. This marks a definite turning point in Abū Sufyān's attitude to the Prophet and to Islam.

Prophet's Marriage to Umm Habībah

About this time the Prophet had married Umm Habībah, the daughter of Abū Sufyān. This relationship was certainly bound to create a soft corner in Abū Sufyān's heart toward the Prophet. Some

1. see Chapter Four
2. Sahīh al-Bukhārī, vol 3, p216; Sahīh Muslim, vol 3, p1397
commentators of the Qur'ān like Ibn Kathīr, al-Suyūṭī and al-Zamakhshāri and the historian Ibn Sa'd cite reports indicating that the following verse of the Qur'ān refers to the Prophet's marriage with Umm Ḥabībah:

"It may be that Allah will ordain love between you and those of them with whom you have enmity. Allah is Mighty and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

This means that through the marriage whatever enmity Abū Sufyān had toward the Prophet would now disappear. In place of it there would now be love and affection - just as Allah had ordained affection between the 'Aws and Khazraj tribes of Madīnah after they accepted Islam.

Exchange of Gifts

In the meanwhile the Prophet had begun to send gifts to the Quraysh leaders, including Abū Sufyān, in order to reduce their enmity and win them over to Islam. While some refused to accept their gifts, Abū Sufyān accepted his. In return, Abū Sufyān sent

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1. Tafsīr ibn Kathīr, vol 4, p349
2. al-Tafsīr al-Maʾthūr, vol 6, p205
4. Tabaqāt Ibn Saʾd, vol 8, p70
5. Qurʾān, 60:7
6. see Qurʾān, 3:103
a sword and other gifts to the Prophet. On receiving these the Prophet sent him some pressed dates. Abû Sufyân then presented him with tanned skin.¹

This exchange of gifts between the Prophet and Abû Sufyân clearly indicates a change in the attitude of Abû Sufyân toward the Prophet and a positive response to the Prophet's hand of friendship.

Thus we see that there are several factors which contributed to Abû Sufyân's change of attitude. To begin with, after the failure of the Alliance at the battle of Khandaq, Abû Sufyân realised that there was no point in pursuing warfare against the Muslims as they could not be defeated. Therefore, though he was not a direct party to the Truce of al-Ḥudaybiyyah, he did not at any stage express his opposition to it. The Prophet's marriage to his daughter, Umm Habībah, made him more amenable toward the Prophet. Finally, he welcomed the Prophet's gesture of kindness in sending him a gift and, therefore, reciprocated accordingly. Now perhaps Abû Sufyân's acceptance of Islam was just a matter of time. What can reflect his attitude better than the following incident: when the Makkans were experiencing a severe drought, Abû Sufyân approached the Prophet pleading with him to pray to Allah for help as the people were starving.²

1. Rawḍ al-Unuf, vol 4, p197; Târikh Dimashq, vol 6, p397; al-Iṣābah, vol 2, p179

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Violation of the Truce

At the time of the signing of the Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah the Muslims were generally unhappy with the terms as they thought that these were more in favour of the Quraysh. However, the Qur'ān termed the Truce "an open victory"¹ which proved to be so soon after the Truce was signed.

The Truce specified that any person from the Quraysh emigrating to Madinah without permission from his guardian would have to be returned to Makkah. When Abū Basīr became a Muslim and escaped from Makkah to Madinah, the Prophet had to return him to the Quraysh. On his way back to Makkah, Abū Basīr killed one of the men sent by the Quraysh to fetch him, whilst the other escaped. Abū Basīr then settled at al-'Is on the sea-coast on the Quraysh trade route to Syria. The Muslims still living in Makkah fled to al-'Is and joined Abū Basīr. Together they began to waylay the trade caravans of the Quraysh on their way to Syria. Consequently the Quraysh were forced to write to the Prophet that they would like to forego the above term of the Treaty.²

Two years after the Truce was concluded the stage was set for the abolition of the whole treaty which subsequently led to the Conquest of Makkah. In accordance with a clause in the Truce, the Khuzā'ah from among the tribes of Arabia had become the allies of

1. Qur'ān, 48:1; see Tafsir al-Ṭabari, vol 11, pt 26, pp 44-45
2. Sīrah, vol 2, p323; Tārikh al-Ṭabari, S 1, pp 1551-1553; al-Maghāzi, vol 2, pp 624-629

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the Prophet. Their rivals, the Banû Bakr, on the other hand, had entered into an alliance with the Quraysh.¹

Prior to the advent of Islam these rival tribes had been fighting each other for a long time. Their tribal quarrels were suspended only because they had all turned their hostilities toward Islam. However, now that the Truce had created a peaceful situation, the Banû Bakr took advantage of the situation and without considering the consequences attacked the Khuzâ'ah. In terms of the treaty the Khuzâ'ah then sought redress from the Prophet.²

The Prophet offered the Quraysh three alternatives:

i) the blood money for all the men killed should be paid

ii) the Quraysh should break their alliance with the Banû Bakr

iii) the Quraysh should declare the abrogation of the Truce.³

Since the Banû Bakr were strong and fierce the Quraysh feared that they would kill so many people that it would not be viable

¹. Strah, vol 2, p390; Musnad, vol 4, p325

². Sîrah, vol 2, p390; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p97

³. al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p786
for them to agree to pay the blood money. Also, the Quraysh could not see themselves breaking their alliance with the tribe which showed the greatest reverence to the Ka'bah. Most importantly the acceptance of the first two would be an admission of guilt which they did not want to concede. Again the were not ready to accept the humiliation of abandoning their ally because that would have damaged the Quraysh reputation further. Therefore, the Quraysh accepted the third alternative.

Abū Sufyān's attempt to renew the Truce

However, the Quraysh soon regretted their decision because they realised that Makkah was now exposed to the danger of invasion by the Prophet. They certainly were not prepared to engage him in battle again. They, therefore, sent Abū Sufyān as their ambassador to Madinah to get the treaty renewed thinking that due to his special relationship with the Prophet he would succeed. However, when he sought the help of his daughter, Umm Habibah, to intervene with the Prophet on his behalf, she refused. Then he approached the Prophet directly, earnestly pleading with him to renew the Truce. But the Prophet refused. Abū Sufyān then tried for the intervention of Abū Bakr and 'Umar, but they did not pay any attention to him. Finally he decided to approach 'Alī and Fātimah (the Prophet's daughter) but was equally unsuccessful. Having failed in all his efforts he eventually proceeded to the Prophet's mosque where he announced unilaterally that he had renewed the Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah. Nonetheless when he returned

1. al-Maghāzī, vol 2, pp 786-787
2. Ibid, pp 785-787
to Makkah he had to concede that his mission was a failure.¹

It was the Prophet's view that the violation of the Truce by the Quraysh was divinely ordained and that it would result in something good for the Quraysh² (i.e. their acceptance of Islam). This violation provided him with the opportunity to prepare for the Conquest of Makkah. Since there was no longer any treaty, the Prophet was now free to advance to Makkah to rededicate the Ka'bah to the worship of the One God, Allah.

For his part Abū Sufyān was not party to the violation of the Truce by the Quraysh and he strongly disapproved of it when he came to learn of it.³ What is interesting is that he was not even consulted when the decision to violate the Truce was taken by the Quraysh leaders,⁴ although he was one of the chiefs of the Quraysh. This can only be because they did not trust him fully due to his changed attitude and because they were fully aware that he would not approve of their decision as he had become sympathetic toward the Prophet. That explains why they chose him to go to Madīnah to renew the Truce. And when he took longer than they expected to return from Madīnah, they began to suspect him of having secretly embraced Islam.⁵ This proves that

¹. Šīrah, vol 2, pp 395-397; Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p97; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, pp 791-795
². al-Maghāzī, vol 2, p788
³. ibid, pp 788
⁴. ibid, pp 783, 785, 788
⁵. ibid, p795
Abū Sufyān had definitely become sympathetic to Islam to the extent that even his colleagues were suspicious of his favourable stance to Islam and Muslims.

