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## LII

# *The Battle of Uhud*

THE sun was now up and Quraysh were already in line, with a hundred horse on either wing, commanded on the right by Khālid, son of Walīd, and on the left by 'Ikrimah, son of Abū Jahl. From the centre Abū Sufyān gave the order to advance. In front of him Ṭalḥah of 'Abd ad-Dār carried the banner of Quraysh, and two of Ṭalḥah's brothers and four of his sons were in close attendance, each ready to take his turn if need be. Ṭalḥah and his brothers were determined to win glory for their clan that day. At Badr their two standard-bearers had ingloriously let themselves be taken prisoner, and Abū Sufyān had not failed to remind them of this on the way to Uhud. Muṣ'ab recognised his fellow clansmen from where he stood in front of the Prophet with the banner of the Emigrants.

As soon as the two hosts were within earshot of each other, Abū Sufyān halted his advance and stepped a little ahead of the standard. "Men of Aws and Khazraj," he said, "quit ye now the field, and leave to me my cousin. Then we will be gone from you, for we have no call to fight you." But the Helpers answered him with a roll of thunderous abuse. Then another man stepped forward from the Meccan ranks, and Ḥanzalah was grieved to recognise his father, who now proclaimed his presence: "Men of Aws, I am Abū 'Āmir!" He could not believe that his influence, once so considerable, had gone to nothing, and he had promised Quraysh that as soon as he made himself known many of the men of his clan would rally to his side. Instead, he received not only curses but a volley of stones which drove him back in dismay.

Again the order was given for the Meccans to advance, and not far from the front lines the women, led by Hind, also moved forward, beating their timbrels and their drums and chanting:

On, ye sons of 'Abd ad-Dār;  
Onwards, ye that guard the rear;  
Smite, with every sharp sword smite.

Then when the women felt they had reached their limit of nearness to the enemy they marked time to the beat of their drums, letting the men advance beyond them, and Hind started up a song which had been sung by another Hind in one of the wars of old:

Advance and we embrace you,  
 And soft carpets spread.  
 But turn your backs, we leave you,  
 Leave you and not love you.

# Uhud

When the two armies were almost joined the Prophet's archers shot a volley of arrows into Khālid's cavalry, and the neighing of horses drowned the women's voices and their drums. From the Meccan centre Ṭalḥah strode forward and shouted for a man to meet him in single combat. 'Alī went out to meet him, and finally felled him to the ground with a blow that cut through his helmet and split his skull. The Prophet knew at once that this was "the leader of the squadron" – the ram that had been subjected to him in his dream – and in a loud voice he magnified God, *Allāhu akbar*, and his magnification was echoed throughout the host. But the ram had signified not only one victim, for Ṭalḥah's brother now took his banner and he was cut down by Ḥamzah. Then Sa'd of Zuhrah put an arrow through the neck of Ṭalḥah's second brother, and his four sons were killed one after the other by 'Alī and Zubayr and 'Aṣim ibn Thābit of Aws. Two of them were carried dying to their mother Sulāfah, who was now in the rear; and when they told her who had dealt them their mortal wounds she vowed that one day she would drink wine out of 'Aṣim's skull.

No woman had been allowed to set out with the Muslims on the previous day. But Nusaybah, a woman of Khazraj, felt that her place was none the less with the army. Her husband Ghaziyyah and two of her sons were there, but that was not the reason. Other women had husbands and sons in the army and were content to stay at home. But Nusaybah had been one of the two women who had gone out with the seventy men of Medina to the Second 'Aqabah, nor could she find it in her nature to stay behind on this occasion. So she had risen early that morning, and having filled a skin with water she set off for the battlefield where she would at least be able to tend the wounded and give drink to the thirsty. She took with her none the less a sword and also a bow and a quiver of arrows. Following by inquiry the way that the army had taken, she reached without difficulty, not long after the battle had begun, the place at the foot of the mountain where the Prophet had now taken up his position on a piece of relatively high ground, with Abū Bakr, 'Umar and others of his closest Companions. The mother of Anas, Umm Sulaym, had had the same idea and arrived with her skin of water not long after Nusaybah. The group behind the lines was also joined by two men of Muzaynah, one of the Bedouin tribes to the west of the oasis. They were both recent converts to Islam, and not knowing of the Meccan attack they had gone to Medina that dawn to find the city more than half empty. On hearing why, they immediately set out for Uhud, and having greeted the Prophet they drew their swords and went forward into the fray.

