

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

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TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM - ARABIC to ENGLISH

m	م	t	ط	d	د	ر	م
n	ن	z	ظ	dh	ذ	ر	ا
h	ه	ʿ	ع	r	ر	b	ب
w	و	gh	غ	z	ز	t	ت
y	ي	f	ف	s	س	th	ث
		q	ق	sh	ش	j	ج
		k	ك	s	ص	h	ح
		l	ل	d	ض	kh	خ

V O W E L S

Long:

or	اَ	ā
و	اُ	ū
ي	ي	ī

Doubled:

اَ	iiy (final form ī)
و	uww (final form ū)

Diphthongs:

او	au or aw
اي	ai or ay

Short:

ا	a
و	u
ي	i

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, Abû Sufyân's opponents cast doubts regarding his fidelity to Islam by accusing him of having accepted Islam only outwardly. These opponents maintained that Abû Sufyân'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 Abû Sufyân and to his tribe, Banû Umayyah deliberately circulated reports to discredit him. This has created in the early Islamic biographies and historical literature, a contradictory picture of Abû Sufyân.

It is a well known fact that the stories of tribal wars, poetry and history of the pre-Islamic days (al-Ayyâm al-Jâhiliyyah) 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, Ḥadîth 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'ân and Ḥadīth 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'ân and Ḥadīth 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'î¹. The other is Hashimi-Umawi Ta'alluqât Awr Sirat-i-Abû Sufyân (Relations between the Umayyads and the Hashimites and the life of Abû Sufyân)

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 Ishâq (d. 150.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 'Abd 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 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463 A.H./1070 C.E.), Ibn 'Asâkir (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. Books

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:

"Kitâb al-Ḥurûf fî al-Şahâbah" by Abû 'Alî Sa'îd ibn 'Uthmân ibn al-Sakn (d. 353 A.H./964 C.E.); "al-Târîkh al-Kabîr by Abû Bakr Aḥmad ibn Zuhayr al-Nasâ'î ibn Abî Khaythamah (d. 279 A.H./892 C.E.); "Kitâb al-Âḥâd" by Abû Muhammad 'Abd Allah ibn 'Alî ibn al-Jârûd(d. 307 A.H./919 C.E.), and the writings of Abû Bashr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥammâd ibn Sa'd al-Dawlâbî (d. 320 A.H./932 C.E.), Abû Ja'far al-'Uqaylî (d. 322 A.H./934 C.E.), Ibn Abî Ḥâtim al-Râzî (d. 277 A.H./890 C.E.), Aḥmad ibn Yûsuf al-Azraq (d. 577 A.H./1181 C.E.), Muş'ab ibn 'Abd Allah al-Zubayrî (d. 236 A.H./850 C.E.), al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥubâb Abû Khalîfah al-Jumahî (d. 305A.H./917 C.E.), 'Abd Allah Ibrâhîm ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Arafah Niftawayh (d. 323 A.H./934 C.E.), Abû Zakarîyya Yaḥyâ ibn 'Abd al-Wahhâb ibn Mandah (d. 475 A.H./1082 C.E.) and Abû Mûsâ Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Madînî (d. 581 A.H./1185 C.E.).

Finally, the most important sources in relation to the period and the subject under discussion are, of course, the Qur'ân and the Ḥadîth literature which have direct bearing on the study as we will see later. Often students of History ignore the Qur'ân and Ḥadîth as sources for the early period of Islamic history which is inexcusable. The Qur'ân and Ḥadîth literature provide rich information for the early Islamic period. The Qur'ân and Ḥadîth 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), Siyar (biographies), Ansâb (genealogies) and Futuhât (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 "Râwî" (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-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dîl" (scrutinizing and ascertaining the validity of statements) and "Asmâ' al-Rijâl" (biography of narrators).

Muslim scholars have laid down principles of "Riwâyah"¹ and "Dirâyah"² 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., Abû Sufyân ibn Ḥarb, was the father of Mu'âwiyah 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 authoratitive 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 Shî'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 "Riwâyah".

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

'Asim ibn 'Umar ibn Qatâdah ibn Nu'mân al-Ansârî al-Zafarî (d. 120 A.H./737 C.E.): his patronymic was Abû 'Amr al-Madanî. He was a specialist in Sîrah 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'în (d. 233 A.H./847 C.E.) and Ibn al-Qaṭṭân (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.

1. al-Khazrajî, Tadhhîb tahdhîb al-Kamâl fi Asmâ' al-Rijâl, ed. Maḥmûd 'Abd al-Wahhâb Fâ'id, Cairo Bookstore, Cairo, n.d., vol 2, p 19

al-Dhahabî, Mîzân al-I'tidâl fi Naqd al-Rijâl, ed. Muḥammad al-Bajawî, 'Isâ al-Bâbî al-Ḥalabî, Cairo, 1963, vol 2, p 355

Ibn Hajar, Tagrîb al-Tahdhîb, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhâb 'Abd al-Latîf, Cairo, 1975, vol 1, p385

Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihâb al-Zuhrî (d. 124 A.H./741 C.E.): He was one of the greatest scholars of Ḥadîth and Fiqh (jurisprudence) of his time. He is credited with having collected more than two thousand ḥadîth. 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 independant work on Maghâzî. His school produced many persons who became experts in this science. According to al-Dhahabî¹, al-Zuhrî some times practised "tadlîs"². Otherwise, all scholars of Ḥadîth reporters ("Aṣḥâb al-Rijâl") have almost unanimously testified in his favour and have called him truthful (Ṣadûq), reliable (Thiqah) and sound in the Ḥadîth (Ḥasan al-Ḥadîth).³ Since the overwhelming majority of scholars have abso-

1. Mîzân al-I'tidâl, vol 4, p40

2. This means that a transmitter narrated a "ḥadîth" from an authority whom he met but from whom he did not learn that particular "ḥadîth" 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.

3. Mîzân al-I'tidâl, vol 4, p 40; Tahdhîb al-Kamâl, vol 2, p 457; Taqrîb, vol 2, p207; Ibn Khallikân, Wafayât al-A'yân, ed. Muḥammad Muḥî al-Dîn 'Abd al-Ḥamîd, Maktabat al-Nahḍa, Cairo, 1948, vol 3, p317; al-Nasâ'î, Kitâb al-Du'afâ' wa'l-Matrûkîn, Idârat Tarjamân al-Sunnah, Lahore, 1977, p311.

solite confidence in al-Zuhrî, al-Dhahabî's criticism is hardly acceptable. Al-Zuhrî is quoted extensively by early Islamic historians including al-Balâdhurî, al-Wâqidî, al-Ṭabarî and al-Mas'ûdî. He is simply indispensable.

Mûsâ ibn 'Uqbah ibn Abî 'Ayyâsh al-Asadî (d. 141 A.H./758 C.E.): He was one of the two pupils of al-Zuhrî - the other being Muḥammad ibn Ishâq - who aquired a great reputation in the science of Maghâzî. His book on Maghâzî, together with those of Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî laid the foundation on which later historians like al-Ṭabarî, Ibn Kathîr and Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs (d. 734 A.H./1333 C.E.) based their works. His Maghâzî is considered as the most authentic work on the subject. Prominent critics like Ibn Ma'in, Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 A.H./855 C.E.) and Ibn Abî Ḥâtim (d. 277 A.H./890 C.E.) regard his Ḥadîth as reliable.¹ Though his work is now extinct it has been frequently referred to by all the major writers on Sîrah, such as Ibn Sa'd, al-Ṭabarî, Ibn Kathîr, Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs and al-Zurqânî (d. 1122 A.H./1710 C.E.).

1. Mîzân al-l'tidâl, vol 4, p214; Tahdhîb al-Kamâl, vol 3, p68; Taqrîb, vol 2, p286

Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (d. 150 A.H./767 C.E.): He has acquired the widest reputation in Maghâzî and Sîrah. He is said to have been the very first person to write on Maghâzî. As stated above, he was a pupil of Al-Zuhrî. Although he was an expert in the science of Ḥadîth the scholars of Ḥadîth differed about his reliability in Ḥadîth. One objection against him is that he used to narrate reports from the Jews and the Christians. Ibn Ma'în and al-Nasâ'î (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 Ḥanbal regard him as "sound in Ḥadîth"; al-Madînî (d. 234 A.H./848 C.E.) classifies his Ḥadîth as authentic; only Mâlik (d. 179 A.H./795 C.E.) and Ibn al-Qaṭṭân have called him a liar. Furthermore, Ibn al-Qaṭṭân has charged him with having had Shî'ah leanings.¹

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

Ibn Ishāq's "Kitâb al-Maghâzî" 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-Azraqî (d. 244 A.H./858 C.E.). Ibn Ishāq is one of

1. Yâqût al-Ḥamawî, Mu'jam al-Uḍabâ; ed. D.S. Margoliouth, Dâr al-Mustashrif, Beirut, 1922, vol 18, pp 5-8; al-Dhahabî, al-Mughnî fî al-Du'afâ', ed. Nûr al-Dîn 'Itr, Dâr al-Ma'ârif, 1963, vol 2, p 552; Mizân al-I'tidâl, vol 3, pp 468-475; Tahdhîb al-Kamâl, vol 2, p379; Taqrîb, vol 2, p 144; Wafayât, vol 3, pp 405-406

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

Abū Ma'shar Najīh al-Madanī (d. 170 A.H./786 C.E.): Ibn Ma'in, al-Madīnī, al-Nasā'ī, Ibn al-Qaṭṭān and al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385 A.H./995 C.E.) describe him as "weak". Al-Bukhārī (d. 256 A.H./869 C.E.) has rejected his Ḥadīth. Nonetheless, Ibn Ḥanbal regards him as knowledgable in the science of Maghâzī. However, he is known to have had Shī'ah leanings.¹

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

Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Wâqidī al-Aṣlamī (d. 207 A.H./822 C.E.): He belongs to the early group of writers on the "Sīrah" and his famous book on the subject is "Kitâb al-Maghâzī" 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 Sīrah and Maghâzī, he also wrote on fiqh (jurisprudence) military conquests, history and events or episodes of people.

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

1. Mīzân al-I'tidâl, vol 4, pp 246-248; Taqrīb, vol 2, p298; Kitâb al-Ḍu'afâ, pp 313-314; al-Mughnī, vol 2, p 694; Mu'jam al-Udabâ', vol 18, p7

C.E.), Muṣ'ab al-Zubayrî (d. 236 A.H./850 C.E.), and Muḥammad ibn Ishâq al-Saghânî (d. 270 A.H./883 C.E.). However, al-Wâqidî has been condemned and rejected by the most prominent experts of Hadîth criticism. Ibn Ma'în called him "unreliable" whilst al-Dâraqutnî called him "weak". Ibn Ḥanbal accused him of lying and making alterations in the traditions. Ibn Abî Ḥâtim, al-Nasâ'î, al-Madînî and Ishâq ibn Râḥwayh (d. 238 A.H./852 C.E.) all accuse him of fabricating Hadîth.

Al-Bukhârî classified him as "matrûk"¹ and Ibn 'Adî (d. 365 A.H. 975 C.E.) regarded his traditions as "unsafe". It is clear from this that al-Wâqidî was not acceptable in Hadîth or in matters concerning religious injunctions. Despite this, he is regarded as an authority in the field of history, Maghâzî and Sîyar.²

-
1. One whose narrations are not accepted and cannot be taken to verify a ḥadîth transmitted by other scholars.
 2. Mîzân al-I'tidâl, vol 3, pp 662-666; Tahdhîb al-Kamâl, vol 2, p442; Taqrîb, vol 2, p194; Wafayât, vol 3, pp 470-473; Mu'jam al-Udabâ', vol 18, p277; Ibn Sa'd, Kitâb al-Ṭabaqât al-Kabîr, ed. Eduard Sachau, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1904, vol 7, pt 2, p77; al-Bukhârî, Kitâb al-Du'afâ'al-Saghîr, Idârat Tarjamân al-Sunnah, Lahore, 1977, p275; al-Mughnî, vol 2, p619, Kitâb al-Du'afâ', p310

Ibn Sa'd - the pupil of al-Wâqidî - uses him as chief authority for his "Kitâb al-Ṭabaqât al-Kabîr", the foundation of which was the "Kitâb al-Ṭabaqât" of al-Wâqidî. A-Balâdhurî, al-Ṭabarî and Ibn Kathîr also rely a great deal on al-Wâqidî in their works. Imâm al-Shâfi'î has quoted al-Wâqidî on Maghâzî under "siyar al-Wâqidî" in his Kitâb al-Umm.¹

'Alî ibn Muḥammad al-Madâ'inî (d. 225 A.H./839 C.E.): He was a pupil of Abû Ma'shar (mentioned above). Ibn 'Adî did not consider him to be very sound in Ḥadîth though Ibn Ma'in thought him to be reliable. Al-Nasâ'î has called him "matrûk". Though he is not counted among the scholars of Ḥadîth, he is regarded as a leading historian. His literary activity was very extensive and included works on the Sîrah, the Quraysh tribe (genealogy), conquests, the Caliphate as well as the history of poets and literature.² Al-Madâ'ini is one of the major sources for the works of al-Balâdhurî. Ibn Khayyâṭ has also transmitted directly from him.

Hishâm ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sâ'ib al-Kalbî (d. 204 A.H./819 C.E.): He was a scholar of Kûfah. Authorities of Ḥadîth like al-Dâraquṭnî, al-Bukhârî and Ibn al-Qaṭṭân classified him as "matrûk". Ibn Sa'd called weak weak in Ḥadîth. Despite this, he

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1. al-Shâfi'î, Kitâb al-Umm, 2nd ed. ed Muḥammad Zuhrî al-Najjâr, Dâr al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1973, vol 8, pp 269-276
 2. Mîzân al-I'tidâl, vol 3, p 153, Mu'jam al-Udabâ', vol 14, pp 124-139; Ibn Ḥajar, Lisân al-Mizân, 2nd ed., al-A'lamî Printing Press, Beirut, 1971, vol 4, p 253; Taqrîb, vol 1, p345; Kitâb al-Du'afâ, p291

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 Ḥadīth 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 Rawâfiḍ¹. 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 Ḥabîb, al-Balâdhurî and al-Ṭabarî.

Sa'îd 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-Madîni. Ibn Abî Ḥâtim regarded him as the most reliable among the Tâbi'ûn in transmitting from

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1. One of the sects of the Shî'ah who rejected the legitimacy of the caliphate of Abû Bakr and 'Umar and disassociated from 'Uthmân, believing that the prophet had explicitly designated 'Alî to succeed him.
Mîzân al-I'tidâl, vol 4, pp 304-305; Wafayât, vol 5, pp 131-133; Lisân al-Mizân, vol 6, pp 196-197; Tahdhîb al-Kamâl, vol 2, p405; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd , vol 6, p250
 2. Sing. "Tâbi'î": one who did not meet the Prophet personally but was directly acquainted with a Ṣaḥâbî (Companion of the Prophet) Tahdhîb al-Kamâl, vol 1, pp 390-391; Taqrîb, vol 1, pp 305-306; Wafayât, vol 2, p 117; Kitâb al-Ḍu'afâ', p311; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pp 128-132

Abû Hurayrah. Though Ḥadīth reported by him is classified as "mursal"¹, it is accepted as the most authentic of Mursal Ḥadīth. He was also one of the great jurists of his time.² Al-Balâdhurî reports on his authority.