Abū Sufyān's failure to have the truce restored put the Makkans in the situation of no war and no peace which was certainly most unsatisfactory. They had realised that the abolition of the Truce had paved the way for the Prophet to enter Makkah without any serious hinderance.

The desire of the Prophet and the Muslims to take over Makkah was understandable in view of the fact that the Ka'bah had to be rededicated to the Worship of One God, Allah.¹ The Prophet now made preparations to march to Makkah. He sent word to the allied tribes, asking them to come prepared. As he advanced toward, Makkah the tribes joined him along the way. The Muslims encamped at Marr al-Zāhrān, not far from Makkah.²

Abū Sufyān's acceptance of Islam

When the news of the arrival of the Muslims reached the Quraysh,

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¹ Qur'an, 2:191-193; see Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī, vol 2, pp 111-115

² Sīrah, vol 2, pp 397-400; Tārikh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1628-1630; Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p97

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they sent Ḥakīm ibn Hīzām, Būdayl ibn Wāqā' and Abū Sufyān to ascertain the fact. Al-Abbās, the Prophet's uncle, detained Abū Sufyān and promised him his personal protection. Then al-'Abbās brought him before the Prophet. When 'Umar spotted Abū Sufyān, he could not restrain himself and sought the Prophet's permission to kill Abū Sufyān. But al-'Abbās interceded for Abū Sufyān as he had guaranteed personally to protect his life.¹

The following dialogue then took place between the Prophet and Abū Sufyān:

The Prophet: "O Abū Sufyān, do you still not believe that none is to be worshipped except Allah?"

Abū Sufyān: "Had there been some other God, he would have come to our succour today."

The Prophet: "Have you any doubt that I am the Prophet of Allah?"

Abū Sufyān: "In this respect, I have some doubt."

On hearing that, al-'Abbās entreated Abū Sufyān to accept Islam. So Abū Sufyān declared: "I bear witness that there is no object of worship but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger."²

¹. Sahīh al-Bukhārī, vol 3, p139; Sīrah, vol 2, pp 402-403; Tārikh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1631-1632; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, p817

². Sīrah, ol 2, p403; Tārikh al-Tabarī, S 1, p1632; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, p818
AI-Suhaylî, the author of al-Rawd al-Unuf, reports on the authority of 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd (d. 249) that when the Prophet requested Abû Sufyân to accept Islam he asked, "What shall I do with 'Uzza?" This could be interpreted to mean that Abû Sufyân was still concerned about the idols. However we have already noted from his above dialogue with the Prophet that Abû Sufyân had given up believing that the idols could help him in any way. Another factor which must be taken into account is that the Prophet had not yet given instructions for the destruction of the idols. This happened only after Makkah was conquered as we will see below.

The manner of Abû Sufyân's eventual acceptance of Islam could easily lead to the conclusion that he did it merely to save his neck. This is understandable considering that his submission to Islam was not voluntary and that he hardly had any option left in view of the circumstances in which he found himself at the time - a helpless captive in the hands of his erstwhile enemies who was saved only by the intervention of his friend. However, we shall see later that Abû Sufyân had changed subsequently. The question naturally arises: why did Abû Sufyân wait up to this point to embrace Islam if he was no longer an "enemy of Allah"? The

1. al-Rawd al-Unuf, vol 4, p99;
   al'Uzza was the idol which was worshipped by the Quraysh specifically. Remember Abû Sufyân's boast at Uhud that the Quraysh had 'Uzza on their side whereas the Muslims did not. In fact, Abû Sufyân had carried al-Lât and al-'Uzza with him to the battle of Uhud (Tārīkh al-Tabarî, S1, p1395)
reason for this maybe that Abū Sufyān thought that if he could 
co-operate with the Prophet and prepare for the Muslim conquest 
of Makkah, his position of leadership in Makkan society would be 
safe-guarded.

The following report of Ibn 'Asakir on the authority of Yazid al-
Raqāshi must be rejected both on the basis of "riwāyah" and 
"dirāyah": Abū Sufyān told the Prophet that he was prepared to 
accept Islam on the following conditions: "you should carry me on 
your mule, you should dress me in your cloak, you should take 
Mu'āwiyyah as a scribe; you should marry Umm Ḥabībah and whoever 
enters my house should be secure". When the Prophet agreed to 
all these conditions, Abū Sufyān accepted Islam.¹

Firstly, Yazid al-Raqāshi was not a reliable narrator of Ḥadīth.² 
Secondly, the report cannot be true because one of the conditions 
supposedly imposed by Abū Sufyān was that the Prophet should 
marry Umm Ḥabībah - something which he had done already about two 
years earlier. Also, Abū Sufyān was hardly in a position to bar-
gain with the Prophet.

Conquest of Makkah

As the Muslim army marched towards Makkah, the Prophet asked al-
'Abbās to take Abū Sufyān to the peak of the mountain so that he 

1. Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 6, pp 401-402
2. Ibn Ḥanbal said his Ḥadīth was "rejected"; both Ibn Ma'īn 
and al-Dāraquṭnī called him "weak"; al-Nasā'ī said he was 
"abandoned" in Ḥadīth (Tahdhib al-Kamāl, vol 3, p166; Mizān 
al-I'tidāl, vol 4, p418)
might have a view of the majesty of the army. The spectacle of
one tribe after another surging forth, fully armed and shouting
"Allah Akbar" (Allah is Great) greatly amazed and inspired Abū
Sufyān.¹ He advised the Makkans not to oppose the Prophet.²

No doubt his was exactly what the Prophet had in mind - that Abū
Sufyān would be so overwhelmed at the size and strength of the
Muslim army that he would abandon any plan or hope to challenge
the Muslims; that he would realise that any resistance or opposi-
tion to Islam was now futile; and that the best course open to
him and the Quraysh was surrender and submission.

As Abū Sufyān was until that time a man of status and prestige,
al-'Abbās requested the Prophet to bestow some honour and favour
on him in order to win him over completely to Islam. Thereupon
the Prophet declared that whoever surrendered his arms, shut his
door, entered the precincts of the Ka'bah or took refuge in the
house of Abū Sufyān would be safe and secure.³

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¹ see Sirah, vol 2, p404; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, p822; Tārīkh
Dimashq, vol 6, p403

² Sirah, vol 2, pp 403-405; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pl633;
al-Maghāzī, vol 2, p818; Sahīh al-Bukhārī, vol 3, pp 139-
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³ Sahīh Muslim, vol 3, pl408; Sirah, vol 2, p403; Sunan Abî
Dāwūd, vol 3, pl62; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pl633; Tabaqāt
Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, p98; al-Maghāzī, vol 2, p818; Tārīkh
Dimashq, vol 6, p405

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Furthermore, the Prophet was willing to grant Abû Sufyân this honour because when he was persecuted in Makkah in the early days of Islam, he often found refuge in Abû Sufyân's house.¹ In this way the Prophet was returning his gratitude to Abû Sufyân for the favour which Abû Sufyân showed him in Makkah. In addition to that the Prophet wanted to allay Abû Sufyân's fears and misgivings about his own fate and that of the Quraysh after the Conquest of Makkah.²

It is significant that the way to the "peaceful conquest" of Makkah was paved by Abû Sufyân's acceptance of Islam. It was at his behest that the Makkans agreed not to oppose the Muslims.³

The Muslim army eventually entered and occupied Makkah. The Prophet refused to enter the Ka'bah until the idols installed inside the Ka'bah were removed.⁴ He then struck the idols one after another with a stick reciting the verse of the Qur'an:

"And say: Truth hath come and falsehood hath vanished away. Lo! falsehood is ever bound to vanish."⁵

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2. Sahîh al-Bukhârî, vol 3, p140; Sahîh Muslim, vol 3, pp1406, 1408
3. Sirâh, vol 2, p405
4. Sahîh al-Bukhârî, vol 3, p 141
5. Qur'ân: 17:81

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The idols were then all broken and the Ka'bah was purified. After Hubal was destroyed al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwâm¹ turned to Abû Sufyân and told him that the idol which he had claimed to be the protector of the Quraysh at the Battle of Uhud was now broken. Abû Sufyân replied, "I have realized that had there been a god other than Muhammad's God, things would have been different".²

This reply is similar to the reply he gave to the Prophet earlier when the Prophet had asked him to accept Islam.

