

Meanwhile, the Hawazin delegation had relayed the Prophet's message to their chieftain Malik ibn 'Awf and had informed him of the Anyone among you who has indicated the need for him to return and take advantage of this general amnesty. Malik was overcome by angst. He feared the Thaqif's learning of the assurance given to him, that his family and possessions would be restored to him in the event of his returning as a Muslim, and their thus imprisoning him in the fortress to prevent his escape. He secretly had a camel readied for him and had it sent to Dahna, instructing the slave he sent with his mount to wait until he arrived there. He himself stole out of Ta'if by night and headed straight for Dahna. No one noticed his departure. Upon reaching Dahna, he mounted his camel and made straight for Ji'rana. He went immediately to the Messenger of God, overcome with shame, but fully aware that he was only now beginning to take his first step towards true happiness. The Messenger of God rejoiced at his arrival and returned his family and possessions to Malik as he had so promised, not to mention the additional hundred camels. Malik ibn 'Awf attempted to express in verse his gratitude for such generosity and earnest hospitality. He spoke of his never having seen the likes of God's Messenger in goodness and generosity and endeavored to describe his making known in advance, one by one, what was to happen in the future.²⁷²

SECTION TWO

MULTIFACETED COMMUNICATION OF THE MESSAGE AND THE MISSION OF 'ABBAS

While he was forced to Emigrate, the Messenger of God did not leave the Meccans to their own devices, or rule them out on account of the thirteen-year suffering and persecution they subjected the Muslims to. Despite having been warmly and wholeheartedly embraced in Medina, he forever kept sight of Mecca. At a time where limited resources were at hand, distance was a major barrier, and where the sole means of communication was the letter and courier, he found ways of reaching all the Meccans and was able to enter Mecca eight years later having won over the hearts of all of them, without exception.

In point of fact, the Messenger of God did not make contact with the people merely through speech, but adopted many different strategies by means of the resources at his disposal, and undertook activities within a very broad arena to reach his addressees. When we look at his life from this standpoint, we see that communication of the message and his guiding others was not

²⁷² Vākidi, *Megâzî* 631-637; İbnü'l-Esîr, *Kâmil* 2/139; Taberî, *Târîh* 3/188-189

just a matter of going to visit them and personally relating his objective, but was a longer running process whereby he was active in every sphere in which he could make contact with them. After all, a consideration of the climate that was established in Mecca following Badr reveals that the conquest of the city in as short a period of time as six years could not have been possible in any other way. The complete transformation, in such a short period of time, of a city where hatred and animosity was at its peak and all its inhabitants — young and old, male and female — lived and breathed revenge arising from enmity, cannot be explained in any other way. For the individual and idea that they had until only just yesterday viewed as their chief enemy, they now put on a pedestal, and the people they did not want in their city they now welcomed with open arms.

Despite the fact that it is God's Messenger whose life is the most thoroughly documented throughout human history, his every action, confirmation, and word has not been recorded. An examination of his life from this vantage point indicates that his having reached all of his addressees in their entirety within a space of twenty-three years, and against all the odds, serves to show that many other different methodologies must have been at play aside from those already known. For the Messenger's conquest of Mecca is symbolic. What was realized on that day was not merely a certain event, but was a process that came to fruition long ago. There is an unnamed conquest, in any case, and with the Prophet's arrival, the end point had been reached. A look at the big picture reveals that God's Messenger entered the city freely and without any opposition. The resistance put up at a single location during an entry into the city from four directions was local and limited to particular individuals, and when they realized that they would not be able to hold out, they fell apart and were each forced to flee in different directions. It would seem that new channels had been found to the hearts of those who lived and breathed hatred and animosity for the past six years, and who vowed that they would taste no worldly pleasure until they exacted revenge. Enmities had been all but wiped away through new and altogether different strategies, with seedlings of love planted in their place. This could not be a spontaneous result. Behind this was surely such the initiatives of a Messenger who constantly sacrificed of his own self for others, used all the resources at his disposal for the benefit of those he addressed, generated new means to make contact with them, patiently endured all hardship and affliction to come from them, and offered them food and gifts. Even at times when they heightened the tension and closed themselves off entirely to him, he forged new relationships with them and opened new doors. When they were subjected to trials and tribulations, he offered them assistance and attended to their needs, suffered every kind of difficulty brought into play by way of sabotaging the process, and implemented who knows how many other strategies to affect even the most troubled of hearts.

One of these Prophetic initiatives is the existence of Companions who concealed their Muslim identity and remained in Mecca. As can be gleaned from particular verses and Prophetic Traditions the Messenger of God had certain Companions keep their Muslim identity secret²⁷³ for various

²⁷³ Just as there would have been among them such people as Abu Dharr whose temperament did not yet allow them to endure such circumstances, it is also quite likely that there were those who God's Messenger appointed himself. For God's Messenger advised Abu Dharr, who had learned of this and come to Mecca in the early days of Islam: "Conceal this matter and speak of it to no one. Return to your land. When it reaches you that we have been victorious, then you can return." (Buhârî, Bed'ü'l-Halk 4 [3199]) This expressly demonstrates that God's Messenger did not want to increase the tension and that he advised his Companions to avoid situations that would provoke their audience.

reasons and, as such, had them undertake certain activities of which only he and they were aware. It also appears that there were even those among them who were charged with certain duties and directed. They remained among the polytheists despite their belief, established close relationships with them and thus tried to soften their hearts towards Islam. They endeavored in the path of keeping them on the course of fairness and reason by means of showing them hospitality and presenting them with gifts, and kept God's Messenger informed of all developments concerning them. The Qur'an explicitly refers to this matter when describing the causes behind the peaceful and victorious return from Hudaibiya: "And had there not been (in Mecca) believing men and believing women whom you did not know and therefore might have trodden down, and thus something undesired might have afflicted you on their account (for what you did) unknowingly, (God would not have restrained your hands from fighting)." ²⁷⁴ Such Companions as 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas state that the people mentioned in the following verses are precisely such people: "O Lord! Bring us out of this land whose people are oppressors," ²⁷⁵ and "As to those whose souls the angels (charged with taking the souls of people) take in the state of wronging themselves (by continuing to live in unbelief, without suffering to emigrate to a land where they would be able to attain faith): They (the angels) ask them: 'What situation were you in (so that you were not with the believers)?' They say: 'We were under such oppression in this land that we could not find a way to faith.' They (the angels) say: 'Was God's earth not wide enough for you to emigrate in it?' Such are those whose refuge is Hell: how evil a destination to arrive at! Except those truly oppressed among the men, and the women, and the children altogether without means and not guided to a way (to emigrate, and including those who, in their lifetime, have not had a means to be guided to faith). For those (while their circumstances are unchanged, it is expected that) God will not hold them accountable and will excuse them. Assuredly God is One Who excuses much, All-Forgiving." ^{276,277} While 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas indicates that both he and his mother are among those described in this verse, ²⁷⁸ 'Ikrima, Ibn 'Abbas' freed slave and one of the most prominent scholars of the