Ma'mar ibn Râshid al-Azdî (d. 153 A.H./770 C.E.): His patronymic was Abû 'Urwah. He was one of the scholars of Kûfah. He compiled an original work on Ḥadīth which is still available. Ibn Abî Ḥâtim regarded him as "sound in Ḥadīth", though he is known to have committed mistakes in some transmissions. In Ibn Ma'în's opinion, Ma'mar was the most reliable transmitter from al-Zuhrî. Al-Nasâ'î found him to be reliable and Ibn Hanbal thought him to be superior to other scholars. Ma'mar also wrote a book on Maghâzî. However, he is known to have had Shî'ah leanings.³ His reports, therefore, cannot be accepted without question, especially in relation to the Umayyad family. Al-Wâqidî quotes him in his Maghâzî.

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1. Transmission of a "tâbi'î" from the Prophet directly, dropping the companion from the "isnâd". This type of Ḥadīth is regarded as weak owing to the discontinuity of the "isnâd".
 2. Mîzân al-I'tidâl, vol 4, p 154; Tahdhîb al-Kamâl, vol 3, p47; Taqrîb, vol 2, p266; al-Mughnî, vol 2, p 671
 - 3 al-Mughnî, vol 2, p671

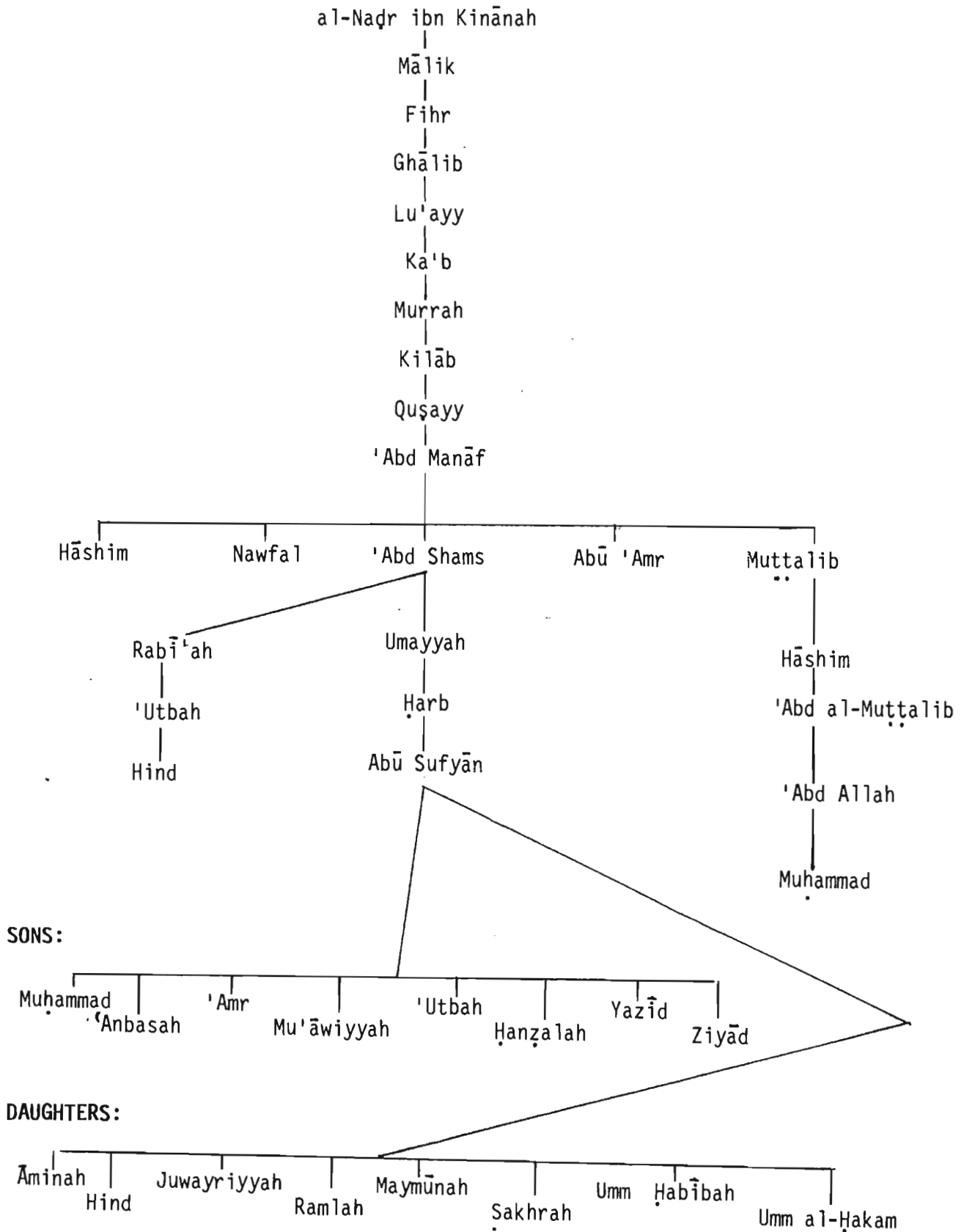
Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn al-Ansāri (d. 110 A.H./728 C.E.): He was a jurist of Baṣrah. He was reputed for his great knowledge of tradition. He was among the most prominent Ḥadīth critics of his time. Ibn Sa'd described him as reliable and trustworthy.¹

Al-Balādhurī has reported many events on his authority.

Sarrī ibn Ismā'īl al-Hamdāni al-Kūfī (d?): He was a cousin of al Sha'bī² (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 Ḥadīth.³ Therefore, his reports are not trustworthy. Al-Ṭabarī has quoted him often in his "Tārīkh".

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1. Tahdhīb 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 Ḥadīth who was also an authority on Maghāzī and Siyar.
 3. Mīzān al-I'tidāl, vol 2, p117; Taqrīb, vol 1, p 285; al-Mughnī, vol 1, pp 252-253, Kitāb al-Du'afā, p 292; Kitāb al-Du'afā al-Ṣaghīr, p 263

GENEALOGY OF ABU SUFYĀN
AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIM AND THE PROPHET



CHAPTER TWO

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF ABÛ SUFYÂN

Abû Sufyân's name was Şakhr.¹ He was sometimes addressed as "Abû Hanẓalah" (the father of Hanẓalah) after the name of his son Hanẓalah.² However, he is better known by his title "Abû Sufyân".³

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1. Şakhr ibn Harb ibn Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams ibn "Abd Manâf ibn Quşayy ibn Kilâb ibn Murrah ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghâlib ibn Fihri ibn Mâlik ibn al-Naḍr ibn Kinânah (Ibn Qutaybah, al-Ma'ârif; 2nd ed: ed. Tharwat 'Ukâshah, Dâr al-Ma'ârif, Cairo, 1969, p344)
 2. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Istî'âb fi Ma'rifat al-Ashâb, Maktabat al-Muthannâ, Baghdad, 1328 A.H., vol 2, p191
 3. There is no indication in the sources as to how he acquired this title.

Date of Birth

Abû Sufyân 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 Hajar.² Abû Sufyân was of medium height, extremely grave, short and stocky.³

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1. Arabic: " 'Âm al-Fîl". 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 Şan'â' (Yemen), where he had erected a great cathedral for that purpose. Chapter 105 of the Qur'ân is named "al-Fîl" (the Elephant) after this incident.

al-Balâdhurî, Ansâb al-Ashrâf, ed. Max Schloessinger, Magnus Press, Jerusalem, 1971, vol 4A, p11

2. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalânî, al-Isâbah fî Tamyîz al-Sahâbah, Dâr Ihyâ al-Turâth al-'Arabî, Beirut, 1328 A.H., vol 2, p179
3. Ibn al-Athîr, Usd al-Ghâbah fi Ma'rifat al-Sahâbah, ed. Muḥammad Ibrâhîm al-Banna, et al, al-Sha'b, Cairo, 1970, vol 3, p11

Parents

Abû Sufyân was one of nine children of the chief of the Umayyad tribe, Harb ibn Umayyah. The others were:

al-Fâri'ah, Umaymah, Umm al-Ḥakam, Fâkhitah, Umm Jamîl¹, al-Dahyâ; 'Amr² and al-Hârith³.

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1. She married the Prophet's paternal uncle, Abû Lahab, one of the staunchest enemies of Islam. (See Ibn Ḥazm, Jamharat Ansâb al-'Arab, 3rd ed. ed. 'Abd al-Salâm Muḥammad Hârûn, Dâr al-Ma'ârif, Cairo, 1971, p72; al-Ma'ârif, p125). Both Abû Lahab and his wife are mentioned in the Qur'ân (see Chapter 111).
 2. Ibn Ḥazm gives his name as 'Umar (see Ansâb 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, Safîyyah (see al-Ma'ârif, p128; Ansâb al-'Arab, p111; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p27) Harb ibn Umayyah's children are listed in Ansâb al-'Arab, p429 and Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p4.

Ḥarb ibn Umayyah had several wives. Abû Sufyân's mother was Ṣafîyyah bint Ḥazn ibn Bujayr ibn al-Ḥuzum ibn Ruwaybah ibn 'Abd Allâh ibn Hilâl ibn 'Amir according to Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn al-Athîr and Ibn Khayyât¹. Though Ibn Ḥajar gives her name as Ṣafîyyah bint Ḥarb al-Hilâliyyah² and Ibn Qutaybah cites her name as Ṣafîyyah bint al-Ḥârith³, the first name seems more likely as Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Khayyât are greater authorities on genealogy and, therefore, more reliable.

1. Ansâb al-'Arab, p274; Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 3, p10; Ibn Khayyât, Kitâb al-Tabaqât, ed. Akram Diyâ al-'Umarî, al-'Anî Press, Baghdad, 1967, p10.

2. al-Iṣâbah, vol 2, pp 178-179.

3. al-Ma'ârif, p344.

In the battle of Fijâr¹, Harb ibn Umayyah was the commander of the Quraysh and Kinânah 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 Kinânah had killed twenty more men than their adversaries.

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

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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 "Fijâr" because it was fought during the months when fighting was unlawful.
 2. Ibn Hishâm, al-Sîrah al-Nabawîyyah, 2nd ed., Muṣṭafâ al-Saqâ et al, Cairo, 1955, vol 1, p186.
 3. Ibn al-Athîr, al-Kâmil fi al-Târikh, Dâr Şâdir, Beirut, vol 1, p595.

Wives and Offspring

Abû Sufyân had eight wives during the course of his life. At the advent of Islam he had six wives.¹ The names of his wives are mentioned in various sources as follows:

- i) Şafîyyah bint Abî al-'Âş ibn Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams.²
- ii) Hind bint 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah ibn 'Abd Shams.³
- iii) 'Atikah bint Abî Uzayhir.⁴
- iv) Umm 'Amr bint Abî 'Amr ibn Umayyah.⁵
- v) Shamsah Hilâliyyah.⁶
- vi) al-Sa'bah bint al-Ḥadramî.⁷

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1. al-Işâbah, vol 4, p358.
 2. Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p217.
 3. ibid, p170.
 4. Sîrah, vol 1, p413.
 5. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p5.
 6. ibid, p6.
 7. al-Zamakhsharî, al-Fâ'iq fî Gharîb al-Ḥadîth, ed. 'Alî Muḥammad al-Bajawî, 'Isâ al-Bâbî al-Ḥalabî, Cairo, 1971, vol 1, p140.

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 Fihir ibn Kinânah according to Ibn Khayyât.²

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

or

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

1. Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 2, p127.

2. Tabaqât Ibn Khayyât, p10.

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, p111.

4. al-Wâqidî, Kitâb al-Maghâzî, ed. Marsden Jones, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, vol 1, p202.

or

Umaymah bint Sa'id ibn Wahb ibn Ashyam al-Kinâniyah according to Ibn Habîb¹ and al-Balâdhurî.²

Abû Sufyân had sixteen children - eight sons and eight daughters. The names of his sons were:

'Amr, 'Anbasah, Hanzalah, Mu'âwiyyah, Muḥammad, 'Utbah, Yazîd and Ziyâd.³

1. Ibn Habîb, Kitâb al-Muḥabbar, ed. Dr E L Shtater, Dâr al-Afaq al-Jadîdah, Beirut, 1361 A.H., p410.,

2. al-Balâdhurî, Ansâb al-Ashrâf, ed. Dr Muḥammad Ḥamîdullah, Dâr al-Ma'ârif, 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 "Sufyân" is only given by one authority. And though Ibn Habîb gives the name of his wife as "Umaynah" this is most likely an error.

3. al-Ma'ârif, pp 344-345.

Al-Balâdhurî has given the same list as above, but has excluded the name of Ziyâd.¹ The reason for this omission will be discussed shortly.

The names of Abû Sufyân's daughters were:

Âminah, Hind, Juwayriyyah, Maymûnah, Ramlah, Şakhrâh, Umm Habîbah and Umm al-Hakam.²

As Umm Habîbah's real name was Ramlah, she was referred to as Ramlah al-Kubrâ (senior) to distinguish her from the other Ramlah who was called Ramlah al-Şughrâ (junior).³

1. see Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, pp 4-6.

2. al-Ma'ârif, p344; Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, pp 5-6.

3. ibid; ibid

The following is a complete list of the names of Abû Sufyân's wives with their respective offsprings:

- i) Safîyyah = Âminah, Hanzalah, and Umm Habîbah
- ii) Hind = Juwayrîyyah, Mu'âwiyyah, Umm al-Hakam and 'Utbah
- iii) 'Âtikah = 'Anbasah and Muḥammad
- vi) Umm 'Amr = 'Amr¹, Hind and Şakhrāh
- v) Shamsah = Maymûnah
- vi) Zaynab or Hind = Yazîd
- vii) Umaymah = Ramlah al-Şuḡhrâ²

Ziyâd

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

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1. According to Ibn Ḥazm, 'Amr was the son of Hind (see Ansâb al-'Arab, p111). This is unlikely, else how would 'Umm 'Amr have acquired that name?
 2. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, pp 4-6; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa`d, vol 7, pt2, p127. There is no mention of al-Sa`bah's children in the sources.

to be called Ziyâd ibn 'Ubayd¹. Ziyâd accepted Islam during the caliphate of Abû Bakr². Since Sumayyah had a husband Abû Sufyân could not openly proclaim Ziyâd as his son. Later, Ziyâd came to be popularly known as "Ziyâd ibn Abîh"³ (i.e., Ziyâd, the son of his father) because of the dispute regarding the identity of his father. Whilst Abû Bakrah, the son of 'Ubayd and Sumayyah and, therefore, brother of Ziyâd as well as other people denied that Ziyâd was the son of Abû Sufyân⁴, Ziyâd himself acknowledged Abû Sufyân as his father⁵. When the Prophet's wife, 'Â'ishah, once

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1. Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, al-'Iqd al-Farîd 2nd ed. ed. Ahmad Amîn et al., Lajnat al-Ta'lîf wa al-Tarjamah wa al-Nashr, Cairo, 1956, vol 6, p132; vol 5, p5.
Al-Ya`qûbi, Târîkh, Beirut, 1960, vol 2, p218.
Ibn 'Asâkir, Tahdhîb Târîkh Dimashq al-Kabîr, ed. 'Abd al-Qâdir Badrân, Dâr al-Massira, Beirut, 1979, vol 5, p409
 2. Târîkh Dimsahq, vol 5, p409.
 3. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 1, p70; al-'Iqd, vol 5, p5.
 4. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, p493; vol 4A, pp 175, 191, and 194
 5. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 1, pp 9, 70-71; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 5, p422; al-'Iqd, vol 5, p11.

wrote to Ziyâd she addressed him as Ziyâd ibn Abî Sufyân¹ showing that she accepted this relationship.