The standard historical and biographical works mentioned in the first chapter contain numerous reports which cast serious doubts on Abû Sufyân's sincerity in accepting Islam. Keeping in mind what we have discussed in Chapter One about the influence of political and theological groupings and factions on the reporting of historical events, all such reports must be treated with utmost caution. Below is a report about an incident alleged to have occurred after the Conquest of Makkah:

When the Prophet entered the Ka'bah, he (Abû Sufyân) was sitting in the courtyard contemplating how he could rally troops against the Muslims. Suddenly the Prophet struck him between his shoulders saying, "then may Allah humiliate you". When Abû Sufyân

1. A well-known Companion; he was a cousin of the Prophet and the fifth person to accept Islam; he was the standard bearer at the Conquest of Makkah
2. al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p832
saw the Prophet standing behind him he said, "I was not sure that you are a Prophet until this moment."

This report is based on the authority of Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'i (d. 127 A.H.) who was known to have been a Shi'ite. Therefore this report was quite obviously intended to discredit Abū Sufyān.

Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Asākir and Ibn Hajar have cited a similar report on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās. In this case, instead of expressing doubts about Muhammad's prophethood, Abū Sufyān is said to have repented for thinking of resuming his opposition to the Prophet.

The source of this report is the Kitāb al-Iklīl by al-Ḥamdānī (d. 334 A.H./945 C.E.) the South Arabian archaeologist, poet, geographer and genealogist. This work cannot be relied upon in matters relating to Sirah as it deals primarily with geography and archaeology.

The Prophet's entrance into Makkah was from the upper region of the city, then known as Kādā'. Al-'Abbās remembered Abū Sufyān

1. al-Bidāyah, vol 4, p304; al-Isābah, vol 2, p179
3. see al-Bidāyah, vol 4, p304; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 6, p406
4. Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol 3, pp 140,142

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saying that he would not believe in the Prophet unless he saw horses emerging from Kadâ'.¹ When he mentioned this to Abû Sufyân the latter replied, "yes, by Allah, I certainly remember it; praise be to Allah who has guided me to Islam".²

This fulfilment of the condition Abû Sufyân himself had set for his acceptance of Islam had convinced him of the truth of the prophethood of Muhammad (S.A.W.S.).

After the Conquest of Makkah the Prophet sent messages to various Quraysh leaders, including Abû Sufyân, informing them that he had pardoned them for their former hostility towards him.³ Abû Sufyân is, therefore, listed among the "Ṭulaqā'".⁴

Thus we see how Abû Sufyân's change of attitude toward Islam and the Prophet after the Battle of Khandaq for the various reasons mentioned earlier in this chapter paved the way for his acceptance of Islam on the eve of the Conquest of Makkah. The reason for Abû Sufyân not voluntarily coming over to Islam like Khâlid ibn al-Walîd and 'Amr ibn al-'Âs was that as chief of the Quraysh he did not want to "betray" them. Furthermore, Abû Sufyân could

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¹. see Chapter Four
². al-Bidayah, vol 2, p319
³. Ţabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p102; see also Rûh al-Ma'ānî, vol 9, p206
⁴. see f.n.1, p 36 for definition of "Ṭulaqā"; Sirah, vol 2, p412

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not bring himself to give up his position of authority as chief of the Quraysh which he had enjoyed for so long. Accepting Islam would mean that he had to submit to the authority of the Prophet. Being aware of this, the Prophet granted him great honour by declaring his house as a place of refuge from the Muslim army at the Conquest of Makkah.

But once Abū Sufyān brought himself to accept Islam finally he never wavered and never repented. Abū Sufyān's statements subsequent to his acceptance of Islam show that he had completely abandoned his old pagan religion and now acknowledged the worship of One God. That is why he showed absolutely no remorse when the idols in and around the Ka'bah were finally destroyed. Any reports which suggest that he submitted to Islam only outwardly but remained inwardly hostile to Islam were meant to discredit Abū Sufyān and cannot be entertained on the basis of his subsequent devotion and loyalty to Islam.

According to Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Kathīr, al-Zarkalī, al-Alūsī al-Nawawī, and al-Tirmidhī, Abū Sufyān was among the "Tulaqā' who became very good Muslims." A further discussion on his loyalty to Islam will take place in Chapter six and the concluding Chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

ABU SUFYAN'S CAREER AFTER HIS CONVERSION TO ISLAM

This Chapter will deal with Abū Sufyān's career from the Conquest of Makkah to his death (31 A.H./652 C.E.)

a) Career during the Lifetime of the Prophet

The Prophet's attitude toward Abū Sufyān is significant and it is worthy to note that despite Abū Sufyān's active and persistant opposition to the Prophet and Islam the Prophet still forgave him on the eve of the Conquest of Makkah. Over and above, the Prophet honoured him by declaring his house as a place of refuge and security. No doubt all this must have had a marked impact on Abū Sufyān.

Under the chapter entitled "Faḍā'il Abī Sufyān" (the virtues of Abū Sufyān), Muslim cites a ḥadīth which reports that Abū Sufyān requested the Prophet to allow him to fight against the disbelievers as he had fought the believers previously. Muslim himself regarded the authenticity of this ḥadīth as doubtful on the grounds that the Hadīth also contains another request, viz., that Abū Sufyān wanted the Prophet to marry his daughter, Umm

1. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, vol 4, p1945
2. The principles of Ḥadīth criticism were not applied rigorously to reports which deal with merits of the Companions of the Prophet

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Habībah. This was something which the Prophet had already done about the time of the Conquest of Khaybar. However, the first part of the hadīth is acceptable. It is significant to note that Abū Sufyân participated fully with the Prophet in the battles after the Conquest of Makkah.

Battle of Hunayn† (8. A.H./630 C.E.)

The first battle in which Abū Sufyân took part was the Battle of Hunayn. This battle is referred to in the Qur'ān in the following words:

"... and on the Day of Hunayn, when ye exulted in your multitude but it availed you naught, and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you; then ye turned back in flight."²

The significance of the battle is evident from the very fact that the Battle of Hunayn is mentioned in the Qur'ān by name. After the Conquest of Makkah, all Arab tribes began to embrace Islam, but the tribes of Hawāzin and Thaqīf still refused to submit. They gathered and army and advanced towards Makkah. When the Prophet heard of their march towards Makkah he mobilized his army

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1. The name of a valley between Makkah and Ṭâ'īf
2. Qur'ān, 9:25
and left Makkah to meet the challenge. The two armies met at Hunayn where the battle eventually took place. Due to the large number of their army the Muslims felt that they had tremendous odds in their favour. This made some Companions boastful as mentioned in the verse above. So instead of victory, the Muslims fled in panic - except for a few Companions. In the advanced guard commanded by Khalid ibn al-Walid were many new Muslims who in their vanity of youth, had not even put on their arms. The enemy, on the other hand, had the advantage of knowing the ground thoroughly. As soon as the Muslim vanguard reached the entrance of the valley of Hunayn, the enemy fell upon them with such fury that many Muslims were slain and others turned back in confusion and retreat as described in the above verse. Nonetheless, after suffering the initial reversal the Muslim army regrouped at the call of the Prophet and launched another attack. This time they defeated the Hawâzin and their allies.