²⁷⁴ Fetih 48/25

²⁷⁵ Nisâ 4/75

²⁷⁶ Nisâ 4/97-99. When this verse was revealed and until Mecca's conquest, emigration to Medina was incumbent upon the believers. This was due to the difficulty of the believers' preserving their belief among the Meccan polytheists, in the midst of their mocking, ridicule, and casting doubt in their hearts and minds. On the other hand, it was important for the believers to share the lived experience of Islam's beauty and be receiving the proper learning and training. Moreover, the believers needed to unite and establish their own forces where they could defend their own rights and not leave the endowment of these rights to the mercy of the unbelievers. In these verses, those who did not emigrate to Medina and instead remained within the Polytheist community of Mecca, are referred to as those, "in the state of wronging themselves." Some from among them preferred their comfort, habits, families, property and possessions, and other interests, to their religion. This is why the excuse, "We were under such oppression in this land that we could not find a way to faith," was not accepted from them. They were thus threatened with an unspeakable end, with punishment in the Fire. However, the grounds of the elderly, the men without means, and the women and children who were truly unable to emigrate, were accepted in the subsequent, 98th verse. The obligation to emigrate to Medina during the Age of Happiness ended with the conquest of Mecca, but the verse indicates, nonetheless, that where the same conditions as existed during the Meccan period are applicable, emigration may still be required. Yıldırım, Suat (translation of relevant verse).

²⁷⁷ Taberî, *Tefsîr* 5/199, 273

²⁷⁸ Taberî, *Tefsîr* 5/273; Taberânî, *Kebîr* 11/272 (11708)

successors of the Companions, makes the same interpretation and states that Ibn ‘Abbas was one of the people in this category.²⁷⁹

The people mentioned particularly in the first verse cited are not those people referred to in the literature as the *mustad'afin* (the dispossessed) who could not emigrate due to lack of means, or those whose movements were restricted due to slavery or because of imprisonment or forced confinement by a family member and who thus had to remain in Mecca, For their identities, as well as the reasons for their inability to emigrate are well-known to all.²⁸⁰ Then those mentioned in the Qur’anic chapter entitled *Fath* are the unknown heroes who laid the foundations of conquest from the very beginning, shouldered the burden of and faced the hardship and suffering of this path, lead a life bent double beneath the yoke of longing and separation, and whose names we cannot even know.

This is surely a projection of Prophetic mercy. He did not let be those people whose hearts he could not win over in the thirteen year period where he strove to the utmost to reach them. Rather, he went to Medina having laid the groundwork for continuing this contact after the emigration. The unfavorable reactions he had seen from them for thirteen years could do nothing to stifle the sorrow he felt at their heading towards eternal punishment. In spite of everything, God’s Messenger continued responding to them with compassion, and although he remained in Medina, continued his contact with them by means of the hidden heroes he left behind among them.

There are, no doubt, other objectives of this strategy. Receiving information of all kinds of violence planned by the Meccans beforehand, reducing challenging environments and heated situations as much as possible, and taking measures to foster reason and sound judgment can be counted among these. Other objectives include taking new initiatives by formulating counter-strategies to ensure that the process was overcome with minimal losses, and in so doing, avoiding blood shed and greater blood loss. As a matter of fact, when we look at the lead up to the Conquest, it can even be said that one of the initiatives taken in order to further the ground gained through the Prophet’s extraordinary efforts over thirteen years, or at the very least to prevent a slipping back, was making each individual responsible for the care and welfare of another.

As can be seen, at the center of all of these is again ‘mercy’. A long-term strategy was executed and it was envisaged that the masses, whose views were blurred by the stirring up of public opinion, would sustain the least possible damage until the day that they could see the truth more clearly.

As can be understood from the Qur’anic statements also, these people numbered at least three for both the women and the men. Moreover, there is no question of an upper limit. The meaning of this is that in Mecca at the time, there were many such women and men. In any case, the aim in the verse bringing this subject to the fore is to provide an account of the logic and reasoning behind the peace effectuated at Hudaibiya, rather than to relate their exact number and the task that they undertook. Hence, the time at which the verse under discussion was revealed was post-Hudaibiya, and the place described as having such people among its inhabitants is Mecca. As for

²⁷⁹ Taberî, *Tefsîr* 5/273

²⁸⁰ Buhârî, *Ezân* 128 (804); *Ebeb* 110 (6200); *Deavât* 58 (6393); *İkrâh* 6940; Müslim, *Mesâcid* 54 (675); Ahmed *İbn-i Hanbel*, *Müsned* 12/202 (7260)

Hudaybiya, it is the name given to the course of events where the Messenger of God — notwithstanding all the tension and provocation that continued for close to twenty days — demonstrated the principle, “Whatever terms the Quraysh put forth today in which they ask me to show kindness to kindred, I shall accept.”²⁸¹ After the all the envoys sent repeatedly, God’s Messenger wanted to send ‘Uthman also, and charged him with two important tasks. One of these pertained to these unknown heroes. God’s Messenger gave him the addresses of these believers in Mecca and instructed him to go to them and inform them of the need to grit their teeth and be patient for a little longer.²⁸² For they had rejoiced upon hearing that the Messenger of God was just about 25 kilometers away, and began the anxious wait for him, in the hope that the years of longing and separation would come to an end. But now, he was to turn back having signed a truce. In other words, at a time when they yearned for reunion, their hopes would be dashed and they would experience instead a great sorrow. It was precisely so that they would not experience such sorrow and dejection that the Messenger of God sent ‘Uthman to them and told them that they needed to endure this process for a little longer.²⁸³ This is why some scholars contend in their interpretations of the Prophet’s stance against fighting despite all the incitement and provocation, that instrumental in this stance was his fear that the people in Mecca would be killed in the event of such an encounter.²⁸⁴ Otherwise, the people of whom even the closest people to God’s Messenger who came with him from Medina, such as Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Ali, had no knowledge, would become a target purely because of their being in Mecca, and Muslim would unwittingly kill Muslim.²⁸⁵

We see God’s Messenger relating a similar detail to Walid ibn al-Walid, when sending him to Mecca to deliver his full brother Salama ibn Hisham and maternal half brother ‘Ayyash ibn Abi Rabi’a from torture. Sending him alone to Mecca at such a critical time, he said, “O Walid,

Set out for Mecca and hide in the house of blacksmith by the name of so-and-so for he has become Muslim. Then try to find ‘Ayyash and Salama. Tell them that you are my envoy and that

²⁸¹ Buhârî, *Şurût* 15 (2731-2732); Ebû Dâvûd, *Cihâd* 168 (2765); Ahmed İbn-i Hanbel, *Müsned* 31/213 (18910)

²⁸² İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 39/77, 79; Halebî, *Sîre* 3/23; İbn-i Kayyım, *Zâdu’l-Meâd* 3/258; Salihî, *Sübülü’l-Hüdâ* 5/46

²⁸³ İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 39/77, 79; Beyhakî, *Delâil* 4/133; İbn-i Kayyım, *Zâdu’l-Meâd* 3/258; Zehebî, *Târîh* 2/219. Due to 'Uthman's not disclosing the Messenger's secret to anyone, we have no information concerning the identity of these individuals. If the names of such individuals as 'Abbas, his wife Umm al-Fadl, her servant Abu Rafi', and Suhayl ibn Bayda' are to be enumerated, then it is clear that the numbers were not limited solely to them. It is quite likely that the Companions who came to Badr not of their own accord but forcibly by the Meccans, the individuals to whom God's Messenger granted immunity, as well as those who emigrated to Medina immediately after Conquest, are those who fulfilled such a responsibility. Desiring an unobstructed reunion after twenty-one years of trial, suffering, adversity, longing, and separation, and with the end of their mission, was a necessity of being a believer.