Ziyâd's kinship with Abû Sufyân was finally established during the caliphate of Mu'âwiyyah, his brother. Abû Sufyân's daughter, Juwayriyyah, testified that her father had claimed Ziyâd as his son. Another witness claimed to have heard 'Alî ibn Ṭâlib - the fourth Caliph of Islam - saying that Ziyâd was indeed the son of Abû Sufyân². Mu'âwiyyah accepted Ziyâd as his brother on the basis of this evidence. Though Abû al-Yaqẓân³ claimed that Ziyâd's mother was Asmâ' bint al-A'war, al-Balâdhurî rejected this report.⁴ The above evidence proves that Ziyâd was indeed the son of Abû Sufyân.

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1. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 1, p71.
 2. al-'Iqd, vol 5, p5; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 5, p400; Târîkh al-Ya'qûbî, vol 2, p219, al-Ṭabarî, Târîkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulûk, ed. M J de Goeje, E J Brill, Leiden, 1964, S 2, p70; Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p168.
 3. He lived in Kûfah and is considered weak in Ḥadîth by Ibn Ma'în, al-Nasâ'î, al-Dâraqutnî, and Ibn Ḥanbal. He is also known to have had Shî'ah pretensions (Mîzân al-I'tidâl, vol 3, p50; Tahdhîb al-Kamâl, vol 2, p219).
 4. See Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p169; and al-Ma'ârif, p346.

Ziyâd became a scribe of al-Mughîrah ibn Shu'bah, the governor of Kûfah, then of Abû Mûsâ ak-Ash'arî, the governor of Baṣrah during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb¹ (13 A.H./634 C.E.-24 A.H./644 C.E.). He continued to serve as a scribe to the new governor of Kûfah, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Âmir, during the caliphate of 'Uthmân.² (24 A.H./644 C.E. - 35 A.H./656 C.E.). When 'Alî became the caliph (r. 35 A.H./656 C.E. -40 A.H./661 C.E.), Ziyâd was appointed as scribe to 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Abbâs, the governor of Baṣrah and then as governor of Persia.³ Later, his brother, Mu'âwiyah, the first Umayyad caliph (r. 40 A.H./661 C.E. - 60 A.H./679 C.E.) made him governor of Baṣrah, and when al-Mughîrah ibn Shu'bah died, then over Baṣrah as well as Kûfah.⁴ Ziyâd died in Kûfah in 53 A.H.⁵ (672 C.E.).

1. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p169; and al-Ma'ârif, p346.

2. al-Muḥabbar, p378.

3. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p165; According to al-Ṭabarî, Ziyâd was appointed to collect the kharâj (land tax) from the people of Baṣrah (see Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, Series 1, p3448)

4. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p170.

5. al-Ma'ârif. p346; Ansâb al-Ashrâf; vol 4A, pp 137, 172, and 195; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 1, p71.

Mu'âwiyyah

Of Abû Sufyân's sons, Mu'âwiyyah is the best known. Al-Wâqidî reports on the authority of Muş'ab al-Zubayrî¹ (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 Islam². Al-Balâdhurî has cited al-Wâqidî's report³. In his biography of Mu'âwiyyah, Ibn Sa'd also states that Mu'âwiyyah had concealed his acceptance of Islam and only disclosed it to the Prophet on the day of the Conquest of Makkah.⁴

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

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1. He was a well-known historian and genealogist of Baghdad (Taqrîb, vol 2, p252; Mîzân al-I'tidâl, vol 4, p120; Tahdhîb al-Kamal, vol 3, p32).
 2. Kitâb al-Maghâzi, vol 1, p359.
 3. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p11.
 4. Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 2, p128.

have made this known to the Prophet or to someone among his companions even if it had to be done secretly for fear of his father. In that case he would not have been included among the "Ṭulaqâ'".¹

Mu'âwiyah participated in the Expedition of Hunayn and of Ṭâ'if. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb appointed him as governor of Damascus. When 'Umar died 'Uthmân 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 'Alî 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 60.A.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'âwiyah in the battle of Siffîn.⁵ Later he returned to Madînah.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.
2. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 2, p128.
3. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p4.
4. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p3219.
5. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p99.
6. ibid, p4.

Al-Balâdhurî refutes the claim that 'Utbah was appointed as governor of Madînah after the death of 'Â'ishah¹ (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 Ṭâ'if² 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 Ḥunayn. 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.¹ In the battle of Yarmûk in 15 A.H./636 C.E. Abû Sufyân fought under the command of Yazîd.²

Ḥanzalah was killed in the battle of Badr as a disbeliever by 'Alî ibn Abî Tâlib.³

'Anbasah was appointed by Mu'âwiyah as governor of Makkah and later of Tâ'if as well.⁴

Umm Ḥabîbah

The best known of Abû Sufyân's daughters is Umm Ḥabîbah. She was married to 'Ubayd Allah ibn Jahsh and migrated with him to Abyssinia when the Quraysh intensified their persecution of the Muslims in Makkah. There 'Ubayd Allah became a Christian but she remained a Muslim. 'Ubayd Allah subsequently died in Abyssinia. On hearing about this, the Prophet sent 'Amr ibn Umayyah al-Ḍamrî to the negus in Abyssinia proposing marriage to Umm Ḥabîbah. The negus fixed her dower at 400 dinars and Khâlid ibn Sa'îd ibn al-

1. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 2, p127.

2. al-Ma'ârif, p345; al-Isâbah, vol 2, p179; Ibn Khayyât, Târîkh, ed. Akram Diyâ al-'Umarî, Baghdad, 1967, vol 1, pp 99-100.

3. al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p47.

4. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, pp 130, 135-136.

'Ās 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-Wāqidī, it took place in 7 A.H.² Al-Ṭabarī, on the other hand, records the marriage as one of the events which took place in 6 A.H., on the authority of Hishām al-Kalbī.³ This date is corroborated by Ma'mar ibn Muthannā⁴ (d 209 A.H./824

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1. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, pp 68-70; Sīrah, vol 2, pp 362-363; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S1, pp 1570, 1772; Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, n.d., vol 6, p427; Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, ed Muḥammad Muḥī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Dār Iḥyā al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyyah, Baghdad, vol 2, pp 229, 235.
 2. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p70.
 3. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S1, p1570.
 4. He was a genealogist, historian and grammarian of Baṣrah. He wrote about 200 books on the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, conquests, battles, the Khārijites, etc. (Mu'jam al-Udabā', vol 19, pp 154-162).

- Maymûnah
- i) 'Urwah ibn Mas'ûd ibn al-Mu'attib al-Thaqafî.
 - ii) al-Mughîrah ibn Shu'bah al-Thaqafî.
- Umm al-Hakam
- i) 'Iyâd ibn 'Abd Ghanam al-Fihri.
 - ii) 'Abd Allah ibn 'Uthmân ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Rabî'ah ibn al-Hârith ibn Hubayyib ibn al-Hârith ibn Mâlik ibn Huṭayṭ ibn Jusham al-Thaqafî.
- Ramlah
- i) Muḥammad ibn Abî Hudhayfah ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah ibn 'Abd Shams ibn 'Abd Manâf.
 - ii) Sa'id ibn 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân ibn Abî al-[^]Âṣ ibn Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams ibn 'Abd Manâf.
 - iii) 'Amr ibn Sa'id al-Ashdaq ibn Sa'id ibn al-[^]Âṣ.
- [^]Aminah
- i) Huwaytib ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzâ ibn Abi Qays ibn 'Abd Wudd ibn Nadr ibn Mâlik ibn Hiṣl ibn [^]Âmir ibn Lu'ayy.
 - ii) Ṣafwân ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf al-Jumahî.

iii) 'Abd Allah ibn Mu'âwiyyah¹

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1. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 5, pp 113-114; vol 8 pp 8, 174-175; Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, pp 440-441; vol 4A, pp 5-6; al-Muḥabbar, p104.

Al-Balâdhurî has erroneously listed Umaymah as the daughter of Abû Sufyân in place of Āminah (see vol 1, p440). Again he has incorrectly named al-Mughîrah ibn Shu'bah as the husband of Āminah (see vol 4A, p5). Al-Mughîrah was in fact married to Maymûnah as he has correctly stated in vol. 1 (see p441).

Ibn Hishâm and al-Ṭabarî name 'Urwah ibn Mas'ûd as the husband of Āminah (see Sîrah, vol 2, p483; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1672). 'Urwah was in fact the first husband of Maymûnah.

Umm al-Hakam was the only Qurayshite woman to apostasize. She was one of six women who returned to Makkah after migrating to Madînah with the Muslims. She was at the time married to 'Iyâd. Later she married 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Uthmân and re-embraced Islam when the Thaḳîf tribe to which her husband belonged, accepted Islam (al-Suyûtî, al-Durr al-Manthûr fî al-Tafsîr al-Ma'thûr, ed. Muhammad Amîn Damâj, Beirut, n.d. vol 6, p205).

Hind

As for Abû Sufyân's wives, there is very little information about them except for Hind bint 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah. It is reported that a chief and a poet of the Quraysh, Musâfir ibn Abî 'Amr ibn Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams ibn 'Abd Manâf 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 Musâfir spent the rest of his life grieving for her till he finally died heartbroken.¹

According to Ibn Sa'd and al-Balâdhurî, Hind first married Hafṣ² ibn al-Mughîrah ibn 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Umar ibn al-Makhzûm.³ When Hafṣ was killed, Abû Sufyân and Suhayl ibn 'Amr⁴ proposed to

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1. Sîrah, vol 1, p150.
 2. Ibn Ḥabîb says that she married al-Fâkih ibn al-Mughîrah before she married Hafṣ (see al-Muḥabbar, p437).
Ibn 'Abd Rabbih agrees that she married al-Fâkih but makes no mention of Hafṣ (see al-`Iqd al-Farîd, vol 6, p86).
 3. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p170; Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p43
 4. He is the man who agreed to the terms of the Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah on behalf of the Meccans.

her.¹

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 Abû Sufyân and Suhayl proposed to her, he described the qualities of Suhayl, then of Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân and married him.²

When Abû Sufyân 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

1. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p6.

2. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p171; al-'Iqd al-Farîd, vol 6, pp 87-88. See also Abû`Alî al-Qâlî, Kitâb al-Amâlî, ed Ismâ'il Yûsuf Diyâb, Dâr al-Kutub al-Misrîyyah, Cairo, 1926, vol 2, pp 104-105

3. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p66.

Suhayl ibn 'Amr, whose proposal Hind had rejected, was very disappointed and composed a poem in which he lamented his loss. When Abû Sufyân heard that he said that he was prepared to do anything to please Suhayl, barring divorce. When Suhayl persisted in belittling him, Abû Sufyân 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 independent 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 Abû Sufyân's son, Hanzalah³ (whose mother was Safiyyah). She promised freedom to a slave, Wahshî ibn Harb, if he killed Hamzah. She had sworn that

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1. Al-`Iqd al-Farîd, vol 6, p88. see Appendix A(a) for text of poem
 2. Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 7, p292
 3. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 708-709

if Ḥamzah was killed, she would eat his liver. When Wahshī killed Ḥamzah, he tore open his stomach, took out his liver and brought it to Hind. She chewed it but could not swallow it, so she spat it out. Then she mutilated his body and made a garland from parts of his body.¹

Al-Balâdhuri 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 death². Though other sources do not mention this, it is understandable considering that Hind was guilty of mutilating Ḥamzah's body and mutilation is regarded as a crime in Islam. However, it appears that the Prophet forgave her when she accepted Islam.

Al-Tabarî 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. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt `1, pp 5-7

2. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, p357; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p98

mutilation of Ḥamzah's body in the battle of Uhud.¹ Hind informed Abû Sufyân 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, Abû Sufyân 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?"

1. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S. 1, p1643

2. Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 7, p293

The Prophet replied: "Take from his wealth what suffices you and your child without blame."¹

When Abû Sufyân 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

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1. al-Bukhârî, al-Jâmi' al-Sahîh, ed. M Ludolf Krehl, Brill, Leiden, 1862, vol 2, p 102; vol 4, pp 488-490; Muslim, Sahîh, ed Muḥammad Fu'âd 'Abd al-Bâqî, Beirut, 1955 vol 3, p1338; Ibn Mâjah, Sunan, ed Muḥammad Fu'âd `Abd al-Bâqî, `Isa al-Bâbî al-Ḥalabî, Beirut, 1952, vol 2, p769; al-Nasâ'î, Sunan, ed Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Mas'ûdî, Dâr Ihyâ al-Turâth al-`Arabî, Beirut, 1930, vol 8, pp 246-247, Musnad, vol 6, p50.
 2. Târîkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1643, Tabaqât 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 Abû 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'ân.³

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1. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1643; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p4
 2. Ibn Kathîr, Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-`Azîm, Beirut, 1969, vol 4, p354
 3. al-Qur'ân, 106: 1-2

The merchants travelled to these areas in caravans and included some wealthy men of the Quraysh and some of their leaders.¹ Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân'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 Balqâ' called "Qubbâsh" and was known to have been respected for his wealth.⁵

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1. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, p59; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p43
 2. Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 6, p148
 3. al-Ma'ârif, p575
 4. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p109
 5. al-Balâdhurî, Futûh al-Buldân, 2nd ed; ed. M J de Goeje, E J Brill, Leiden, 1968, p129; vol 4A, p110

Abû Sufyân was one of seventeen men who could write at the advent of Islam.¹ A man by the name of Bishr ibn 'Abd al-`Ibâdî taught Abû Sufyân and Abû Qays ibn 'Abd Manâf ibn Zuhrah to write. They in turn taught it to the people of Makkah.²

Abû Sufyân was the chief of the Banû `Abd Shams and one of the nobility of the Quraysh.³ He was appointed chief because of his wisdom.⁴ Ibn Hazm describes him as wealthy and niggardly, but greatly loved by his people.⁵ It is said that the Quraysh were pleased with his leadership.⁶

There is no doubt that Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân.⁷ On

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1. Futûh al-Buldân, pp 471-472
 2. al-Ma'ârif, p553
 3. Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 4, pt 1, p12; Sîrah, vol 1, p417
 4. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p110
 5. Ansâb al-`Arab, p80
 6. al-Muḥabbar, p338
 7. al-`Iqd al-Farîd, vol 2, pp 201, 287

another occasion a Yemenite requested that his camel be slaughtered by the most respected man in Makkah. Again Abû Sufyân was accorded this privilege.¹ This shows that he enjoyed the distinction of being the most respected member of Makkan society.

