

Historical Stories For Children (5)



HISTORICAL STORIES FOR CHILDREN - 5

ABŪ SUFYĀN



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*In the Name of Allāh,
the Beneficent, the Merciful*

Our aim for the publication of these series is to introduce some aspects of biography from the history of Islam. These biographies include both types of individuals who either played a good and useful role or a bad and harmful role. We had always cherished the idea that we would be able to produce a short sketch of hard facts from the history of Islam in this field to be written exclusively to capture the interest of young children and teenagers.

We pray to the Almighty Allāh to assist us in proving our present and future efforts to be accomplished facts — thus making a useful contribution to the learning of young children and teenagers and help us in this cause. He is the Best Guide and the Best Helper.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
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In the Name of Allāh

It was an age when the whole of the Hijāz (Arabia) was covered in darkness and oppression and full of ignorance and corruption. It was a country where debauchery, wrong action and evil deeds were considered to be honourable. It was a time when women were deprived of all privileges in life, denied freedom and access to any spirituality. In those clays baby-girls were buried alive and they were

even denied the right to live. It was to such a culture and way of behaving that the noble Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) came: he appeared amongst the people carrying a life-giving message of peace and prosperity from his lord, Allāh. His message was this:

قُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَفْلِحُوا

Say: (O people), there is no god, but Allāh, so that you may achieve success.

The first action of the noble Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was to destroy and remove the false and superstitious gods of the idol-

worshippers which they had made out of stone, wood, date-palms and other materials. Then, he affirmed that there was no god, only Allāh and that men must submit to Him only and to no other power. Thus the noble Prophet (s.a.w.a.) relying only on Allāh for support began calling the people to the correct way of life: he feared nothing, neither person or political force.

In the same way, however, as darkness opposes itself to light and the forces of evil to truth, so there existed in opposition to this figure of truth and

spiritual reality the satanic figures of darkness of that age, namely, the men of the Quraysh tribe. To avoid conflict he kept his message hidden from these pharaonic-like people at the initial stages of his mission. The first to accept the faith of Islam was Khadijah, the noble wife of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); then Abu Ṭālib, the uncle and guardian of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and Ali (a.s.), his cousin and faithful supporter, both accepted.

These distinguished servants of Allāh worshipped and prayed out of sight of the *mushrikīn* (the pl. of *mushrik*: polytheists)

of Mecca, especially the rich and powerful amongst the tribe of the Quraysh. The holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) used every opportunity to call the poor servants and slaves of the Qurayshite nobles to worship Allāh, the One, the Unique, and to keep them from worshipping the idols of falsehood and magic which had been erected by the chiefs of the Quraysh.

Gradually however, from all quarters of Mecca murmurings of discontent began; then the cry of anger and revolt of the pleasure-seeking nobles was to be heard, loud and clear. The *kāfirūn* (the pl.

of *kāfir*; the people who do not believe in God) amongst the nobles of Mecca feared that the slaves would be roused and incited by the call of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and as a result they would be unable to keep them in slavery. Day by day the voice of criticism grew louder until the name of the Messenger of Allāh became known to every tribe in the Ḥijāz and in every corner of every town people could be heard talking about a certain man who had brought a new *din* (a divine code for living and worshipping) and was boldly challenging the existence of the accepted gods.

The chiefs and nobles of the Quraysh, whose tyrannical leader was Abu Sufyān, complained to Abu Ṭālib the paternal uncle and guardian of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) . They asked him to advise his nephew to stop slandering and challenging their gods. Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was not to be deterred from his mission. It was during this period of psychological warfare between the forces of truth and falsehood that Allāh revealed to the Prophet that he should begin to openly call the people to Islam, to the worship of the One, Unique God and to prevent his family and relatives from worshipping the

idols: وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ (and warn your tribe and those closest to you; Qur'an, 26:214).

