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Battles

Badr: The First Battle in Islam

The Quraish had begun grand-scale preparations to attack Medina. The trade caravan which had gone to Syria that year headed by Abu Sufyan was extraordinarily equipped. Every Quraishite put all his savings in that caravan, and it was decided that whatever the profit accrued that year, it would not be given to the traders but would be spent on arms, horses, and other items of war to fight the Muslims of Medina.

This news did cause much anxiety in Medina. As Abu Sufyan was returning from Syria, he feared that the Muslims might intercept his trade caravan. He sent a messenger well in advance to inform the leaders of the Quraish of his fears. Upon receiving the message, a well-equipped army of one thousand Meccans marched towards Medina under the command of Abu Jahl.

They had reached Badr (200 miles from Mecca and 80 miles from Medina) when news came that the trade caravan was passing just three miles on the seaside from the Quraishites' camp, and that it had not encountered any attack from the Muslims yet. But since the Meccans were so eager on giving battle to Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his followers, they decided to proceed towards Medina anyway. After all, was not the objective of sending such a trade caravan this very battle?! So, why should they go back to Mecca when they had one thousand well-equipped warriors among them who were sufficient to teach the Muslims a lesson? They camped at the stream of Badr.

Now let us see what was happening in Medina. When news came that the trade caravan was coming from Syria (on the north side) and that the Meccan army was marching towards Medina (from the South), the Muslims thought that they would be crushed between these two enemy groups.

Now, there were two alternatives before the Muslims in Medina: to either save themselves from being overwhelmed by the Meccans with all their resources from the rich Syrian trade, or make another option (one which had the least danger for the time being and which also promised a rich booty): fall upon the

Quraishi caravan returning from Syria richly laden and led by Abu Sufyan with only 40 not so well-armed men. From a worldly point of view, this latter course was the safest and the most lucrative, and many Muslims preferred it. The other alternative, which was actually adopted on the recommendation of the Prophet as guided by God, was to leave the booty alone and to march out boldly against the well-armed and well-equipped Quraishite army of 1,000 men coming from Mecca.

This situation is described in the following ayats of the Qur'an:

Just as your Lord caused you (***O Prophet!***) ***to go forth from your house with the truth, though a party of the believers were averse, they disputed with you about the truth after it had become clear,*** (***and they went forth***) ***as*** **if** ***they were being driven to death while they looked*** (***at it***)***. And when Allah promised you one of the two parties that it shall be yours, and you loved that the one not armed should be yours, and Allah desired to manifest the truth of what was true by His words and to cut off the root of the unbelievers. That He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false, even though the guilty ones disliked it.*** (**Qur'an, 8:5-8**)

These verses clearly show that the Meccan army was already on its way long before the Muslims came out of Medina to defend themselves. Also, they clearly show that although some Muslims desired to avoid the Meccan army and to attack the trade caravan, that idea was not accepted, and that the decided aim and objective of their march was to fight the Meccan army which was already on its way.

This clearly belies the vicious and mischievous propaganda of Western writers who claim that the Prophet had intended to attack the trade caravan of the Quraish and that the Quraish had come out only to protect their caravan. The verses of the Qur'an are the only contemporary record of the events of Badr. If there is any writing by anyone, which goes against this authentic narrative, it must be thrown out of window.

You may wonder why the enemies of Islam labor so much to present this battle of Badr as one in which the Quraishites (poor souls!) were aiming just to protect their trade caravan. The reason is this: It was the first battle between the Quraishites and the Muslims, and if the responsibility of this first battle is laid on the heads of the Muslims, then all subsequent battles could be portrayed as being the continuation of this battle and, thus, the Holy Prophet could be presented as a warrior prophet who by his plundering designs compelled the "peace-loving" Meccans to fight!

Anyhow, let us go back to our narrative. The Meccan army was in control of the stream of Badr, and the ground of their campsite was of firm clay. Contrarily, the Muslims were far from the stream and thus experienced difficulty in finding water. To make the matters worse, many Muslims had nocturnal discharge while asleep and became "unclean" (*najis*). And the ground under them was sandy which was likely to prevent fast running during the battle.

God helped them by sending rain which provided them with water enough for their needs and made the sandy ground firm for them, while the firm clay of the Meccans' side became muddy, making their stand and maneuvers difficult.

Referring to this, Allah says in the Qur'an:

(***Remember***) ***when He caused drowsiness to*** **fall** ***on you as a security from Him and sent down upon you water from the cloud so that He might thereby purify you and take away from you the uncleanness of Satan, so that He might fortes your hearts and keep*** (***your***) ***footsteps thereby firm.*** (**Qur'an, 8:11**)

In this background, look at the insinuation of some Western "scholars" who have written that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had taken control of the stream of Badr and by refusing water to Meccans, reduced them to defeat! Anyhow, the facts of the actual battle are, in short, as follows:

With an ill-equipped body of three hundred and thirteen persons, having among them only two horses and seventy camels, the Prophet proceeded to Badr, about eighty miles from Medina, to meet the Meccan army. The forces met on the 17th of the month of Ramadhan, 2 A.H. (624 A.D.). After individual combats according to the custom of the Arabs, between Hamza, 'Ali and Ubaidah (all Hashimites) on the side of the Muslims and Utbah, Shaibah and Walid ibn 'Utbah (all Umayyads) from the Meccan ranks, a pitched battle ensued. The stakes were high. Both forces fought valiantly but the Muslims were animated by holy zeal. In the thick of the battle, the Prophet prayed to God, earnestly beseeching Him thus: "O Lord, forget not Thy promise of assistance! O Lord! If this little band were to perish, there will be none to offer worship unto Thee."

Allah describes it in the following verses:

(***Recall***) ***when you sought aid from your Lord, so He answered you: I will assist you with a thousand angels following one another. And Allah only gave it as a good news and so that your hearts might thereby be at ease, and victory is only from Allah; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise.*** (**Qur'an, 8:9-10**)

The Muslims got the upper hand. The Meccans were driven back, leaving seventy dead, including a number of their notable chiefs. Out of 70, thirty-five were killed by 'Ali ibn Abi Talib alone. It was his first war. Seventy others were taken prisoners. The Muslim force had lost fourteen men.

The prisoners were treated with exceptional kindness. Even the hostile critic Muir says:

"In pursuance of Mahomet's commands the citizens of Medina and such of the refugees as possessed houses received the prisoners and treated them with much consideration. 'Blessings be on the men of Medina', said one of these prisoners in later days, 'they made us ride while they themselves walked; they gave *us* wheaten bread to eat when there was little of it, contenting themselves *with* dates'."

The more affluent prisoners paid ransom and were set free. The others were asked to teach ten persons each to read and write and this teaching was to count as their ransom. After all, in these times of progress and enlightenment, with all the charters and agreements on the treatment of prisoners of war, history does not record another instance even remotely as generous and as humane as the Muslims' treatment of the prisoners taken in their very first encounter fourteen hundred years ago.

Features and Consequences of the Battle

The battle of Badr was remarkable in more ways than one. It demonstrated the great devotion of the disciples to the cause and their complete faith in the Prophet and his mission. Ranged before them in the Mencan ranks were many of their close relatives, their own sons, fathers, or uncles. Thus, the Prophet's uncle 'Abbas, 'All's brother 'Aqil, Abu Bakr's son, Hudhaifa's father and 'Umar's maternal uncle, to name a few, figured in the Meccan army. Yet the disciples never faltered. Personal feelings and sentiments were subordinated to the supreme cause. Such was the material from which Islam arose. The battle also proved that mere numerical superiority and matching valor are of no avail if the cause is not righteous. God helps those who make sacrifices in His cause.

The battle of Badr had far-reaching consequences. Till then, the Muslims were a harassed band avoiding any major conflict. This victory gave them confidence in their physical power. They could now meet force with force. They were soon recognized as a power to be reckoned with and smaller tribes were cautioned against joining forces against them.

This victory dealt a severe blow to the prestige of the Quraish. A number of their chiefs, such as Abu Jahl, 'Utbah, Shaibah, Zam'ah, 'Aas ibn Hisham, and Umayyah ibn Khalaf had been killed and, consequently, Abu Sufyan became their undisputed chieftain. 'Abdullah ibn Ubay and his oscillating followers professed Islam, though in name only, and as *munafiqun* (hypocrites), they were always a source of danger. The Jews of Medina and its vicinity were alarmed at the new power that had emerged. Their enmity towards the Muslims, however, did not abate, and a Jewish tribe, Banu Qinaqa', had to be punished not long after Badr as will be discussed later. The ignominy of the defeat made the Meccans more bitter and furious and the cry of "Revenge!" was on all lips.

Ghazwat-us-Sawiq (2 A.H.)