The fact that Abu Sufyân, who had only accepted Islam shortly before, participated in this battle against those who were until recently his friends and allies proves his loyalty to Islam. For who would put his life in jeopardy for any cause unless he is totally committed to it? Abu Sufyân's sincerity to Islam was tested at Hunayn when he took the risk of dying for Islam.

Some Companions had expressed their opinion to the Prophet that he should not take the "Ţulaqā'" - including Abū Sufyān - along in the battle as they would be more concerned with booty than with the actual battle.¹ But the Prophet did not accept their advice.

The report cited by Ibn Ishāq, al-Tabarî and al-Wâqidi, all on the authority of 'Aṣim ibn 'Umar Qatādah, that when Abū Sufyān saw the Muslims fleeing the battlefield he remarked that the Muslims will not be defeated until they are thrown into the sea, thereby indicating his inner malice toward Islam,² is unacceptable. Had Abū Sufyān said or done anything to indicate his enmity toward Islam as implied by the report, it would have most certainly been reported to the Prophet.

After their defeat, the Hawāzin and their allies had fled from the battlefield; those who were left behind were made captives. The Prophet appointed Abū Sufyān to guard over these prisoners.³ This shows the Prophet's trust and confidence in Abū Sufyān. It cannot be imagined that the Prophet would entrust him with such a position of responsibility had he suspected Abū Sufyān of infidelity or observed any sign of disloyalty on his part.

1. al-Maghāzī, vol 3, p895; al-Bidayah, vol 4, p330
2. Sīrah, vol 2, p443; al-Maghāzī, vol 3, p910; Tārīkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1660
Siege of Tā'īf

A section of the Hawāzin and Thaqīf army defeated by the Muslims at Hūnayn had withdrawn to Tā'īf where they made preparations for war. The Thaqīf tribe which inhabited Tā'īf was known for its bravery and courage throughout Arabia.¹ As indicated in Chapter Two 'Urwah ibn Mas'ūd, the chief of Tā'īf, was the son-in-law of Abū Sufyān.² Having ordered the booty and captives of Hūnayn to be kept under guard, the Prophet marched towards Tā'īf which was well-guarded and fortified all around. The Muslims besieged the fort but despite their concerted efforts they could not capture it initially. The Prophet laid siege of Tā'īf which lasted for twenty days but still with no success.³ As the siege prolonged and it became impossible to capture the fortresses of Tā'īf, the Prophet gave the order to cut down and burn the orchards of Tā'īf as a strategy to force the enemy to surrender. Several people of the city surrendered to the Prophet in order to spare their vineyards. But when the Prophet realised that the city could withstand the siege for a very long time, and also that Tā'īf will have to surrender sooner or later, he ordered the Muslims to withdraw. The holy

1. Sīrah, vol 2, p478; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, p1669; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p114; al-Maghāzī, vol 3, p924
2. He was among the notables of Arabia who entered the negotiations regarding the Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah on behalf of the Quraysh.
months during which no war was permitted had also begun. However, the Prophet announced that he would resume the war against Tâ'if at the expiration of the holy months.¹

While the Muslims were busy destroying the vineyards during the siege of Tâ'if, Abû Sufyân and al-Mughîrah ibn Shu'bah approached the Banû Thaqîf and advised the Quraysh women² to leave the fort so that they wold not be harmed or taken as captives.³ The women refused to heed their advice. The Thaqîf asked them to intercede on their behalf with the Prophet not to destroy their vineyards. The Prophet acceded to this request by Abû Sufyân and al-Mughîrah ibn Shu'bah.⁴

When the defenders of the fort at Tâ'if had started showering the Muslims with arrows, Abû Sufyân was struck in one of his eye by an arrow shot by Sa'id ibn 'Ubayd al-Thaqafî² as a result of which Abû Sufyân lost his eye.

1. al-Maghâzî, vol 3, pp 928-937
2. those who were married among the Thaqîf, including Abû Sufyân's daughter
5. al-Ma'ârif, p344'; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p408

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When the Prophet asked him whether he preferred to have his eye restored, or to be recompensed with the eye in Paradise, he replied that he would rather have the eye in Paradise.¹ To my mind there is absolutely no doubt that Abū Sufyân had accepted Islam wholeheartedly.

The Prophet's offer to Abū Sufyân as well as Abū Sufyân's response here are very significant. The Prophet's offer implies that Abū Sufyân would enter Heaven. What greater honour than the good news of having paradise could anyone expect from the very lips of the Prophet himself? At the same time Abū Sufyân's preference to have his eye restored in Paradise though he was offered the opportunity to have it back during his lifetime in this world signifies that he was no longer concerned with material comforts and benefits of this world but that as a devoted Muslim he now looked forward to the reward of paradise.

After the siege of Tā'if, the Prophet made special provision in the booty acquired in Ḥunayn for those Makkans who had embraced Islam after the Conquest of Makkah. Among the recipients were the prominent persons of the Quraysh, including Abū Sufyân.²

1. Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 6, pp 395, 408; al-Iṣābah, vol 2, p179; Futūḥ al-Buldān, pp 56, 135
2. Sirah, vol 2, pp 492-493; Sahīḥ Muslim, vol 2, pp 737-738; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, p1679; Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p110; al-Maghāzī, vol 3, p944

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That is why he is counted among the "mu'allifât al-qulûb"¹ mentioned in the Qur'ân.² The reason why the Prophet allotted a share in the booty to the Quraysh leaders was to win them over through his generosity and to create mutual affection and harmony between himself and them, and through them with their people.³ For once the leaders were reconciled to the Prophet the people would naturally follow. The fact that the Prophet gave the biggest share of the booty to Abû Sufyân and his family⁴ indicates Abû Sufyân's place of importance in his eyes and the significant role Abû Sufyân could play in effecting a reconciliation between the Prophet and the Quraysh.

After the campaigns of Hunayn and Tâ'if the Prophet together with the Muhâjirûn and Ansâr performed the 'umrah or lesser pilgrimage and returned to Madînah. Abû Sufyân returned to Makkah. Therefore he did not participate in the Campaign of Tabûk⁵ in 9 A.H./635 C.E. when the Prophet marched with an army of thirty thousand to counter the rumoured Byzantine attack on Madînah. When the Prophet reached Tabûk it turned out that the rumour was not correct and he returned to Madînah.

1. This means "those whose hearts are to be reconciled"; see al-Fîruzâbâdî, al-Qâmuûs al-Muhiî, Bulûq, 1289, A.H. vol 3, p136
2. Qur'ân, 9:60; see Tafsîr al-Tabarî, vol 10, p112
3. Sîrah, vol 2, p492; Târîkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1679
5. A well known place about midway between Madînah and Damascus
Destruction of al-Lāt

As soon as the Prophet returned to Madīnah from Tabūk those tribes which remained polytheist up to now including the Thaqīf began to ponder their fate.¹ The march of the Muslim army to challenge the Byzantines left these tribes severely shaken, anxious over the fate of their pagan religion and society. Thus it was in the tenth year of Hijrah that people embraced Islam en-masse. That is why this year is called "'Amar al-Wufūd" (the Year of Deputations) when a large number of delegations visited the Prophet to know more about Islam and then enter its fold.

The Thaqīf, realising that their opposition to the Prophet would be of no avail specially when all Arabia had laid down arms, sent their representatives to declare their allegiance to the Prophet. After the Prophet had explained Islam to them they were prepared to submit to Islam on condition that he promised not to destroy their idol, al-Lāt, for three years. They changed their proposal to two years, then to one and eventually to one month. Naturally the Prophet strongly rejected their conditions.² Finally, the Thaqīf agreed to the destruction of al-Lāt but requested, however, that they be exempted from destroying the idol with their

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¹ The majority of Arab tribes had sent delegations to Madīnah after the Conquest of Makkah from 8 A.H./630 C.E. to 10 a.H./632 C.E. to declare their submission to Islam

² Sīrah, vol 2, pp538-540; Tārikh al-Ṭabarī. S 1, p1689-1691; al-Maghāzī, vol 3, pp 962-968
own hands. The Prophet consented. For the Prophet, it was all one whether al-Lat was destroyed by the Thaqif themselves or by others. What was important to him was that the idol was soon to be destroyed so that the Thaqif would have a complete break from their past devotion to idols and turn to the worship of one God, Allah, alone.