²⁸⁴ Sâlihî, *Sübülü’l-Hüdâ* 5/72

²⁸⁵ The argument, "They would not have faced such a predicament had they sat at home and not left their houses," can come to mind at such a juncture. However, it should not be forgotten that they would be giving themselves away to the Meccans in this case. Especially given how they were coerced in going to Badr, it quickly becomes apparent that they could not possibly remain in their own homes when war raged outside.

I have commanded them to come to me. Inform them that God will assuredly provide them with aid and ease on this path.”²⁸⁶

The names that God’s Messenger provided to ‘Uthman at Hudaibiya and the name of the Muslim blacksmith he imparted to Walid are still unknown to us. The meaning of this, however, is apparent. This demonstrates that the Messenger of God had strategies and practices that he did not disclose even to those closest to him. That which is known by all cannot be a strategy in any case. Even if referred to as a strategy by name, the end result of every matter that is discussed openly is frustration and disappointment.

The identity of these people indirectly referred to in the Qur’an, the names of whom God’s Messenger revealed to ‘Uthman, and some of whom we can only conjecture, are for the most part unknown, with the exception of a few. Furthermore, an examination of relevant narrations illustrates that these people were unknown even to one another, with the knowledge of each of them restricted only to their own area of concern. In describing these days, Junayd b. Subai’ who we know to be one of them, says, “We numbered a total of nine, two of whom were women.”²⁸⁷ It is not possible for this figure to remain limited to that provided by Junayd, as according to the Qur’an the men and women each need to number at least three people, with no maximum. Another narration reads: “We were nine people, three of them women.”²⁸⁸ The fact that the women outnumbered the men also does not appear plausible, given the cultural milieu, in which women were deemed inferior to men. It is quite possible that those mentioned in these two narrations were responsible for looking out for each other or undertaking a joint activity. That is, the matter was carried out in complete secrecy, with there even having been cases of such secrecy been maintained between husband and wife. For instance, Jimash ibn Qays ibn Khalid *made preparations to join a resistance during Mecca’s conquest, vowing that that on no circumstances would they allow Muhammad free entry into Mecca. He rushed to his house as soon as he had heard the call of the likeminded Meccan chiefs and began readying his weapons.*²⁸⁹ The following dialog which took place between Jimash and his wife, who had accepted Islam earlier and had withheld this information from her husband and who noticed this change in him, vividly portrays the state of affairs:

“Why all this preparation? Why are you readying what I see?”

“On account of Muhammad and his men.”

“By God, I do not think that anything can stand in the way of Muhammad and his men.”

“We shall see! I shall even bring one of them back as a servant, to wait on you!”

²⁸⁶ Ibn-i Sa’d, *Tabakât* 4/98; Belâzurî, *Ensâb* 1/210. Coming all the way to Mecca upon the direction of God’s Messenger, Walid saw a woman carrying some food, and suspecting that she knew where ‘Ayyash and Salama were imprisoned, asked her where she was going. When she replied indeed replied that she was taking food to two men who were locked up, Walid followed her, helped them escape, and took them with him to Medina without a single soul finding out. Ibn-i Sa’d, *Tabakât* 4/98-99

²⁸⁷ Ibn-i Kesîr, *Tefsîr* 7/319

²⁸⁸ Ibn-i Kesîr, *Tefsîr*, 7/319; Taberânî, *Kebîr* 2/290

²⁸⁹ Some sources identify this individual as Himas. Vâkîdî, *Megâzî* 557; Ibn-i Hişâm, *Sîre* 2/255; Ibn-i Esîr, *Kâmil* 2/247

“Woe unto you! Do not, whatever you do, set out to do such a thing and dare to fight Muhammad! For, by God, had you seen Muhammad and his men, you would not have acted thus and would have quickly backed down.”

“We shall see!”

After reciting lines of verse, Jimash set off on his way until he met up with Safwan ibn Umayya, ‘Ikrima ibn Abi Jahl, and Suhayl ibn ‘Amr at Khandama, and took up position with them there. A skirmish followed with the forces under the command of Khalid ibn al-Walid. Swords drawn, they swore that they would not allow them entry into Mecca.

Naturally, the outcome was not as they had anticipated, as before them stood such a figure as Khalid in al-Walid. It did not take long for them to realize that there was no way out, and they all took to taking flight. Scampering in all directions, some of them shut themselves up in their houses, others took to the mountains, while others still left Mecca, making for other towns and cities.

Jimash, however, came to his home covered in wounds, weary and trembling, banging on the front door. Seeing her husband in such a state upon opening the door, his wife understood immediately what had happened. It was now her turn to make jest, so she turned to Jirash who was utterly wretched and forlorn, and said, “So where is the servant that you promised me? I have been waiting for you since the morning.”

Running for dear life, Jimash had long forgotten his promise and the servant. To his wife, he merely said angrily, “Forget it! Quick, lock the door behind me!” Then, he turned to the artlessness of poetry once more. Laying the blame on Safwan ibn Umayya, ‘Ikrima ibn Abi Jahl, and the others, he spoke of how they fell apart and scattered, how each of them scampered in different directions in fear, and detailed their crushing defeat.²⁹⁰

Ensuing from all these considerations is the question of a secrecy to the highest possible degree. There is constant activity, but no one is aware of the activities of another. Those who are aware are only aware of what falls into their area of activity and only know what they have become acquainted with over that drawn-out process. The limited number of narrations on the subject also serve to illustrate that the process transpired against a backdrop well away from the knowledge and awareness of others. So much so that these heroes who resided in Mecca did not even know one another, let alone the believers in Medina.²⁹¹

The most striking name among them was no doubt the Prophet’s uncle ‘Abbas.²⁹² He held a crucial role in Mecca from before the years of the Messenger’s Prophethood. He represented the Banu Hashim as a natural member of the House of Assembly (Dar al-Nadwa), and held the Quraysh’s office of providing drinking water and other refreshments to the

²⁹⁰ Ībn-i Hişâm, *Sîre* 5/67; Ībn-i Kesîr, *Bidâye* 4/296

²⁹¹ Even if there were individuals whom the Companions suspected as being as such, their being Muslim at the time cannot be said for certain. For instance, it is stated that Suahyl ibn Bayda' was Muslim while in Mecca, that he hid this from the people, and that he was forced to go to Badr. As will be remembered, 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud had reported seeing him observing the prayer in Mecca. However, a great many sources state that he embraced Islam after Badr. Ahmed Ībn-i Hanbel, *Mūsne'd* 6/140; Taberî, *Târîh* 10/46; Beğavî, *Mu'cemü's-Sahâbe* 3/104 (1013)