Abu Sufyan had sworn vengeance. He took a vow that he would not touch his wives nor comb his hair till he had avenged that defeat. In order to fulfill this vow and to show that all was not lost to the Meccans, he rode upon Medina with two hundred horsemen. Sallam ibn Mashkam, Chief of the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadhir, treated them to a feast and divulged the weak points of Medina's fortifications. On the next day, Abu Sufyan raided a Medina pasture, killing an Ansar named Sa'ad ibn 'Amr and burning a number of houses. When this news reached the Prophet, he hotly pursued the raiders who fled, abandoning their rations. This gave the raid its name, "the battle of meal bags, *sawiq."*

On the 15th of Rajab of the same year, i.e. 2 A.H., Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet, was married to 'All. All that 'All could offer by way of *mater* (dower) was his coat of mail, and all that the Prophet could give to his daughter were an ordinary cot, a mattress stuffed with palm leaves, a water bag, two grinding stones, and two earthen pitchers. Yet some writers insinuate that the Prophet and his party were ambushing and plundering trade caravans! If these writers, who profess to make an unbiased study, are to be believed, what had happened to the booty and the riches?! What is most dangerous about such – "historians" is that they dutifully cite a mass of historical data and in the same breath utter some falsehoods so that those lies may also pass on as historically true.

Ghazwah Ghatfan

In 3 A.H., tribes of Bani Tha'labah and Bani Mihrab sent a force of five hundred and forty horsemen under the command of Da'thur to raid Medina. They gave up the idea when the Prophet marched with his companions out of Medina to meet this raiding party. Da'thur, however, got an opportunity to launch a surprise attack on the Prophet who was resting=alone under a tree. "O Muhammad," cried he with a drawn sword in his hand, "who is there now to save thee?!" "Allah", replied the Prophet. This dauntless composure and complete faith in God awed the wild bedouin whose sword now fell from his hand... Seizing it, the Prophet asked in turn, "Who is there now to save thee, O Da'thur?" "Alas, none," replied the bedouin. "Then learn from me to be merciful." So saying, the Prophet returned the sword to him. Da'thur was so impressed that he asked the Prophet for forgiveness and later on embraced Islam.

The Battle of Uhud

Ghazwat-us-Sawiq was only a prelude to the big battle that was to follow. The chagrin and fury of the Quraish at their defeat at Badr knew no bounds. Their whole energy was aroused and they commenced preparations for another attack on the Muslims. The tribes of Tihamah and Kinanah joined them. Their united forces numbered three thousand well equipped soldiers under the command of Abu Sufyan.

This army marched towards Medina and occupied a vantage position near the hills of Uhud, a short

distance of three miles from Medina. Muhammad (s.a.w.) marched out with only a thousand men. On the way, 'Abdullah ibn Ubay with three hundred of his followers, the *munafiqun,* deserted the believers, and the Prophet was left with only seven hundred men. Only a hundred of them had coats of mail, and between them they had only two horses. Their zeal was, however, so great that when some boys, who were considered too young to participate in the battle, were asked to go back, they departed very reluctantly and two of them, Raft' ibn Khadij and Samrah, managed to remain with the army anyway.

The Prophet took up his position below the hill. The army was arrayed in fighting formations and fifty archers were posted, under the command of 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr, at a pass between the hills to guard the army from any attack from the rear. They had strict orders not to leave their post, whatever the outcome of the battle might be. The standard was in the hands of Mus'ab ibn'Umayr. Zubayr was in command of the mailed section and Hamza in command of the rest. On the side of the Meccans, Talhah held the standard and the various regiments were under the charge of Khalid ibn al–Walid, 'Ikrimah ibn Abu jahl, Safwan ibn Umayyah and 'Abdullah ibn Umayyah. Talhah challenged the Muslims to individual combat. The challenge was accepted by 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and very soon Talhah's dead body lay on the ground. The standard was taken by his brother 'Uthman who was slashed by Hamza. A general engagement then started. 'Ali, Hamza and Abu Dajjanah gave heroic accounts of their valor.

An Abyssinian slave, Wahshi, had been commissioned by Hind, wife of Abu Sufyan, to kill either Muhammad (s.a.w.), 'Ali, or Hamza (in order to avenge the death of her father 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, her brother al–Walid as well as that of Hanzalah son of Abu Sufyan at Badr at their hands). He singled Hamza out and threw a spear at him, which pierced his abdomen and killed him.

On the Meccan side, one standard–bearer after another met his end at the hands of 'Ali. The Meccans were losing heart till one of their women, 'Umrah daughter of 'Alqamah, took up the standard. The Meccans again rallied behind her but the Muslims crushed them. The Meccans, having paid a heavy toll, fell back in disarray and the Muslims started gathering the booty. Thinking that the battle battle was over, most of the archers who were guarding the passage in the hill left their posts lured by the spoils even against the orders of their leader'Abdullah ibn Jubayr.

Khalid ibn al–Walid was fleeing when he saw such an opportunity and, gathering a group and killing the few remaining defenders of the pass, launched a furious attack from the rear. The Muslims were taken so much by surprise that they did not know what to do. In the general melee their ranks became disorganized. The retreating Meccan forces rallied again and launched a fresh onslaught from the front.

The Muslim standard–bearer, Mu'sab ibn 'Umayr, who bore a great facial resemblance to the Prophet, was killed. Up went the cry that the Prophet had been killed. This threw the Muslims into further confusion and utter dismay. Even many of their famous personalities lost heart. 'Umar threw away his sword saying there was no use fighting since the Prophet was no more. He fled towards the mountain and, in his own words, he was jumping from one boulder to another like mountain goats. Abu Bala and

'Uthman also fled, the latter returning to Medina after three days.

On the other hand, many valiant soldiers, renouncing all discretion, entered the thick of the Meccan ranks determined to fight to the end. This went on till Ka'ab ibn Malik saw the Prophet and shouted at the top of his voice that the Prophet was still alive. The spirit of the Muslims revived, but the Prophet now became the chief target of the Meccan forces. 'Abdullah ibn Qama'a advanced towards the Prophet and struck a sword on his head with such force that two links of his helmet penetrated the Prophet's face.

Utbah ibn Abi Waqqas threw a stone at the Prophet, further injuring his face and dislodging his two upper teeth. The Prophet now had fallen in a pit where 'Ali ibn Abi Talib found him and protected him against the continuous furious onslaughts of the Meccans. When the Prophet saw this sacrificing spirit of 'Ali, he asked him as to why did he too not flee like the others. 'Ali replied: "Should I become kafir after having accepted Islam?"

When 'Ali's sword broke down, the Holy Prophet gave him his own sword Dhul-Fiqar. It was then that a voice was heard from above saying, "There is no sword except Dhul-Fiqar. There is no hero except Ali."

At the same time, Jibril told the Holy Prophet that it was the height of loyalty and bravery which 'Ali was demonstrating towards the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet said: "Why not? 'Ali is from me and I am from 'Ali." Jibril said: "And I am from you both."

Later, some Muslims, like Sad, Zubayr, Talhah, Abu Dajjanah and Ziyad, gathered round the Holy Prophet.

Faithful companions, including the brave lady Ummu 'Ammarah, prevented others from getting too close to the Prophet. With their bodies did they shield him against the rain of arrows. Standing in such a great peril, the Prophet cried to God: "O God! Forgive my people, for they know not!" There was no rancor, no bitterness, and no ill-will in his heart against his mortal enemies even in such a precarious situation.

An overwhelming compassion for the people and a burning desire to lead them to the right path actuated all his deeds and sayings. Then some other Muslims arrived where the Prophet was being defended at fearful odds by the small band of his companions. After some furious fighting, they managed to take the Prophet to the security of a cave in the heights of Uhud.

Meanwhile, the word had reached Medina that the Prophet was killed. The Prophet's daughter, Fatimah al-Zahra, surrounded by a group of Muslim women, hurried to Uhud. To her great relief, Fatimah found her father alive but his forehead and face were covered with his own blood. 'Ali brought water in his shield and Fatimah cleansed and dressed the wounds.

The Meccan forces had turned the tables but they were too exhausted to drive their advantage home

either by attacking Medina or by driving the Muslims from the heights of the hill. They satiated their desire for vengeance by committing ghastly brutalities upon the slain and the injured, cutting off their ears and noses and mutilating their bodies. The brave Hamza was amongst the slain. Hind cut off his ears and nose and took out his heart and liver. She tried to chew the liver but Allah made it so hard that she could not do so... She had to throw it out. The horrible scene was so revolting that the Prophet forbade forever the practice of mutilation.

In this battle, seventy Muslims were martyred and an equal number of them were wounded. 'Ali received sixteen serious sword wounds. The Meccans lost 30 (or 22) warriors twelve of whom at the hands of 'Ali.

