

Battle Of The Ditch

This battle occurred during the 5th year of Hijrah when the infidels of Mecca in cooperation with some other tribes and Jews marched to Medina under the leadership of Abu Sufyan, father of Muawiyah, grandfather of Yazeed. They laid siege to Medina for some days. In order to defend Medina from their attack, a ditch was dug up under advice of Salman the Persian and that is why this battle is called the Battle of the Ditch. The infidel attackers tried to launch many attacks, but they failed to gain entry into Medina. This time the infidel army was 10000 strong¹ and the enemies of Islam had made elaborate arrangements of warfare. On the side of Muslims, the ditch was dug up with great efforts.²

But in any case, Amr Ibn Abde Wudd, Khalid bin Amr bin Abde Wudd, Akrama bin Abu Jahl, and Abdullah bin Mughaira crossed the ditch by spurring their horses.³ The infidels came to the edge of the ditch to watch. Amr Ibn Abde Wudd came to the Medinan side and challenged the forces of Islam. Since none of the Muslim soldiers accepted the challenge, they all remained quiet. Only Ali (a.s.) came out in defense of Islam. However, the Holy Prophet (S) stopped him and asked the Muslim army, if there was anyone who could accept the challenge of this infidel, but no one volunteered.

Seeing this, the Holy Prophet (S) asked what the problem was. On hearing this, Umar said: "Amr Ibn Wudd and I were together in a caravan that was going to Shaam. All of the sudden, the caravan was surrounded by a thousand bandits who began to loot the caravan. On seeing this, Amr Ibn Abde Wudd took out his sword and slew all the bandits in a few moments." That is the reason why no one was prepared to accept his challenge.⁴

Then the Holy Prophet (S) gave Ali (a.s.) the permission to fight. Ali (a.s.) was eager for this leave and he was prepared to fight even before the Prophet had given him the permission. He at once rushed to confront the infidel. The infidel was huge, strong, ferocious and awesome. He continued to fight Ali (a.s.) for a long time but was finally killed at his hands. After his extermination, the Prince of Men sent some other leaders of the army of infidels to Hell.

When Umar saw that Ali (a.s.) had instilled fear in the breasts of infidels and none had any courage to face the Muslims, he came to the field and at once pursued Zarar bin Khattab who had already started running from Ali (a.s.). When Umar ran after him, he turned to Umar and gave him a small spear and

went on his way. This happened somehow, otherwise, Umar never risked taking part in any sort of fighting. Anyway, in this battle also, like the battles of Badr and Uhud, none of the non-Bani Hashim was killed and neither did they kill anyone. Leave alone getting killed, none of them, except Umar, as mentioned in the above incident, even got a bruise.

Only six persons of the Ansar were martyred. From the infidels too, three people were killed. Doubtlessly, this victory fell to the Muslims without any fighting and bloodshed. The cause was that the slaying of Amr Ibn Abde Wudd instilled a great terror in the hearts of the infidels after which the deniers of Islam fled and they could not gather the strength to face Muslims.

We should know that the sword of Ali (a.s.) provided the same sort of service that it had provided in the previous battles. If the Prince of Men had not subdued Amr Ibn Abde Wudd, the infidels of Mecca would have attacked and destroyed all Muslims, and Islam would have perished in its infancy. But the slaying of Amr Ibn Abde Wudd strengthened the arms of Islam and shattered the backbone of infidelity.

As soon as Amr was killed, the infidel forces were demoralized and there developed cracks of disunity among the confederates. All of them took to their heels. We should know that on this juncture, the Holy Prophet (S) said regarding Ali (a.s.):

“Each strike of Ali on the day of Khandaq is superior to all the good deeds of my nation put together, till Judgment Day.”

This tradition is available in Madarijun Nubuwwah, Maarijul Nubuwwah, Kashful Ghumma, Nazalul Abrar, Insaanil Uyoon, Seeratul Ameen – Mamoon, Rauzatul Ahbab and other books of Ahlul Sunnat. No one denies the correctness of this tradition. Was the contribution of Ali (a.s.) to the religion of Allah any less than what it was on the day of Uhud? What can be said about the unsuccessful.

Thus, the people of justice may themselves conclude, if there is anyone more superior to Ali (a.s.). Does he deserve to be included among the four Caliphs? What is the meaning of considering him at par with Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman?

The truth is that comparing Ali (a.s.) to other Caliphs or saints of Allah is a useless act. It is indeed pitiful that in this battle also, Abu Bakr could not present any feat worthy of mention. Rather, it was not even clear where Abu Bakr was and in what condition during the Battle of Khandaq. In spite of his achievements, would Ali (a.s.) still remain in the category of the Caliphs? What type of justice is it? Whatever Allah and the Prophet may say, these people continue to harp upon their old tune.

[1.](#) Ref. Tarikh Khamis, Pg. 290; Kamil of Ibn Athir, Vol. 2, Pg. 23.

[2.](#) Ref. Tarikh Rusul wal Muluk

[3.](#) Ref. Tarikh Khamis, Ibid Pg. 290 – 293; Tarikh Tabari, Pg. 1475.

[4.](#) Ref. Maarijun Nubuwwah, Pg. 58; Rauzatus Safa, Vol. 2, Pg. 101.

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