Abū Dujānah was being true to the promise of his red turban. Zubayr admitted afterwards: "I was hurt within my soul when I asked the Messenger of God for the sword and he kept it from me and gave it to Abū Dujānah and I said to myself: I am the son of Safiyyah, his father's sister, and I am of Quraysh; and I went to him and asked him for it before the

other man, yet he gave it to him and set me aside. By God, I will go see what Abū Dujānah is about! And so I followed him." He then told how Abū Dujānah killed every man he encountered as easily as if he had been a reaper and his sword a scythe, and how he himself was reconciled to the Prophet's decision and told himself: "God and His Messenger know best."

Hind, a large woman of imposing appearance, was still in the midst of the men, urging them on to fight, and she narrowly escaped being cut down by Abū Dujānah, who thought she was a man. His sword was raised above her head when she shrieked, and, realising that she was a woman, he turned against the men at her side. She now joined the other wives and mothers in the rear, where the slaves had been put to guard the camp; and, as she retreated, Waḥshī, the Abyssinian, was making his way forward. Unlike the rest of those on the field, he was concerned with one man only, and unlike them his blood was cold. Ḥamzah was unmistakable for his unusually powerful stature, for his manner of fighting and for his ostrich plume. Waḥshī saw him from a distance and while keeping to the edge of the fray he was able to reach a point of relative safety that was none the less close enough for a javelineer to strike. Ḥamzah was now face to face with the last of the standard-bearers of 'Abd ad-Dār, and as he lifted his sword to strike he momentarily laid open a chink in his armour. Waḥshī was quick to see his chance, and poising his javelin he launched it with perfect aim. Ḥamzah staggered a few paces forward, having already killed his man, and fell to the ground in the throes of death. Waḥshī waited until his body stopped moving, and then went and drew out his javelin and returned with all speed to the camp. As he himself said: "I had done all I had come to do, and I only killed him for the sake of my freedom."

The death of Ḥamzah made little difference to the sense of defeat which was beginning to spread through the Meccan army. Another Abyssinian, a slave of the family of the seven dead standard-bearers, now took up the standard himself, but he was soon killed and for a while it lay unheeded on the ground; and although Ḥamzah's ostrich feather was no longer to be seen, Abū Dujānah, Zubayr and others of the Emigrants and Helpers fought like incarnations of the Muslim battle-cry that day, *Amit, Amit*, which means "Kill, Kill". It seemed that none could resist them: 'Alī's white plume, Abū Dujānah's red turban, the bright yellow turban of Zubayr and the green turban of Ḥubāb were like flags of victory which gave strength to the ranks behind them. Abū Sufyān narrowly escaped the sword of Ḥanzalah, who was fighting valiantly near the centre and who was about to cut him down, when a man of Layth came in from the side and thrust Ḥanzalah through with his spear, felling him to the ground and killing him outright with a second thrust.

The battle had gradually moved down the slope away from the Prophet as the Meccans were driven back towards their camp. He could no longer discern in any detail what was happening, though he could see that so far his men were winning the day. But now his attention was drawn upwards from the battle and his eyes were raised as one who watches the flight of birds. After a moment he said to those beside him: "Your companion" — he meant Ḥanzalah — "the Angels are washing him."<sup>1</sup> And afterwards he

<sup>1</sup> I.I. 568.

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said to Jamīlah, as if seeking an explanation: "I saw the Angels washing Ḥanzalah between heaven and earth with water from the clouds in vessels of silver."<sup>1</sup> Then she told him of her dream, and how through fear of being late for the battle, he had not made the ablution he would normally have made.

The Muslims continued to advance until at one point the enemy lines were broken altogether. The way to their camp was thus laid open, and there was a surge forward of would-be plunderers. Now the fifty chosen archers were at some distance to the left of the Prophet. Between him and them the ground sloped down to the plain and then rose up to the point of vantage at which he had placed them. They could see the first lines, and the sight of their fellows about to enrich themselves, as they thought, with enemy spoils, was too much for most of them. In vain their commander, 'Abd Allāh ibn Jubayr, reminded them of the Prophet's order not to leave their post on any account. They replied that the Prophet had not meant them to stay there for ever. The battle was now finished, they said, and the disbelievers routed. About forty of them sped down the slope in the direction of the camp, leaving 'Abd Allāh at the head of a staunch but fatally depleted nucleus of bowmen.