With victory almost within their grasp, the Muslims had suffered a heavy blow. They were shaken in body and in spirit. But the Prophet preached to them fortitude and endurance. For those who laid their lives in the way of Allah, the following glad tiding had been revealed:

And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive (***and***) ***are sustained by their Lord.*** (**Qur'an, 3:169**)

While retreating to Mecca, Abu Sufyan had bribed a traveler going towards Medina to inform the Holy Prophet that the Meccans were again assembling a great force to attack Medina. Hearing the news, 'Ali said: "Allah is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is He."

The Holy Prophet went out at once, taking with him only those seventy warriors who were wounded in Uhud, to pursue the Meccan forces. He stayed for three days at a place called Hamra'ul-Asad but did not find any trace of the Meccans, so he returned. The Qur'an mentions this episode in the following ayat:

Those who responded to the call of Allah and the Messenger even after the wound had afflicted them, those among them who do good and guard (***themselves against evil***) ***shall have a great reward. Those to whom the people said: Surely men have gathered against you; therefore, fear them, but this only increased their faith, and they said: Allah is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is He. So they returned with favor from Allah and*** (***His***) ***grace; no evil touched them, and they followed the pleasure*** **of** ***Allah, and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace.*** (**Qur'an, 3:172-174**)

The defeat at Uhud did, indeed, create serious difficulties for the Muslims. It emboldened the nomadic tribes on the one hand to make forays upon Medina and, on the other hand, encouraged the Jews of Medina to foment further trouble. Yet it was not disastrous for the Muslims. While a defeat at Badr, when the Muslims were yet a handful would have wiped them out and spelt the death knell of the Prophetic mission, a defeat here and there after Islam had gained strength only put the Muslims in the testing

crucible so that they might emerge more determined and cured of any complacency and vanity to which they might have otherwise fallen prey.

The Meccans were determined to annihilate the Muslims. This objective they could not achieve. Their infantry had suffered such losses that they could not even drive home the advantage they gained in the last stages of the battle. They had thought they were the masters of all western Arabia, but they could do nothing more than hold their own against the Muslims. It is not surprising, therefore, that they marched back to Mecca frustrated and discouraged.

The Meccans realized that on their own they could not crush the Islamic movement. They ,now started instigating other tribes to make common causewith them. Most of the tribes were already inimical to Islam. They practiced idolatry while Islam forbade it and enjoined worship of one God. Raiding and plundering were the general means of their livelihood while Islam dictated an orderly society, forbidding oppression, exploitation, and foul play. It enjoined its followers to seek honest means of livelihood. The influence of the Quraish extended far and wide and all the tribes came into contact with them at the time of the annual pilgrimage. The Jews were also constantly instigating the tribes against the Muslims. The victory of the Muslims over the Quraish at Badr had overawed nomadic tribes but their defeat at Uhud emboldened them to show their hands and a number of skirmishes followed.

Sariyah Abu Salamah

The first of these forays was Sariyah Abu Salamah. Talhah and Khalid instigated their tribe, Banu Asad, to attack Medina on the first of Muharram of 4 A.H. The Prophet dispatched a force of one hundred and fifty men to intercept them. The invaders dispersed on seeing this force and there was no engagement.

Sariyah Ibn Anis

In the same month (4 A.H.), Sufyan ibn Khalid of the Banu Lahyan prepared to attack Medina. The Prophet sent 'Abdullah ibn Anis with a force to meet him. 'Abdullah was killed. Hostile critics say that the Prophet got the chiefs of some tribes killed to overawe them. They quote Arab historians like al-Waqidi, Ibn Hisham and Ibn al-Athir in recounting the names of the persons killed, but they very conveniently omit the details and circumstances given by the same authorities regarding the raids they were committing or the preparations they were making to assault Medina. The Prophet could not ignore the danger that surrounded the Muslims; he would not allow them to be exterminated.

Treachery at Bir Ma'unah

The tribes were not only repeatedly raiding Medina but also employing treacherous methods to deplete

the Muslim's ranks and resources. In Safar of 4 A.H., Abu Bara' of Banu Kalb approached the Prophet to lend the services of his companions to preach to his tribe and to instruct them in the way of Islam. Seventy pious disciples were sent with him but, with the exception of one person, namely Abr ibn Umayyah, the entire party was put to death when it reached Bi'r Ma'unah.

The Foul play at Raji

Likewise, the tribes of Adh'al and Quarah sent a deputation to the Prophet to inform him that they had accepted Islam and needed some instructors. He sent ten disciples with them. On reaching Raji', the envoys instigated Banu Lahyan to kill seven of the disciples and to capture the rest. The captives were sold at Mecca and those who purchased them put them to death. One of the captives was Zaid. A crowd, including Abu Sufyan, assembled to see him being slaughtered. Abu Sufyan inquired of him if he would not have considered himself lucky had Muhammad been there to be slaughtered in his place. The devoted attachment of Zaid to the Prophet can be gauged from the reply he gave. He said: "By God, I do not value my life even this much that in its place a thorn may pierce the sole of the Prophet's foot." He was thereupon slashed to death.

The Attitude of the Jews

For a long time, the Jews were masters of Medina. The tribes of Aws and money lending at exorbitant rates of interest was Khazraj (the Ansar) had settled there later. Gradually, these tribes gathered strength and equaled the Jews in power and prestige. The internecine war of the Bu'ath, however, weakened them, and the Jews again assumed ascendancy. The Jews were a prosperous people and one of their main occupations. With the deterioration in the economic situation of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, many of them became heavily in debt to the Jews.

The position of authority and eminence, which their material superiority and strength gave to the Jews, received a big setback when Islam started spreading in Medina. They therefore, viewed the expansion of Islam with great disfavor and apprehension. Expediency had actuated them into entering into a pact with the Muslims, but soon they began plotting against Islam. They would distort the words and verses of the Qur'an and mock and jeer at the Muslims. Nevertheless, the Prophet was bidden to bear it patiently:

.... And you shall certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and from those who are polytheists much annoying talk, and if you are patient and guard (yourself against evil), surely this is one of the matters of great resolve. **(Qur'an, 3:186)**

The Prophet tried his best to maintain friendly ties with the Jews. The Qur'an stressed the fundamental unity between the two religions and asked the Jews to come to terms with the Muslims:

Say: O people of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: That we shall not worship any but Allah and (that) we shall associate nothing with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah, but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims. **(Qur'an, 3:64)**

Neither kindness nor fair dealing on the part of the Prophet could, however, conciliate the Jews. They tried to revive the rift between the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. Some Jews would accept Islam one day and renounce it the next in order to show that there was nothing (important) in Islam.

And a party of the people of the Book say: Profess faith in that which has been revealed to those who believe in the first part of the day and disbelieve therein at the end of it, perhaps they will go back on their religion. **(Qur'an, 3:72)**

They conspired with the munafiqun and sent emissaries to the enemies of Islam. Apprehension and envy at the growing power of the Muslims following their victory at Badr rankled in their hearts, and they redoubled their efforts to exterminate the new religion. The Quraish were further instigating them to do so, sending a threatening epistle to them:

"You possess arms and fortresses. You should fight our enemy (Muhammad); otherwise, we will attack you and nothing will prevent us from grabbing the arms of your women."

Ka'ab ibn Ashraf, a Jewish chieftain of Banu Nadhir, was a poet of considerable fame. Like so many others, he was bitterly hostile to Islam. With his fiery poems, he began to incite the people to rise up against the Muslims. After the battle of Badr, he composed a number of eulogies mourning the Meccan chiefs slain in the battle. He used to recite them at every gathering. He contacted Abu Sufyan with a view to making a combined effort to wipe out the Muslims.

He openly recited a number of poems derogatory to the Prophet. As poetry had a high place in the life of the Arabs and could deepen influence and sway feelings, Ka'ab ibn Ashraf had become not only a nuisance but a serious menace. We have it on the authority of al-Ya'qubi and Hafiz Ibn Hajar that Ka'ab plotted to kill the Prophet. When the Prophet knew this plot, he consulted his companions and it was decided that Ka'ab should be silenced forever. Muhammad ibn Maslamah undertook to carry out the job and, on getting an opportunity, he sent Ka'ab ibn Ashraf to hell.

The Banu Qinaqa', the most powerful Jewish tribe, were the first to resile from the alliance with the Muslims. Says Ibn Sa'd, "The Jews attempted sedition during the battle of Badr and were envious of the Muslims, retracting from their pact with them."

As mentioned earlier, an incident in 2 A.H. led to a flare-up. A veiled Muslim lady had gone to the shop of a Jew. She was pestered and her clothes thrown up. A Muslim standing nearby was unable to tolerate this indecent behavior, so he killed the Jew. The Jews, thereupon, killed the Muslim. The Prophet remonstrated with them but they defiantly replied that they were not (as weak as) Quraish (who were defeated in Badr) and would show him what battle was.