A further illustration that Abû Sufyân was held in high esteem by his people is the fact that he was often appointed to arbitrate in their disputes.² It will suffice here to quote the following instances:

Hamzah ibn`Abd al-Muttalib was passing a group of Banû Makhzûm when one of them insulted a woman of the Banû Manâf. So Hamzah struck him so severely that he died. Then he informed Abû Sufyân about it. Abû Sufyân approached the Banû Makhzûm and offered them three animals as blood-money for the deceased. But they declined it. When they came the next day to Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân said that they would only

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1. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p9
 2. al-Muhabbar, p132

get one animal. Once again they refused to accept his offer though they returned the following day to indicate their acceptance. However, Abû Sufyân now informed them that they would not receive any blood-money as they had declined it each time it was offered to them.¹

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

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

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

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

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

1. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, pp 6-7

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-Jâhiz 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.

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1. al-`Iqd al-Farîd, vol 2, p188
 2. al-Jâhiz, Kitâb al-Tâj fi Akhlâq al-Mulûk, ed. Ahmad Zâkî Pâshâ, al-Amiriyya Press, Cairo, 1914, p56

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'âwiyah, led the funeral prayer for him¹ it is generally agreed that he died in Madînah and that 'Uthmân led the funeral prayer.² 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.³

1. Fuṭūḥ al-Buldân, p135; Usd al-Ghabâh, vol 6, p149
2. Fuṭūḥ al-Buldân, p135; Usd al-Ghabâh, vol 6, p149, vol 3, p10; al-Istî'âb, vol 2, p190; Ṭabaqât Ibn Khayyât, p10; Târikh al-Ya'qûbî, vol 2, p169
3. Futûḥ al-Buldân, p139; Usd al-Ghabâh, vol 3, p11; vol 6, p149; Târikh Dimashq, vol 6, p409; Târikh al-Ya'qûbî, vol 2, p169; al-Istî'âb, vol 2, p191

His age when he died is said to have been sixty-eight, eighty-eight or ninety-three.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.²

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1. Futûḥ al-Buldân, p135; Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 3, p11; vol 6, p149; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p409
 2. Ṭabaqât Ibn Khayyât, p10; Târîkh al-Ya'qûbî, vol 2, p169; Futûḥ al-Buldân, p135; al-Kâmil fî al-Târîkh, vol 3, p130; al-Suyûtî, Târîkh al-Khulafâ', ed Muḥammad Muḥî al-Dîn'Abd al-Hamîd, al-Madanî Press, Cairo, 3rd ed; 1964, p156

CHAPTER 3

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

Three years after the first Revelation (Wahy¹), God commanded the Prophet to proclaim the teachings of Islam openly.² When the Prophet began preaching Islam openly and condemned idolatry, some respectable persons from among the Quraysh complained to Abû Tâlib³ who pacified them by mild words and sent them away.⁴ However, as the Prophet would not desist from performing his prophetic mission, they approached Abû Tâlib 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 Abû Tâlib 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.⁵ As Abû Tâlib refused to yield to the demand of the Quraysh, they began to put pressure on the Prophet persecuting him in various ways.⁵

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1. See Qur'ân, 15:94 and 26:214-216
 2. the paternal uncle and guardian of the Prophet; he was the seniormost member of the Hâshimites.
 3. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 264-265; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1174; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 134-135
 4. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 264-266; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1174-1179
 5. For details see Sîrah, vol 1, p355; Saḥîḥ al-Bukhârî, vol 1, p71, vol 3, p22; Musnad, vol 4, p63; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1186

Undaunted by the persecution of the Quraysh, the Prophet continued preaching Islam. 'Utbah ibn Rabî'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. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 293-294

2. ibid, pp 317-321

3. Sîrah, vol 1, p205; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1179 and 1181
Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt 1, pp 162, 164-166

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.

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

2. See Qur'ân, 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 Umayyah for leadership of the Quraysh tribe.¹ Since the Prophet belonged to the Banû Hâshim, the Banû Umayyah 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 ruler² who was known for his justice and equity.³ 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

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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-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1181, 1183

brief description of Islam by the Prophet's cousin, Ja'far ibn Abî Tâlib, 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-Khaṭṭâb, one of the strongest opponents of Islam declared his conversion to Islam.⁴ The conversion of 'Umar changed the situation all at

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1. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 333-337; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1189
 2. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1194; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1 p138
 3. Ṭabaqât ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 138-139; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî S 1, p1198
 4. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 345-346; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pp 191-193; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1189

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 Tâlib 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. Sîrah, vol 1, p342; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 3, p193
 2. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 139-140; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1189; Sîrah, vol 1, pp 350-351, 375-376
 3. For details see al-Suhaylî, al-Rawd al-Unuf, Cairo, 1972, vol 2, p127
 4. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 374-37; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1196-1198
Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p141

Not long after the end of the boycott the Prophet lost his uncle and protector, Abû Ṭâlib, as well as his faithful wife and helpmate Khadîjah.¹ 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 Ṭâ'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.²

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.³ It is reasonable to expect that since the Prophet and his followers were being subjected to relentless

1. Sîrah, vol 1, p418; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p11; vol 1, pt 1, p141; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S-1, p1199

2. Sîrah, vol 1, p419; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1199-1200; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 141-142

3. Sîrah, vol 1, p423; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî. S 1, pp 1204-1206; Ṭabaqât 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.¹ They responded favourably to his invitation to embrace Islam.² 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.³

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 covenant of al-'Aqabah" when they took a pledge called "Bay'at al-Nisâ'" (Pledge of Women).⁴ This covenant 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

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1. This was the original name of Madînah; it came to be known as Madînat al-Nabî (the city of the Prophet) on his settling here after his migration, and later became simply Madînah
 2. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 428-429; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1209-1210; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 146-147
 3. Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1210; Sîrah, vol 1, pp 428-429
 4. Sîrah, vol 1, p431; Târikh al-Ṭabarî. S 1, pp 1211-1213; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 147-148

establish him in a very strong position in Arabia. After this covenant, 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 covenant of 'Aqabah" when they took a pledge called "Bay'at al-Harb" (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

1. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1216-1217; Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt 1, p83

2. Sīrah, vol 1, p454; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1217-1220; Ṭabaqāt 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

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

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 him², 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. Sīrah, vol 1, pp 482-485; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1232-1236; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 153 ff
 2. Sīrah, vol 1, p486; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1239

city from his hands in order to protect the trade route. They had written a letter to 'Abd Allâh ibn Ubayy¹ warning him to either kill or drive the Prophet out of Madînah, else they would destroy Madînah 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 Anşâr. 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 Madinah. 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 Abû Sufyân 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 Madînah 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 "Munâfiqûn" (Hypocrites) in Madînah.
2. Sîrah, vol 1, p448; al-Muḥabbar, p271

CHAPTER 4

ABŪ SUFYÂN'S OPPOSITION TO THE PROPHET OF ISLAM

A. FROM THE ADVENT OF PROPHETHOOD TO BADR

Journey with Umayyah ibn Abî Salt to Syria

The Arabs in general were familiar with the idea of an expected Prophet through Jewish and Christian traditions. Umayyah ibn Abî Şalt al-Thaqafî, a tribal chief and famous poet of Tâ'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 Abû Sufyân was away on a trade journey to Syria and Umayyah ibn Abî Şalt 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 Abû Sufyân 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'ârif, p60

2. al-Bayhaqî, Dalâ'il al-Nubuwwah, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Saqr, al-Ahrâm, Cairo, 1970, vol 1, pp 469-470; al-Bidâyah, vol 2, p222

the Prophet. On hearing that the Prophet would be a young man, Abû Sufyân's immediate response was that if God did send a prophet he would be an old and noble man.¹

This reaction of Abû Sufyân 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 Tâ'if.²

It is not surprising, therefore, that Umayyah ibn Abî Saḥḥ then asked Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân replied: 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah.³ This explains why when Abû Sufyân returned

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1. al-Bidâyah, vol 2, pp 222-223; Dalâ'il al-Nubuwwah, vol 1, p470; Ma'ruf al-Arnawut, Sayyid Quraysh, 3rd ed; Dâr al Kalam, Beirut, 1971, vol 1, pp 11-17
 2. See Qur'ân, 6:53; 11:27; 25:41; 43:31
 3. he was the chief of Makkah and father-in-law of Abû Sufyân
Dalâ'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.¹) had claimed to be a Messenger of Allah, he was completely taken aback and incredulously retorted "this man is false".² This shows that it was inconceivable for Abû Sufyân - 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 Abû Sufyân left again for Yemen for trade. On the way he called on Umayyah ibn Abî Ṣalṭ to inform him that the Prophet had made his appearance in Makkah and that he was Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allâh. When Umayyah acknowledged that Muḥammad (S.A.W.S.) fitted the description of the awaited Prophet and advised Abû Sufyân to follow him, Abû Sufyân 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 - Banû Thaḳîf - as a Prophet.³ What this indicates is that Abû Sufyân was anxious and eager to know how others reacted to Muḥammad's claim to prophethood.

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1. This is an abbreviation of the Arabic "ṣallallâhu alayhi wa sallam " meaning, "may Allah bless him and grant (him) peace"
 2. al-Bidâyah, vol 2, p223; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, pp 395-396
 3. al-Bidâyah, vol 2, pp 223-224

When Abû Sufyân returned to Makkah and saw that the Prophet's companions were being assaulted 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 Abû Sufyân, Umayyah had mentioned that most of the Prophet's army consisted of angels. This shows that Abû Sufyân was comparing Muhammad (S.A.W.S.) with Umayyah's description of the awaited Prophet.

Journey with al-'Abbâs to Yemen

On one of his trade journeys to Yemen, Abû Sufyân accosted al-'Abbâs, the Prophet's paternal uncle who was travelling with him, about his nephew's claim to prophethood. Apparently al-'Abbâs 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, Abû Sufyân 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-'Abbâs said that he found his nephew to be honest and truthful, Abû Sufyân cautioned him against making a hasty judgement. Abû Sufyân said that whilst the family of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (father of al-'Abbâs 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-'Abbâs

1. al-Bidâyah, vol 2, p223

replied that it might, in fact, be a blessing for them.¹

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

At the same time Abû Sufyân's cautioning of al-'Abbâs 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 Muḥammad's claim to prophethood was accepted and confirmed by the people of Makkah, especially by his close companions like al-'Abbâs.

A few days later while they were still in Yemen, 'Abd Allâh ibn Ḥudhâfah, who had accepted Islam, arrived in Yemen. The news of his arrival spread quickly among the people of Yemen. It so happened that Abû Sufyân 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-Iṣbahânî, Kitâb al-Aghânî, Costatasumas, Cairo, 1925, vol 6, p350

claim to prophethood because there were others who were better than him.¹ This proves again that in Abû Sufyân's eyes, Muḥammad (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 Abû Sufyân and al-'Abbâs both attended the session of the Jews. This time al-'Abbâs answered the rabbi's questions about the Prophet - whether he was honest and truthful, and whether he was literate. When al-'Abbâs informed him that the Prophet was known as "al-Amîn" (the trustworthy) by the Quraysh, and that he could not write, the rabbi exclaimed that this was the end of the Jews. Later, al-'Abbâs asked Abû Sufyân whether he was now willing to believe in the Prophet after having witnessed the rabbi's reaction. Abû Sufyân replied that he would not believe in him till he saw horses emerging from Kadâ'.² When al-'Abbâs asked him what he meant by that he said that horses never entered Makkah from the direction of Kadâ'.³ This seems to imply that the acceptance of Islam was the furthest thing from his mind at the moment.

1. al-Aghânî, 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-Aghânî, vol 6, p351

Abû Sufyân, Abû Jahl and the Prophet

One day when the Prophet was passing Abû Sufyân and Abû 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. Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Jahl that while he might find it a cause for laughter now, he would find it a cause for weeping later. As for Abû Sufyân, 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 Abû Sufyân's refusal to accept his prophethood was primarily because he did not belong to the Umayyad family, who in Abû Sufyân's eyes, were the noblest among the Quraysh.² Had the Prophet been an Umayyad, Abû Sufyân 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

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1. al-Bidâyah, vol 3, p65; al-Alûsî, Rûh al-Ma'ânî fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-'Azîm wa al-Sab' al-Mathânî, Dâr Ihyâ al-Turâth al-'Arabî, Beirut, n.d., vol 17, p48
 2. cf Abû Sufyân's conversation with Umayyah ibn Abî Ṣalt earlier in this Chapter

once he was accepted by the generality of the people. Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân's mind. That is why when he learnt that Khâlid ibn Sa'îd ibn al-'Âs² 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 Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân's tribe, the Banû Umayyah, and the Prophet's

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1. *Ansâb al-Ashrâf*, vol 4A, p9
 2. He was among the Muslims who migrated to Abyssinia. There he contracted the Prophet's marriage to Umm Habîbah. He also acted as the mediator between the Prophet and the Banû Thaqîf tribe when the latter embraced Islam.
 3. *al-Balâdhurî*, *Ansâb al-Ashrâf*, ed. Max Schloessinger, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1938, vol 4B, pp 125-126

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-Hârith, was married to the Prophet's paternal aunt, Şafîyyah, 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, Quşayy ibn Kilâb who had attained great fame and prominence as the custodian of the Ka'bah.¹ At the time of Quşayy's death, his son, 'Abd Manâf, secured the leadership of the Quraysh² and Hâshim, the son

1. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 124, 130; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1089-1090; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 37, 39

2. Sîrah, vol 1, p132; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p42

of 'Abd Manâf, assumed the custodianship of the Ka'bah.¹ It was, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the son of Hâshim, who, by his seniority and influence, had made the Hâshimites supreme.² On his death, however, there was none among them to command such influence. As a result, the leadership of the Quraysh passed on to Abû Sufyân's father, Harb ibn Umayyah, who was the grandson of 'Abd Shams, the brother of Hâshim.³ This meant that the Umayyads now enjoyed dominance over the Hâshimites.

When the mantle of prophethood fell on Muhammad (S.A.W.S.) the Banû Umayyah realised that this would restore the honour and prestige of the Banû Hâshim. This became one of the reasons for their opposition to the Prophet. Though Abû Sufyân did not succeed to the office of his father, he was, nonetheless, the chief of the Banû Umayyah.⁴ 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 Abû Sufyân severely rebuked 'Uthmân ibn

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1. Sîrah, vol 1, p135; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, p44
 2. Sîrah, vol 1, p142; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 1, pp 48, 51
 3. al-Muḥabbar, p165
 4. Tabaqât ibn Sa'd, vol 4, pt 1, p12

'Affân',¹ a member of the Umayyad family for accepting Islam².

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

1. 'Uthmân 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 Madînah after the migration of the Muslims to Madînah, he married Umm Kulthûm, another daughter of the Prophet. He later became the third Caliph of Islam (Tabaqât ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt 1, pp 37 - 29)
2. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p7

accept Islam.¹ Though neither Abû Sufyân nor Hind acceded to his request, this incident illustrates that Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Tâlib, the Prophet's paternal uncle and guardian, to seek his help in preventing his nephew from continuing his mission, Abû Sufyân was among them.² This shows that despite his personal respect for the Prophet, where it involved the Prophet's mission, Abû Sufyân 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'ân was so attractive to the Arabs that even those who did not believe in it, used to enjoy listening to it.⁴ One night Abû Sufyân decided to go and listen to the Prop-

1. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p7

2. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 264-265

3. ibid, p295

4. see Qur'ân, 17:47

het reciting the Qur'ân at home. He spent the whole night listening to him. Unknown to him, Abû Jahl and al-Akhnas ibn Sharîq 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 Abû Sufyân at home to ask him for his opinion about what they had heard the Prophet reciting. Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Jahl was asked for his opinion he said that he would never believe in the Prophet.³

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

2. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 315-316

3. *ibid*, p316

Abû Sufyân's response here indicates that unlike other leaders of the Quraysh like Abû Jahl who simply dismissed the message of the Qur'ân, he was at least prepared to reflect on what he had heard. It could be reasonably surmised from this that Abû Sufyân 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'ân were discussing the Prophet. Abû Jahl said that the Prophet was possessed. Abû Lahab accused him of being a sorcerer. Huwaytib ibn 'Abd al'Uzzâ called him a poet.¹ Al-Nadr ibn al-Hârith said that he did not understand what Muḥammad was saying though he saw his lips moving. Abû Sufyân's reaction was: "I do not regard some of what he says as true".² Here again we note that Abû Sufyân was certainly less hostile than the other Quraysh leaders.