So far the Meccan cavalry had been of no avail. In the centre the two armies were so interwoven that a charge of horse would have endangered their own men as well as their enemies; and they could not reach the rear of the Muslim army without first exposing themselves to the shafts of the archers over a long stretch of ground. But Khālid saw what now had happened, and realising that his moment had come, he led his men at full gallop for the post where the archers were stationed. 'Abd Allāh and his men vainly tried to head them off with their arrows; then they threw down their bows and fought to the death with sword and spear. Not one of the faithful ten was left alive; and wheeling round, Khālid led his men into the rear of their enemy's main force. 'Ikrimah followed his example, and the Meccan horsemen made much havoc in the unguarded ranks of the believers. 'Alī and his companions now turned to face the new danger, and some of the idolaters who had been put to flight rallied and came back into the fray. The tide of battle had suddenly changed, and the Quraysh war-cry "O 'Uzzah! O Hubal!" was taken up again all over the field. Many of the Muslims in the rear who had escaped being cut down by the horsemen now lost heart and fled towards the mountain, where they knew they could find refuge. The Prophet called to them to return, but their ears were closed to his voice, nor were their minds open to any thought but flight. The majority of the Muslims fought on, but the initial impetus was now lost, and the weight of numbers told against them. They were driven back step by step, and the whole battle moved towards Uhud in the direction of the Prophet.

He and his Companions, including the two women, shot volley after volley of arrows into the enemy, and their group was increased by others from the main force whose chief thought, when the day turned against them, had been the safety of the Prophet. Among the first to join them were the two men of Muzaynah, Wahb and Ḥārith. A small body of enemy

<sup>1</sup> W. 274.

horse now approached from the left. "Who is for this detachment?" said the Prophet. "I am, O Messenger of God," was the instant reply of Wahb, and he shot at them with such speed and dexterity that his arrows came upon them as from a group of archers and they withdrew. "Who is for this squadron?" said the Prophet as another body of horse made for them. "I am, O Messenger of God," said Wahb, and again he fought as if he were not one man but many, and again they withdrew. Then yet a third troop emerged from the lines. "Who will stand up to these?" said the Prophet. "I will," said Wahb. "Arise then," said the Prophet, "and rejoice, for Paradise is thine." And Wahb rose joyfully saying, as he drew his sword: "By God, I give no quarter and I seek no quarter." Then he plunged into their midst and fought his way through them and out at the other side while the Prophet and his Companions stopped their shooting to gaze at his prowess and his valour. "O God, have Mercy upon him!" said the Prophet, as Wahb returned into the midst of the troop, fighting on until they hemmed him in on all sides and killed him. He was found afterwards with twenty lance thrusts, any one of which would have sufficed, apart from what the swords had done to him. No one who saw his fighting ever forgot it. 'Umar would say in after years: "Of all deaths the one I would most fain have died was the Muzaynite's death."<sup>1</sup> And Sa'd of Zuhrah claimed ten years later that he still carried in his ears the sound of the Prophet's voice giving Wahb the good tidings of Paradise.

The main body of the fray had come gradually nearer as the Muslims were slowly driven backwards up the slope. Amid the battle-cries of both sides the individual shouts of the fighters could also be heard — challenges to single combat or the staking of claims in arrows shot or blows struck. "Take that: and I am the son of so-and-so." Abu Dujānah styled himself as the son of Kharashah, who was his grandfather. Not seldom the identity of the claimant was left uncertain. One of the Anṣār, that is the Helpers, was heard to shout: "Take that: and I am the Anṣārī lad." The Prophet himself said that day, on at least one occasion: "I am Ibn al-'Awātik,"<sup>2</sup> which means "I am the son of the 'Atikahs," referring to his many ancestresses<sup>3</sup> of that name. But now there came a challenge of unmistakable identity as a single horseman emerged from the lines and said: "Who will come forth against me? I am the son of 'Atīq." It was 'Abd al-Ka'bah, the eldest son of Abū Bakr, 'A'ishah's only full brother, the one member of their family who had not entered Islam. Abū Bakr threw down his bow and drawing his sword would have gone to the attack but the Prophet was too quick for him. "Sheathe thy sword," he said, "and go back to thy place, and give us the good of thy company."<sup>4</sup>

Another body of horse broke through the rear of the Muslims, and advanced in front of 'Abd al-Ka'bah, who now withdrew. "Which of you will sell himself for us?"<sup>5</sup> said the Prophet, and five of the Helpers drew their swords, threw themselves on the enemy, and fought till they were

<sup>1</sup> W. 275.    <sup>2</sup> W. 280.