Within the security of their fortress, they started making preparations for war. The Muslims besieged the fortress for fifteen days and the Jews had to sue for peace, promising that they would accept the Prophet's decision. The Prophet banished them, allowing them to take all their movable possessions to Syria. Some European critics see only the immediate cause, that is, the indecent behavior with the Muslim lady and, ascribing it to boyish prank, they try to minimize it. In their view, therefore, the punishment was too harsh, but they fail to take notice of the constant efforts of the Jews to undermine the Islamic movement. It was not one incident but a series of events that had brought on the final clash.

Expulsion of the Bann Nadhir (Rabi 1, 4 A.H.)

The banishment of the Banu Qinaqa' enraged its sister tribe, the Banu Nadhir. Encouraged by the Meccans and by 'Abdullah ibn Ubay, they plotted to kill the Prophet. Once the Holy Prophet, together with some companions, were there to seek their help in arranging the payment of blood-money of two persons from the tribe of 'Amir. The Jews asked the Holy Prophet to come inside their fortress, but the Holy Prophet did not like the idea. Instead, he sat outside the wall of the fortress. They sent one man to climb the wall from inside the fortress and to kill the Holy Prophet by throwing a big boulder on his head.

The Holy Prophet, through divine revelation, came to know of this treacherous scheme in nick of time and immediately left the place.

Then he sent Banu Nadhir an ultimatum with Muhammad ibn Maslamah that, since they had broken their treaty, they should leave Medina in ten days. They wanted to migrate when 'Abdullah ibn Ubay encouraged them not to leave Medina, promising them help with 2000 warriors. The Jews then refused to leave Medina. The following ayats refer to this promise of help:

***Have you not seen those who have become hypocrites? They say to those of their brethren who disbelieve from among the people of the Book: If you are driven forth, we shall certainly go forth with you, and we will never obey anyone concerning you, and* if *you are fought, we will certainly help you, and Allah bears witness that they are most surely liars. Certainly, if these are driven forth, they will not go forth with them, and* if *they are fought, they will not help them, and even* if *they help there, they will certainly turn* (*their*) *backs, then they shall not be helped.* (Qur'an, 59: 11-12)

Their fortress was besieged, and 'Abdullah ibn Ubay did nothing to help them. After 15 days, they agreed to leave Medina. They were allowed to take away–`all their movables, which they could take except weapons of war.

They did not like the idea of leaving their houses to be occupied by the Muslims, so they demolished them. The Qur'an refers to the various aspects of this expulsion in Sura 59. For example, their migration and the destructing of their houses at their own hands is referred to in this ayat:

He it is who caused those who disbelieved from among the people of the Book to go forth from their homes at the first banishment, you did not think that they would go forth, while they were certain that their fortresses would defend them against Allah, but Allah came to them from where they did not expect and cast terror into their hearts: they demolished their houses with their own hands and the hands of the believers; therefore, take a lesson, O you who have eyes! **(Qur'an, 59:2)**

They passed through Medina's market singing and beating drums to show that they were not disheartened by that banishment and that they would soon avenge this defeat. Some of them went to Syria while others settled with the Jews of Khaybar.

Since there was no war, according to the command of Allah (see Sura 59, verses 6 to 10), all the wealth left by them became the personal property of the Holy Prophet who, having consulted with the Ansar, distributed all movable property to poor Muhajirun and three poor companions from the Ansar: Sahl ibn Hanif, Abu Dajjanah and Zaid. He gave the immovable property to 'All ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) who made it *waqf* (endowment) for the descendants of Fatimah (s.a.).

The 59th Chapter of the Qur'an (The Banishment) describes various aspects of Banu Nadhir' s expulsion.

The Battle of Khandaq (Moat) or Ahzab

Upon settling down at Khaybar, the Banu Nadhir decided to seek revenge against the Muslims. They contacted the Meccans, and 20 leaders from the Jews and 50 from the Quraish made covenant in the Ka'bah that so long as they lived, they would fight Muhammad. Then the Jews and the Quraish contacted their allies and sent emissaries to a number of tribes. Banu Ghatfan, Banu Asad, Banu Aslam, Banu Ashja', Banu Kinanah and Banu Fizarah readily responded and the coalition contributed ten thousand soldiers who marched upon Medina under the command of Abu Sufyan.

When news of these preparations reached Medina, the Holy Prophet consulted his companions. Salman al–Farsi advised to dig a moat on the unprotected side of Medina.

Muslims were divided into parties of 10, and each party was allotted 10 yards to dig. The Holy Prophet himself participated in this task. The *khandaq* (moat) was completed in nick of time: just 3 days before the host of the enemies reached Medina. The Muslims could muster only three thousand men to face this huge army.

Huyaiy ibn Akhtab, head of Banu Nadhir, met secretly with Ka'b ibn Asad, head of Banu Quraizah, a Jewish tribe still in Medina. Banu Quraizah, on his instigation, tore down the treaty, which they had concluded with the Muslims.

This treachery and danger from inside Medina, when Muslims were surrounded by the combined armies of pagans and Jews of all of Arabia on the outside, had a telling effect on the Muslims. As a meager safeguard, Salimah ibn Aslam was deputed with only two hundred men to guard the city from any attack by Banu Quraizah. The enemy was astonished to see the moat because it was a new thing for the Arabs. They camped on the outside for 27 (or 24) days. Their number increased day by day, and many Muslims were extremely terrified, as the Qur'an gives us the picture. Surah al-Ahzab describes various aspects of this siege. For example, see the following verses:

When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes turned dull, and the hearts rose up to the throats, you began to think diverse thoughts about Allah. There, the believers were tried, and they were shaken a tremendous shaking. (**Qur'an, 33:10-11**)

At that time, many hypocrites, and even some Muslims, asked permission to leave the rank of the Muslims and to return to their homes:

And when a party of them said: O people of Yathrib! There is no place for you to stand, and a party of them asked permission of the Prophet saying: Verily our houses are exposed, and they were not exposed; they only desired to fee away. (**Qur'an, 33:13**)

The bulk of the army, however, steadfastly bore up the hardship of inclement weather and rapidly depleting provisions. The coalition's army hurled arrows and stones at the Muslims.

Finally, a few of the Quraish's more valiant warriors, 'Amr ibn 'Abdwadd, Nawfil ibn 'Abdullah ibn Mughirah, Dhirar ibn Khattab, Hubairah ibn Abi Wahab, 'Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl and Mirdas al-Fahri, succeeded in crossing the moat.

'Amr called for battle; nobody responded; he was considered equal to one thousand warriors. History accounts state that all the Muslims were as though birds were sitting on their heads: they were too afraid to raise their heads.

Three times did the Holy Prophet exhort the Muslims to give battle to Amr. Three times it was only 'Ali who stood up. In the third time, the Holy Prophet allowed 'Ali to go. When 'Ali was going to the battlefield, the Holy Prophet said:

"The whole faith is going to fight the whole infidelity."

'Ali invited 'Amr to accept Islam, or to return to Mecca, or to come down from his horse since 'Ali had no horse and was on foot. 'Amr alighted from his horse and a fierce battle ensued. For a while, so much dust covered both warriors that nobody knew what was going on. Once 'Amr succeeded in inflicting a serious cut on 'Ali's head, yet after some time, 'Ali killed 'Amr. Concerning this battle, the Holy Prophet said:

"Verily, one attack of 'Ali in the Battle of Khandaq is better than the worship of all human beings and jinns, up to the Day of Resurrection."

This killing of 'Amr demoralized the pagans, and all his companions fled away except Nawfil, who was also killed by'Ali.

The Muslims were short of provisions. The Holy Prophet had to tie a stone on his stomach in order to lessen the pangs of hunger. Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said: "Our hearts had reached our throats in fear and desperation." On the other hand, the besieging army was getting restive; it could not put up any further with the rain and cold; its horses were perishing and provisions nearing exhaustion.

The Holy Prophet went to the place where the Mosque of Victory (Masjid-ul-Fath) now stands and prayed to Allah. A fierce storm raged which uprooted the tents of the enemies; their pots and belongings went flying in all directions; an unbearable terror was cast in their ranks. The Meccans and the pagan tribes fled away. The first to flee was Abu Sufyan himself who was so upset that he tried to ride his camel without first untying its rope. This episode is referred to in the Qur'an in this *ayat:*

O ye who believe! Remember the bounty of Allah unto you when came upon you the hosts, so We sent against them a strong wind and hosts that ye saw not: and Allah is seeing all what you do **(Qur'an, 33:9)**

And also in *ayat 25* which says:

And God turned back the unbelievers in their rage; they did not achieve any advantage, and Allah sufficed for the believers infighting, and
Allah is Strong, Mighty. **(Qur'an, 33:25)**

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was interpreting this *ayat* in (*Tafsir ad-Durrul-Manthur*) thus:

"And God sufficed the believers (through 'Ali ibn Abi Talib) in their fight"

As a direct result of this defeat of the infidels' combined forces in the Battle of Ahzab, the influence of the Quraish waned, and those, tribes who were till then hesitating to accept Islam out of their fear of Quraish began to send deputations to the Prophet. The first deputation came from the tribe of Mazinah, and it consisted of four hundred persons. They not only accepted Islam but also were ready to settle down at Medina. The Prophet advised them to return to their homes.