Acting on this divine order he told Ali (a.s.) to organize a meeting and invite both his close family and the rest of his kin. Ali (a.s.) sent out letters of invitation to his own relatives and to those of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) calling them to an evening meal at his own house. One after the other the important members of the Quraysh, who were all related to the holy Prophet, arrived at the meeting; Ali (a.s.) received and served on them. When everyone had

finished the meal the noble Prophet (s.a.w.a.) began to speak: "Oh leaders of the Quraysh! Cease to worship idols! Put an end to your evil actions, corruption, debauchery, tyranny, usury and everything which is *ḥarām* (forbidden according to the divine code), fear God, for on the Day of Judgement each person will be rewarded according to his actions . . ." Silence fell on the meeting; the *mushrikūn* were so angry that they gnashed their teeth and would have torn the noble Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) to pieces had they been able; they feared Abu Ṭālib however and so restrained their evil

desires. It was at this moment that the Messenger of Allāh turned to face the sons of his paternal uncle ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib and said: "Listen, sons of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib. In truth, I do not believe that any other Arab has brought you something better than I have brought you. You must realize, that I desire nothing for you but the best of this world and the next. Oh young men of Mecca! Do not listen to the words of these ignorant old men who pass their miserable lives in idol-worship, magic, *shirk* (associating partners with Allāh), tyranny and who strive to keep the people from knowing the Truth."

It was at this point in the speech of the noble Prophet that the men of importance amongst the Quraysh, their pride deeply wounded by these words, began to laugh and make fun of him, uproar then broke out in the meeting and they got up from their places and left.

After this, the noble Messenger (s.a.w.a.) , carrying out the divine order, called the closest members of his tribe to the worship of the One, Sublime God. He continued the task, sometimes openly, sometimes secretly, amongst both the common and the elite, taking advantage of

every appropriate occasion until another more definitive message came from Allāh via Jibrīl (Gabriel) :

{ فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ }

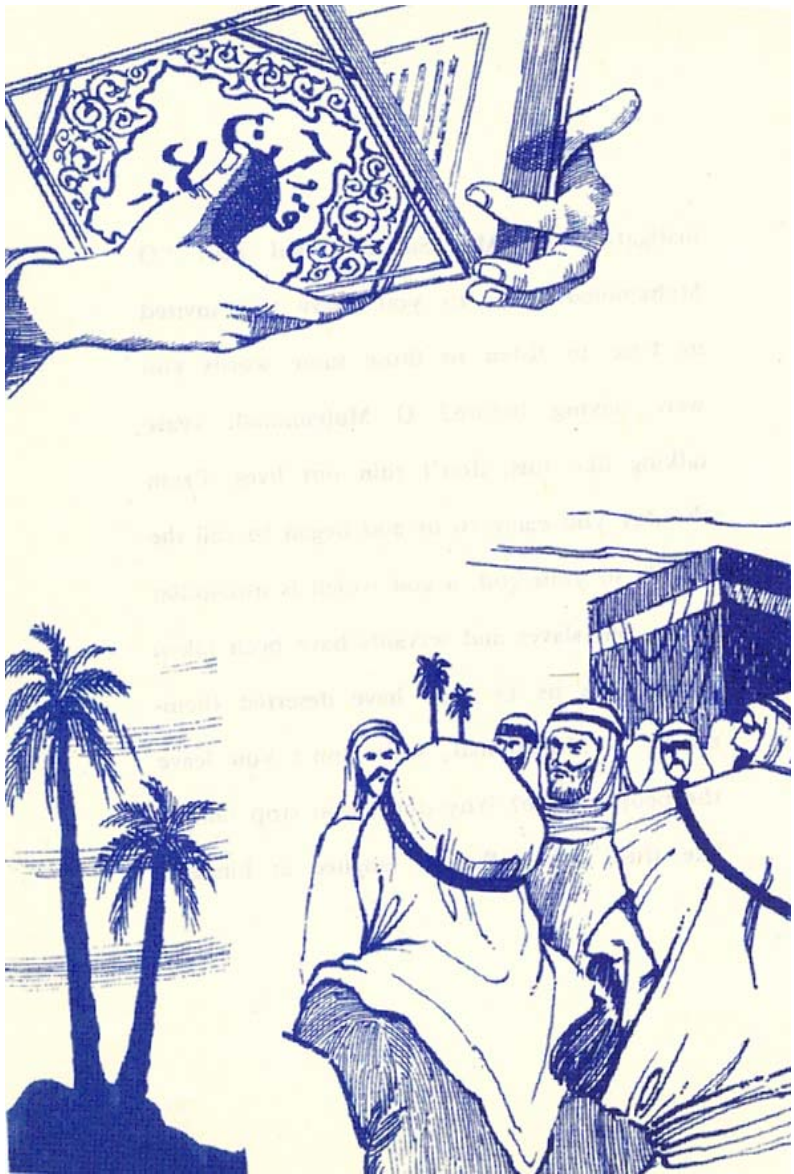
(So declare openly what you are bidden and turn aside from the polytheists; Qur'an, 15:94).