This might explain why, in spite of Abû Sufyân'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'ân, 68:51; 10:2; 52:30; 21:5

2. Nawawî, Marâh Libîd, Dar Ihyâ al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, Cairo, 1376 A.H., vol 1, p480

Prophet and the Muslims. Rather, Abû Sufyân is said to have been one of those leaders who were not as cruel and tyrannical as the other chief of the Quraysh.¹ Despite this, however, his opposition was no less than the others.

As mentioned in chapter three, after the Prophet's wife, Khadîjah, and his uncle and mentor, Abû Tâlib 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, Abû Sufyân was also present at the Dâr al-Nadwah (Council Chamber).² This shows that Abû Sufyân went along with the Quraysh in all their decisions, including such a momentous decision as killing the Prophet. Abû Sufyân 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'ân have included Abû Sufyân among the "a'immat al-kufr" (leaders of disbelief) mentioned in the Qur'ân³ for his role in the opposition to Islam after Badr.

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1. *Ṭabaqât ibn Sa'd*, vol 1, pt 1, pp 133-134; *al-Kâmil fî al-Târîkh*, vol 2, p76
 2. *Sîrah*, vol 1, pp 480-482; *Târîkh al-Ṭabarî*, S1, pp 1229-1231
 3. *Rûḥ al-Ma'âni*, vol 10, p59; *al-Tafsîr al-Ma'thûr*, vol 3, p214; *Al-Ṭabarî, Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân*, Dâr al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1983, vol 6, pt 10, p62; *al-Râzî, Ahkâm al-Qur'ân*, Dâr al-Kitâb al-'Arabî, Beirut, vol 3, p86

After the Prophet had managed to elude the Quraysh and reached Madīnah safely, Abū Sufyān wrote to the people of Madīnah protesting against their granting of refuge and shelter to Muḥammad (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 Madīnah as was mentioned in chapter three.

In chapter three we also discussed the fear of the Quraysh that the Muslims in Madīnah would cut off their trade route to Syria as this trade route passed near Madīnah 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 Madīnah from the Muslims. He, therefore, expected the Quraysh to attack Madīnah at any time.

Events leading to the Battle of Badr³

The Prophet's fear proved true and soon the outskirts of Madīnah

1. al-Muḥabbar, p271; Sīrah, vol 1, p448

2. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol 3, p53

3. Badr was a village at a distance of about 80 miles from Madīnah

was attacked by Kurz ibn Jâbir from Makkah.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.²

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

1. Târîkh al-Tabâri, S 1, p1269

2. Sirâh, vol 2, p560

3. al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p10; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p2

granting asylum to the Prophet has already been mentioned above. The Quraysh also threatened to kill Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh, the chief of the `Aws tribe of Madînah 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 Quraysh in which 'Amr ibn al-Ḥadramî 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-Ḥadramî 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 Abû Sufyân 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 Madînah he questioned all

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1. Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî, vol 3, p53
 2. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S1, pp 1273-1279; Ṭabaqât ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt 1, p284
 3. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1284; Sîrah, 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 Ddamdam ibn 'Amr al-Ghifâri to Makkah informing the Quraysh about the situation, and seeking their assistance to protect the caravan.

When Ddamdam reached Makkah he warned the Quraysh that the Muslims were heading for Abû Sufyân's caravan. Immediately the Quraysh prepared an army and proceeded towards Madînah in order to protect the caravan.¹ When the Muslims in Madînah 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 Abû Sufyân arrived at Badr he asked Majdî ibn 'Amr al-Juhanî - who was guarding the water of the well of Badr-whether he noticed anyone in the vicinity. Majdî told him about Basbas ibn al-Juhanî and 'Adî ibn Abî al-Zaghbâ'- whom the Prophet had sent before his arrival to gather information at Badr. Abû Sufyân picked up the camel dung from the spot where they had stood and crumbled it. He recognised the fodder as that of Yathrib (al-

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1. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 607, 609; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1292, 1295; al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p31; Ṭabaqât ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p7
 2. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1288-1289; Musnad, vol 1, p117 see also Qur'ân 8:7-8

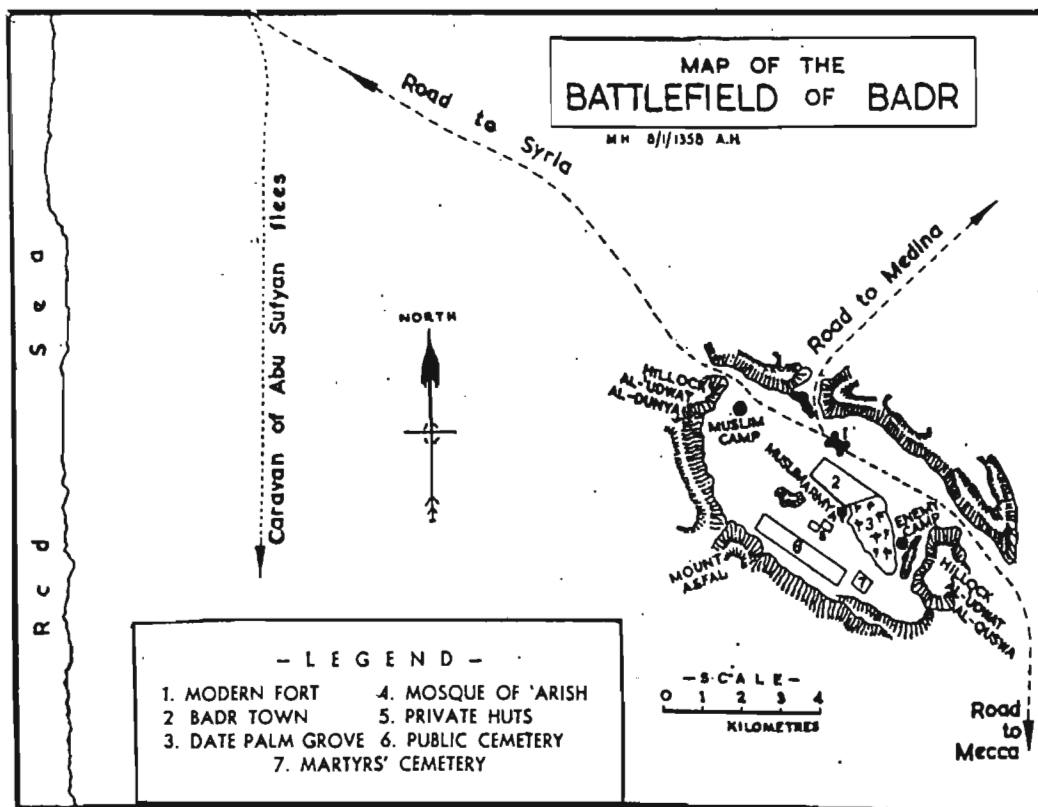
Madīnah), and quickly departed from there.¹ No doubt Abû Sufyân must have concluded that the Prophet was intending to intercept his caravan.

Abû Sufyân, 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. Abû Jahl spurred them on.² This indicates that Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân

In spite of the fact that Abû Sufyân 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,

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1. Ṭabaqât ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p7; Sīrah, vol 1, pp 617-618; Târīkh al-Ṭabarī, S1, vol 3, p1305; al-Maghâzī, vol 1, pp 40-41; Saḥīḥ Muslim, vol 3, p1510
 2. Sīrah, vol 1, p618; Al-Maghâzī, vol 1, p43; Ṭabaqât ibn Sa'd vol 2, pt 1, p7; Târīkh al-Ṭabarī, S 1, pp 1306-1307
 3. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p11, al-Maghâzī, vol 1, pp 93, 96



Courtesy: Ḥamidullah, Battlefields of the Prophet Muḥammad

Walîd and 'Utbah's brother - Shaybah,¹ 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"² 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.³

When the Quraysh army returned defeated from the battle with feelings of despondence and dejection Abû Sufyân urged them not to mourn for their dead, but to display courage and strength. They might yet avenge their defeat.⁴

The above reflects a transformation in Abû Sufyân'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

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1. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 708-709; Ṭabaqât ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p11; Al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p148
 2. Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî, vol 3, p60
 3. Sîrah, vol 2, p44; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1364-1365; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p20; al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p121
Abû Sufyân's pledge of revenge was fulfilled in the Battle of Uḥud when the Quraysh killed seventy Muslims, including the Prophet's uncle, Ḥamzah
 4. al-Maghâzî, 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 Râbigh, 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 Syfyân 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-

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1. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1383; Ibn Qayyim, Zâd al-Ma'âd fî Hady Khayr al-'Ibâd, ed, Ṭâhâ 'Abd al-Ra'ûf Ṭâhâ, Muṣṭafâ' al-Bâbî al Ḥalabî, Cairo, 1970, vol 2, p102
 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-Ṭabarî, vol 4, pt 5, pp 151-153)
 3. al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p73

lms whose faith had weakened in the face of persecution and oppression.¹ Thereupon the Makkan Muslims set out again for Madīnah, and again Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân's attitude toward the Muslims.

Abû Sufyân'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'mân ibn Akkâl, an elderly Muslim went to Makkah for pilgrimage, Abû Sufyân detained him in retaliation for his captive son. Then Abû Sufyân 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'ân, 29:10

2. al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p74; Tafsîr al-Tabarî, vol 10, pt 20, pp 85-86

3. Sîrah, vol 1, p650; Târîkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1345; al-Maghâzî, vol 1, pp 129-130; al-Ma'ârif, p344

4. see Appendix A (b) for text of poem

5. Sîrah, vol 1, pp 650-651; Târîkh al-Tabarî, 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 Abû Sufyân 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 Sawîq¹

As mentioned earlier, Abû Sufyân 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 Madînah² and destroy the tribes of `Aws and Khazraj who had embraced Islam.³

Abû Sufyân left with two hundred men and went to the quarters of the Banû al-Nadîr, one of the Jewish tribes living on the outskirts of Madînah at the time. Sallâm ibn Mishkam, the chief of the tribe welcomed him and gave him some information about

1. Sawîq: a kind of mush made of barley or wheat.

In this expedition, the Muslims found plenty of provisions (sawîq) 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 Abû Sufyân inciting his men to war appears in Appendix A (c)

3. Târikh al-Tabarî, S 1. p1366

the Prophet.¹ Abû Sufyân then proceeded with his men to al-'Urayd - a valley near Madînah where they burnt some palm trees. They came across an Ansârî and his companion and killed them both. As soon as the Prophet heard about the attack, he and some of his Companions chased Abû Sufyân and his party who managed to escape and reach Makkah safely.² Thus Abû Sufyân felt that he had avenged the defeat at Badr and had fulfilled his pledge.

Expedition of Zayd ibn Hârithah

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 Madînah 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 Sawîq, Zayd ibn Hârithah led an expedition to al-Qaradah, a place situated in Najd at that time.

Meanwhile Abû Sufyân was on his way to Syria with a trade cara-

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1. Abû Sufyân recited a poem in relation to this expedition in which he eulogised Sallâm ibn Mishkam for his hospitality and generosity (al-Aghânî, vol 6, p356; Sîrah, vol 2, pp 45-46). For full text of poems see Appendix A (d) and (e)
 2. Sîrah, vol 2, p45; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1364-1367; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p20; al-Maghâzî, vol 1, pp 181-182

van. Zayd ibn Hārithah and his party intercepted this caravan and seized the merchandise.¹ Abû Sufyân and the other Quraysh leaders escaped.²

Battle of Uhud³ (3 A.H./625 C.E.)

It is a well known fact that after the Battle of Badr, the Mak-kans 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 Abû Sufyân. 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.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:

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1. Sîrah, vol 2, p50; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S1, pp 1374-1375
 2. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 3, pt 1, p31
 3. This is the name of a hill close to Madînah, on its north side.
 4. Sîrah, vol 2, p60; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1384; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p25; al-Maghâzî, 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 Abû Sufyân 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

Abû Sufyân 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 Madînah, Abû Sufyân sent a message to the Anṣâr 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'ân, 8:36; see Tafsîr al-Tabarî, vol 6, pt 9, pp 159-160
 2. al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p202
 3. ibid, ibid
 4. Târîkh al-Tabarî, 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, Khâlid ibn al-Walîd, 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 Allâh ibn Qamî'ah, a renowned Quraysh warrior, claimed that he was the one to have killed the Prophet, Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân believed

1. See Qur'ân 3:152

2. Sîrah, vol 2, pp 65-66, 77-83, 126; Târîkh al-Tabarî, S 1, pp 1402-1409; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, pp 28-29; al-Maghâzî, vol 1, pp 224-235, 300

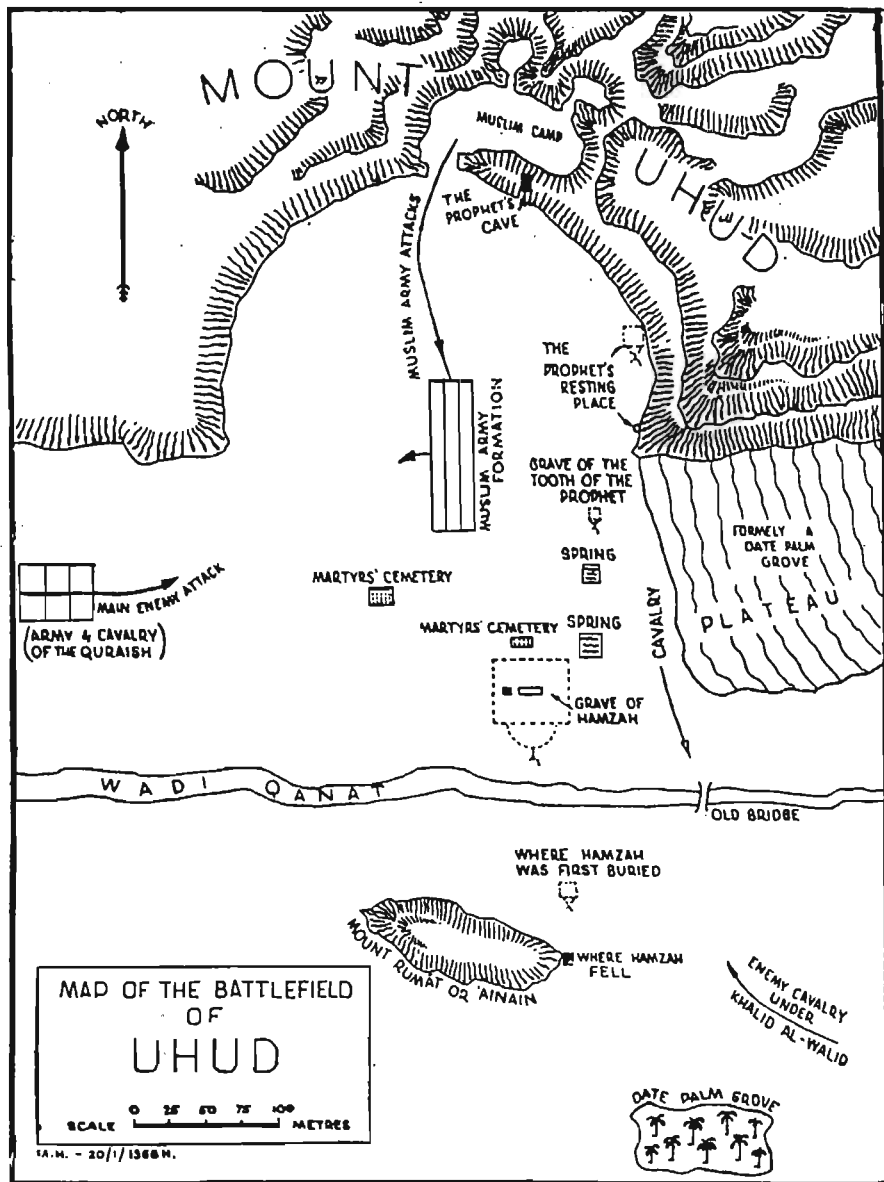
3. al-Maghâzî, vol 1, p236

Qamî'ah, climbed the mountain and shouted, "is Muḥammad there?" The Prophet told the Companions not to reply. Abû Sufyân then shouted again calling Abû 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.