Likewise, a deputation of a hundred persons came from the Ashja' and embraced Islam. The tribes of Juhainah lived near them and were influenced by their conversion. One thousand of their men came to Medina and entered the fraternity.

Elimination of the Bann Quraizah

According to the terms of the treaty which the Banu Quraizah had contracted with the Muslims, they were bound to assist the Muslims against outside aggression. But, not to speak of assisting the Muslims or even remaining neutral, they had sided with the Meccans and joined the besieging foe. What was worse, they had tried to -attack the fortress where Muslim women and children had been lodged for safety. Living in such a close proximity to Medina, they had become a serious menace.

As soon as the siege of their own town was lifted, the Muslims surrounded the Banu Quraizah's fortress. For some time they resisted but they ultimately opened the gates of their fortresses on the condition that their fate should be decided by Sa'd ibn Ma'adh, chief of the Aws. Basing his judgement upon the direction contained in the Old Testament itself, Sa'd ruled that the fighting men should be killed and their women and children made captive. The sentence was carried out. It was in this connection that the following ayats were revealed:

And He drove down those of the people of the Book who backed them from their fortresses, and He cast awe into their hearts: some you killed and you took captive another part **(*of them*).** ***And He made you inherit their land and their dwellings and their properties, and*** **(*to*)** ***a land which ye have not yet trodden, and God has power over all things.*** **(Qur'an, 33:26-27)**

Many critics had described this punishment as harsh. But what other punishment could be meted out to them? They had violated the pact and, instead of helping the Muslims, they joined the forces of their enemies and had actually besieged the Muslims. There were no prisons where prisoners of war could be detained nor any concentration camps where they could be put to forced labor, and the capture of

women and children, thoughk appaling to the notions of the present age, was probably the only method known in those days to provide sustenance to them when the earning members of their families had lost their lives. At any rate, this was the customary aftermath of a war.

The Treaty of Hudaibiah and the Pledge of Ridhwan

In Dhul-Qa'dah, 6 A.H., the Prophet decided to perform the *'umrah* (the lesser pilgrimage) to the Ka'bah which had been till then denied to the Muslims due to the hostility of the Meccans. Fourteen hundred Muhajirun and Ansar showed readiness to go with him. Lest there be any misgivings in any quarter about his intentions, he directed the Muslims not to carry any arms other than swords, and he himself put on the robes of *ihram* and took up camels to sacrifice.

The Muslims camped at Hudaibiyah, ten miles from Mecca. An envoy was sent to the Meccans to obtain-their permission for visiting the Ka'bah but it was rejected. Instead, the Meccans collected a force to prevent the Muslims from entering Mecca. The Quraish sent Budayl of the tribe of Khuza'ah, to tell the Prophet that he was not allowed to visit the Ka'bah. The Prophet said that he had not gone there to fight but to perform the pilgrimage.

The Quraish deputed 'Urwah ibn Mas'ud al-Thaqafi to have a talk with the Prophet, but nothing came out of it. The Prophet then sent Karash ibn Umayyah to the Quraish, but the messenger was mistreated, and it was only with difficulty that he escaped with his life. The vanguard of the Quraish attacked the Muslims, but it was captured. The Prophet demonstrated great clemency and set the captives free. Ultimately, 'Uthman (who belonged to the same clan to which Abu Sufyan belonged) was sent to persuade the Quraish to allow the Muslims to visit the Ka'bah. News came that 'Uthman had been killed by the Quraish. The Muslims took a pledge on the hands of the Prophet, known as "Bay'atur-Ridhwan", to stand by him to the last. Referring to this pledge, the Qu'ran says:

Indeed God was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to thee under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility on them and rewarded them with a near victory. **(Qur'an, 48:18)**

However, it came to be known later that the news of Uthman's murder was not true. After considerable difficulty, a treaty was ultimately signed with Suhayl ibn 'Amr, Quraish's envoy, on the following terms reproduced in almost all the Arab Chronicles:

- The Muslims should return to Medina that year without performing the pilgrimage.

- They could return the next year but their stay should not exceed three days.

- The Muslims should not bring any arms with them except sheathed swords.

- There would be no war between the Quraish and the Muslims for ten years.

- Muslims residing in Mecca would not be allowed to migrate to Medina, but if any Muslim wanted to settle in Mecca, he should not be prevented from doing so.

- Any idolater or Meccan Muslim migrating to Medina without the permission of his clan will be sent back to Mecca, but a Muslim of Medina going back to Mecca without permission will not be allowed to return.

- Any tribe in Arabia will be free to join any of the parties to the pact, and the allies also will be bound by this treaty.

Although these terms were apparently disadvantageous to the Muslims, the Prophet accepted them. No sooner had the terms been agreed upon than a critical situation arose. Abu Jundal, son of the said Suhail, had been imprisoned by his father for accepting Islam and was being severely mistreated. He managed to escape and, with his fetters on, reached Hudaibiyah just before the treaty was signed. Suhail, the emissary of the Meccans, demanded his return according to the terms of the treaty.

The Muslims said that the treaty had not been signed yet. Suhail said that if his son was not returned to him, there would be no treaty at all. Abu Jundal pleaded with the Muslims in the name of mercy not to throw him back to the tyranny of the Meccans and showed the injuries they had inflicted upon him. The Muslims were moved to plead his cause and 'Umar made an impassioned appeal, but the Prophet silenced them by declaring that he could not break a treaty. He consoled Abu Jundal by saying that God would create some way for his deliverance.

Some Muslims were unhappy abut this treaty. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab talked very rudely to the Holy Prophet. Afterwards, he used to say: "Never did I have doubt (about the truth of Islam) since my acceptance of Islam except on that day (of Hudaibiyah)."

The Prophet sacrificed his animals at Hudaybiyah. Having shaved his head, he removed the robes of ihram. Many Muslims were reluctant to do so, but finally they followed suit.

After three days' stay at Hudaibiyah, the Muslims returned to Medina. On the way back, Surah 48 titled "TheVictory" was revealed. It described the treaty as an open victory for the Muslims. Later events confirmed that it was really a great victory for them.

Till then, idolaters and Muslims had not been mixing with each other. By virtue of this treaty, they started doing so freely. On account of their family relationships and trade connections, the Meccans started visiting Medina, and many of them stayed there for months. In this way, they were getting acquainted

with the teachings of Islam and were deeply impressed by the righteous conduct and moral integrity of the Muslims.

The Muslims of Medina who were visiting Mecca left behind them similar impressions. The result was that the Meccans were themselves attracted to Islam and many of them embraced the new religion. It is recorded that during the two years following this treaty, more people accepted Islam than during the whole nineteen years since the inception of the mission. A clear proof is found in the fact that while only 1,400 Muslims had accompanied the Prophet for the lesser pilgrimage when the treaty of Hudaibiyah was concluded, two years later, that is, when Mecca fell in the hands of the Muslims, 10,000 Muslims accompanied him.

Inviting Sovereigns of Neighboring States

The tranquility afforded by the Hudaibiyah peace treaty gave an opportunity to the Prophet to propagate Islam throughout Arabia and to enable Islam to embark upon its attempt to embrace all humanity. He sent ambassadors with his letters to Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, to Khusro Parviz II, the Kisra of Persia, to the kings of Egypt and Abyssinia, the chiefs of Yemen and Syria. These letters have been preserved and reproduced by Arab chroniclers.

The letter to Heraclius, which was carried by Dahiyah al-Kalbi, read as follows:

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muhammad, the slave and Messenger of Allah, to Heraclius, the emperor of Rome. Peace be on him who follows the guidance. After this, I invite you to accept Islam. Accept Islam and you will prosper and Allah will give you double rewards. But if you refuse, the sin of your people also will fall on your shoulders. O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we shall not worship anything save Allah, and that we shall not associate anything with Him, nor shall some of us take others for lords besides Allah. But if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.

Herachus wanted to know more about this religion, so he summoned some Arab merchants who had come to Gaza with a caravan. Abu Sufyan, one of the bitterest enemies of the Prophet, happened to be in that group, so he became its spokesman. The conversation that took place between Heraclius and Abu Sufyan is preserved in the books of traditions:

Herachus: Is the family of the person claiming prophethood a noble one?

Abu Sufyan: It is a noble family.

Heraclius: Has anyone else in", this family claimed prophethood?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Has there been any king in this family?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Are the people who have accepted this religion weak or influential?

Abu Sufyan: They are weak people.

Heraclius: Are his followers increasing or decreasing?