After hearing this divine order, he went up the Safi mountain near Mecca gathering the nobles and leaders of the different tribes around him and with words full of beauty and meaning and declaring the loaf (the pl. of *āyah*, verses of the Qur'an) which had been revealed to

him by Allāh, he began to advise them: "O people, O leaders of the Quraysh! I demand nothing of you but that you say: لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ - "*there is no god, but Allāh*".

Nobody from amongst the distinguished assembly dared to speak except for Abu Lahab, the uncle of the noble Prophet, who at the instigation of Abu Sufyān cried out: "O Muhammad! Woe to you. Have you invited us here to listen to those same words you were saying before? O Muhammad, cease talking like this: don't ruin our lives. From the day you came to us and began to call the

people to your god, a god which is unfamiliar to us, our slaves and servants have been taken away from us or they have deserted them-selves. O Muhammad, why don't you leave the people alone? Why don't you stop talking like this?" Abu Sufyān laughed at himself, satisfied at how well his instigation of Abu Lahab had worked, and how Muhammad was powerless to do anything. The holy Prophet remaining polite and patient, looked at Abu Lahab with a pleasant smile; but he said nothing. The ignorant people stole glances at each other, bent their heads muttering and left the



presence of the noble Messenger Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) . From among this crowded assembly, however several persons, who possessed a pure heart and spirit were attracted, as bees to the nectar, towards the noble Prophet, and accepted his message. These persons were ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir and his mother and father, and Bilāl, the Abyssinian. It was from this moment on, that the leaders of the Quraysh, in particular the most influential from amongst them, Abu Sufyān, the deceitful plotter of Mecca, began to work together to form a counter-force to Muhammad (s. a. w. a.).

THE CHANGING FACES OF ABU SUFYĀN

Before we begin to consider the nature of Abu Sufyān's character we must go back a few years to a time before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and become familiar with the grand-parents of these two men. ‘Abd Manāf was one of the grand-parents of both the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Abu Sufyān. It was into ‘Abd Manāf's home that the baby twins were born, the toe of one of the twins was attached to the forehead of the other. The two twins were taken to a

soothsayer to see what he thought of the matter. After seeing them the soothsayer said that if the twins were separated from each other, strife and bloodshed would reign between their off-spring for as long as this world existed.

As it was obvious that they would encounter enormous difficulties thus joined to each other it was decided that they should be separated. One of them was given the name Hāshim and the other ‘Abdu 'sh-Shams. It is said that the toe of Hāshim was attached to the forehead of ‘Abdu 'sh-Shams. Later, ‘Abdu 'sh-Shams

who had no children of his own — adopted — a butcher's apprentice called Umayyah and gave him all rights of inheritance.

It was at this point that the two forces of truth and falsehood were set, the one opposed to the other: on the one side stood Hāshim, who was a peaceable man, fond of his friends and always entertaining guests and on the other, Umayyah who, because his true parents were not known, was a spiteful, malicious and ill-mannered man. (We have already explained that he was not the true son of

‘Abdu 'sh-Shams and that it is not known who his father or mother were; it is said that he came originally from the west.)

At that time ‘Abd Manāf was responsible for guarding and taking care of the Ka‘bah of Mecca. After him the responsibility was handed over to his son Hāshim whose devotion and hard-working nature made him more suitable than anyone else. Umayyah the adopted son of ‘Abdu 'sh-Shams, who, through his adoption was like a cousin to Hāshim became jealous. The fire of jealousy burned so fiercely in the heart of Umayyah that it

drove him crazy with anger, his jealousy was no different from that of Cain for Abel. Umayyah, this son of unknown parentage, by trickery and deceit used every opportunity to draw together a group of persons around him in an attempt to destroy or undermine the social and political influence of Hāshim. Umayyah schemed and plotted, caused disorder and chaos in people's hitherto peaceful lives.

Hāshim, however, a fine good-natured man, from whose family the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) was to appear,

cordially invited Umayyah to come and exchange views with each other. Hāshim advised and requested the latter to give up his evil actions. These gentle words of advice had no effect on the stony-hearted Umayyah and he continued as before his interference into other's affairs. Hāshim, seeing that this selfish, black-hearted man would not cease his savage behaviour was obliged to buy his peace with money and goods; thus he gave him several camels together with quantity of foodstuffs and succeeded in relieving the people of his evil actions for a few days. Umayyah, however, began to cause trouble again,

openly acted in a bad manner and defiantly challenged Hāshim.