The Prophet asked Abū Sufyān and al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, who knew the tribe of Thaqif well and were on friendly terms with them to accompany the Thaqif to Ta'if. Abū Sufyān's daughter was, after all, married in the Thaqif tribe as mentioned earlier. Abū Sufyān and al-Mughirah were assigned by the Prophet the task of destroying al-Lat.

When they approached the sanctuary al-Mughirah began destroying the idol. Every time he struck the idol with a mattock Abū Sufyān exclaimed, "woe to you! alas to you!"

What a transformation in Abū Sufyān! A man who was a devoted idol-worshipper all his life till he became a Muslim was now a party to the destruction of one of the chief idols of Arabia!

After the siege of Ta'if, Abū Sufyān's son-in-law, 'Urwah ibn Mas'ūd had gone to Madīnah to accept Islam. On his return home he

1. Sīrah, vol 2, p540; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 1691
   al-Maghāzī, vol 3, p968
2. Sīrah, vol 2, pp541-542; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, p1691-1692;
   al-Maghāzī, vol 3, p971

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was killed by his own people because he began to preach Islam to them.

'Urwah's son, Abû Malîh and his nephew, Qârib, had specifically requested the Prophet when they had come with the Thaqîf delegation to Madînah to discharge their fathers' debts from the wealth which would be obtained from the sanctuary housing al-Lât. The Prophet gave his consent no doubt due to the fact that 'Urwah had died for the sake of Islam. After the idol was destroyed, Abû Sufyân, in obedience to the Prophet's instructions, faithfully discharged this obligation.¹

Appointment as Witness

Apart from the Thaqîf, another tribe which sent a delegation to Madînah was the Baliyy. It was the practice of the Prophet to stipulate certain conditions on those willing to accept Islam and to appoint witnesses from among his Companions to testify to their acceptance of the conditions. The Prophet chose Abû Sufyân as one of the witnesses to the terms agreed between himself and the Baliyy tribe. The other witnesses were al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abd al-Mutta'ilîb, 'Ali ibn Abî Tâlib and 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân.² Since

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¹ Sirah, vol 2, p542; Târikh al-Tabârî, S 1, p1692
² Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 2, p24
the Baliyy tribe was a branch of the Quraysh the Prophet's choice of Abū Sufyān is understandable. As a former chief of the Quraysh who was now a Muslim and siding with the Prophet, his presence was bound to create a greater impact on the minds of the Baliyy tribe.

It was again for the same reason mentioned above that the Prophet made him a witness to the conditions he stipulated in his letter to the Christians of Najrān\(^1\) with whom the Quraysh had friendly relations.

**Appointment as collector of Sadaqāt**

During the last three years of his life the Prophet appointed many persons to responsible, administrative positions, including governors of various regions, and collectors of "sadaqāt".\(^2\)

Accordingly Abū Sufyān was appointed to collect "sadaqāt" from the Yemenite tribes of Bajilah and Khawlān\(^3\) and from the people of Tā'if.\(^4\) In 11 A.H. / 632 C. E. the Prophet appointed him to collect "sadaqāt" from the Muslims of

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1. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 2, pp 35-36; al-Bidāyah, vol 5, p55; Futūḥ al-Buldān, p65;
2. sing "sadaqah"; a legally prescribed alms tax in Islam
3. Ansāb al-Ashārāf, vol 1, p530
4. ibid, vol 4A, p6

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Najrân¹ during the governorship of 'Amr ibn Ḥazm.²

Appointment as Governor
The Prophet had so much trust and confidence in Abū Sufyân that apart from appointing him as a collector of "sadaqât", he also appointed him as a governor several times.

At first Abū Sufyân was appointed governor of Jurâsh, a province of Yemen.³ Later he succeeded 'Amr ibn Ḥazm as the governor of Najrân. While he was still the governor of Najrân the Prophet passed away.⁴

As the persons who were appointed governors had to be men of knowledge and critical judgement as well as possessing exemplary moral character, Abū Sufyân's appointment becomes all the more significant. The governors enjoyed a respectable position in Islamic society as administrators of the affairs of their

1. Najrân was the principle stronghold of Christianity in Arabia. However, a pagan tribe, Banû al-Ḥârith ibn Ka'b also lived there. In 10 A.H./631 C.E. the Prophet sent Khâlid ibn al-Walîd to invite them to Islam. He succeeded in getting the whole tribe to accept Islam (al-Rawd al-Ūnuf, vol 4, p 217)
2. Târîkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1983
3. Futûh al-Buldân, p59
communities. The Prophet's act of appointing Abū Sufyān as governor and to other responsible positions clearly indicates the Prophet's full confidence in Abū Sufyān.

The Prophet's death marks the end of Abū Sufyān's career during the Prophet's life and the beginning of his career under the first three Caliphs of Islam.

b) Career during the rule of the first three Caliphs of Islam

After the death of the Prophet the first three Caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, who had succeeded the Prophet one after the other had continued to hold Abū Sufyān in high esteem and respect and had appointed him to various responsible positions. Most reports in the early sources which cast doubts on Abū Sufyān's loyalty and commitment to Islam relate to his period. A critical examination of the narrators of these reports reveals that most of them were either Shī'ah per se or had Shī'ah sympathies. This naturally means that they were hostile to Abū Sufyān and the Umayyads. In other cases it will be seen that the reporters are not reliable.

i) During the Caliphate of Abū Bakr

Numerous reports were deliberately circulated to discredit Abū Sufyān. The following will suffice as an example.

Al-Balādhurī reports on the authority of Hishām ibn Muhammad al-
Kalbi that when the Prophet passed away Abū Sufyān went to see 'Uthmān (who was an Umayyad) and on emerging from their meeting began saying that the Banū Umayyah should seize the opportunity to govern the affairs of the Muslims. Firstly, as Hishām ibn al-Kalbi was a Rāfiḍite and was known for his hostility to the Umayyads, the report can hardly be accepted. A similar report cited by al-Baladhurī on the authority of Hishām ibn Ḥassān cannot be accepted as reliable because he has been classified unanimously as "weak" and unreliable. Moreover, the above two reports cannot be accepted because Abū Sufyān was not even in Madīnah at the time of the Prophet's death but in Najrān as has already been established earlier in this Chapter.

In fact, al-Kalbi himself is reported by al-Baladhurī to have stated that Abū Sufyān was not present in Madīnah when the Prophet died.

Similarly the following report by Al-Baladhurī, al-Ṭabarī and ibn 'Abd Rabbih that when Abū Sufyān heard of the Prophet's death and of Abū Bakr's election as Caliph he expressed fears of possible bloodshed cannot be accepted on the basis of "riwāyah".

1. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, p11
2. see Chapter One
3. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, p11
5. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 1, p529
6. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 1, p589; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, p1827; al-'Iqd al-Farīd, vol 4, p257
The "isnād" of al-Baladhurī's report includes Ibn Abī Ḥazīm who was well-known for fabricating reports.¹ The source of Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's report is Ja'far ibn Sulaymān who was known to have Shi'i sympathies.² And al-Ṭabarī's source is al-Kalbī. The report is obviously a fabrication. As mentioned in the first Chapter the early historians were concerned more with collecting reports than first verifying them.