²⁹² While some sources indicate that he became Muslim in later years, after Badr, Khaybar, or the Conquest (Ībn-i Abdilberr, *İstîâb* 2/240; *Abdulğânî*, *Mu'cem* 11/4050), this is due to the concealment of his Muslim identity by virtue of his position and the mission he undertook.

pilgrims (siqaya and 'imara).²⁹³ After the commencement of God's Messenger's Prophethood, however, the Dar al-Nadwa became the central place where the Meccans came together to deliberate, plan, scheme, and develop strategies in the name of unbelief — their headquarters, so to speak. Being a member, 'Abbas had a natural right to enter this place as he pleased. Presumably at the directive of God's Messenger, he maintained his position here despite having accepted Islam, and without ever revealing his new identity. When describing this situation in later years, 'Abbas' slave Abu Rafi', as one of those who knew him best, stated that 'Abbas and his family had become Muslim early on, but had concealed this.²⁹⁴ That 'Abbas' wife Umm al-Fadl is referred to in the key sources as first woman to accept Islam after the Prophet's wife Khadija²⁹⁵ also corroborates Abu Rafi's view. It is also reported that God's Messenger set Abu Rafi' free upon the latter's bringing God's Messenger the good news of 'Abbas and his wife's acceptance of Islam.²⁹⁶

'Abbas' attitude and stance from the very beginning also reinforces the abovementioned. The following account of 'Abbas' old friend 'Afif ibn Qays, who came to visit him in the early days of Prophethood, is noteworthy as a case in point:

"When I was a merchant during the Age of Ignorance I came to stay with 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib at Mina. While I was sitting with him, a man in the prime of life came out, looked toward the sky where the sun hovered above, and then stood for prayer. Then a woman came out and stood for prayer behind him. Then a youth just past the age of puberty came, and stood praying with them. I said to 'Abbas, 'Who is this?' He said, 'This is my brother's son Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, who alleges that God has sent him as a Messenger. None save this woman and this youth have followed him in his religion. But he says that the treasures of Chosroes and Caesar will be opened to him.' 'And who is this woman?' I asked. 'This woman is his wife Khadija bint Khuwaylid,' he said. When I asked him, 'Who is this youth?' he calmly replied, 'This youth is his uncle's son 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.' 'And what is it that they do?' I asked, to which he answered, 'They are performing the prayer.'²⁹⁷

We see 'Abbas — who some sources report as having become Muslim during the period of nascent Islam — in a flurry on the day of the Pledge of 'Aqaba. Panicked that God's Messenger whom they had looked out for until that day would leave for Medina, he said:

²⁹³ Ibn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/284; Abdulgânî, *Mu'cem* 11/4050

²⁹⁴ Hâkim, *Müstedrek*, 4/384 (5454); Ibn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/286; Ibn-i Hacer, *Tehzîb* 5/122; Ibn-i Esîr, *Üsdü'l-Gâbe* 6/102; Zehebî, *Siyer* 2/78; Abdulgânî, *Mu'cem* 11/4050

²⁹⁵ Ibnü'l-Esîr, *Üsdü'l-Gâbe* 7/246; Ibn-i Abdilberr, *İstîâb* 2/563. Sources that refer to his acceptance of Islam on the even of Badr have documented as far as they could discern from the outside, and propounded such a view due its becoming then apparent that he had become Muslim.

²⁹⁶ Abu Rafi' was 'Abbas' servant in any case. He had presented him as a gift to his nephew God's Messenger. The fact that his master was a Muslim also signified for him a path leading to freedom. Ibn-i Sa'd, *Tabakât* 4/73, 74; Ibn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/295

²⁹⁷ Ahmed Ibn-i Hanbel, *Müsned* 3/306 (1787); Ibn-i Sa'd, *Tabakât* 8/18. Ibn-i Abdilberr, *İstîâb* 2/204. 'Afif ibn Qays, who had not embraced Islam on this day but later on, was later to say in great sorrow: "How I should have wanted to have been a Muslim on that day and to have been the fourth of them!" Hâkim, *Müstedrek* 3/201 (4842)

“O people of the Khazraj,²⁹⁸ you all know well the position that Muhammad holds among us. Though we may think differently about him, we have protected him from our people. He lives in honor and security among his people, but he is now to turn to you and join you. If you think you can be faithful to what you have promised him and withstand what is to befall you as a consequence, then assume the burden you have undertaken. But if you are going to leave him to his enemies and abandon him after he has gone with you, then leave him now, for he is respected and safe in his own land.”²⁹⁹

As can be seen, ‘Abbas asked them over and over again if they knew the exact implications of the invitation they had extended to God’s Messenger. His purpose was to make it clear that an invitation in theory was merely the beginning of what was to come, and to ascertain whether or not they would protect the Messenger of God whatever may come to pass.³⁰⁰

In one of the letters he wrote to God’s Messenger after the Emigration, he mentioned that he wanted to come to Medina, but the Messenger of God said: “O uncle, remain where you are, for it is better that you stay in Mecca. This is, for you, an excellent jihad.”³⁰¹ Furthermore, by indicating that his uncle would be the last person to emigrate to Medina, the Messenger of God defined the exact time frame for ‘Abbas’ mission in Mecca.³⁰² Looking at the Prophet’s words on that day from the latter period, it is possible to understand them as signifying, “You will remain in Mecca until the day of its conquest.” Indeed, this was in fact what happened. Hearing that God’s Messenger had left Medina with a view to conquest, ‘Abbas too left Mecca and met him along the way. Seeing his uncle, God’s Messenger said, as though reminding him of his prophecy: “Just as I am the last in the line of Prophets, so too shall you be the last to emigrate.”³⁰³ In just this way, ‘Abbas was the last person to emigrate from Mecca to Medina.

The greatest proof of ‘Abbas’ true identity in the early period is undoubtedly the course of events at Badr. Looking at the bigger picture, one can see that the leading name which drew the Meccans’ suspicion, Abu Jahl first and foremost, was ‘Abbas. This was because he noticed that their every step was known by the Medinans and they had thus begun to harbor suspicions about one another. They realized that God’s Messenger was informed of every matter they had deliberated upon and planned, and concentrated their efforts on possible suspects. However, as they had no solid proof, they could do nothing and were unable to resolve the matter. Badr, for them, was a precious process where the proverbial battle lines would be drawn. This is why they especially forced those they supposed were close to the Messenger of God to fight, wanting to

²⁹⁸ This is how Arabs used to address Medinans at the time, implying the Aws tribe also. Şimrânî, *Ahlâkıyyâtü'l-Harb* 61

²⁹⁹ İbn-i Hişâm, *Sîre* 1/266

³⁰⁰ İbn-i Hişâm, *Sîre* 1/266

³⁰¹ İbn-i Sa’d, *Tabakât* 4/23; İbn-i Abdilberr, *İstîâb* 2/240; İbn-i Hacer, *Tehzîb* 5/214; Hamidullah, *Vesâik* 70; İbn-i Esîr, *Üsdü'l-Gâbe* 3/164; İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/286; Abdulgâni, *Mu’cem*, 11/4050