The confrontation between truth and falsehood became so bitter that the difference between the two men broke into open strife and battle and the courts of justice were obliged to intervene. The two men appeared in court in order to settle their differences; the judge began the proceedings; after a thorough investigation into the matter and after taking counsel he decided that Hāshim was in the right. Umayyah was ordered to return everything he had received from Hāshim

and to be exiled to Sham (now Syria). Umayyah went to Sham but he did not remain idle; even from his place of exile, he began interfering in other's affairs, plotted and schemed, and instigated the idol-worshippers against Hāshim.

Unfortunately, this good generous man Hāshim died at an early age living behind him a son called Shaybah who was living with his mother in another house. Hāshim, also had another brother whose name was Muṭṭalib; this brother, like Hāshim himself, was very well-mannered generous man. The responsibility for

guarding the Ka‘bah was entrusted to him. Muṭṭalib invited his nephew Shaybah from Medina and brought him up with loving care; it is for this reason that he is called ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, that is servant or slave of Muṭṭalib.

But let us return to Umayyah. Umayyah had many sons, who were all similar to Umayyah himself in their intentions and behaviour. Moreover all the had qualities of Umayyah were manifest to the utmost degree in the figure of one particular son whose name was Ḥarb. Thus it was that the two forces, one

satanic the other merciful, were again opposed to each other. Harb at the instigation of Abu Sufyān made plans to kill ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib; fortunately, however he was unsuccessful in his attempt and had to flee. The conflict between them continued in this way for a time until God gave ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib several fine and worthy sons; one of them was Abdullāh who was to have as a son the noble Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The two opposed parties and the two forces of truth and falsehood continued thereby to confront each other: on the one side Abu Sufyān and on the other side the noble Prophet

**Muhammad, the Messenger of Allāh
(s.a.w.a.).**

Abu Sufyān's deceit and hypocrisy, his bad language and vile behaviour was notorious amongst the people of the Ḥijāz. His evil actions and bad qualities were just like those of Hind, the "liver-eater" (who ate the liver of Ḥamzah, the uncle of the holy Prophet), who knew no bounds of modesty or decency, whether with her own people or with strangers. His sister, Umm Jamil played an important role in hindering or tormenting Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) . She was the wife of Abu Jahl

and is mentioned by God in the Qur'an (*surah* 111, *āyah* 4) as the bearer of fuel for the fire. In fact, all the family of Umayyah (Hamamah, Rabi'ah, Hind, Abu Sufyān, Mu'āwiyah and their grandparents) are mentioned by the name of 'the cursed tree' in the Qur'an (*surah*, 14, *āyah* 14).

From his early youth, Abu Sufyān shunned no means in order to achieve his political and criminal aims; he took the infamous daughter of Umayyah, Hind as a wife to further his own designs and it was together with this woman that he

confronted Islam and the radiant figure of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). Abu Sufyān believed that if his parents were unable, as a result of their struggle, to vest control of the Ka‘bah from the family of Hāshim then he himself should undertake this task. Abu Sufyān saw himself as the guardian of the dictatorial regime of the Quraysh and as the upholder of the traditional age of *jāhiliyyah* (pre-Islamic period of ignorance). To this end he began his ungodly action against the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), urging others to do the same. Furthermore, he persuaded them to make fun of the noble Master,

Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and engage in open conflict with him. He even went so far as to plot the death of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). By studying the history of that age we will discover that Abu Sufyān was the ring-leader, responsible for all the battles undertaken against the Prophet; he even swore never to sleep with his wives until he had killed Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).

Finally the situation became so bad that the tribe of Hāshim, under the guidance of their own leader, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was forced to leave Mecca and take residence in the valley of Shi‘b Abī

Ṭālib. The nobles and important men of Mecca from all the different families drew together as a result of this. They held many meetings, finally deciding on the following plan of actions against Muhammad and his followers:

- 1) To effect an economic blockade: no foodstuffs and other basic necessities would be allowed to reach them.**
- 2) All trade would be stopped and marriage to any of them would not be permitted.**
- 3) Torture and harassment of them would be encouraged.**

Other measures were also decided upon. Following these decisions all roads leading to their encampments were closed and anyone caught dealing with them was subject to deprivation and torture. It was during this period that the holy Prophet began to equip and prepare his forces for war (in the valley of Shi‘b Abi Ṭālib and in other places). He trained the strongest, most fiercest and most god-fearing amongst them in the skills of war.