Al-Baladhurī, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Asākir and al-Iṣbahānī have all cited a report - on different authorities - that after Abū Bakr's election as Caliph, Abū Sufyān approached 'Alī and offered to prepare an army to wage war against Abū Bakr - apparently favouring 'Alī's appointment as Caliph - but that 'Alī rebuked him, accusing him of hypocrisy.³

This report must be rejected on the basis of "dirāyah" for the following reasons:

a) if Abū Sufyān had been going around inciting his own family, the Umayyads, to wrest the caliphate from Abū Bakr - as reported by al-Baladhurī - it is inexplicable why he should

1. al-Mughnī, vol 2, p397
2. al-Mughnī, vol 1, p132; Taqrīb al-Tahdhib, vol 1, p131; Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 2, p44
3. Ansāb al-Ashrāf, vol 1, p588; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, p1827; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 6, p408; al-Aghānī, vol 6, p355
suddenly incite 'Alî to do the same when 'Alî belonged to the Banû Ḥāshim.

b) had Abû Sufyân offered to support 'Alî for the caliphate, this would have been an act of rebellion against Abû Bakr. Yet we find that though 'Alî is supposed to have condemned Abû Sufyân according to the report, it is strange that 'Alî did not report this matter to Abû Bakr.

c) finally, Abû Sufyân remained loyal to Abû Bakr throughout his caliphate. There is no report anywhere suggesting anything to the contrary. As proved earlier, Abû Sufyân was not even in Madînah at the time of the Prophet's death and the subsequent election of Abû Bakr. The reports are nothing but fabrications and through these false reports an attempt was made to discredit Abû Sufyân.

Had there been any truth in the reports that Abû Sufyân was opposed to the caliphate of Abû Bakr, he would not have accepted a position in Abû Bakr's administration. Yet we find that Abû Bakr retained him as governor of Najrân¹ to which the Prophet had appointed him. This also indicates that Abû Bakr, like the Prophet, had complete faith and confidence in Abû Sufyân. Furthermore, Abû Sufyân must have proved to be a capable administrator as governor of Najrân under the Prophet; that is why Abû Bakr reappointed him to the same position.

1. Futûḥ al-Buldân, p103
During the Caliphate of 'Umar

Abû Sufyân showed the same loyalty to 'Umar as he showed to the Prophet and to Abû Bakr after him. Though 'Umar did not appoint him to any administrative position as the Prophet and Abû Bakr had done, probably due to his old age, 'Umar appointed Abû Sufyân's sons, Mu'āwiyyah and Yazîd as governors of Syria and 'Utbah as governor of Ta'îf as mentioned already in the second chapter. It was 'Umar's policy to keep the senior members of the Quraysh in Madīnah to act as his advisors in state matters. Abû Sufyân was one of those who advised the Caliph.

In the early days of Islam no regular armies were kept in Arabia. Whenever there was war the people voluntarily offered their services. Soldiers did not receive any salary but received a share in the booty of the war. The army was disbanded soon after the conclusion of the wars. But 'Umar instituted a regular army and maintained a regular register of salary.

In 20 A.H./640 C.E. 'Umar set up a permanent department of defence and got names of all serviceable men registered. The task of registration was entrusted to Makramah ibn Nawfal, Jubâyr ibn Mu't'im and 'Aqîl ibn Abî Tâlib, three expert genealogists who were at the same time well-versed in accountancy. The list was headed by the family of the Prophet. Their names were followed by the names of people in the order in which they recede further
and further away from the Prophet in relationship. The register was prepared accordingly and the annual stipends fixed. Abū Sufyān was one of those who were to receive a stipend for the services he rendered as a soldier fighting for Islam as at Ḥunayn and Ṭā'if.

When the register was prepared, Abū Sufyān opposed it and warned 'Umar that people would now begin to depend on the stipends and give up trade and commerce. Abū Sufyān's advise to the Caliph clearly reveals him as a man concerned about the well-being of the Muslims considering the fact that he himself would have lost out on the stipends if 'Umar had heeded his warning. 'Umar did not share Abū Sufyān's fear and, therefore, he did not accept his advice.

'Umar's great respect for Abū Sufyān can be estimated from a report which says that he used to spread out a bed in his house on which he allowed only Abū Sufyān and al-Abbās to sit. And he used to say, "this is the uncle of the Prophet and this is the "shaykh" of the Quraysh." It can be reasonably assumed that al-Abbās and Abū Sufyān used to offer their advice and suggestions to the Caliph on matters of state policy as Abū Sufyān had done in the above instance.

1. Futūḥ al-Buldān, p457; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, p2750; Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī, vol 2, p153
2. lit. an elderly, venerable gentleman; it is used as a term of respect.
3. al-Kāmil, vol 1, p319
Though ʿAbū ʿSuʿfān had retired from active public life probably due to old age he took an active part in the Battle of Yarmūk as will be seen below.

**Battle of Yarmūk (15. A.H./636 C.E.)**

As mentioned in chapter five, after the Treaty of al-ʿUdāybiyyah in 6 A.H./628 C.E. the Prophet had sent epistles to various rulers inviting them to Islam. Ḥārith ibn ʿUmayr, the messenger of the Prophet to the Byzantine governor of Busrâ, was killed by Shurahbîl, the Ghassânid chief and vassal of Heraclius. Consequently the Prophet had sent a punitive expedition against Shurahbîl under the command of Zayd ibn ʿHārithah, his manumitted slave. When the news of the Muslim expedition reached Shurahbîl he raised an army and was joined by the forces of Heraclius.

In the ensuing battle which was fought at Muʿtah⁴ in 8 A.H./629 C.E. the Muslim army of 3000 men were no match for the Syrian army of 100,000 and the only strategic course of action for them was to withdraw and return to Madīnah. However, the Prophet remained concerned with the Syrian front.

It was as a result of this concern that the Prophet had led the campaign to Tabūk mentioned earlier in this chapter. After his return to Madīnah from the "Farewell Pilgrimage" in 10 A.H./631

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1. a place in Syria

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C.E. he had again ordered the mobilization of a large army under Usâmâh ibn Zayd and commanded it to march on Syria. However, while they were getting ready the Prophet had fallen ill and then soon passed away. As a result, this expedition was temporarily held back.

After Abû Bakr was appointed as Caliph the first order he issued was that 'Usâmâh's army should now proceed to Syria. The Muslims launched their attack against al-Balqâ' in the vicinity of Mu'tah and avenged their setback in Mu'tah during the time of the Prophet. The punitive expedition of 'Usâmâh had enraged the Syrian tribes and they carried out a number of retaliatory raids.

In 13 A.H./634 C.E. Abû Bakr had dispatched four different armies to Syria and instructed them to assemble at Yarmûk. At the same time he had ordered Khâlid ibn al-Walîd, who had been deputed to conquer Iraq, to proceed to Yarmûk to reinforce the Muslim army. The combined Muslim forces defeated the Roman army at Ajnâdâyân\(^1\) in 13 A.H./634 C.E.\(^2\)

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1. a place between Jerusalem and Gaza
2. Tarîkh al-Tabârî, S 1, pp 2125-2126
Abū Bakr received the glad tidings of the success of the Muslim army on his death-bed.\(^1\) When 'Umar assumed the reins of the caliphate he had to bring the expeditions both on the Syrian and Persian fronts to a successful conclusion. This now links up with the Battle of Yarmūk with which we are concerned because of Abū Sufyān's participation in this decisive battle.

Within a short period of 'Umar's rule the Muslims had successfully conquered Damascus (14 A.H./635 C.E.), Fahl (14 A.H./635 C.E.), Hims (14 A.H./635 C.E.) and other centres.\(^2\) The Byzantines after suffering these initial reverses fled to Antioch where Heraclius, the Emperor resolved to bring all the strength and resources of his empire to bear upon the Muslims once and for all. On hearing of the march of the Byzantine army the Muslims advanced to Yarmūk where they awaited the Byzantine army.\(^3\) It is here where the battle which finally decided the fate of the Byzantine Empire was fought - the battle in which the Muslims broke the back of Byzantine resistance once and for all.