³⁰² İbnü'l-Esîr, *Üsdü'l-Gâbe* 3/164

³⁰³ İbnü'l-Esîr, *Üsdü'l-Gâbe* 3/164; İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/296, 297

learn their ‘colors’ on the military front.³⁰⁴ The only exception to this was Abu Lahab, for in the eyes of the Abu Jahls of the time, Abu Lahab was a certified unbeliever who was close enough to use the same toothpick. Whereas Abu Lahab was a paternal uncle of God’s Messenger just like ‘Abbas was. When Abu Lahab, of whose being in their own ranks they entertained no doubt, said that he would not go to Badr, but would send in his place Abu Jahl’s brother ‘Asi ibn Hisham who owed him four thousand dirhams, they raised no objection whatsoever.³⁰⁵ However, when the names of such individuals of whom the Meccans were suspicious as the Prophet’s uncle ‘Abbas, ‘Ali’s brother ‘Aqil, his other brother Talib, and another one of the Prophet’s nephews Nawfal ibn al-Harith came into question, they responded in a very different way. For they suspected that some of them had already embraced Islam and that others would be sympathetic to Islam if left to their own devices. Their attention was focused on the Prophet’s uncle ‘Abbas and his relatives the Banu Hashim in particular. Hence, ‘Abbas was left with no other option but to go to Badr. On top of that, we see that the Quraysh strove to find this out from the very beginning. For example, when setting off for battle on that day, they turned to the wealthy individuals of Mecca for the preparation of their forces. In doing so, they passed the entire financial burden of all those who participated in Badr onto the shoulders of ten individuals and one of these was naturally the Prophet’s uncle ‘Abbas.³⁰⁶ The following words of God’s Messenger had begun to be discussed among the Companions, and those unaware of the Prophet’s strategy, such as Abu Hudhayfa, even said, “Are we to kill our fathers and our sons and our brothers and our families, and spare ‘Abbas?” For among Abu Jahl’s forces coming to Badr on that day were his father ‘Utba, his uncle Shayba, and his brother Walid.³⁰⁷

When these words reached God’s Messenger, he called ‘Umar and said, “O Abu Hafs,³⁰⁸ Ought the face of the Messenger’s uncle to be marked with the sword?”

God’s Messenger’s bearing in saying this, the expression on his face, and his general manner, was read clearly by such Companions as ‘Umar and they too were troubled by this. Indicating the utterer of such a statement, ‘Umar said, “Leave him to me, O Messenger of God. Let me off with his head!” But God’s Messenger was not of the same opinion. On no account would anyone be struck for voicing their views. There was no such concept in his world. What is more, this was not a case of a matter being discussed with malice aforethought. At the same time, it was crucial that people expressed their opinions for the truth to be revealed. In addition, these differences would be dissolved upon entering the melting pot of Islam, where all become one, and when the time came, everyone would be united around the absolute truth. And this was what ultimately

³⁰⁴ Ībn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/287. The Abu Jahls of the era had established such a climate during the entire Badr process that rejecting or opposing the idea battle at the time amounted to direct opposition to them.

³⁰⁵ Ībn-i Kesîr, *Bidâye*, 3/323; Taberânî, *Kebîr* 1/308. It has also been suggested that underlying his reluctance to participate in this battle was the dream seen by ‘Atika bint ‘Abd al-Muttalib. After learning of this, he was too afraid and could not dare to go to battle. Vakîdî, *Megâzî* 59; Taberî, *Târîh* 3/40

³⁰⁶ Ībn-i Kesîr, *Bidâye* 3/272

³⁰⁷ Events transpired exactly how Abu Hudhayfa had feared. The first person to be killed at Badr was his father ‘Utba. His uncle Shayba and brother Walid were also among the slain.

³⁰⁸ This pleased ‘Umar greatly, as this was the first time that the Messenger of God had addressed him with this honorific. Ībn-i Hişâm, *Sîre* 1/371; Ībn-i Sa’d, *Tabakât* 4/7; Halebî, *Sîre* 2/231; Sâlihî, *Sübûlü’l-Hüdâ* 4/49

happened. Those who ‘Umar thought were carrying signs of hypocrisy at Badr each acquired the status of being the object of ‘Umar’s admiration, and faithful companions of God’s Messenger.³⁰⁹ So full of remorse was Abu Hudhayfa for his words concerning the Prophet’s uncle ‘Abbas, that he feared the spiritual repercussions of these and said, “I never felt safe afterwards on account of those words which I spoke that day, but I hoped that martyrdom might expiate them.” He was ultimately to find that the martyrdom that he so sought at Yamama.³¹⁰

It is a given that like fire, war is something easily begun but very difficult to control. Consequently, in a highly agitated arena such as this, things can spiral out of control and many a deviation and departure from what is deemed right and proper can come in tandem. Hence, ‘Abbas found himself within precisely such tumult at Badr to which he very reluctantly came, despite all the Prophet’s warnings, and was taken prisoner.³¹¹

On the first night of the captives’ having been brought to Medina, the Messenger of God lay awake the whole night, unable to sleep. When his Companions who noticed this asked him the reason he said, "I heard the writhing and moans of 'Abbas." So one of the Companions immediately rose to his feet and untied ‘Abbas. Following all developments very closely, God’s Messenger later asked his Companions why he could not hear ‘Abbas’ cries of pain any longer. The Companion who had untied ‘Abbas’ hands and feet stepped forward and said, “I untied him, O Messenger of God.” These words were enough to put a huge smile on the face of the Prophet of Mercy. He was evidently very pleased with such an action. However, he was a strategic leader just as he was a Prophet who was the representative of justice. He thus instructed the Companion who had untied ‘Abbas: “Go and untie all the captives.”³¹² In this way, those who could not see the compassionate face of Islam until then, would now be able to behold it, while at the same time ensuring that ‘Abbas was not granted special preferential treatment.

God’s Messenger once inspected the captives with a group of his Companions. At this stage, one of the Companions jumped forward to say that the time had come, after the victory at Badr, for the renegade Qurayshi caravan. The Messenger’s uncle ‘Abbas, who was among the captives at the time, heard this remark also and, projecting his voice in reply, said, “This would not be lawful for you.”

