

[Home](#) > [Abu Sufyan, Historical Stories For Children 5](#) > The Hijrah of the Messenger of Allah from Mecca to Medina

The Hijrah of the Messenger of Allah from Mecca to Medina

Ten years have passed since the noble Prophet received the first revelation from Allah, 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 Sufyan 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 Ta'if (which was an important town at the time), and alone he set off in its direction. On arriving at Ta'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 Ta'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 Masjidul-Haram (the Ka'bah and the mosque surrounding it).

Abu Sufyan 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 Madinatu 'r-Rasul — "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 under- stood 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 mushrikin 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 Allah 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 Allah 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 Sufyan, 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: "Allah 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 Sufyan 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 unsheathed swords surrounded the house of the Messenger of Allah, 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 Sufyan's armed men were taken completely by surprise and recoiled in anger and hatred like wounded snakes.

The kuffar 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 Allah, 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 kuffar and idol-worshippers of Mecca to occur in the first years after the *hijrah* 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 Sufyan, 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 Allah. The Prophet gave the order to attack and the army of Islam surrounded the caravan.

The courageous Muslim force struck the army of the kuffar 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 Sufyan 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 Sufyan. Hind was the sister of 'Utaybah and Shaybah who were among the worst enemies of the Prophet. The name of her mother was Hamamah. Hind was at first the wife of Abu 'Umar and Hafs 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 Sufyan. Mu'awiyah, 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 Sufyan 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 Uhud 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, Hamzah 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 Sufyan for his part thrust his spear into Hamzah's mouth and pierced through his neck saying: "This battle too, is under the leadership of Abu Sufyan and any injury to the Prophet and his followers has been at my hand."

Abu Sufyan made further plans to kill the Messenger of Allah (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 Sufyan.

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 Allah marched from Medina with a large army to capture Mecca, and was about to enter the town (of Mecca), Abu Sufyan immediately approached 'Abbas the paternal uncle of the Prophet and sought refuge. It was thus by compromise that he furthered his own aims.

'Umar ibn al-Khattab because of his hatred for Abu Sufyan 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. 'Abbas, however, the uncle of the Prophet supported Abu Sufyan and did not allow 'Umar to carry out the plan, saying that his life was under protection of Islam.

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

Abu Sufyan was still waiting for a suitable 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 jahiliyyah 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: "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 Sufyan 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 Allah called him (the Prophet) a mercy to the world!"

When the Messenger of Allah left this world and a dispute broke out concerning who should be his rightful caliph and deputy, Abu Sufyan went to visit Ali, hoping to incite him against Abu Bakr, 'Umar 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 himself and aware of all the secrets of existence, whether past or present, understood the real intention of the evil Abu Sufyan; 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 Sufyan 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 'Uthman became the third illegal caliph, Abu Sufyan found a way to increase his activity against Islam. It was at his ('Uthman's) time that through guile and deceit he appointed Mu'awiyah (son of Abu Sufyan) as his commander. This was a preliminary step to gaining full control of the government.

One day in the house of 'Uthman 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 Sufyan, 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 Sufyan even engaged a group of men to kill 'Uthman 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."

'Ammar ibn Yasir, the faithful friend of Imam Ali (a.s.) and unflinching fighter in the way of truth said: "When the Umayyids appeared, all good departed and the evil of jahiliyyah 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.

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