One of the commanders appointed by Abū Bakr when he had dispatched the Muslim armies to Syria was Abū Sufyān's son, Yazīd.\(^4\) 'Umar

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1. Futūḥ al-Buldān, p107 ff; pp 241-249; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, pp 2078-2089; 2016-2046; 2390 ff
2. Futūḥ al-Buldān, pp 115, 120-134; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, 2103-2104; 2146
3. Futūḥ al-Buldān, p135; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, p2347
4. Futūḥ al-Buldān, p108; Tārīkh al-Tabarī, S 1, p2079
retained Yazid as a commander. The importance and decisiveness of the battle can be estimated from the fact that inspite of his old age, Abu Sufyan participated in the battle and fought under the command of his son, Yazid. At the time Abu Sufyan was seventy-six years old. Probably due to his old age he was appointed as the "qâss". He used to walk among the troops telling them that they were the protectors and the helpers of Islam, whereas the Byzantines were the protectors of Byzantium and the helpers of polytheism. Then he said to them, "O servants of Allah, help Allah (and) He will help you." And he prayed to Allah to help the Muslims in battle.

Whilst the commanders of the Muslim army were discussing the strategy they should adopt in the battle, Abu Sufyan happened to pass them. When he expressed to them his disappointment at not being included in the consultations, they invited him to make suggestions. They found his advice on the positioning of the troops to be sound and acted upon it. Prior to the commencement of the battle the commanders addressed the troops. When they

2. i.e., one who incites and encourages the troops to fight; Târikh al-Tabari, S 1, p2095; al-Bidâyah, vol 7, p8; Usd al-Ghabah, vol 3, p10
3. this refers to a verse in the Qur'an, 47:7
4. Târikh al-Tabari, S 1, p2095; Târik Dimashq, vol 6, p408
5. Târik Dimashq, vol 1, p162

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had finished, Abū Sufyān delivered his address. He told them that they found themselves in a foreign land, cut off from their own people and their Caliph, as well as from their material assistance and support. They were facing an enemy of great numbers who were enraged by their earlier defeats at the hands of the Muslim. Abū Sufyān advised the troops to be courageous in battle and patient in times of adversity—else they had no chance against the enemy. Their country was now behind them and between them and their people and the Caliph was desert land. There was no place of refuge for anyone. Their only recourse was patience and hope in what Allah had promised as He is the Most Reliable. Then Abū Sufyān ordered them to take up their swords in defence of each other and to co-operate together and support one another, for that was their best protection and defence.¹

Many Muslim women had accompanied their menfolk in this battle and they were seated behind the ranks of the Muslim army. They formed patrols which were to assist the men in battle.² Abū Sufyān's wife, Hind,³ and his daughter, Juwayriyyah, were also among the women present at the battlefield.⁴ After he had add-

1. al-Bidāyah, vol 7, p9; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 1, p164;
2. Futūḥ al-Buldān, p135; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2100; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 1, p164
3. Futūḥ al-Buldān, p135
4. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2100

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ressed the men, Abū Sufyān then addressed the women. He asked them to beat with sticks and stones any Muslim they saw fleeing from the battlefield in their direction.¹

Finally, Abū Sufyān returned to the troops for his final words of encouragement before taking up his position. He told them that if they fought the enemy they would enter Paradise where they would meet the Messenger of Allah but if they fled from the enemy they would enter Hell where they would meet the Devil.²

When the battle commenced the Byzantines launched such a vigorous attack that though the Muslims stood firm for a long time their right wing broke off from the main body and fell back in great disorder. Khalid ibn al-Walīd, the supreme commander of the Muslim army had to call upon his reserve to assist the right flank. The left wing was equally hard pressed for the Byzantine numbers were heavily telling against them. The fighting was grim and the issue so uncertain that even the Muslim women joined their husbands and brothers in the field. Although the troops were thrown into disorder the commanders, including Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān performed outstanding deeds of valour.³

1. Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 1, p164; al-Bidāyah, vol 7, p11
2. al-Bidāyah, vol 7, pp 9, 11; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 1, p164
3. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, p2347; al-Bidāyah, vol 7, pp 12-14; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 1, pp 165-169
Abū Sufyān who was exhorting the men with his persuasive eloquence to the performance of heroic deeds happened to pass by and seeing his son he encouraged him to put his faith in Allah and to persevere. Since he was one of the commanders of the Muslim army he should excel the soldiers in courage and boldness, and show a greater willingness to take risks in the battle.¹

By this time the Muslims had lost three thousand men in this battle. At this grim hour when all the voices were subdued during the battle, the only voice which was heard supplicating Allah repeatedly for help and encouraging the Muslim army to remain steadfast was that of Abū Sufyān.² Finally this battle ended in victory for the Muslims.

Abū Sufyān who had lost one of his eyes during the siege of Ṭā'īf as mentioned earlier now lost his other eye too when it was pierced by an arrow during the Battle of Yarmūk.³ Having lost both his eyes, he had to be guided by his servant for the rest of his life.⁴ This is why he had to spend his remaining days in retirement. The way Abū Sufyān and his family members fought in this battle proved their bonafides for Islam and thus compensated for their pre-Islamic deeds.

1. al-Bidayah, vol 7, p14; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 1, p169
2. Ansāb al-Asrāf, vol 4A, p9; al-Bidayah, vol 7, p14; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 6, p408
3. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2101
4. Usd al-Ghabah, vol 3, p11
iii) During the Caliphate of 'Uthmān

The relationship between Abū Sufyān and 'Uthmān was pleasant and mutually supporting. 'Uthmān was well-known for his generosity and bestowing his wealth on his relatives and on people in general. Abū Sufyān was one of those whom he favoured particularly.1 'Uthmān also employed Abū Sufyān as his chamberlain.2 'Uthmān, like his predecessors, consulted Abū Sufyān on state matters.

On his assumption of the caliphate 'Uthmān had found one thousand dinars in the Public Treasury deposited there by 'Umar who had taken the money from Abū Sufyān's son, Yazīd. The money was acquired by Yazīd from trade at the time when he was appointed by 'Umar as governor of Tā'if. This was in keeping with 'Umar's policy that whatever money was acquired by the governors belonged to the State Treasury. 'Umar was not satisfied with Yazīd's explanation as to how he had acquired the money. He set it aside for Yazīd with the intention of returning it to him later. However, Yazīd died in 12 A.H./633 C.E. before the money could be returned to him.

'Uthman now offered to return the money to Abū Sufyān. However, Abū Sufyān refused to take the money saying that had 'Umar consi-

1. Tārikh al-Ya'qūbī, vol 2, p173
2. Ansāb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, p11; al-'Iqd al-Farīd, vol 1, p71
dered it necessary he would have certainly given the money to him.\(^1\) Furthermore, he advised 'Uthman not to act against 'Umar's decisions because that would place him in disfavour with the people. Not only that, but if he acted contrary to his predecessor, then his successor would do the same.\(^2\)

Abū Sufyān did not participate in any battle during the rule of 'Uthmān as he was completely blind after the Battle of Yarmūk.

Abū Sufyān died in Madīnah during the caliphate of 'Uthmān as indicated in the second chapter on his biography. The Caliph himself led the funeral prayer for him.\(^3\)

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1. Ansāb al-Ashrāf, vol 4A, p8; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol 6, p409
2. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, p2766
3. Usd al-Ghābah, vol 6, p149
CONCLUSION

The discussion in the previous chapters gives an ample insight into the life and career of Abū Sufyân. The most difficult task that I faced during my study was to sift out reality from fiction by analysing hosts of historical reports which had any bearing on the topic of my thesis. Sometimes, I came across two or three reports dealing with the same event but contradicting each other either in substance or facts. Just to illustrate the point the following reports would suffice as an example:

a) When the Prophet passed away Abū Sufyân went to see 'Uthmân (an Umayyad) and on emerging from their meeting began saying that the Banû Umayyah should seize the opportunity to govern the Muslims.¹

b) After Abû Bakr's election as Caliph, Abû Sufyân approached 'Alî (a Hâshimite) and offered to prepare an army to wage war against Abû Bakr but 'Alî rebuked him and accused him of hypocrisy.²

These conflicting reports regarding the issue of the caliphate originate from two different chains of transmitters but are both cited by al-Balâdhurî. The reasons for the rejection of both reports have been given in chapter six.