Abû Sufyân said, "we have al-'Uzzâ² with us and you do not have it". The Companions replied: "Allah is our Lord, and you have no Lord."

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

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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 Kinânah tribes; al-Lât, Manât and al-'Uzzâ were called "the daughters of Allah" by the Quraysh (al-Kalbî, Kitâb al-Asnâm, 2nd ed., ed., Aḥmad Zâki Pâshâ, Dâr al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, Cairo, 1924, pp 26-28; see Qur'ân, 53:19-21)
 3. Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî, vol 2, p256; vol 3, p79; Musnad, vol 1, p288; vol 4, p293; Sîrah, vol 2, p93; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p 1410; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p33; al-Maghâzî, vol 1 pp 296-297



Courtesy: Ḥamidullah, Battlefields of the Prophet Muḥammad

Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân's wife, Hind, as already mentioned in Chapter two.

As Abû Sufyân felt that he had avenged the Badr defeat,¹ he left the battlefield quickly without pursuing the Muslims to Madînah. When Abû Sufyân and his army arrived at Rawḥâ'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 Hamrâ'al-Asad³ the chief of the Khuzâ'ah tribe, Ma'bad ibn Abî Ma'bad, on hearing of the misfortunes of the Muslims at Uḥud came to sympathize with him. Then he met Abû Sufyân at Rawḥâ' 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 Abû Sufyân and he returned to Makkah.⁴

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1. Abû Sufyân later composed a poem in which he vented his satisfaction at the turn of events at Uḥud (see Appendix A [f])
 2. A place forty miles from Madînah
 3. A place about eighty miles from Madînah
 4. Sîrah, vol 2, p102; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1428-1429; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, pp 34-35; al-Maghâzî, vol 1, pp 338-339

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'¹ 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 Şafwân 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.²

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. Sîrah, vol 2, pp 172-173; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, 39-40

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

Abû Sufyân'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'ân:

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

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1. Sîrah, vol 2, pp 209-210; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1458; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, pp 42-43; al-Maghâzî, vol 1, pp 384-388
 2. Qur'ân, 3:173-174; see Tafsîr al-Ṭabarî, vol 3, pt 4, pp 118-122

As time passed, the Quraysh became more and more determined to annihilate the Muslims in Madīnah. 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 Banû al-Nadîr, 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. Abû Sufyân's immediate response was, "welcome; the most beloved people to us are those who help us against Muḥammad."²

This statement of Abû Sufyân 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 Banû al-Nadîr and their allied tribes.

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1. A place about two hundred miles to the north of Madīnah
 2. Sīrah, vol 2, p214; Târīkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1464; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p47; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, pp 441-442

Battle of Ahzâb¹ (5 A.H./627 C.E.)

The Quraysh, the Banû al-Naḍîr and their allies marched to Madînah in 5 A.H./627 C.E. Abû Sufyân led the Quraysh army.² When they were close to Madînah, Abû Sufyân sent Ḥuyayy ibn Akḥṭab, the chief of the Banû al-Naḍîr, with a message to the Jewish tribe of Banû Qurayzah,³ asking them to break off their covenant (viz., the Madînah Charter) which they had entered with the Prophet. Ḥuyayy pleaded with the Banû Qurayzah till they eventually agreed to break the covenant.⁴

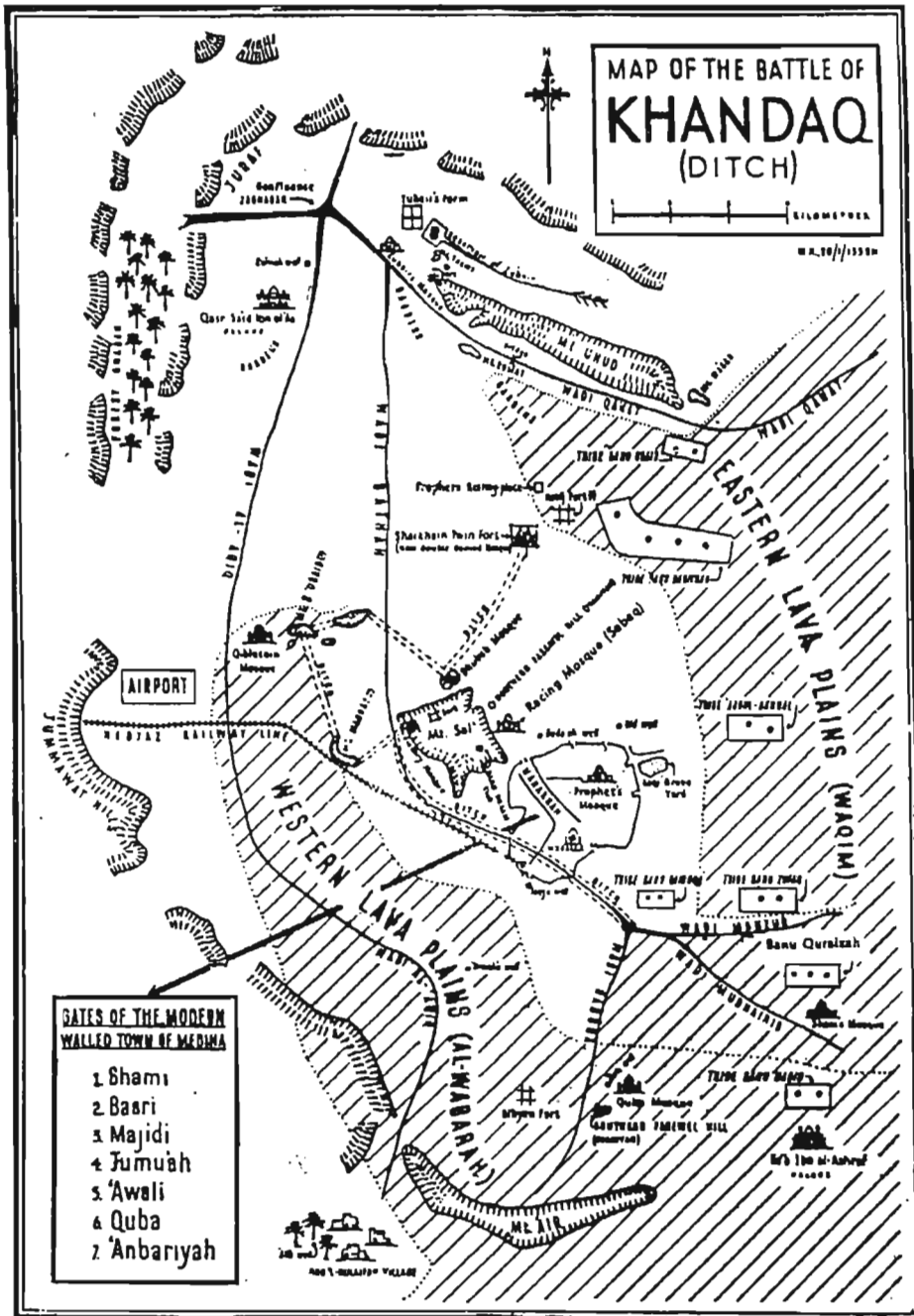
When the Prophet came to know that the Quraysh were marching with their allies to Madînah, he consulted his Companions. At the

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1. Ahzâb (sing. Hizb) means allies or confederates. Chapter 33 of the Qur'ân is named after this battle and deals with the battle in great detail
 2. Sîrah, vol 2, pp 214-215; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1463, 1465; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p47; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, pp 441, 443
 3. Though the Jewish tribes of Banû Qaynuqâ' and Banû al-Naḍîr had been exiled from Madînah due to their violation of the Madînah Charter, the Banû Qurayzah were still in Madînah at the time.
 4. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p48; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, pp 454-456

suggestion of Salmân al-Fârisî¹ a trench² was dug on the side of the city which was unprotected. The allies attacked Madînah 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 Madînah.³

As Abû Sufyân was deprived of an open battle, he wrote a letter to the Prophet saying that the Quraysh had marched to Madînah 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 Uḥud.⁴

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1. Formerly of Isfahân in Iran; he was a Magian but his constant search for the true faith brought him to Madînah where he embraced Islam.
 2. The Arabic form of trench is "Khandaq"; hence this battle is also known as the Battle of Khandaq.
 3. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, pp 47-48; Sîrah, vol 2, p224; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, vol 3, pp 1458, 1465, 1467, 1473; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, pp 444-447, 450-451
 4. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, p344; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p492



Courtesy: Hamidullah, Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad

In his reply the Prophet asked Abû Sufyân to renounce idol-worship. Soon Allah would settle the matter between them in favour of the Muslims.¹

The siege of Madînah 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. Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân to rethink his whole position towards the Muslims.

1. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, p344; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p492-493

2. Sîrah, vol 2, p232; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1483-1485; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, pp 50-51; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p490

CHAPTER FIVE

REASONS FOR ABŪ SUFYÂN'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 Abū Sufyân'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. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1360, 1448,1449,1472: Ṭabaqât 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 Khâlid ibn al-Wâlid 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 Sîrah, vol 2, pp 308-310; Târikh al-Tabarî, S 1, pp 1528-1534; Tabaqât 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 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân to negotiate with the leaders of the Quraysh. ¹ However, Abû Sufyân was not present in Makkah at the time.² 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 Madînah 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 Khâlid ibn al-Walîd and 'Amr ibn al-'Âs, two noted generals of the Quraysh army, had accepted Islam.³

1 Sîrah, vol 2, p 315; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1 pp 1542-1545;
Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p 70; al-Maghâzî, vol 2,
pp 600-605

2 al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p 792

3 Ibid, p 745

When Abû Sufyân saw the Muslims from Madînah becoming reconciled to the Makkans and mixing freely with them as a result of the Truce, he was demoralised.¹ 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.

Abû Sufyân 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, Diḥyâ al-Kalbî, delivered the Prophet's letter to the Ghassânid² ruler. Hârith, to forward it to the Byzantine Emperor³ 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 Abû Sufyân - with other Arab traders - was in Syria at the time. So he was brought before the Emperor together with his companions.⁴

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1. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1540
 2. Ghassân was a Christian Arab tribe in Syria under Byzantine suzerainty.
 3. The emperor from 610 C.E. to 641 C.E. was Heraclius
 4. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1559-1562; Ṭabaqât 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, Abû Sufyân claimed that he was. There then ensued a dialogue between Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân had not yet embraced Islam, he answered all the questions honestly and truthfully. Heraclius responded to Abû Sufyân'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.¹

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

1. Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî, vol 1, pp 7-8; vol 2, pp 162, 203, 223, 233-235; vol 3, pp 214-216; Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim, vol 3, pp 1393-1395; Musnad, vol 1, pp 262-263; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1563-1564

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

If the Jews and Christians could acknowledge that Muhammad (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, Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân's attitude to the Prophet and to Islam.

Prophet's Marriage to Umm Habîbah

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

1. see Chapter Four

2. Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî, vol 3, p216; Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim, vol 3, p1397

commentators of the Qur'ân like Ibn Kathîr¹, al-Suyûtî² and al-Zamakhsharî³ and the historian Ibn Sa'd⁴ cite reports indicating that the following verse of the Qur'ân refers to the Prophet's marriage with Umm Ḥabîbah:

"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."⁵

This means that through the marriage whatever enmity Abû Sufyân 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 Madînah after they accepted Islam.⁶

Exchange of Gifts

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

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1. Tafsîr ibn Kathîr, vol 4, p349
 2. al-Tafsîr al-Ma'thûr, vol 6, p205
 3. al-Zamakhsharî, al-Kashshâf 'an Haqâ'iq al-Tanzîl wa al-Uyûn al-Aqâwîl fî wujûh al-Ta'wîl, Aftâb, Tehran, vol 4 p91
 4. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 8, p70
 5. Qur'ân, 60:7
 6. see Qur'ân, 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-Hudaybiyyah, he did not at any stage express his opposition to it. The Prophet's marriage to his daughter, Umm Habîbah, 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-Isâbah, vol 2, p179
2. al-Tabarî, Jâmi al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al Qur'ân, Dâr al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1983 vol 4, pp 118-121; Sahîh al-Bukhârî, vol 1, pp 255, 259; vol 3, p307

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'ân 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 Madinâh without permission from his guardian would have to be returned to Makkah. When Abû Baṣîr became a Muslim and escaped from Makkah to Madinâh, the Prophet had to return him to the Quraysh. On his way back to Makkah, Abû Baṣîr killed one of the men sent by the Quraysh to fetch him, whilst the other escaped. Abû Baṣîr 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 Abû Baṣîr. 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 Khuzâ'ah from among the tribes of Arabia had become the allies of

1. Qur'ân, 48:1; see Tafsîr al-Ṭabarî, vol 11, pt 26, pp 44-45
2. Sîrah, vol 2, p323; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1551-1553; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, pp 624-629

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. Sîrah, vol 2, p390; Musnad, vol 4, p325

2. Sîrah, vol 2, p390; Ṭabaqât 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.¹ Most importantly the acceptance of the first two would be an admission of guilt which they did not want to concede. Again they 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.

Abû Sufyân'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.² They, therefore, sent Abû Sufyân as their ambassador to Madinâh 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 Habîbah, 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. Abû Sufyân then tried for the intervention of Abû Bakr and 'Umar, but they did not pay any attention to him. Finally he decided to approach 'Alî and Fâtimah (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-Maghâzî, 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 Abû Sufyân 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 Madînah to renew the Truce. And when he took longer than they expected to return from Madînah, they began to suspect him of having secretly embraced Islam.⁵ This proves that

1. Sîrah, vol 2, pp 395-397; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p97; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, pp 791-795

2. al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p788

3. ibid, pp 788

4. ibid, pp 783, 785, 788

5. ibid, p795

Abû Sufyân had definitely become sympathetic to Islam to the extent that even his colleagues were suspicious of his favourable stance to Islam and Muslims.