For three years, the noble Prophet and his faithful supporters remained in these valleys, cut off socially and

economically. Finally, however the powerful leaders of Mecca grew tired of this situation and decided to lift the blockade. Deliverance of Hāshim's tribe and the Prophet himself from this unfortunate situation gave the supporters of Islam an opportunity to consolidate their forces and allowed the god-fearing slaves and servants of the usurers and powerful men of Mecca to come out and join them. As a result of the resistance of the holy Prophet against the forces of Shayṭān (Satan) the Abu Sufyāns and pharaonic men of Mecca were left helpless; they gained nothing from their evil,

inhuman policies. Their trade and industry had been disrupted and the source of their riches was in danger. In order to destroy the root of the problem of usury, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) ordered his followers, who were suffering at the hands of the Meccans to make *hijrah* (emigrate) from Mecca to Medina. By this mean they were delivered of the evils of these blood- sucking leeches.

The Quraysh had not remained idle; they held a series of meetings and in one of them the *kuffār* (unbelievers) leaders made the following proposals:

- 1. To set fire to the house of the Prophet.**
- 2. To exile him to a far-off town and keep him under guard.**
- 3. To imprison him without food and force him to do hard labour.**
- 4. To torture him.**
- 5. To kill him by means of a hired-killer.**

All of these proposals were rejected ; it was then that one of the evil-minded men present made the following strange suggestion: One man should be chosen

from each tribe and together, sword in hand we should strike the Prophet's head and cut him to pieces under the cover of darkness. By taking this path of action we would be free of his trouble-some action, would destroy all trace of him and no one person in particular could be held responsible. Shouts of approval were to be heard from everyone and this devilish scheme was unanimously accepted. Before carrying out this plan, however, they began to harass and torture the faithful supporters of the holy Prophet. Among those who especially suffered this campaign of harassment and torture at

the hands of these vicious men we may cite the names of Bilāl, the Abyssinian, ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir and his mother and father. They were stripped naked and thrown onto the scorching sands of Arabia; children and youths from among the ignorant *kuffār* were persuaded to use every means to molest them.

The father and mother of ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir were martyred (*shahīd*) under the effects of the torture, Bilāl, the Abyssinian, ‘Ammār and other supporters of the Prophet fell ill after the torture and lay for a long time in their

houses, bed - ridden while recovering. Despite this torture and harassment neither the holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) , nor those who believed in his prophethood gave up the task of calling the people to Islam. The latter loved the Messenger of Allāh and Islam so passionately that 'iman (faith and trust in Allāh) shone like a light in their hearts and they did not feel the pain of the torture.

Gradually the number of the Prophet's supporters increased and brave Muslims revolutionaries appeared from

amongst the people, especially from the class of slaves, servants and workers. The fire of their determination ignited the hearts of both the town and the village tribes and began to under-mine and destroy the rule of the powerful, criminal nobles of Mecca.

THE *HIJRAH* OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLĀH FROM MECCA TO MEDINA

Ten years have passed since the noble Prophet received the first revelation from Allāh, not once during these ten years had

he taken a moment's respite from his mission. Indeed, his supporters and followers were not even left in peace at night by the idol-worshippers and tyrants of Mecca. These idol-worshippers and enemies of the Master Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) incited so much fear and uncertainty into the hearts of the people that no-one dared to openly approach the Prophet. Abu Sufyān and Abu Lahab in particular, the leaders of these brutish, evil criminals, one day caused so much trouble that the holy Prophet as a result of this unfortunate situation, decided to leave for another region where he would be able

to continue calling the people to Islam and to complete his mission. The noble Messenger after reflection, chose Ṭā'if (which was an important town at the time), and alone he set off in its direction. On arriving at Ṭā'if, he made contact with the leaders of the different tribes and explained his divine mission and the *din* of Islam to them. The people of Ṭā'if not only refused to accept Islam but they also made every effort to torment and molest the Prophet; they even urged their own children to do the same. Men and women, accompanied by their ignorant children followed the noble Prophet, throwing

stones at his body and legs until he fell, blood pouring from his wounds. Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) considered it likely that if he were to return to Mecca the idol-worshippers and enemies of God would take him prisoner and kill him, if this were to happen his mission would be incomplete. He thus decided to spend a few days in a safe place called Nakhlah. After several days the noble Prophet, accompanied by a group of armed men to guard him entered Mecca and settled in the *Masjidu 'l-Ḥarām* (the Ka‘bah and the mosque surrounding it).