This surprised everybody. This was strange indeed. For he had both been taken captive and was besides speaking up, without hesitation or equivocation, on a subject that most others could not fathom. The Messenger of God consequently asked, “And why is that? This was presumably directed at showing to those who were accurately able to read developments and thus see the

³⁰⁹ İbn-i Ebi Şeybe, *Musannef* 7/481 (37390); Taberânî, *Kebir* 3/165

³¹⁰ İbn-i Hişâm, *Sîre* 3/177; İbn-i Sa’d, *Tabakât* 4/7; Taberî, *Târîh* 2/34; Beyhakî, *Delâil* 3/141; İbnü’l-Esîr, *Kâmil* 2/22; İbn-i Hibbân, *Sîre* 1/173; Halebî, *Sîre* 2/231; İbnü’l-Esîr, *Kâmil* 2/22; Sâlihî, *Sübûlü’l-Hüdâ* 4/49

³¹¹ The Prophet's uncle 'Abbas was taken captive by a Companion of slight build by the name of Abu al-Yasar, while 'Abbas was strongly and stoutly built. Later, God's Messenger was to say to Abu al-Yasar, "O Abu al-Yasar, how did you manage to capture 'Abbas?" Overcome with embarrassment, Abu al-Yasar replied, "O Messenger of God, a man such as I have never seen either before that or afterwards helped me." "A noble angel helped you," remarked God's Messenger. Ahmed İbn-i Hanbel, *Müsned* 5/334 (3310); İbn-i Sa’d, *Tabakât* 4/8; Taberî, *Târîh* 3/41; İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/288

³¹² İbn-i Sa’d, *Tabakât* 4/9; İbn-i Abdilberr, *İstîâb* 2/240

Prophetic strategy the distinctiveness of ‘Abbas. “Because,” ‘Abbas began, in response to this question, God has promised you one of ‘two’, and He has bestowed on you at this moment what He has promised.”³¹³

Indeed, this was true, for the Qur’an declared: “Even when God had promised you that one of the two hosts (the trade caravan and the Makkan army approaching) would fall to you, you still wished that other than the powerful, armed one should fall into your hands – whereas God willed to prove the truth to be true by His decrees and make it triumphant, and uproot the unbelievers (by causing their leaders to die).”³¹⁴ In this way, God has pledged one of the two alternatives that were the trade caravan, or the Badr victory. Now, given that He had favored them with a victory at Badr, it was not fitting that they pursue the trade caravan on top of that and show ambition in this regard. God’s Messenger turned to ‘Abbas and said, “You speak the truth.”³¹⁵

Considering that this Qur’anic verse of which ‘Abbas makes mention was revealed during the pursuit of Abu Sufyan who had left Damascus with his caravan and was close to Badr, the situation changes completely. For ‘Abbas is aware of a Qur’anic verse that was revealed only just ten days ago.³¹⁶ What is more, at that point, he was with the Meccan forces who were on their way to Badr. Clearly, this points to a communication between the unknown believers of the time and God’s Messenger, such that ‘Abbas was aware of a newly-revealed Qur’anic verse. Not only was he aware of the verse, but he grasped its meaning, and was the first to object when following the trade caravan came into question following Badr.

What would be done with the Badr captives had begun to be discussed at around this time. God’s Messenger, who sought to ascribe his each and every step to his Companions also, asked such leading Companions as Abu Bakr and ‘Umar their views on the matter. Abu Bakr was of the view that they should be forgiven, while ‘Umar held that they ought to be put to death. ‘Abd Allah ibn Rawaha was harsher. “O Messenger of Allah,” he said, “As far as I can make out, there is abundant wood and twigs in this valley. Gather them there and set fire to the valley.”³¹⁷

Needless to say, ‘Abd Allah’s approach was due in large part to the fifteen years of persecution and suffering in Mecca and to the reason for their coming to Badr in the first place. He thus thought that this was what they had long since deserved. Of course this was not a suggestion that Prophetic mercy could in any way accept and was a view that articulated on the basis of emotion. However, this was at the same time a blood-curdling proposal and no sooner had ‘Abbas heard it than he again intervened and indicated the wrongfulness of such a suggestion, saying, “You have severed the ties of kinship!”³¹⁸

³¹³ Ahmed İbn-i Hanbel, *Müsned* 5/141 (3001); İbn-i Sa’d, *Tabakât* 2/16; İbn-i Kesîr, *Bidâye*, 3/310; İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/291-292; Zehebî, *Siyer* 2/83; İbn-i Ebî Şeybe, *Megâzî* 203

³¹⁴ *Enfâl* 8/7

³¹⁵ Tirmizî, *Tefsir* 9 (3080)

³¹⁶ Sources indicate that this verse was revealed by Gabriel who came to inform God's Messenger that the Meccan forces were on their way. Taberî, *Tefsîr* 9/199; Taberânî, *Kebîr* 4/174 (4056)

³¹⁷ İbn-i Kesîr, *Bidâye* 3/312; Beyhakî, *Delâil* 3/138; İbn-i Ebî Şeybe, *Megâzî* 195; Sâlihî, *Sübülü'l-Hüdâ* 4/60

³¹⁸ Beyhakî, *Delâil* 3/138; İbn-i Ebî Şeybe, *Megâzî* 195; Sâlihî, *Sübülü'l-Hüdâ* 4/60

At one point, relations on his mother's side had approached God's Messenger wanting to intervene, and said, "O Messenger of God, allow us not to take the ransom of our maternal cousin, and to thus set him free." "No," he said, and then added:

"You are not to leave even a single dirham of it."³¹⁹

The consultations had ended and it had now come time to release the captives for ransom. The Messenger of God demanded four thousand dirhams from his uncle 'Abbas to this end. There was in question a plan of action that 'Abbas had not yet been able to fully comprehend and he said inadvertently, "O Messenger of God, I was a Muslim."³²⁰ He was right in his own way. For fifteen years he had put up with the Meccans and had grit his teeth and borne all manner of trial and affliction. He was forced into coming to fight and with a bleeding heart he came; on top of that, he was taken captive and his pride was wounded. Moreover, treating those people with whom he became close friends to meals and tempering their ferocity with gifts, were all matters requiring financial means. What is more, there was no one in Mecca to help him with these undertakings. And now God's Messenger was on the verge of taking the wealth that he had kept in reserve too. But the Messenger's strategy was altogether different and so he turned to 'Abbas and said: "God knows best concerning your Islam." And then he continued:

"If it is as you say, God will reward you for it. So pay your ransom. You must ransom yourself, your two nephews, 'Aqil ibn Abi Talib and Nawfal ibn al-Harith, and your confederate, 'Utba ibn 'Amr, the brother of the Banu al-Harith ibn Fihir, for you are a wealthy man."³²¹

These were suggestions that shook 'Abbas to the core, for he was still unaware of the Prophet's strategy. What is more, just as he had appealed for a reduction of his financial obligation, God's Messenger now demanded from him the ransom money for four people.

In a glimmer of hope, he said to God's Messenger, "But I have nothing with which to pay." However, this, too, was to prove fruitless. God's Messenger would signal that all paths were closed, and that 'Abbas should no longer insist, saying:

"Where is the money that you left in Mecca with Umm al-Fadl, and no one else was present with you two when you said, 'If I am killed, then 'Abd Allah is to have so much and al-Fadl is to have so much'?"