Abû Sufyân'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-Zahrân, not far from Makkah.²

Abû Sufyân's acceptance of Islam

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

1. Qur'ân, 2:191-193; see Tafsîr al-Ṭabarî, vol 2, pp 111-115
2. Sîrah, vol 2, pp 397-400; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1628-1630; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p97

they sent Ḥakīm ibn Hizâm, Budayl ibn Warqâ' and Abû Sufyân to ascertain the fact. Al-'Abbâs, the Prophet's uncle, detained Abû Sufyân and promised him his personal protection. Then al-'Abbâs brought him before the Prophet. When 'Umar spotted Abû Sufyân, he could not restrain himself and sought the Prophet's permission to kill Abû Sufyân. But al-'Abbas interceded for Abû Sufyân as he had guaranteed personally to protect his life.¹

The following dialogue then took place between the Prophet and Abû Sufyân:

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

Abû Sufyân : "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?"

Abû Sufyân : "In this respect, I have some doubt."

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

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1. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhârî, vol 3, p139; Sîrah, vol 2, pp 402-403; Târiḫ al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1631-1632; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p817
 2. Sîrah, ol 2, p403; Târiḫ al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1632; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p818

Al-Suhaylî, the author of al-Rawḍ al-Unuf, reports on the authority of 'Abd ibn Humayd (d. 249) that when the Prophet requested Abû Sufyân to accept Islam he asked, "What shall I do with 'Uzza?"¹ 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-Rawḍ al-Unuf, vol 4, p99;

al'Uzzâ was the idol which was worshipped by the Quraysh specifically. Remember Abû Sufyân's boast at Uhud that the Quraysh had 'Uzzâ on their side whereas the Muslims did not. In fact, Abû Sufyân had carried al-Lât and al-'Uzzâ with him to the battle of Uhud (Târîkh al-Tabarî, S1, p1395)

reason for this maybe that Abû Sufyân 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 Yazîd al-Raqâshî must be rejected both on the basis of "riwâyah" and "dirâyah": Abû Sufyân 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'âwiyah as a scribe; you should marry Umm Ḥabîbah and whoever enters my house should be secure". When the Prophet agreed to all these conditions, Abû Sufyân accepted Islam.¹

Firstly, Yazîd al-Raqâshi was not a reliable narrator of Ḥadîth.² Secondly, the report cannot be true because one of the conditions supposedly imposed by Abû Sufyân was that the Prophet should marry Umm Ḥabîbah - something which he had done already about two years earlier. Also, Abû Sufyân was hardly in a position to bargain with the Prophet.

Conquest of Makkah

As the Muslim army marched towards Makkah, the Prophet asked al-'Abbâs to take Abû Sufyân to the peak of the mountain so that he

1. Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, pp 401-402
2. Ibn Ḥanbal said his Ḥadîth was "rejected"; both Ibn Ma'în and al-Dâraquṭnî called him "weak"; al-Nasâ'î said he was "abandoned" in Ḥadîth (Tahdhîb al-Kamâl, vol 3, p166; Mîzân al-I'tidâl, 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 Abû Sufyân.¹ He advised the Makkans not to oppose the Prophet.²

No doubt his was exactly what the Prophet had in mind - that Abû Sufyân 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 opposition to Islam was now futile; and that the best course open to him and the Quraysh was surrender and submission.

As Abû Sufyân was until that time a man of status and prestige, al-'Abbâs 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 Abû Sufyân would be safe and secure.³

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1. see Sîrah, vol 2, p404; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p822; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p403
 2. Sîrah, vol 2, pp 403-405; Târîkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1633; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p818; Şahîh al-Bukhârî, vol 3, pp 139-140
 3. Şahîh Muslim, vol 3, p1408; Sîrah, vol 2, p403; Sunan Abî Dâwûd, vol 3, p162; Târîkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1633; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, p98; al-Maghâzî, vol 2, p818; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p405

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

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1. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhîb al-Tahdhîb, Dâ'irat al-Ma'ârif al-Nizâmiyyah, Hyderabad, 1325 A.H., vol 4, p411; al-Iṣâbah, vol 2, p179; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p397
 2. Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî, vol 3, p140; Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim, vol 3, pp1406, 1408
 3. Sirâh, vol 2, p405
 4. Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî, vol 3, p 141
 5. Qur'ân: 17:81

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 Uḥud 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

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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."¹

This report is based on the authority of Abû Ishâq al-Sabî'î (d. 127 A.H.) who was known to have been a Shî'ite.² Therefore this report was quite obviously intended to discredit Abû Sufyân.

Ibn Kathîr, Ibn 'Asâkir and Ibn Hajar have cited a similar report on the authority of Ibn 'Abbâs. In this case, instead of expressing doubts about Muḥammad's prophethood, Abû Sufyân is said to have repented for thinking of resuming his opposition to the Prophet.³

The source of this report is the Kitâb al-Iklîl by al-Ḥamdânî (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 Sîrah 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 Kadâ'.⁴ Al-'Abbâs remembered Abû Sufyân

1. al-Bidâyah, vol 4, p304; al-Isâbah, vol 2, p179

2. Mîzân al-I'tidâl, vol 3, p350

3. see al-Bidâyah, vol 4, p304; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p406

4. Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî, vol 3, pp 140,142

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 "Ṭulaqâ'"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-'Âṣ was that as chief of the Quraysh he did not want to "betray" them. Furthermore, Abû Sufyân could

1. see Chapter Four

2. al-Bidâyah, vol 2, p319

3. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p102; see also Rûḥ al-Ma'ânî, vol 9, p206

4. see f.n.1, p 36 for definition of "Ṭulaqâ";
Sîrah, vol 2, p412

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 Abû Sufyân brought himself to accept Islam finally he never wavered and never repented. Abû Sufyân'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 Abû Sufyân and cannot be entertained on the basis of his subsequent devotion and loyalty to Islam.

According to Ibn al-Athîr, Ibn Kathîr, al-Zarkalî, al-Alûsî al-Nawawî, and al-Tirmidhî, Abû Sufyân was among the "Ṭulaqâ'who became very good Muslims.¹ A further discussion on his loyalty to Islam will take place in Chapter six and the concluding Chapter.

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1. al-Bidâyah, vol 8, p117,; Rûḥ al-Ma'ânî, vol 10, p63; Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 6, p149; al-Zarkali, al-A'lâm, 2nd ed, Cos-tatasumas, 1954, vol 3, p288; al-Nawawî, Tahdhîb al-Asmâ' wa al-Lughât, Idârat al-Tîbâ'ah al-Munîriyyah, Cairo, n.d. vol 1, pt 2, pp 239-240; al-Tirmidhî, Sunan, 2nd ed, ed.'Abd. al-Wahhâb 'Abd al-Laṭîf, Cairo, 1963, vol 8, p 356

CHAPTER SIX

ABU SUFYAN'S CAREER AFTER HIS CONVERSION TO ISLAM

This Chapter will deal with Abû Sufyân'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 Abû Sufyân is significant and it is worthy to note that despite Abû Sufyân's active and persistent 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 Abû Sufyân.

Under the chapter entitled "Faḍâ'il Abî Sufyân" (the virtues of Abû Sufyân), Muslim cites a ḥadîth which reports that Abû Sufyân requested the Prophet to allow him to fight against the disbelievers as he had fought the believers previously.¹ Muslim himself regarded the authenticity of this ḥadîth as doubtful² on the grounds that the Ḥadîth also contains another request, viz., that Abû Sufyân wanted the Prophet to marry his daughter, Umm

1. Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim, vol 4, p1945

2. The principles of Ḥadîth criticism were not applied rigorously to reports which deal with merits of the Companions of the Prophet

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

Battle of Hunayn¹ (8. A.H./630 C.E.)

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

".... and on the Day of Ḥunayn, 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 Ḥunayn 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 an army and advanced towards Makkah. When the Prophet heard of their march towards Makkah he mobilized his army

1. The name of a valley between Makkah and Ṭā'if
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 Khâlid ibn al-Walîd 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.¹ 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 Abû 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? Abû Sufyân's sincerity to Islam was tested at Hunayn when he took the risk of dying for Islam.

1. Sîrah, vol 2, pp 437-442; Târîkh al-Tabarî, S 1, pp 1654 - 1660; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, pp 108-109; al-Maghâzî, vol 3, pp 885-898

Some Companions had expressed their opinion to the Prophet that he should not take the "Ṭulaqâ'" - including Abû Sufyân - 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 Ishâq, al-Ṭabarî and al-Wâqidî, all on the authority of 'Āsim ibn 'Umar Qatâdah, that when Abû Sufyân 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 Islam² is unacceptable. Had Abû Sufyân 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 Hawâzin and their allies had fled from the battlefield; those who were left behind were made captives. The Prophet appointed Abû Sufyân to guard over these prisoners.³

This shows the Prophet's trust and confidence in Abû Sufyân. It cannot be imagined that the Prophet would entrust him with such a position of responsibility had he suspected Abû Sufyân of infidelity or observed any sign of disloyalty on his part.

1. al-Maghâzî, vol 3, p895; al-Bidâyah, vol 4, p330

2. Sîrah, vol 2, p443; al-Maghâzî, vol 3, p910; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1660

3. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p9. Târikh Dimashq, vol 6, p407

Siege of Tâ'if

A section of the Hawâzin and Thaḡif army defeated by the Muslims at Hunayn had withdrawn to Tâ'if where they made preparations for war. The Thaḡif tribe which inhabited Tâ'if was known for its bravery and courage throughout Arabia.¹ As indicated in Chapter Two 'Urwah ibn Mas'ûd, the chief of Tâ'if, was the son-in-law of Abû Sufyân.² Having ordered the booty and captives of Hunayn to be kept under guard, the Prophet marched towards Tâ'if 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 Tâ'if which lasted for twenty days but still with no success.³ As the siege prolonged and it became impossible to capture the fortresses of Tâ'if, the Prophet gave the order to cut down and burn the orchards of Tâ'if 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 Tâ'if will have to surrender sooner or later, he ordered the Muslims to withdraw. The holy

1. Sîrah, vol 2, p478; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1669; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p114; al-Maghâzî, vol 3, p924
2. He was among the notables of Arabia who entered the negotiations regarding the Truce of al-Ḥudaybiyyah on behalf of the Quraysh.
3. Sîrah, vol 2, pp 482-484; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1670-1672; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, pp 114-115; al-Maghâzî, vol 3, pp 923-927

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 would 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'îd ibn 'Ubayd al-Thaqafî⁵ as a result of which Abû Sufyân lost his eye.

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1. al-Maghâzî, vol 3, pp 928-937
 2. those who were married among the Thaqîf, including Abû Sufyân's daughter
 3. Sîrah, vol 2, p483; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1672; al-Maghâzî, vol 3, p929
 4. Sîrah, vol 2, p484; al-Maghâzî, vol 3, p929
 5. al-Ma'ârif, p344'; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p408

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 Abû Sufyân had accepted Islam wholeheartedly.

The Prophet's offer to Abû Sufyân as well as Abû Sufyân's response here are very significant. The Prophet's offer implies that Abû 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 Abû 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 Tâ'if, the Prophet made special provision in the booty acquired in Hunayn for those Makkans who had embraced Islam after the Conquest of Makkah. Among the recipients were the prominent persons of the Quraysh, including Abû Sufyân.²

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1. Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, pp 395, 408; al-Işâbah, vol 2, p179; Futûh al-Buldân, pp 56, 135
 2. Sîrah, vol 2, pp 492-493; Şahîh Muslim, vol 2, pp 737-738; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1679; Tabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p110; al-Maghâzî, vol 3, p944

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 Ḥunayn and Ṭâ'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.

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1. This means "those whose hearts are to be reconciled"; see al-Firuzâbâdî, al-Qâmûs al-Muḥîṭ, Bulâq, 1289, A.H. vol 3, p136
 2. Qur'ân, 9:60; see Tafsîr al-Ṭabarî, vol 10, p112
 3. Sîrah, vol 2, p492; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1679
 4. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 2, pt 1, p110; al-Maghâzî, vol 3, pp 944-945
 5. A well known place about midway between Madînah and Damascus

Destruction of al-Lât

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 "'Ām 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-Lât, 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-Lât 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; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī. S 1, p1689-1691; al-Maghâzī, vol 3, pp 962-968

own hands. The Prophet consented.¹ For the Prophet, it was all one whether al-Lât was destroyed by the Thaqîf themselves or by others. What was important to him was that the idol was soon to be destroyed so that the Thaqîf would have a complete break from their past devotion to idols and turn to the worship of one God, Allah, alone.

The Prophet asked Abû Sufyân and al-Mughîrah ibn Shu'bah, who knew the tribe of Thaqîf well and were on friendly terms with them to accompany the Thaqîf to Tâ'if. Abû Sufyân's daughter was, after all, married in the Thaqîf tribe as mentioned earlier. Abû Sufyân and al-Mughîrah were assigned by the Prophet the task of destroying al-Lât.

When they approached the sanctuary al-Mughîrah began destroying the idol. Every time he struck the idol with a mattock Abû Sufyân exclaimed, "woe to you! alas to you!"²

What a transformation in Abû Sufyân! 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 Tâ'if, Abû Sufyân's son-in-law, 'Urwah ibn Mas'ûd had gone to Madînah to accept Islam. On his return home he

1. Sîrah, vol 2, p540; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 1691

al-Maghâzî, vol 3, p968

2. Sîrah, vol 2, pp541-542; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1691-1692;

al-Maghâzî, vol 3, p971

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-Muṭṭalib, 'Alî ibn Abî Tâlib and 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân.² Since

1. Sîrah, vol 2, p542; Târikh al-Tabarî, 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 Abû Sufyân 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 Najrân¹ with whom the Quraysh had friendly relations.

Appointment as collector of Sadaqât

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 "ṣadaqât".²

Accordingly Abû Sufyân was appointed to collect "ṣadaqât" from the Yemenite tribes of Bajîlah and Khawlân³ and from the people of Ṭâ'if.⁴ In 11 A.H. / 632 C. E. the Prophet appointed him to collect "ṣadaqât" from the Muslims of

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1. Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 1, pt 2, pp 35-36; al-Bidâyah, vol 5, p55; Futûḥ al-Buldân, p65;
 2. sing "ṣadaqah"; a legally prescribed alms tax in Islam
 3. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, p530
 4. ibid, vol 4A, p6

Najrân¹ during the governorship of 'Amr ibn Ḥazm.²

Appointment as Governor

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

At first Abû 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, Abû 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-Unuf, vol 4, p 217)
2. Târîkh al-Tabarî, S 1, p1983
3. Futûḥ al-Buldân, p59
4. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, pp 529, 589; vol 4A, p6; Futûḥ al-Buldân, p69; al-Iṣâbah, vol 2, p179; al-Istî'âb, vol 2, p190; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p407

communities. The Prophet's act of appointing Abû Sufyân as governor and to other responsible positions clearly indicates the Prophet's full confidence in Abû Sufyân.