Abu Sufyān and his liver-eating wife Hind, who were among the worst enemies of Islam had been lying in ambush, awaiting the approach of the Prophet. They changed their mind and decided not to attack, however, disturbed at the sight of the armed men.

Some time passed after this incident, during which he would go to the small towns and villages calling people to wake up to the truth of his message, to the truth of Islam. One of the most pleasant areas we may mention by name, was the small town of Yathrib, which later came to be

called as Madīnatu 'r-Rasūl — "the Town of the Messenger." The inhabitants of Yathrib who, because of long years of bitter fighting with the people of Mecca, were obliged to live in very straightened circumstances; they joined the forces of Islam and swore that they would support the Master Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) to their last drop of blood. The noble Prophet took advantage of the situation and formed a military encampment of his armed forces. The people of Mecca, especially its leaders had slipped into a deep sleep, imagining that the holy Prophet's mission had lost its impetus and would soon fade into

obscurity. Suddenly, however, they received news of the pact of the people of Yathrib with the Messenger which caused the colour to drain from their faces. The leaders and important nobles of the idol-worshipping government of Mecca understood that the situation had changed. They feared that if the Muslims had established an important military encampment in the heart of the Arabian peninsula, as a result, the very foundation of the central government of the idol-worshippers in Mecca was in danger. The enemies of the Prophet, awoke from their sleep and once again went into action. The supporters of

Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), living in very difficult circumstances because of the harassment and pressure in the part of the *mushrikīn* of Mecca, requested permission of the holy Prophet to travel to another place where their lives would be safe. Two days later, the Messenger of Allāh told them that the best place for them in the present situation was the town of Yathrib. He added : "You can make *hi/rah* to this place, one by one. Secretly and in perfect safety." After this order had been given, the Muslims began to leave Mecca one at a time using different, excuses and subterfuges to escape unnoticed, making

their way to Yathrib. The idol-worshippers of Mecca heard about this decision and prevented them from leaving.

Despite this, a large number of the Muslims escaped to the surrounding woody areas and joined the militant Muslims revolutionaries. This exodus continued until, except for the Prophet and Ali (a. s.) and several elderly or invalid persons, no one remained in Mecca. The noble Master Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) , received a further order from Allāh to leave for Medina and to join his supporters. He realized however that

because of the merciless officials of the idol-worshipping government it could be difficult to escape without risking his life. As for Abu Sufyān, Abu Lahab and other notables amongst the Quraysh they ordered that the Prophet's house be surrounded and that he himself should be killed. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was warned of the evil plan of the idol-worshippers and he realized that the sooner he left for Medina, the better. The noble Messenger thus had Ali sleep on his bed and said to him: "Allāh has instructed that your life be sacrificed for the sake of Islam." Ali (a.s.), the true and lawful

deputy and heir of the noble Messenger lay down to sleep on the latter's bed. Before the armed men of Abu Sufyān had encircled the Prophet's house, the Prophet escaped out of another door under the cover of darkness. He made his way through the streets and alleyways and left Mecca. Forty men, armed with un-sheathed swords surrounded the house of the Messenger of Allāh, it was near daybreak when they burst into the room where the Prophet usually slept. They were just about to strike their swords on the body of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) when Ali (a.s.) raised his head from the pillow

and said: "O! What's going on?" Abu Sufyān's armed men were taken completely by surprise and recoiled in anger and hatred like wounded snakes.

The *kuffār* enemies of the holy Prophet could hardly contain their rage when they realized that their plot had completely failed. They believed however that the Prophet must be hiding in some other house in Mecca and so they dispatched their guards to search every place the Prophet was likely to have taken refuge in and ordered them to keep a watch on every highway. They, poor

fellows, did not know that the noble Prophet was outside Mecca sheltering in a cave. After walking on foot for over a week he reached Medina and immediately began to think about forming a powerful army to wipe out all trace of idol-worship, ignorance and inhuman behaviour from Arab society and to save the people from their tyrannical oppressors. On several occasions, accompanied by a number of devoted men who were ready to die in the way of Allāh, he attacked the caravans of the Quraysh and the nobles of Mecca. The latter, supported by the dictatorial government had used force to plunder the

goods of the Muslims who had made *hi/rah* to Medina. This action by Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his army caused fear in the hearts of the idol-worshipping community. One of the most important battles against the *kuffār* and idol-worshippers of Mecca to occur in the first years after the *hi/rah* of the holy Prophet was the battle of Badr. Those who fought beside the holy Prophet were later honoured above all the other Muslims.