'Abbas was thunderstruck. "By Him Who sent you with the Truth," he said, "I bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of God. For this is a thing that none except Umm al-Fadl and I knew."³²²

³¹⁹ Buhârî, *Itk* 11 (2537); Meğâzî, 12 (4018); İbn-i Sa'd, *Tabakât* 4/10; İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/292; İbn-i Kesîr, *Bidâye* 3/315

³²⁰ In some traditions this expression reads, "I was a Muslim, but the people forced me (to fight) against my will." The Messenger's response was: "God knows best concerning your situation." If what you say is true, God will reward you for it. However, to all appearances, they were against us; so ransom yourself." İbn-i Sa'd, *Tabakât* 4/10; Beyhakî, *Delâil* 3/142; Taberî, *Târîh* 3/43; İbn-i Hibbân, *Sîre* 1/184; İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/288; Harguşî, *Şerefu'l-Mustafa* 3/14

³²¹ Taberî, *Târîh* 3/43; İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/288

³²² İbn-i Sa'd, *Tabakât* 4/10; Taberî, *Târîh* 3/43; Beyhakî, *Delâil* 3/142, 143; İbn-i Kesîr, *Bidâye* 3/314; İbn-i Hibbân, *Sîre* 1/184; İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/289; Sâlihî, *Sübülü'l-Hüdâ* 4/69; Sâlihî, *Sübülü'l-Hüdâ* 4/69

Moreover, there are accounts to the effect of ‘Abbas requesting to credit the twenty ‘uqiyya he brought with him towards his ransom, to which God’s Messenger replied: “No, that was something which God gave to us by means of you.”³²³ ‘Abbas consequently realized that he was surrounded from all sides after Badr and was forced to pay ransom for himself, as well for three others.³²⁴

On the other hand, all that took place on the day that news of the Badr defeat reached Mecca is rather striking. Hearing of this disastrous outcome, Abu Lahab flew into a rage. The bringer of the news began to relate how they suffered a devastating blow at the hands of people they did not know, describing everything to the minutest detail, to their mounts and turbans. Meanwhile, ‘Abbas’ slave Abu Rafi’ who was present, could not help but blurt out, “By God, those were the angels!” This meant revealing the identity that he had kept hidden until that day and Abu Lahab swooped down upon Abu Rafi’, looking to vent his raging fury out on him. ‘Abbas’ wife Umm al-Fadl realized that one of the Meccan chiefs was looking on and was enraged at Abu Lahab’s beating a slave in the absence of his master. She thus took hold of a tent pole and brought it crashing down upon Abu Lahab’s head and, as such, was able to protect Abu Rafi’s secret. For Abu Lahab, who was shaken by the might of the blow, died a few days later without having been able to share what he learned on that day.³²⁵

Situations indicating ‘Abbas’s Muslim identity were certainly not limited to Badr. Upon scrutiny of the mission that ‘Abbas fulfilled afterwards in Mecca, it follows that this was a Prophetic strategy and was actualized very much as a result of a conscious stance. At a most critical point like Uhud, God’s Messenger received letters from Mecca and the author of these letters is without question ‘Abbas himself.³²⁶ What is more, it is worth stressing that while ‘Abbas’ letter under normal circumstances could only arrive in six days at the earliest, sources document that it took three days on the Mecca-Medina route for the letter to reach God’s Messenger.³²⁷ It is also apparent that the Messenger of God dispatched expeditions and campaigns along the Meccan route early on, in order to ensure safety of passage, and that by signing agreements with the tribes en route, he was prepared for any such surprises. Clearly this implies an uninterrupted journey realized via transfers along the way, with rested camels and camels that were travel-ready.

The content of the letter is also worthy of note. It informs God’s Messenger of the discussions and deliberations in Mecca, what kind of strategies were developed, the nature of the forces gathered and its participants, the expected time of the attack, and the general atmosphere in

³²³ Ahmed İbn-i Hanbel, *Müsned* 5/335 (3310); Taberî, *Târîh* 3/43; Beyhakî, *Delâil* 3/143; İbnü’l-Esîr, *Kâmil* 2/26

³²⁴ Beyhakî, *Sünen* 6/322; *Delâil* 3/150

³²⁵ Hâkim, *Müstedrek* 4/385-386 (5457-5458); İbn-i Hişâm, *Sîre* 1/381, 382; Taberî, *Târîh* 3/41; Beyhakî, *Delâil* 3/146; İbn-i Kesîr, *Bidâye* 3/324; Halebî, *Sîre* 2/258; Sâlihî, *Sübülü’l-Hüdâ* 4/67

³²⁶ The letter in which ‘Abbas informed God’s Messenger of the present state of affairs and said, "So do what you must when they come to you," reached God’s Messenger when he was in Quba'. He had Ubayy ibn Ka'b read the letter to him and concealed its contents until his return to Medina. Belâzurî, *Ensâb* 1/313; Ya’kûbî, *Târîh* 2/31; Hamidullah, *Vesâik* 68; Sâlihî, *Sübülü’l-Hüdâ* 4/182

³²⁷ Vâkîdî, *Meğâzî* 170

Mecca. It also added a note on the urgency of action and that the need for preparations to be complete before theirs.³²⁸ ‘Abbas’ letter reads:

“The Quraysh have gathered to advance upon you, so do what you must when they come to you. Complete your preparations before them and act before they do. They are headed towards you, and number three thousand. They lead two hundred horses, and have seven hundred armor plates and three thousand camels, and they have taken all their weapons with them.”³²⁹

This is the chief reason behind such individuals as ‘Abbas remaining in Mecca. In this way, God’s Messenger formulated new strategies to ensure that the masses marching upon him with a vengeance were able to return without harm or with minimal losses. To be more precise, the Messenger of God sought to send ‘Abbas, who served as his eyes and ears, to Mecca once again, and in so doing, dispel all the suspicions entertained by the Meccans, and so strengthen his hand.

We see ‘Abbas who was thus devoted to the cause of his nephew, particularly sensitive when God’s Messenger went to Khaybar. Harping on this move, the Meccans disseminated lies and misinformation as part of their psychological warfare, and began to announce that the Messenger had been defeated at Khaybar. Already full of apprehension, ‘Abbas is said to have languished and fainted in response to this unfavorable report which was circulating in respect to God’s Messenger.³³⁰

When ‘Abbas finally caught wind of his nephew’s having left Medina for the conquest, he understood his mission in the city to have been complete, and thus set off, their paths crossing in Juhfa. When the Messenger of God saw him, he said, as though wanting to remind him of what he said to his uncle the day he sought permission to emigrate to Medina, “Just as my Prophethood is the last in the line of Prophethood, so too is your emigration, dear uncle, the last emigration.”³³¹ This expression of favor was at the same time an indication that Mecca would embrace Islam and that the door of emigration would henceforth be shut. Thereafter, God’s Messenger sent ‘Abbas’ load to Medina³³² and subsequently set out to Mecca for the conquest, taking ‘Abbas with him.

A closer analysis of the events which unfolded in the valley of Marr al-Zahran immediately before Mecca’s conquest, reveals further details as to ‘Abbas’ former identity. These will later be expanded upon under the headings “The Marr al-Zahran Strategy” and “The Birth of Abu Sufyan”.