<sup>3</sup> I.S. I/1, 32-4, gives more than ten, including the mother of Hāshim and the mother of Lu'ayy. The name 'Atikah is similar in meaning to Ṭāhirah, "the Pure".

<sup>4</sup> W. 257.    <sup>5</sup> I.I. 572.

killed, except for one to replace them, for 'Umar had been in the front of the host. They now advanced from the enemy having broken one of his ranks. He could not stand seriously injured, and was too weak from his wounds, said the Prophet. "Recovered conscious," Khazraj went into the ranks they made space for them. At that moment their lines had even now sold blessings upon them in effort to work his wounds, carry him, and as a result which he kept motionless.

"Know that Paradise is said; and in after-years place as being so well." "Would I had been the Prophet's foot!"<sup>2</sup>

The enemy gradually group round the Prophet; in any case it seemed the enemy continued to sheathe for a final blow against every believer on that side and made straight for Muhammad?" he shouted. Qami'ah, a man of our group made much slaughter; his sharp eye horse, he brought down could resist. But Ṭalḥ himself in the direction blow a little, at the hands for the rest of the Prophet's helmet and two of the helmet rings spent, striking his dome his head momentarily his assailant withdrew attack, and Shammā'ah and the Prophet and fought till

<sup>1</sup> B. LII, 22.    <sup>2</sup> W.

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killed, except for one, who was mortally wounded. But help was at hand to replace them, for 'Alī, Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and Abū Dujānah and others who had been in the forefront of the battle had fought their way back through the host. They now reached the Prophet's side, but not before a sharp stone from the enemy had struck him in the mouth, gashing his lower lip and breaking one of his teeth. The blood flowed from his face, but doing what he could to staunch it, he reassured 'Alī and the others that he was not seriously injured, and they returned to the fight, except for Ṭalḥah, who was too weak from loss of blood and who now fainted. "Look to thy cousin," said the Prophet to Abū Bakr, but Ṭalḥah almost immediately recovered consciousness, while Sa'd of Zuhrah and Ḥārith ibn Simmah of Khazraj went out instead of him, and together with the new reinforcements they made so great an onslaught against the enemy that for the moment their lines receded away from the bodies of the five Helpers who had even now sold their lives. The Prophet looked at them and invoked blessings upon them, and the one who was not yet dead began with an effort to work his way along the ground towards him. He sent two men to carry him, and as a pillow for the dying man's head he put out his foot, which he kept motionless until the man died with his cheek resting upon it.

"Know that Paradise is beneath the shadow of the swords,"<sup>1</sup> the Prophet said; and in after-years he would look back to this particular time and place as being so wondrously blessed that on one occasion he exclaimed: "Would I had been left abandoned with my Companions of the mountain's foot!"<sup>2</sup>

The enemy gradually began to gain the ground they had lost. In the little group round the Prophet the supply of arrows would soon be finished, and in any case it seemed that the time for archery was running out. If the enemy continued to advance every sword would soon have to be unsheathed for a final hand-to-hand conflict with an average of four pagans against every believer. Then suddenly a single horseman came in from the side and made straight for where the Prophet was standing. "Where is Muḥammad?" he shouted. "May I not survive if he survive!" It was Ibn Qamī'ah, a man of one of the outskirt clans of Quraysh, who had already made much slaughter among the Muslims. With a quick glance at the group his sharp eye recognised his intended victim and urging on his horse, he brought down his sword in a blow which he was sure no helmet could resist. But Ṭalḥah, who was standing next to the Prophet, threw himself in the direction of the sword and was somehow able to deflect the blow a little, at the expense of losing the use of the fingers of one of his hands for the rest of his life. The blade narrowly missed the crown of the Prophet's helmet and glanced off the side of it, grazing his temple, driving two of the helmet rings into his cheek, and finally, with its force somewhat spent, striking his doubly mailed shoulder. The shock against the side of his head momentarily stunned him and he fell to the ground, whereupon his assailant withdrew as quickly as he had come. But others closed in to attack, and Shammās<sup>3</sup> of Makhzūm stationed himself in front of the Prophet and fought like a man inspired – the Prophet described him as a

<sup>1</sup> B. LII, 22.    <sup>2</sup> W. 256.    <sup>3</sup> See p. 82.

living shield – until he was cut down, and another man took his place, backed by Nusaybah, who had now drawn her sword.