Abu Sufyan: They are on the increase.

Heraclius: Have you ever known him to tell lies?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Does he ever commit a breach of any pact?

Abu Sufyan: He has not done it so far, but we would like to see if he keeps up a new peace treaty that we have recently negotiated with him.

Heraclius: Have you ever fought against him?

Abu Sufyan: Yes.

Heraclius: What was the result?

Abu Sufyan: Sometimes we won and sometimes he.

Heraclius: What does he teach?

Abu Sufyan: He bids people to worship one God and not to associate any partners with Him, to offer prayers, to be truthful and chaste, and to bestow alms.

Heraclius then summed up the conversation thus:

"You say that this man belongs to a noble family. Prophets always come from noble families. You say that no one else in the family ever before claimed prophethood. Had it been so, I would have thought that he was influenced by family traditions. You say that none of his predecessors was a king. Had it been so, I would have thought that he was aspiring to attain kingship. You admit that he never tells lies. A person who does not tell a lie to a man cannot tell a lie about God. You say that poor people are the adherents of his creed. The first followers of prophets always come from this class. You say that his religion is expanding. This is a characteristic of a true religion. You say that he does not deceive. Prophets do not deceive anyone. You say that he bids you to offer prayers and to observe purity and chastity. If all this is true, his realm will come right up to my domain. I had thought that a prophet might be coming, but I did not think that he would be born in Arabia. If I could go there, I would have paid homage to him."

Abu Sufyan used to say that he had to give true answers to the emperor, as he was afraid of being contradicted by one or more of his caravan companion if he gave any false reply.

The envoy sent to Khusro Parviz met a different reception. Khusro Parviz was enraged at the very idea of an ordinary person addressing him, the great Kisra that he was, on terms of equality, so he tore the letter to pieces. Kisra directed his governor of Yemen to arrest the person claiming to be a prophet and to send him to his court. When the governor's messengers arrived at Medina and asked the prophet to comply with Kisra's orders on pain of his country's destruction, the Prophet replied, "Go back and tell him that the Islamic empire will reach the throne of Kisra's kingdom." Not many years had passed when this prophecy came true.

The envoy sent to Harith, chief of the Ghassan tribe ruling Syria, was put to death. This eventually became the cause of a conflict with the Christians which resulted in the Battle of Mu'tah and the expedition of Tabuk.

The Prophet sent an epistle to al–Mundhir, the then Iranian Governor of Bahrain. It read as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muhammad the Messenger of Allah to al–Mundhir son of Sawa. Peace on him. Praise be to Allah besides Whom there is no other god. And I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. And now I remind you of Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious. Whoever receives admonition receives it for his own good, and whoever obeys my envoys and follows their instructions obeys me. Whoever is sincere to them is sincere to me. My envoys have spoken well of you. I have accepted your intercession on behalf of the people of Bahrain. Leave to the Muslims all they owned before accepting Islam. While I hereby grant indemnity to the wrongdoers, you should also forgive them. You shall not be deposed so long as you conduct yourself well. And whosoever continues following his (religion of) Judaism shall be liable to pay the *jizyah* (defence tax).

The letter sent earlier to Negus, the king of Abyssinia, had read as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muhammad the Messenger of Allah to Negus, the king of Abyssinia. Peace be on him who follows the path of Guidance. Praise be to Allah besides Whom there is no other god, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Preserver of Peace, the Keeper of the Faithful, the Guardian. I bear witness that Jesus son of Mary is indeed a spirit of God and His word, which He conveyed unto the chaste Virgin Mary. He created Jesus through His word just as he created Adam with His hands. And now I call you to Allah Who is One and has no partner, and to friendship in His obedience. Follow me and believe in what has been revealed to me, for I am the Messenger of Allah. I invite you and your people to Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious. I have conveyed the message, and it is up to you to accept it. Once again, peace on him who follows the path of guidance.

Another epistle sent to Muqauqis, the then Roman Viceroy over Egypt, was as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muhammad, the servant and Messenger of Allah to Muqauqis, Chief of the Copts. Peace be on him who follows the path of Guidance. I invite you to accept the message of Islam. Accept it and you shall prosper. But if you turn away, then upon you shall also fall the sin (of misleading by your example) the Copts. O people of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah and that we shall ascribe no partners unto Him and that none of us shall regard anyone as lord besides God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.

The Battle of Khaibar

The banishment of the Jewish tribes of Banu Nadhir and Banu Qinaqa' from Medina had accentuated the animosity of the Jews towards the Muslims. These tribes had settled down at Khaibar at a distance of about eighty miles from Medina. "Khaibar" means: "fortified place". It was a Jewish stronghold comprised of seven fortresses: Naaim, Qamus (on a hill of the same name), Katiba, Shiqu, Natat, Watih and Sulalim, of which Qamus was the most fortified.

These tribes were instigating other tribes to join them in a conclusive assault upon the Muslims. The Battle of Ahzab was the first attempt in which the Jews had participated for the siege of the Muslims. The reverses they had suffered had not deterred them. Their chief, Usir ibn Razam, collected all the Jewish tribes and solicited the aid of Ghatfan for a final showdown. To demonstrate their strength, Ghatfan sent a posse, which captured twenty camels of the Prophet after killing their herdsman and capturing his wife.

The news of the preparation of the Jews was reaching Medina frequently. At last, the Holy Prophet

decided to crush them before they could destroy the Muslims. It was the "near victory" foretold in the Sura of "Victory" revealed just after the truce of Hudaibiyah:

Indeed God was well pleased with the Believers when they swore allegiance to thee under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility on them and rewarded them with a near victory. **(Qur'an, 48:18)**

By the middle of Muharram, 7 A.H., the Holy Prophet marched on Khaibar with 1,400 persons. In about seven days, six of the Jewish fortresses were overrun by the Muslims. Then Qamus was besieged. Abul Fida says the following in his book of history: (*Tarikhu 'l-mukhtasar fi Akhbari 'l-basha*):

In those days, the Prophet sometimes used to suffer from migraine. As a matter of chance, on the day he reached Khaibar, he suffered from the same. Abu Bakr, therefore, took the banner and went out to fight but returned unsuccessful. Then Umar took the standard and fought hard, more than his predecessor, but returned equally unsuccessful. When the Prophet came to know of these reversals, he said, "By Allah, tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger and whom Allah and His Messenger love, one who is constant in onslaught and does not flee, one who will stand firm and will not return till victory is achieved."

Having heard this, both the Immigrants and the Helpers aspired for the flag. When the day dawned, having said the morning prayer, the Prophet came and stood among his companions. Then he called for the banner. At that moment, every companion was engrossed in the hope and desire of getting the flag, while the Prophet called for 'Ali who was suffering from red eyes. The Prophet took some of his own saliva on his finger and applied it to 'Ali's eyes. The eyes were at once cured and the Prophet handed over the standard to him.

Shaikh 'Abdul-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlavi (traditionist) writes in his *Madarijun-Nubuwwah* as follows:

"Then 'Ali started with the flag in his hand and, reaching under the fort of Qamus, planted the standard on a rock. A Rabbi who was watching from the fort asked, 'O standard-bearer! Who are you?' 'Ali replied, 'I am 'Ali son of Abu Talib.' The Rabbi called unto his people, 'By the Torah, you will be defeated! This man will not go back without winning the battle.'"

The author *of Madarijun-Nubuwwah,* states the following:

"Perhaps that Jew was well informed of 'Ali's valor and had seen his praises in the Torah."

He further states in his afore-mentioned book:

"Harith, brother of Marhab, first sallied forth from the fort with a huge spear whose point weighed about 3 mounds (a measure of weight, varying from a few lb. to 84 lb. according to the custom of the area). In his immediate attack, he killed a number of Muslim veterans. Then 'Ali proceeded towards him and dispatched him to hell. in one stroke. When Marhab was informed of his brother's plight, he rushed out of the fort accompanied by some of the bravest soldiers from the Khaibar garrison to avenge his brother's death. It is said that Marhab was the strongest, tallest, and the most fierce among the warriors of Khaibar and that none equalled him in his might.

That day, he was armed twice over, wearing double armor with two swords dangling by his sides. He was also wearing two turbans with a helmet over and above. He marched ahead in the battlefield singing about his own valor. Nobody among the Muslims dared to fight him in the battlefield. 'Ali, therefore, darted out, reciting about his own valiance in response to Marhab's. Taking the initiative, Marhab attacked 'Ali with his sword.

But 'Ali avoided the blow and rendered with Dhul-Fiqar such a forceful blow on Marhab's head that it cut through the latter's helmet, the double turban, the head, till it reached the man's throat. According to some narratives, it is said that he was cut up to his thigh, in others that it tore him into two parts upon the saddle. Marhab took his way to hell in two pieces. Then the Muslims under the command of 'Ali began fighting the Jews.