While there were a great number of causes and factors behind the conquest of Mecca, it can be argued, in light of all this information, that one of the leading and perhaps the most important figure who comes to the fore in the backdrop to the conquest is the Prophet’s uncle ‘Abbas.³³³

³²⁸ Belâzurî, *Ensâb* 1/313; Ya’kûbî, *Târîh* 2/47; Sâlihî, *Sübü’l-Hüdâ* 4/69

³²⁹ Vâkîdî, *Megâzî* 170

³³⁰ İbn-i Sa’d, *Tabakât* 4/12

³³¹ İbn-i Esîr, *Kâmil* 2/118; Halebî, *Sîre* 3/112; İbn-i Asâkir, *Târîh* 26/296, 297

³³² İbn-i Esîr, *Kâmil* 2/118; Halebî, *Sîre* 3/112

³³³ When considering the strategies of God’s Messenger in the lead up to Mecca’s conquest, it is self-evident that the second is Abu Sufyan.

The course of events changed based on the intelligence he provided. Steps enabling violence to be replaced with mercy instead of those in which violence bred violence were taken, and the most arduous circumstances were got through with minimum damage.

Ties of Kinship

Another one of God's Messenger's strategies was to open new doors where all doors closed one by one, and to form new ties with his addressees. Those who stood against him and confronted him with their hostility until their dying breath were all united in their ties of kinship also. Almost all of them were descendants of Qusayy ibn Kilab. Though these people, known as the 'Quraysh' on this account, later branched out into separate sub-clans over time, they were essentially kindred. At a time where a tribal existence prevailed, one which bound them even closer together, such a connection was not one that could be bought for all the money in the world. This was indeed a value unto itself. A person who was related to a fellow clan member was related to their entire clan population. They were hereafter treated as 'one of the family', and all the clan's members conformed to this social norm.

All sharing a common ancestral origin, the Meccans thought to also furnish security for their future via similar alliances. Looking at those who opposed God's Messenger from this perspective shows them to be individuals who established new bonds of kinship with each other, and who in this sense strove to forge new and dynamic powers at the time. For instance, Abu Sufyan's sister Umm Jamil was married to the Prophet's uncle Abu Lahab.³³⁴ Walid ibn al-Mughira was married to Lubaba bint al-Harith, who was at the same time 'Abbas and Safwan ibn Umayya's sister-in-law. Suhayl ibn 'Amr was married to Abu Jahl's daughter Hunfa', while 'As ibn al-Wa'il was married to the daughter of Hisham ibn al-Mughira. Similarly, Umayya ibn Khalaf married his son Safwan ibn Umayya off to Fakhita,³³⁵ daughter of Walid ibn al-Mughira, while Abu Jahl married his son 'Ikrima to Umm Hakim, the daughter of his brother Harith ibn Hisham.³³⁶ Abu Jahl's brother Harith ibn Hisham was married to Fatima bint al-Walid, the daughter of his uncle Walid ibn al-Mughira and also sister of Khalid ibn al-Walid.³³⁷ In an environment where the bonds of kinship were so closely intertwined, Safwan ibn Umayya, 'Ikrima and his brothers, as well as Khalid grew up as brothers.³³⁸

There is no doubt that the parallel practices of God's Messenger played an instrumental role in the softening of the hardest hearts of the time. Divine guidance was also thus. The Qur'an, which

³³⁴ Ibn Abdilberr, *İstîâb* 3/1430

³³⁵ Ibn-i Hacer, *İsâbe* 8/47

³³⁶ Umm Hakim was the daughter of Khalid ibn al-Walid's sister Fatima bint al-Walid. She was among the women who came to Uhud with the Meccan forces. After her husband 'Ikrima's martyrdom at Yarmuk, she was to marry Khalid ibn al-Sa'id, and with the post of the tent she had pulled out, killed seven enemy soldiers after the martyrdom of her own husband, on her wedding day. The bridge on which they pitched their tent is today known as the Bridge of Umm Hakim. Mizzî, *Tehzîbü'l-Kemâl* 17/40; Ibn-i Hibbân, *Sikât* 1/221; Ibn-i Sa'd, *Tabakât* 4/99; Ibn-i Abdilberr, *İstîâb* 4/1933

³³⁷ İbnü'l-Esîr, *Üsdü'l-Gâbe* 7/226; Ibn-i Hacer, *İsâbe* 4/2606

³³⁸ Ibn-i Hacer, *İsâbe* 8/193; Ibn-i Hayyât, *Tabakât* 1/299

limited the number of women a man could marry - the customary practice in pre-Islamic Arabia - and encouraged monogamy, allowed for God's Messenger to marry several women in order for him to reach all his addressees in their entirety within as short a time as twenty-three years. The Messenger of God made use of this means in loosening such closely knit ties at a time when all the doors on which he knocked were slammed shut in his face. Moreover, it is not possible to suppose that the marriages of God's Messenger, who stated, "God has assuredly willed that I marry only those who are of Paradise,"³³⁹ and who took his each and every step in line with the Divine injunctions, could be realized except by God's permission. Within this context, he states: "Each of my marriages and those of my daughters was conducted as a result of Divine permission conveyed to me through Gabriel."³⁴⁰ In this way was he able to come together, on the basis of kinship, with those people who were not capable of being approached, and it was in these assemblies that the hearts of those who were consumed with hatred and enmity were softened. The marriages of God's Messenger functioned as a bridge in his communication with them, and served to relax the atmosphere as well as legitimize his steps in their regard. He extended hospitality towards them, invited them to his wedding feasts using his marriages as a means to come together, and sent them gifts, drawing attention to their affinity. In a culture where maintaining the ties of kinship held great importance, he found opportunities to converse with them through visiting them or hosting them at his home. It could even be said that in this way the Messenger of God established such a connection with those whose hostility was most intense, and ensured that their animosity was soon afterwards transformed into mildness and affection. The most salient example of this is his marriage with Umm Habiba the daughter of Abu Sufyan, at a time when the latter's audacity and effrontery was at its height.

Marriage to Umm Habiba

Tension in Mecca had reached its peak. The unrivaled chief and representative of this tension, especially in the post-Badr period, was Abu Sufyan. Having turned into a bird of prey, he made all plans imaginable to end the life of God's Messenger, even sending a contract killer to Medina for this purpose. He was the person behind the savagery at Uhud and it was again him who held the position of commander at Khandaq. It was precisely in such a period that Gabriel came to God's Messenger and revealed to him the following verse:

"(When you obey God in His commands and prohibitions,) it may be that God will bring about love and friendship between you and those of them with whom you are in enmity. God is All-Powerful, and God is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate."³⁴¹

The timing was rather striking: at a time when hostility was most intense, this verse announced that this hostility would fade away and, what is more, heralded that it would be replaced by love and affection. There was more good news to come: it affirmed that such a transformation was possible in regard to God's power, and that such love and friendship could only be attained through forgiveness, acceptance, humility, avoiding reactionary attitudes, and compassion. This verse also echoes other Qur'anic statements wherein those who convey in

³³⁹ Ibn-i Asâkir, Târîhu Medîneti Dîmaşk 69/149

³⁴⁰ Ibn-i Asâkir, Târîhu Medîneti Dîmaşk 69/149

³⁴¹ Mümtahne 60/7