A voice – perhaps that of Ibn Qami'ah himself – was heard to shout: "Muhammad is slain!" The cry was taken up all over the field, interspersed with glorifications of al-'Uzzah and Hubal. The cliffs of Uhud resounded and the Muslims who had fled were overcome with self-reproach and sorrow, while many of those who were still fighting in the plain lost heart and withdrew from the strife as best they might. But there were many exceptions, and one of these was Anas the son of Naḍr after whom his nephew, the Prophet's servant Anas, was named. It was his sister, the daughter of Naḍr, who had been told by the Prophet that her son, killed by an arrow at Badr, was in Firdaws, the highest Paradise. Anas came upon two of his fellows for whom life seemed to have lost its meaning, and who could bring themselves neither to continue fighting nor to climb the ascent to safety. "Why sit ye here?" he exclaimed. "The Messenger of God hath been slain," they said. "Then what will ye do with life after him?" said Anas. "Rise and die, even as he died."<sup>1</sup> And he set off for where the fight was thickest. There he found Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh, who told the Prophet afterwards that Anas had called to him: "Paradise! I scent its fragrance blowing from the other side of Uhud." "O Messenger of God," said Sa'd, "I could not fight as he fought." Afterwards they found Anas lying dead with more than eighty wounds, so disfigured as to be unrecognisable to anyone save his sister, who knew him by his fingers.<sup>2</sup>

As to the believers who now sought refuge on the higher ground above the plain, withdrawal was made easier for them because most of the enemy felt that the battle was now over and they too slackened their efforts. The dead had not yet been counted, but it was evident that they had amply avenged those who had died at Badr; and now, by killing the man who had been the sole cause of all the strife, they had surely put an end to the new religion and virtually re-established the old order of things. *Yā la-'Uzzah yā la-Hubal!*

The sudden relaxing of effort on the part of Quraysh was nowhere more apparent than amongst those who had half surrounded the little group of some twenty men who were acting as a bodyguard to the Prophet. It had become clear to the Meccans that these were men who would never be taken prisoner and who in fighting to the death would certainly deal death to others. So their better course, now that their main purpose had been achieved, was to live and let live, and to celebrate their victory.

The Prophet had almost immediately recovered consciousness, and when the enemy had withdrawn he rose to his feet and, motioning to his Companions to follow him, he led them towards the entrance of a glen which seemed to offer the easiest ascent to a point of safety from which they could watch over the movement of the enemy. But he was now in great pain from his cheek: the metal rings were deeply embedded in the flesh, so they halted for a moment and Abū 'Ubaydah caught one of them and then the other between his teeth and drew them out. The wound began to bleed again and Mālik of Khazraj put his mouth to it and sucked out the blood

<sup>1</sup> W. 280.    <sup>2</sup> B. LVI, 12.

another man took his place, and sword.

himself – was heard to shout: "Over the field, interspersed by the cliffs of Uhud resounded me with self-reproach and shouting in the plain lost heart fight. But there were many men of Naḍr after whom his sword. It was his sister, the Prophet that her son, killed by Paradise. Anas came upon the lost its meaning, and who fighting nor to climb the ascent The Messenger of God hath no with life after him?" said he set off for where the fight ādh, who told the Prophet Paradise! I scent its fragrance Messenger of God," said Sa'd, they found Anas lying dead as to be unrecognisable to others.<sup>2</sup>

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and swallowed it. It was he who had said in Medina: "We have before us one of two good things"; and except for Shammās, who appeared to be dead, he was the most severely wounded of those present. The Prophet said: "Whoso would look on a man whose blood is mingled with my blood, let him look on Mālik, the son of Sinān." Abū 'Ubaydah was also included, for in his effort to remove the rings he had pulled out two of his own teeth and his mouth was bleeding. The Prophet said to them: "Whose blood hath touched my blood, him the fire cannot reach."<sup>1</sup>

As the small party moved up the glen they were seen by some of those who had already taken refuge on Uhud, and they came down to meet them. Ka'b ibn Malik was ahead of the others, and he was surprised to see a man whose stature and bearing were exactly like those of the Prophet, albeit that his gait was slower. Then, as he drew near, Ka'b saw the incomparable and unmistakable brightness of the eyes through the eyeholes of the visor, and he turned and shouted to those behind him: "O Muslims, be of good cheer! This is the Messenger of God!" The Prophet motioned him to be silent, and he did not shout the good news again, but it spread from mouth to mouth, and men came hurrying to reassure themselves that it was true. So great was the rejoicing that it was as if the defeat had suddenly been changed into victory.