1. Ansâb al-Ashraf, vol 4A, p11
2. ibid, vol 1, p588

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What became clear during my study is that Abū Sufyān's career can be divided into three distinct periods:

i) his youth and his role as a young prominent member of the Banū Umayyah clan of the Quraysh till the Battle of Badr (2 A.H./623 C.E.);

ii) his direct involvement in the Makkāni and Arab affairs and in the armed conflict between the Makkans and the Prophet from the Battle of Badr to the advent of the Conquest of Makkah (8 A.H./630 C.E.);

iii) from the time he accepted Islam on the eve of the Conquest of Makkah to the time he died (31 A.H./651 C.E.)

During the first period his reaction and opposition to the Prophet and Islam was more academic and was confined to verbal passtime discussion at the usual meeting places of friends or on trade trips. During this period, although he went along with the decisions of his elders to check the progress of Islam and the mission of the Prophet, he himself did not have any serious direct confrontation with the Prophet.

Nevertheless, he was aware of the serious turn that the spread of Islam was taking around him and then suddenly he was catapulted in an active leadership role in the post Badr period when several influential elders of the Quraysh were killed at Badr. Now by virtue of his position as the chief and the leader of the Quraysh he had to lead an active opposition against Islam and the Prophet as is evidenced from my discussion of his career in Chapter Four.
It seems that the defeats of the Quraysh at the hands of the Muslims in a series of battles from Badr to Ḥażāb and their failure in achieving their original objectives on the one hand, and their disappointment and frustration at the fast pace of the spread of Islam on the other, forced Abū Sufyān and the Quraysh leadership to accept the reality of Islam. Thus the Truce of al-Ḥudaybiyyah formed a milestone in the relationship between the Prophet and the Quraysh. Again the Truce which the Quraysh had thought to be in their favour turned out not only in favour of the Muslims but proved a disaster for the Quraysh. Although Abū Sufyān was not present in Makkah when the Truce of al-Ḥudaybiyyah was signed, he went along with the Truce and never opposed it as I have shown in Chapter Five.

By this time Abū Sufyān's daughter, Umm Ḥabībah, had become the wife of the Prophet. This new relationship and also the realisation of the futility of opposing the Prophet and Islam anymore forced Abū Sufyān to change his stance towards the Prophet and Islam. This change of Abū Sufyān appeared in the form of his appeared in the form of his acceptance of Islam on the eve of the Conquest of Makkah in 8 A.H./630 C.E. Thus the third period of Abū Sufyān's career, viz., from the Conquest of Makkah until his death proves beyond doubt the complete transformation of Abū Sufyān from a staunch opposer to a staunch believer and a zealous defender of Islam. During this period, as I have shown in Chapter Six, Abū Sufyān and his family members served Islam well and faithfully and even defended Islam at the risk of their lives on the battlefields.
Abû Sufyân suffered physically on the battlefield and even lost both his eyes while fighting those enemies of Islam who until yesterday were his friends and comrades. Nobody would like to risk his life or intend to sacrifice his life for any person or cause unless he loves the person or the cause more than his own life.

Abû Sufyân's reliability and trustworthiness and his acceptability to senior Companions of the Prophet can be gauged from the fact that several "ahâdîth" (Traditions of the Prophet) dealing with the Sîrah have been reported on his authority in the standard works of Hadîth by prominent Companions like 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbâs.¹

Let me conclude this Chapter with Abû Sufyân's words of inspiration to the Muslim soldiers on the battlefield of Yârrûk:

"......... your only recourse is perseverance and hope in what Allah had promised as He is the Most Trustworthy

.........

......... the Messenger of Allah and Paradise are in front of you (i.e., in facing the enemy) and the Devil and the Fire are behind you (i.e., in fleeing from the enemy) ...."²

¹. see Sahîh al-Bukhârî, "Kitâb al-Zakât", vol 1, p 352

². al-Bidâyah, vol 7, pp 9, 11; Târikh Dimashq, vol 1, p 164
I see that Suhayl’s goal has eluded him
And he has abandoned all reins of highness
He has begun to rise to the lofty heights
He has an unhidden dish and songstress
And wine drinkers from Lu‘ayy ibn Ghâlib
Extensive effort, appropriate speech
But one day when the war began
And the face of a beautiful veiled girl was uncovered
He committed as much outrage as he could during it
And veiled his face during it and called me
So I saved him as he was not capable of his (own)
defence in war
And I answered his call wholeheartedly.

1. al-‘Iqd al-Farîd, vol 6, p 88
b. أرهط أبن أكَّال أذَّتُوا دُعاءهُ تعاقدُم لا تسليموا السُّيَّدَ الكَبْلَا
فانَّ أبى عمرو لِيَّام أذَّتُوا لَنَّم يَفْكَوا عن أسيِّه بِهِ الكَبْلَا

O people of Ibn Akkāl respond to his call
You made an agreement not to surrender the old chief

Verily the Banū 'Amr are lowly, contemptible
If they do not break the fetters from their captive.

1 Sirah, vol I, pp 650-651;
Tārikh al-Tabari, S1, p 1346
Attack Yathrib and their troops
What they have prepared for war is your booty

If the topsy-turvy day was their day of victory
verily you will not have chances of fortune thereafter

I swear not to approach women nor
should a bath (i.e. water) touch my head or skin

Until you destroy the tribes of Aws and Khazraj
verily the hearts are afame.

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1 Ṭāriḵ al-Tabarī, S1, p 1366
d. Sallām ibn Mishkam gave me red wine to drink
And thereby quenched my thirst
I chose him alone in preference to all the people of Madinah
And I was not deceived and I did not regret it
When the night had passed I said - and I was not trying (just) to make him happy - I am delighted with the beneficence and benefits
Verily the father of benefits is generous and his house at Yathrib is a clean, munificent haven.

1 al-Aghānī, vol 6, p 356
Translation:

I chose Madinah alone

for an ally and I did not regret nor reproach

Sallám ibn Mishkam gave me red wine to drink

hastily (prepared) for me

When the army turned back I said - and I was not

(merely) making him happy: I am delighted with the

honour and benefit

Contemplate, for the people are glad that they have

the purity (of blood), of Lu’ayy, not the adulteration

of Jurhum

It was only a few nights later when a rider

came speedily, without property, destitute.

1 Sirah, vol 2, pp 45-46
Translation:

If I had wished a reddish-brown stallion would have saved me
And I would not have depended on a favour from Ibn Sha’ub

My colt continued sitting at a suitable distance from them
from early morning until it (the sun) approached sunset time

I fought them and I claimed, o conqueror
And I warded them off from me with a corner of a cross

So mourn and do not pay attention to the speech of the critic
And do not get bored of tears and mourning

Your father and brothers have succeeded him
They are entitled to a share of the tears

It consoled that which was in the heart
that I killed all the important men of the Banū al-Najjār

1 Sirah, vol 2. pp 75-76
And from the Banū Hāshim a noble outstanding personality 1 and Mus‘ab
Who was fearless in battle

If I did not vent my anger at them (i.e. avenge them)
There would have been grief in the heart—full of effects of wounds

They scorned/denied, and the wearers of coarse garments 2 among them have perished
They have people with deep wounds who are bleeding and are grieved

One who was not their equivalent in blood afflicted them
Nor did he match (them) in refined qualities.

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1 Referring to Hamzah, uncle of the Prophet
2 viz the Muslims
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