One day a caravan of the Quraysh, headed by Abu Sufyān, accompanied by fifty armed guards was making its way

towards Sham. They were bringing with them a thousand camels, the profit the idol-worshippers had made through trading and also goods stolen from the Muslims. The noble Prophet found out about this important caravan and together with three hundred and thirteen brave and faithful men set out to attack it on its way back. The Muslim army gathered in a place called Badr, there were however differences of opinion as to whether the battle should be fought or not. The holy Prophet had to decide which was the best line of action, so he took counsel with the commanders and officers of the Muslim

army. Although during the meeting and decision taking ‘Umar and Abu Bakr made a hypocritical show of support, others who were not truly concerned with the advance of Islam were opposed to fighting; another group of men announced their willingness to fight alongside the Prophet. Shouting slogans of support for Islam, they were prepared to sacrifice themselves in the way of Allāh. The Prophet gave the order to attack and the army of Islam surrounded the caravan. The courageous Muslim force struck the army of the *kuffār* so fiercely that the latter turned in flight leaving the camels



and goods to the Muslims. It was total dishonour for those who had been opposed to fighting.

Abu Sufyān managed to escape with

his life, however, and returned like a wounded animal to his house in Mecca. There he took counsel with his wife Hind. The latter was one of leaders of the Banu Umayyah; she was one of the rich pleasure-loving usurers of Mecca. She was the daughter of Umayyah's brother and the evil-minded wife of Abu Sufyān. Hind was the sister of 'Utaybah and Shaybah who were among the worst enemies of the Prophet. The name of her mother was Ḥamāmah. Hind was at first the wife of Abu 'Umar and Ḥafṣ Makhzumi but when the latter realized how bad a woman she was, they divorced her. Hind had several

husbands and one of them, as we have seen was, Abu Sufyān. Mu‘āwiyah, the commander of Banu Umayyah was the son of this very woman. It was while the holy Prophet was traveling from Mecca to Medina that Hind, Abu Sufyān and his brothers, accompanied by the rest of the enemies of Islam tried every means to have him killed. It was these same enemies who caused several wars. During the battle of Badr, Hind's brother Shaybah was slain; Hind's heart began to burn with spite and began to consider how she would be able to take revenge.

When the battle of Uḥud occurred, Hind played a leading role in the affairs. Inflamed by the recitations of epic poets her thirst for revenge increased; it was her who had the worthy uncle of the Prophet, Ḥamzah killed and later tore out the liver from his corpse. She tried to eat it but was unable to; she then cut off the limbs of this fine man and hung them about her neck. It is because of this action that she became known as the 'liver-eating' Hind. Other Quraysh woman did the same thing to others. The holy Prophet became very angry at Hind's action and ordered her to be killed. Abu Sufyān for his part thrust

his spear into Ḥamzah's mouth and pierced through his neck saying: "This battle too, is under the leadership of Abu Sufyān and any injury to the Prophet and his followers has been at my hand." Abu Sufyān made further plans to kill the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) , making pacts with the Jews and the emperor of Rome; none of them succeeded however and in desperation he gave a large amount of money to a hired-killer, ordering him to slay Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) while he was praying. The hired-killer, however was taken prisoner in the mosque before he could carry out the attempt; he confessed

in front of everyone that he had been engaged on the part of Abu Sufyān. When this insidious man saw every way of action blocked and realized that he would not be able to fulfill his aim, he resorted to other deceitful means: he decided to make up with the Prophet and he gave the impression he had become a Muslim. His action was just like all the present-day anti-Islamic politicians who accept the *din* only after realizing that they cannot achieve their aims by armed struggle.

When the Messenger of Allāh marched from Medina with a large army

to capture Mecca, and was about to enter the town (of Mecca), Abu Sufyān immediately approached ‘Abbās the paternal uncle of the Prophet and sought refuge. It was thus by compromise that he furthered his own aims. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb because of his hatred for Abu Sufyān believed that he should not be given the opportunity to accept Islam but rather should be put to death. To this end he wanted to obtain the Prophet’s permission to decapitate him. ‘Abbās, however, the uncle of the Prophet supported Abu Sufyān and did not allow ‘Umar to carry out the plan, saying that

his life was under protection of Islam.