But Ka'b's joyful shout was heard by a solitary horseman of Quraysh who had halted on the very site they had just vacated. It was Ubayy, the brother of Umayyah, who had sworn that from the back of his horse 'Awd, which he was now riding, he would kill the Prophet. Having learned that his intended victim was dead, he had no doubt come to look for the body to see if there was still life in it; and when he heard the shout of Ka'b he rode up the glen until he was hard on the heels of the Muslims. They turned to face him. "O Muḥammad," he called out, "if thou escape, then may not I escape!" Some of the Companions closed round the Prophet, and others were about to attack Ubayy when the Prophet ordered them to hold off their hands; and those who were round him said afterwards that he shook himself clear of them as if they had been no more than flies on a camel's back. Then he took a spear from Ḥārith ibn as-Simmah and stepped in front of them all. Not daring to move, they looked on in awe at his grim and deadly earnestness. As one of them said: "When the Messenger of God made a deliberate effort toward some end, there was no earnestness that could compare with his."<sup>2</sup> Ubayy approached with drawn sword, but before he could strike a blow the Prophet had thrust him in the neck. He bellowed like a bull, then swayed and almost fell from his horse but, recovering his balance, he turned and galloped down the slope and did not stop until he reached the Meccan camp where his nephew Ṣafwān and others of his clan were now assembled. "Muḥammad hath slain me," he said in a voice he could not control. They looked at his wound and made light of it, but he was convinced that it was mortal, as indeed it soon proved to be. "He told me he would kill me," he said, "and by God if he had spat upon me he would have killed me." Was Muḥammad not dead after all,

<sup>1</sup> W. 247.    <sup>2</sup> W. 251.



they began to wonder. But Ubayy was clearly beside himself, and in any case it was easy to mistake one helmeted man for another.

When the Prophet and his Companions reached the top of the glen, 'Alī went to fill his shield with water from a cavity in the rocks. He held it out to the Prophet, but the odour of its stagnancy repelled him, and he could not bring himself to drink of it despite his thirst, though he used some of it to wash the blood from his face. Then, since they were still too easily accessible from the plain, he gave the word to move onwards to higher ground, and he tried to raise himself onto a ledge of rock from which further ascent could be made. But he was too weak for the effort, so Ṭalḥah crouched below the ledge with great violence to his wounds, and taking the Prophet on his back he raised him to the necessary height. The Prophet said of him that day: "He that would behold a martyr walking the face of the earth, let him look on Ṭalḥah the son of 'Ubayd Allāh."<sup>1</sup>

By the time they had found a place which could serve as a temporary camp the sun had reached its zenith and they prayed the noon prayer. The Prophet, who led it, remained seated throughout, and everyone followed his example. Then they lay down to rest and many of them slept a deep and refreshing sleep, while a relay of watchmen kept watch from a point of vantage overlooking the plain.

<sup>1</sup> I.H. 571.

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<sup>1</sup> I.I.

## LIII

# Revenge

QURAYSH were now busy about their dead and their wounded. The losses had not been great: there were only twenty-two killed out of three thousand. Then they counted the losses of the enemy and found about sixty-five dead, many of whom they did not know. Only three were Emigrants: Ḥamzah of Hāshim, Muṣ'ab of 'Abd ad-Dār, and 'Abd Allāh ibn Jaḥsh. A few other bodies at some distance from the centre of the field, wounded as well as dead, escaped their notice. Amongst these was Shammās, still alive but unable to move. In vain they searched for the body of Muḥammad, and while they were doing so Waḥshī went back to the body of Ḥamzah, ripped open his belly, cut out his liver and brought it to Hind. "What shall be mine for slaying the slayer of thy father?" he said. "All my share of the spoils," was her answer. "This is Ḥamzah's liver," he said, and she took it from him and bit away a piece of it, chewed it, swallowed a morsel in fulfilment of her vow and spat out the rest. "Show me where he is," she said, and when they reached the body she cut off his nose and ears and other parts of his flesh. Then she took off her necklaces and pendants and anklets and gave them to Waḥshī, telling the women who were with her to mutilate others of the dead. They all made for themselves ornaments of vengeance with what they cut from the bodies of the Muslims, and Hind mounted upon a rock and uttered a chant of triumph. One or two men of Quraysh also sought to slake their thirst for revenge by mutilating the dead, but their Bedouin allies were outraged. Abu Sufyān was striking the side of Ḥamzah's mouth with the point of his spear and saying "Taste that, thou rebel" when Ḥulays passed by, the leader of one of the clans of Kinānah. In a loud voice, so that Abū Sufyān could hear, he said: "O sons of Kinānah, can this be the lord of Quraysh who is doing what ye see with the body of his dead cousin?" "Confound thee," said Abū Sufyān, "tell not of it. A slip it was, no more."<sup>1</sup>