'Ali himself killed seven generals of the Jewish forces everyone of whom was considered to be most valiant. After these had been killed, the remnants of the Jewish troops ran helter-skelter towards their fort. 'Ali followed them in hot pursuit. In this rush, one Jew delivered a blow to 'Ali's hand wherein he carried his shield. The shield fell down. Another Jew picked it up and made good with his booty. This infuriated 'Ali, who was now strengthened with such a spiritual force and divine strength that he jumped across the moat and came straight to the door of the iron gate. He dislodged it from its hinges, held it up as a shield, and resumed fighting."

According to Ibn Hisham's *Sirat,* and according to *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil* and Abul Fida's *Tarikh,* Abu Rafi' is cited saying:

"When the Prophet gave the flag to 'Ali and bade him fight the forces of Khaibar, we, too, accompanied him. When 'Ali was a short distance from the fort, fighting all along, a Jew struck a blow on his hand with such a force that the shield 'Ali was holding fell down. 'Ali at once pulled out a part of the gate of Khaibar, held it up as a shield and fought till Allah granted him a clear victory. Once the fighting was over, he threw it away. It was so heavy that eight men from among us could hardly turn it over from one side to the other."

An agreement was reached with the Jews of Khaibar. Their lands and movable property were left in their hands. They were allowed to practice their religion freely. In return for the protection they would receive,

they were required to pay the Muslims half the produce of their lands. The Prophet maintained the right to turn them out of their lands whenever he so decided. The battle of Khaibar is important as it put an end to the Jewish resistance and, for the first time, a non-Muslim people were made "Protected Persons" of the Muslim commonwealth.

On the same day, Ja.'far ibn Abi Talib returned from Ethiopia. The Holy Prophet said:

"I do not know on which blessing of Allah I should thank Him more: on the victory of Khaibar or on the return of Jaf'ar!"

Fadak

The Holy Prophet then sent an expedition with 'Ali ibn Abi Talib to a Jewish tribe living in Fadak. Without any battle, they agreed to the same terms as the people of Khaibar had.

The income from Khaibar was for all Muslims in general, whereas the income from Fadak was exclusively for the Prophet because it was taken without any use of force. Jalaluddin al-Suyuti states in *Ad-Durr al-Manthur* on the authority of Bazaar, Abu Yaala and Ibn Abi Hatim who have taken the tradition from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri that when the verse: *Wa aati dhal-Qurba Haqqahu* (Qur'an, Chap. 17, V. 26), ("and give thy kinsfolk their dues") was revealed, the Prophet gave the property of Fadak as a gift to Fatimah. Ibn 'Abbas has narrated that:

"When the verse *And give thy kinsfolk their dues'* was revealed, the Prophet assigned the Fadak property to Fatimah."

A Visit to Mecca

According to the terms of the treaty with the Meccans, the Muslims could visit Mecca the next year. Towards the end of the seventh year of Hijra (March 629 C.E.) the Prophet, accompanied by about two thousand Muslims, proceeded to Mecca to make the lesser pitgrimage (the *'umrah*). The Quraish left their houses and watched the Muslims from their tents pitched on the heights- of the surrounding hills. After three days' sojourn, the Muslims retired strictly in accordance with the terms of the treaty.

The Battle of Mu'ta

It has already been mentioned that the envoy sent to the Ghassanid prince of Busra had been killed en route at the hands of Shurahbil, a feudatory of the Byzantine emperor. In order to exact reparations, the Prophet, on his return to Medina after the pilgrimage, sent a force of 3,000 men with an order to go to

the place where the envoy (Harith ibn 'Umayr al-Azdi) had been killed.

The Holy Prophet gave to Zaid ibn Harithah the command of the army, saying, "If Zaid is killed, then Jatar ibn Abi Talib will be the commander, and if he, too, is killed, then 'Abdullah ibn Rawahah will command the army. And if he is killed, then the Muslims should select someone as their commander."

Hearing it, a Jew said: "If he is a true Prophet, none of these three will remain alive." Before dispatching this expedition, he instructed them as follows:

- Many servants of God will be busy worshipping Him in their places of worship (churches). Do not touch them.

- Do not lift your hand against any woman (to strike her).

- Do not kill any child or minor boy.

- Do not kill any old person.

- Do not destroy any green tree.

These instructions imparted in an age when hardly any scruples were exercised during bloody engagements indicate the depth of the Prophet's compassion and the efforts he was exerting to effect reforms in all walks of life.

The Muslim force marched under the command of Zaid ibn Harithah to Mu'ta in Syria. In order to meet it, the Syrians had raised a huge army. Although far outnumbered, the Muslim force gave a heroic account of its valor, but the disparity in number was too great. When its commander, Zaid, was slain, the command was taken over by Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, a cousin of the Holy Prophet. He, too, was killed and 'Abdullah ibn Rawahah, took the command. When, as prophesied by the Holy Prophet, he, too, was martyred, the command went to Khalid ibn al-Walid who was able to bring about a successful retreat.

The Holy Prophet was much grieved by the death of Zaid and Ja'far. About Ja'far, whose hands were both severed before he fell down, the Holy Prophet said that Allah had given him two wings of emerald in place of his arms whereby he flies in the Garden with the angels. That is why Ja'far is known as at-Tayyar (the flyer).

The Fall of Mecca

One of the conditions of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah was that the Quraish would not fight against any ally of the Muslims, nor should the Muslims fight against any ally of the Quraish. In simple language, the clause of 10-years' cease-fire included the allies as well as the principals.

During the month of Ramadhan of 8 A.H., the Banu Khuza'ah, an ally of the Muslims, were attacked by Banu Bakr and their allies, the Quraish. By virtue of their alliance with the Muslims, the Banu Khuza'ah sought the aid and protection of the Prophet. The Prophet sent an emissary to the Quraish to persuade them to accept any of the following terms:

Reparations should be paid for the massacred people of Banu Khuza'ah, or The Quraish should break their alliance with Banu Bakr, or The treaty of Hudaibiyah should be abrogated.

The Quraish accepted the last alternative. The time had come to free the citadel of Islam from idolatry and to end the reign of oppression in Mecca. The Prophet marched with ten thousand men on the 10th of the month of Ramadhan and camped a short distance from Mecca. The Meccans sent a few scouts, including Abu Sufyan, to find out the strength of the Muslim army. Abu Sufyan was seen by 'Abbas, uncle of the Holy Prophet, who took him to the Holy Prophet.

The Prophet, in honor of the recommendation made by his uncle, offered protection to Abu Sufyan. Then the Prophet said, "Isn't it time for you to know the creed: *La ilaha illa-Allah?!"* Abu Sufyan replied, "Why not?" Then the Prophet further asked him, "And is it not the time for you to confirm that I am the Messenger of Allah?!" Abu Sufyan said, "I have still some doubt about it." At this response, 'Abbas rebuked Abu Sufyan: "Fie upon you, fellow! Confirm his prophethood or you will be killed!" So Abu Sufyan recited both declarations of the creeds of confirmation, and with him Hakim ibn Hizam and Budail ibn Warqa' also accepted the Islamic creed.

Abul-Fida writes the following in his *Tarikh:*

"Then the Prophet asked 'Abbas to take Abu Sufyan round the valley of Mazeeq and to show him the army of Islam. 'Abbas said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Abu Sufyan is a boaster! Perhaps you should give him some distinctive order so that he may have a chance to boast about it among the Quraish.' The Prophet said, 'Well, then, whoever seeks refuge in Abu Sufyan's house shall be given protection. And also he who seeks refuge in the Sacred Mosque and in the house of Hakim Bin Hizam or shuts the door of his house shall be given protection'.

'Abbas further says, 'Then I took Abu Sufyan for a review of the Islamic army. At Abu Sufyan's request, I pointed out to the eminent people from every clan who were present in the Islamic regiments. In the

meantime, the Prophet passed by his army, which was clad in green uniforms. Abu Sufyan cried out `O 'Abbas! Verily your nephew has acquired quite a kingdom!' 'Abbas said to him, 'Woe unto thee! This is no kingship! It is prophethood!"

Apart from a slight resistance offered by 'Ikrimah and Safwan, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) entered Mecca almost unopposed. It happened on a Friday, the 20th of the month of Ramadhan, 8 A.H.

The city which had scoffed and jeered at Muhammad's prophetic mission, ruthlessly persecuted him and his disciples and ultimately driven his disciples away, had created all manner of obstacles in the propagation of the faith and had waged war upon war on the Muslims. This same city now lay at his feet. At this moment of triumph, he could have done anything he wished with the city and the citizens, but he had not come to the world to cause misery or bloodshed but as a benefactor of mankind, to proclaim the message of God and to guide erring humanity to the righteous course: to the worship of the One and Only God.