‘Umar wanted to kill Abu Sufyān as the latter used always to say : "I swear by Allāh, that if I remain alive I will force this tribe to relinquish it's rule." From these words it was clear why ‘Umar was the enemy of Abu Sufyān. He feared leadership of the Muslims would fall into the hands of Abu Sufyān after the death of the Prophet; if this happened ‘Umar's power would be curtailed.

Abu Sufyān was still waiting for a suit-able occasion to strike Islam with a heavy blow. Several times he swore: "As

long as I live I will strike to wrest political power from the hands of these people and accomplish what my fathers failed to do." The noble Prophet realized that if Islam fell into the hands of these evil-minded people, it would be corrupted and the age of *jāhiliyyah* would return. As the Prophet was fully aware of the evil scheming on the part of the tribe of Banu Umayyah, he foresaw calamity and misfortune for the Muslims of the next generation. He referred to this openly when he said :

لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ آفَةٌ وَ آفَةُ هَذَا الدِّينِ بَنُو أُمَيَّةَ

"Everything is afflicted by some calamity or other and the calamity which will afflict the *din* of Islam is Banu Umayyah." He also said: "The worst of the tribe amongst the Arabs is the Banu Umayyah."

Although Abu Sufyān is reckoned to be one of the holy Prophet's people, we know from his behaviours and evil intentions how much harm he did to the cause of Islam; it was he who in the name of Islamic justice found his top positions of power amongst the ruling elite; it was he too who tried to corrupt the purity of

Islam. It is at first surprising that the noble Prophet forgave such people and their actions, even turning a blind eye to the 'liver-eating' Hind, who had previously been sentenced to death; but we realize that it is not for nothing that Allāh called him (the Prophet) : رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ - a mercy to the world!"

When the Messenger of Allāh left this world and a dispute broke out concerning who should be his rightful caliph and deputy, Abu Sufyān went to visit Ali, hoping to incite him against Abu Bakr, 'Omar and others who were

unlawfully claiming the caliphate and to thus stir up fresh strife within the Muslim community. Ali (a.s.) raised by the Prophet him-self and aware of all the secrets of existence, whether past or present, understood the real intention of the evil Abu Sufyān; striking his fist on his chest, he declared: "O son of Umayyah! I can see what treacherous plot you have in mind. Your heart is not burning out of love for Islam but rather for your own selfish desires." When Abu Sufyān realized that it was hopeless to try and deceive Ali (a.s.), he turned to Abu Bakr and ‘Umar and began to

compromise with them.

When ‘Uthmān became the third illegal caliph, Abu Sufyān found a way to increase his activity against Islam. It was at his (‘Uthmān's) time that through guile and deceit he appointed Mu‘āwiyah (son of Abu Sufyān) as his commander. This was a preliminary step to gaining full control of the government. One day in the house of ‘Uthmān he went on to the *minbar* (a small raised platform) to speak: turning to the Umayyids he began: "O Umayyids! Seize hold of power as you would a ball in your hand and do not let it slip from your fingers." (Any thought of

paradise and hell was far from his mind; for him the nay of Reckoning did not exist and only this world was of any value to his eyes.) This treacherous politician Abu Sufyān, using cunning and deceit, persuaded the Umayyids to join forces with the usurper caliph ‘Uthman. He saw that all the important positions of power within the country were given to them and he himself acted so inhumanly, so outrageously that mere words fail to describe the true nature of his action. Abu Sufyān even engaged a group of men to kill ‘Uthmān and to lay the blame on Ali (a.s.) who in his life had never caused

harm, even to an ant. It was Ali who said: "Even if the whole world were given to me; on condition that I take a straw from the mouth of an ant, I would not do it." His words and actions tear away the veil of deceit and hypocrisy: "The Umayyids have not really accepted Islam, they have only covered their faces with the mask of Islam." And on another occasion: "They have hidden their *kufr* (disbelief), so that they can better fight against the very fundament of Islam." ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir, the faithful friend of Imām Ali (a.s.) and unflinching fighter in the way of truth said: "When the Umayyids appeared, all

good departed and the evil of *jāhiliyyah* returned."

After the death of the Prophet, the true Islamic rule became corrupted; at the same time as the caliphate was being usurped, the Umayyids were gradually revealing their own evil designs, (we have seen what kind of strife and conflict they caused to Islam and the Muslims). It has thus become clear to us who were the true enemies of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Ali (a.s.) and their families and what role they played in hindering the spread of Islam.