Meantime Abū 'Amir came upon the body of his son Ḥanzalah, and grievously lamented over him saying: "Did I not warn thee against this man?" – he meant the Prophet. "But thou wast a dutiful son unto thy father, noble of character in thy life, and in thy death thou liest with the flower of thy companions. If God requite with good this slain one" – he pointed to Ḥamzah – "or any of the followers of Muḥammad, may he requite thee with good!"<sup>2</sup> Then he looked sternly at Hind and the other women and said in a loud voice: "O Quraysh, let not Ḥanzalah be

<sup>1</sup> I.I. 582.    <sup>2</sup> W. 274.

mutilated, what though he was mine adversary and yours!" And they respected his wishes.

It was now presumed that Ubayy had not been mistaken, and that the Prophet was with his army somewhere on the high ground above the plain. But the battle was over: there could be no question of attacking the mountain, and the slaves had already been told to strike camp. So when they had buried their own dead and taken their fill of revenge on the enemy dead, they loaded the armour and whatever else they had stripped from them onto their camels, and prepared to set off. But before they did so Abū Sufyān mounted his chestnut mare and rode to the foot of the mountain, to the point nearest where the Prophet and his Companions had been stationed, and shouted at the top of his voice: "War goeth by turns, and this is a day for a day. Exalt thyself, O Hubal! Make prevail thy religion!" The Prophet told 'Umar to go and answer him, saying: "God is All-Highest, Supreme in Majesty. We are not equal: our slain are in Paradise, yours are in the Fire." So 'Umar went to the edge of the precipice below which Abū Sufyān was standing and answered him as the Prophet had said, whereupon Abū Sufyān called up to 'Umar, having recognised his voice: "I adjure thee, 'Umar, by God, have we slain Muḥammad?" "No, by God," said 'Umar, "but he is even now listening to what thou sayest." "I take thy word for it as truer than the word of Ibn Qami'ah," said Abū Sufyān. He turned to go, but turning back once more he added: "Some of your dead have been mutilated. By God, I take no pleasure therein, neither am I wroth. I forbade it not, nor did I command it." Then he said: "Badr be your meeting-place with us next year!" Hearing this, the Prophet sent another of his Companions to the edge of the cliff, to shout his response: "That is a binding tryst between us."<sup>1</sup>

Abū Sufyān rode to where his army was waiting for him at the further side of the plain, and they set off towards the south. It was too far for 'Umar to discern clearly their formation, so the Prophet sent Sa'd of Zuhrah down to the plain to follow them and see what they were about. "If they are leading their horses", he said, "and riding their camels, they are for Mecca; but if they are riding their horses and leading their camels, they are for Medina; and by Him in whose hand is my soul, if that is their aim, I will overtake them and fight them." Sa'd went down to the gully where the Prophet's stallion Sakb had been tethered ever since their arrival in Uhud, and having ridden after the Meccans until he had a clear sight of them, he then hastened back with the good tidings that their horsemen were on camelback leading their horses beside them. As one of them said in after-years, namely 'Amr<sup>2</sup>, who had taken part with Khālid in the decisive cavalry charge: "We had heard that Ibn Ubayy had returned to Medina with a third of the army, and that some men of Aws and Khazraj had stayed in the city. Nor could we be certain that those who had retreated would not return to the attack; and many of us were wounded, and nearly all our horses had been pierced by arrows, so we went on our way."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I.I. 583.<sup>2</sup> See p. 81.<sup>3</sup> W. 299.

صلى الله عليه وسلم

# MUHAMMAD

his life based on the earliest sources

by

Martin Lings



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