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud says:

"Entering Masjidul-Haram, the Holy Prophet started breaking and demolishing the idols. There were three hundred and sixty idols fixed in the walls and on the roof of the Ka'bah with lead or tin. Any idol near which the Prophet went and towards which he pointed his cane, saying:

Right has come and falsehood has vanished; verily falsehood is destined to vanish **(Qur'an, 17:81)**

The idol fell headlong on the ground without anyone touching it. Lastly, there remained an idol of Banu Khuza'ah on the rooftop of the Ka'bah. It was made of polished brass. The Prophet ordered 'Ali to climb on his shoulders, which 'Ali did, throwing that last idol down which shattered into pieces on impact."

Then he ordered Bilal, the Ethiopian, to go on the rooftop of the Ka'bah to call the *adhan.* The wordings of the *adhan,* coupled with the fact that it was called by a freed Negro slave, caused much heartache among the Quraishites. After clearing the Ka'bah, the first House of God built by Ibrahim (a.s.), of all the symbols of idolatry, he assembled the Quraish and delivered the following sermon to them:

"There is no god but Allah. He has no partners. He has fulfilled His promise and helped His slave and defeated all coalitions (allied) against him. All authority, revenge and blood reparations are under my feet. The guardianship of the Ka'bah and the arrangements for the supply of water to pilgrims are exempt. O! You Quraish! The arrogance of the heathen days and all pride of ancestry God has wiped out. All mankind descended from Adam, and Adam was made of clay."

He then recited the following verse of the Qur'an:

O people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may identify one another. Surely the most honorable ofyou with Allah is the one among you who is most pious; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware. (**Qur'an, 49:13**)

Having dwelt upon the equality and brotherhood of mankind and preached the Unity and the Omnipotence of God, he inquired from the Quraish: "Descendants of Quraish! How do you think I should act towards you?" "With kindness and pity, gracious brother and nephew," beseeched they.

The Prophet magnanimously declared:

"I shall speak to you as Yusuf spoke unto his brothers: ***'There is no reproach against you today; God will forgive. He is the most Merciful and the most Compassionate.'"*** (**Qur'an,12:92**)

Then he said to them:"Go; you are free!" Mecca lay conquered but not a single house was plundered, nor any woman insulted. Cruelties, insults and oppression perpetrated during a long period of twenty-one years were now forgiven. The Muhajirun were asked even to forego their houses and properties, which on their migration to Medina had been occupied by the Meccans. Through all the annals of history, there have seldom been any conquests like this.

The result of this magnanimity and' compassion was that those very die-hards who had relentlessly opposed the Prophet and refused to listen to the Divine message converged around him in their multitudes and accepted Islam. The glad tidings given by God about the peace of Hudaybiyah came true and His injunction had been obeyed:,

When there comes assistance from Allah and victory, and when you see men entering the religion of Allah in companies, then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and implore His forgiveness; surely He is oft-returning (***to mercy***). (**Qur'an, Ch. 110**)

Once the Meccans submitted to the faith, disciples were sent out to all neighboring tribes to invite them, with peace and good will, to embrace Islam. Many tribes responded positively to the call. However, there was one tragic incident, which must be mentioned. Khalid ibn al-Walid (who had accepted Islam a few months before the fall of who had already accepted

Mecca) was sent to Banu Khuzaimah Islam. When they learned of Khalid's arrival, they came out cautiously armed. Khalid asked them who they were and in reply he was informed: "They are Muslims following the teaching of Muhammed; they pray in the recognized form of prayer, have built a mosque, recite the *adhan* and the *iqamah* and gather together on Fridays for prayers." Khalid then asked them

why they had come out to meet him armed.

They said that they were on inimical terms with a fellow Arab clan and mistook Khalid's men for their enemies. But Khalid did not accept their explanation and asked them to yield their arms. They at one yielded. Khalid then ordered his companions to tie their hands behind their shoulders, then he placed them in the custody of his comrades. Early next morning, he ordered that the custodian of each of the prisoner should himself kill that prisoner. Thus, these innocent Muslims were killed then and there.

Another version of this incident says that when Banu Khuzaimah submitted their arms at the order of Khalid, he himself unsheathed his sword and killed one hundred men of that clan. Someone from Banu Khuzaimah informed the Prophet about this tyranny. The Prophet was angered and in dismay thrice repeated, "O Lord! I deplore Khalid's action!"

Abul-Fida adds: "Then the Prophet sent 'Ali with gold to Banu Khuzaimah and ordered that the blood money of the victims and compensation for their lost properties should be paid with the same. 'Ali did as he was bidden."

The Battle of Hunain

The violent tribes of Hawazin and Thaqif joined hands. Collecting a large force, they marched upon the Muslims. In order to enable them to pursue their hostility to the bitter end and to inspire their own ranks to desperate deeds, they had brought their families with them. On the 6th of Shawwal, a pitched battle was fought at Hunain, about ten miles from Mecca. The Hawazin and Thaqif had taken up vantage positions. They almost took the Muslims by surprise, attacking them in the early hours of the morning. They fought in a spirit of desperation. The Muslims first lost ground and their defeat seemed imminent.

At that time, a cousin of the Holy Prophet named Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith was holding the bridle of the Prophet's horse. As the Prophet was witnessing his people's retreat, he called out to them, "Where are you rmming off to?!" But nobody was paying any attention to him. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) then told his uncle 'Abbas to call the Muslims back. 'Abbas wondered as to how his voice would reach the fleeing herd.

The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said that Allah would cause his voice to reach them, no matter how far they might have gone. 'Abbas called them in these words as the Prophet had taught him: "O group of the Helpers! O people of the tree of Samrah!" Those who proved to be firm in the battle of Hunain include 'Abbas, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abu Sufyan ibn alHarith, 'Aqil ibn Abi Talib, 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam and Usamah ibn Zaid.

Al-Halabi remarks in Al-Sira alHalabiyya that only four persons remained with the Holy Prophet, three of whom were Hashimites, i.e., 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, 'Abbas and Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith, and one non-

Hashimite, i.e., 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud.

Abul-Fida makes another point. He says:

"When the Muslims fled, the secret malice which the people of Mecca entertained against the Muslims was exposed. Abu Sufyan ibn Harb gleefully cried out, 'They will not stop until they reach the seashore!"

However, after the call of 'Abbas, at last the deserters returned and ultimately the Hawazin and Thaqif were totally routed. The Thaqif took refuge in the city of Ta'if but the families of the Hawazin, with all their flocks and herds, fell into the hands of the Muslims. Ta'if was besieged, but the siege was lifted a day later. The Hawazin approached the Prophet and beseeched him to restore their families to them.

The Prophet answered them that he could not compel his army to forego all the fruits of victory and that if they wanted their families back, they would have to forego their worldly goods. To this, the Hawazin consented. On the next day, on the advice of the Holy Prophet, they approached the Prophet and repeated their request. The Prophet replied, "My own share of the captives, and that of the children of 'Abdul-Muttalib, I give back to you at once." The army followed suit, and six thousand people were set free. The Hawazin were so overwhelmed by this generosity that many of them accepted Islam there and then.

The spoils of the war, which consisted of 24,000 camels, 40,000 goats, and a considerable quantity of silver, were distributed among the army. In making the distribution, the newly converted Muslims as well as many non-Muslims of Mecca, known in history as "mu'allafatul qulub" (those who were helped in order to win their hearts) were given disproportionately larger shares. Some Ansar considered this as an act of partiality, and their discontent was reported to the Prophet. It was also reported that Ansar feared that now that Mecca was conquered, the Holy Prophet would return to it and migrate from Medina. The Holy Prophet delivered a lecture to them wherein he said:

"O Ansar! I have learned about your discourse. When I came to you, you were wandering in the dark, and the Lord gave you the right direction. You were suffering, and He made you happy. You were enemies of one another, and He filled your hearts with brotherly love and concord. Was it not so, tell me?"

"Indeed, it is even as you say," was the reply: "Lord and to His Prophet belong the benevolence and the grace."

"Nay, by the Lord," continued the Prophet, "but you might have answered (my questions), and answered truly, for I would have testified to its truth myself 'You came to us rejected as an impostor, and we believed in you; you came as a helpless fugitive and we assisted you; you were poor and outcast, and

we gave you asylum, comfortless and we solaced you. 'O Ansar! Why do you disturb your hearts because of the things of this life? Are ye not satisfied that others should return with the flocks and the camels, while you go back to your homes with me in your midst? By Him Who holds my life in His hands, I shall never abandon you. If all mankind went one way and the Ansar went another, surely I would join the Ansar. The Lord be favorable to them, and bless them, and their children, and their children's children!"

At these words, say the chroniclers, they all wept until tears ran down their beards. And they all cried with one voice, "Yes, Prophet of God, we are well satisfied with our share." (meaning the presence of Holy Prophet in Medina). Thereupon they retired happy and contented. Muhammad soon after returned to Medina.

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