The Prophet's death marks the end of Abû Sufyân'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, Abû Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân, who had succeeded the Prophet one after the other had continued to hold Abû Sufyân in high esteem and respect and had appointed him to various responsible positions. Most reports in the early sources which cast doubts on Abû Sufyân'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 Shî'ah per se or had Shî'ah sympathies. This naturally means that they were hostile to Abû Sufyân and the Umayyads. In other cases it will be seen that the reporters are not reliable.

i) During the Caliphate of Abû Bakr

Numerous reports were deliberately circulated to discredit Abû Sufyân. The following will suffice as an example.

Al-Balâdhurî reports on the authority of Hishâm ibn Muhammad al-

Kalbî that when the Prophet passed away Abû Sufyân went to see 'Uthmân (who was an Umayyad) and on emerging from their meeting began saying that the Banû Umayyah should seize the opportunity to govern the affairs of the Muslims.¹ Firstly, as Hishâm ibn al-Kalbî was a Râfiḍite and was known for his hostility to the Umayyads,² the report can hardly be accepted. A similar report cited by al-Balâdhurî³ on the authority of Hishâm ibn Ḥassân cannot be accepted as reliable because he has been classified un-animously as "weak" and unreliable⁴. Moreover, the above two reports cannot be accepted because Abû Sufyân was not even in Madînah at the time of the Prophet's death but in Najrân as has already been established earlier in this Chapter.

In fact, al-Kalbî himself is reported by al-Balâdhurî to have stated that Abû Sufyân was not present in Madînah when the Prophet died.⁵

Similarly the following report by Al-Balâdhurî, al-Ṭabarî and ibn 'Abd Rabbih that when Abû Sufyân heard of the Prophet's death and of Abû Bakr's election as Caliph he expressed fears of possible bloodshed⁶ cannot be accepted on the basis of "riwâyah".

1. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p11

2. see Chapter One

3. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p11

4. Tahdhîb al-Kamâl, vol 3, p113; al-Mughnî, vol 2, p710

5. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, p529

6. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, p589; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1827; al-'Iqd al-Farîd, vol 4, p257

The "isnâd" of al-Balâdhurî's report includes Ibn Abî Hâzim who was well-known for fabricating reports.¹ The source of Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's report is Ja'far ibn Sulaymân who was known to have Shî'ite sympathies.² And al-Ṭabarî's source is al-Kalbî. 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-Balâdhurî, al-Ṭabarî, Ibn 'Asâkir and al-Iṣbahânî have all cited a report - on different authorities - that after Abû Bakr's election as Caliph, Abû Sufyân approached 'Alî and offered to prepare an army to wage war against Abû Bakr -apparently favouring 'Alî's appointment as Caliph -but that 'Alî rebuked him, accusing him of hypocrisy.³

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

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

1. al-Mughnî, vol 2, p397

2. al-Mughnî, vol 1, p132; Taqrîb al-Tahdhîb, vol 1, p131; Ṭabaqât Ibn Sa'd, vol 7, pt 2, p44

3. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 1, p588; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p1827; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p408; al-Aghânî, vol 6, p355

suddenly incite 'Alî to do the same when 'Alî belonged to the Banû Hâshim.

- 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. Futûh al-Buldân, p103

ii) 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'âwiyyah and Yazîd as governors of Syria and 'Utbah as governor of Ṭa'îf as mentioned already in the second chapter. It was 'Umar's policy to keep the senior members of the Quraysh in Madînah 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, Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im and 'Aqîl ibn Abî Ṭâlib, 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. Abû Sufyân was one of those who were to receive a stipend for the services he rendered as a soldier fighting for Islam as at Hunayn and Ṭâ'if.

When the register was prepared, Abû Sufyân opposed it and warned 'Umar that people would now begin to depend on the stipends and give up trade and commerce.¹ Abû Sufyân'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 Abû Sufyân's fear and, therefore, he did not accept his advice.

'Umar's great respect for Abû Sufyân can be estimated from a report which says that he used to spread out a bed in his house on which he allowed only Abû Sufyân and al-Abbâs to sit. And he used to say, "this is the uncle of the Prophet and this is the "shaykh"² of the Quraysh.³ It can be reasonably assumed that al-'Abbâs and Abû Sufyân used to offer their advice and suggestions to the Caliph on matters of state policy as Abû Sufyân had done in the above instance.

1. Futûḥ al-Buldân, p457; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2750;

Târîkh al-Ya'qûbî, vol 2, p153

2. lit. an elderly, venerable gentleman; it is used as a term of respect.

3. al-Kâmil, vol 1, p319

Though Abû Sufyân had retired from active public life propably due to old age he took an active part in the Battle of Yarmûk as will be seen below.

Battle of Yarmûk (15. A.H./636 C.E.)

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

In the ensuing battle which was fought at Mu'tah¹ in 8 A.H./629 C.E. the Muslim army of 3 000 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 Madînah. 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 Tabûk mentioned earlier in this chapter. After his return to Madînah from the "Farewell Pilgrimage" in 10 A.H./631

1. a place in Syria

C.E. he had again ordered the mobilization of a large army under Usâmah 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 'Usâmah'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 'Usâmah 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 Ajnâdayn¹ in 13 A.H./634 C.E.²

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1. a place between Jerusalem and Gaza
 2. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 2125-2126

Abû 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 Yarmûk with which we are concerned because of Abû Sufyân'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.), Faḥl (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 Yarmûk 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 Abû Bakr when he had dispatched the Muslim armies to Syria was Abû Sufyân's son, Yazîd.⁴ 'Umar

1. Futûḥ al-Buldân, p107 ff; pp 241-249; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, pp 2078-2089; 2016-2046; 2390 ff

2. Futûḥ al-Buldân, pp 115, 120-134; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, 2103-2104; 2146

3. Futûḥ al-Buldân, p135; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2347

4. Futûḥ al-Buldân, p108; Târikh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2079

retained Yazîd as a commander. The importance and decisiveness of the battle can be estimated from the fact that inspite of his old age, Abû Sufyân participated in the battle and fought under the command of his son, Yazîd.¹ At the time Abû Sufyân was seventy-six years old. Probably due to his old age he was appointed as the "qâṣṣ".² 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."³ And he prayed to Allah to help the Muslims in battle.⁴

Whilst the commanders of the Muslim army were discussing the strategy they should adopt in the battle, Abû Sufyân 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.⁵ Prior to the commencement of the battle the commanders addressed the troops. When they

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1. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p9; al-Bidâyah, vol 7, p14; Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 6, p149
 2. i.e., one who incites and encourages the troops to fight; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2095; al-Bidâyah, vol 7, p8; Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 3, p10
 3. this refers to a verse in the Qur'ân, 47:7
 4. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2095; Târîk Dimashq, vol 6, p408
 5. Târîkh Dimashq, vol 1, p162

had finished, Abû Sufyân 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. Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân 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 partols which were to assist the men in battle.² Abû Sufyân's wife, Hind,³ and his daughter, Juwayriyyah, were also among the women present at the battlefield.⁴ After he had add-

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1. al-Bidâyah, vol 7, p9; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 1, p164;
 2. Futûh al-Buldân, p135; Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2100; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 1, p164
 3. Futûh al-Buldân, p135
 4. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2100

ressed the men, Abû Sufyân 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, Abû Sufyân 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. Khâlid ibn al-Walîd, 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 Yazîd ibn Abî Sufyân performed outstanding deeds of valour.³

1. Târîkh Dimashq, vol 1, p164; al-Bidâyah, vol 7, p11

2. al-Bidâyah, vol 7, pp 9, 11; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 1, p164

3. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2347; al-Bidâyah, vol 7, pp 12-14; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 1, pp 165-169

Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân.² Finally this battle ended in victory for the Muslims.

Abû Sufyân who had lost one of his eyes during the siege of Ṭâ'if as mentioned earlier now lost his other eye too when it was pierced by an arrow during the Battle of Yarmûk.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 Abû Sufyân and his family members fought in this battle proved their bonafides for Islam and thus compensated for their pre-Islamic deeds.

1. al-Bidâyah, vol 7, p14; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 1, p169

2. Ansâb al-Asrâf, vol 4A, p9; al-Bidâyah, vol 7, p14;
Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p408

3. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2101

4. Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 3, p11

iii) During the Caliphate of 'Uthmân

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

On his assumption of the caliphate 'Uthmân had found one thousand dinars in the Public Treasury deposited there by 'Umar who had taken the money from Abû Sufyân's son, Yazîd. The money was acquired by Yazîd from trade at the time when he was appointed by 'Umar as governor of Ṭâ'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 Yazîd's explanation as to how he had acquired the money. He set it aside for Yazîd with the intention of returning it to him later. However, Yazîd died in 12 A.H./633 C.E. before the money could be returned to him.

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

1. Târîkh al-Ya'qûbî, vol 2, p173

2. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p11; al-'Iqd al-Farîd, 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

Abû Sufyân did not participate in any battle during the rule of 'Uthmân as he was completely blind after the Battle of Yarmûk.

Abû Sufyân died in Madînah during the caliphate of 'Uthmân as indicated in the second chapter on his biography. The Caliph himself led the funeral prayer for him.³

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1. Ansâb al-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p8; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 6, p409
 2. Târîkh al-Ṭabarî, S 1, p2766
 3. Usd al-Ghâbah, vol 6, p149

CONCLUSION

The discussion in the previous chapters gives an ample insight into the life and career of Abû 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 Abû 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-Ashrâf, vol 4A, p11

2. *ibid*, vol 1, p588

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

- i) his youth and his role as a young prominent member of the Banû Umayyah clan of the Quraysh till the Battle of Badr (2 A.H./623 C.E.);
- ii) his direct involvement in the Makkan 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 form 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 Aḥzâb 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 Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân was not present in Makkah when the Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah was signed, he went along with the Truce and never opposed it as I have shown in Chapter Five.

By this time Abû Sufyân's daughter, Umm Ḥabîbah, 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 Abû Sufyân to change his stance towards the Prophet and Islam. This change of Abû Sufyân 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 Abû Sufyân's career, viz., from the Conquest of Makkah until his death proves beyond doubt the complete transformation of Abû Sufyân from a staunch opposer to a staunch believer and a zealous defender of Islam. During this period, as I have shown in Chapter Six, Abû Sufyân 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 "aḥādīth" (Traditions of the Prophet) dealing with the Sīrah have been reported on his authority in the standard works of Ḥadīth 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 Yarmûk:

" 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 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhârî, "Kitâb al-Zakât", vol 1, p 352

2. al-Bidâyah, vol 7, pp 9, 11; Târîkh Dimashq, vol 1, p164

- a. رأيت سهيلاً قد تفاوت شأوه
وأصبح يسمو للمعالى وإنه
وشرب كرام من لؤي بن غالب
ولكنه يوماً إذا الحرب شمرت
تطأطأ فيها ما أستطاع بنفسه
فأكفنيه ما لا أستطاع دفاعه
وفرط في العلياء كل عنان
لذو جفنة مفضية وقيان
عراض المساعي عرضة الحدثان
وأبرز فيها وجه كل حصان
وقنع فيها رأسه ودعاني
والقيت فيها كل كلبي وجراني

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 Ghálib
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-Farid, vol 6, p 88

- b. أرهطَ ابنِ أَكَّالٍ أَجِيبُوا دُعَاءَهُ
فَإِنَّ بَنِي عَمْرٍو لِرِثَامٍ أَذِلَّةٌ
تَعَاقَدْتُمْ لَا تُسَلِّمُوا السَّيِّدَ الْكَهْلَا
لَنْ لَمْ يَنْفَكُوا عَنْ أَسِيرِهِمُ الْكَبْلَا

O people of Ibn Akkál respond to his call
You made an agreement not to surrender the old chief
Verily the Banú 'Amr are lowly, contemptible
If they do not break the fetters from their captive.

1 Sirah, vol I, pp 650-651;

Tárikh al-Tabarí, S1, p 1346

- c. كُرُوا عَلَيَّ يَثْرِبَ وَجَمْعِهِمْ فَاِنَّ مَا جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ اَنْقَلَبُ
اِنْ يَكُ يَوْمَ الْقَلِيْبِ كَمَا لَهُمْ فَاِنَّ مَا بَعَدَهُ لَكُمْ دَوْلٌ
اَلَيْتُ لَا اُقْرَبُ النِّسَاءَ وَلَا يَمَسُ رَاسِي وَجِلْدِي الْغَسْلُ
حَتَّى تُبِيرُوا قَبَائِلَ الْاَوْسِ وَالْخَزْرَجِ اِنَّ الْفُؤَادَ مُشْتَغَلَةٌ

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 aflame.

1 Tārikh al-Tabarī, S1, p 1366

- d. سقاني فرّواي كُتبتا مُدامنة * على ظمأ مني سَلامُ بنِ مِشكَمِ
 تخيرته أهل المدينة واحدا * سواهم فلم أُغْنِ ولم أتدَمِ
 فلما تقضى الليل قلت ولم أكن * لأفرحه أبشُر بعُرفِ ومَنَمِ
 وإنّ أبا غنمٍ يجود وداره * بيثرب ماوى كلّ أبيضِ خَضَمِ⁽¹⁾

Sallám 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-Agháni, vol 6, p 356

- e. وَإِنِّي تَخَيَّرْتُ الْمَدِينَةَ وَاحِدًا لِحِلْفٍ فَلَمْ أُنْدَمَ وَلَمْ أَتَلَوِّمْ ٧
 مَقَانِي فَرَوَانِي كُمَيْتًا مُدَامَةً! عَلَى عَجَلٍ مِنِّي سَلَامُ بَنِ مِشْكَمِ ٨
 وَلَمَّا تَوَلَّى الْجَيْشُ قُلْتُ وَلَمْ أَكُنْ لِأُفْرِحَهُ : أَبْشُرْ بِعِزٍّ وَمَغْنَمِ ٩
 نَأْمَلُ فَاِنَّ الْقَوْمَ سَرَّوَانِهِمْ صَرِيحُ لُؤَيٍّ لِأَسْتَمَاطِيطُ جُرْهُمِ ١٠
 وَمَا كَانَ إِلَّا بَعْضَ لَيْلَةٍ رَاكِبٍ أَتَى سَاعِيَا ٥ مِنْ غَيْرِ خَلَّةٍ مُعْدِمِ

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

f. ولم أنحل النعماء لابن شعوب^١ ولو شئتُ تجتني كمت طمرة^٢
لأن غدوة حتى دنت لغروب^٣ وما زال مهري مزجر الكلب منهم^٤
وأدفعهم عني بركن صليب^٥ أقاتلهم وأدعي يا لغالب^٦
ولا تسأني من عبرة ونحيب^٧ فبكتي ولا ترغني مقالة عاذل^٨
وحق لم من عبرة ينصيب^٩ أباك وإخوانا له قد تتابعوا^{١٠}
قتلت من النجار كل نجيب^{١١} وسلتي الذي قد كان في النفس أني^{١٢}
وكان لدى الهيجاء غير هيوب^{١٣} ومن هاشم قرما كريما ومضعبا^{١٤}
لكانت شجا في القلب ذات ندوب^{١٥} ولو أني لم أشف نفسي منهم^{١٦}
بهم خدب من معطب وكتيب^{١٧} فأبوا وقد أودى الجلابيب منهم^{١٨}
كفاء ولا في خطة بضريب^{١٩} أصابهم من لم يكن لدمائهم^{٢٠}

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 Banú al-Najjar

1 Sirah, vol 2. pp 75-76

And from the Banú Háshim 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.

1 Referring to Hamzah, uncle of the Prophet

2 viz the Muslims

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