

THE NEW SOCIETY IN MADINA

After a long and tiring Journey, Muhammad (pbuh) and his close companion Abu Bakr had safely arrived in Quba. The Makkans had tried their best to prevent Muhammad (pbuh) from performing this Hijra but they had failed miserably. They had tried all their tactics and plans to stop the Prophet (pbuh) from preaching Islam but they had failed miserably. They had tried their best to stop the spread of Islam but their efforts had ended in failure.

When the Prophet (pbuh) arrived in Quba there were many scenes of joy and celebration. The people welcomed Muhammad (pbuh) with open arms. The air was filled with shouts of the Takbir -Allahu Akbar (Allah is great) and the singing of the children. After the people had met the prophet (pbuh), they laid the foundations of the new society by building the first Masjid in Quba.

Muhammad (pbuh) with his own hands helped to build this new mosque. The mosques in those days were not as big and well decorated as they are today. They did not have the beautiful minarets and domes, which makes the Masjids distinct from other buildings. The Masjid was a simple building with a palm leaf roof.

Muhammad spent a few days at Quba before heading for Yathrib. On Friday morning, he set off for Yathrib with a group of his companions. When it was time for Jummah, they prayed it in a valley close to Yathrib. Later on that afternoon they arrived in Madina (which was the new name of Yathrib).

The scenes in Madina were similar to Quba but a much larger community welcomed the Prophet (pbuh). They celebrated the arrival of the prophet (pbuh) by lining the streets of Madina. The men of Madina accompanied the prophet (pbuh) dressed in their armour and armed with their swords and spears. This signified the promise made to Muhammad (pbuh) that they would protect him; this was a demonstration of their intention to fulfil this promise.

Some of the people were competing with each other to invite the prophet (pbuh) to their homes. Some tried to take the reigns of his camel to lead it towards their own home. The Prophet (pbuh) stopped the people and said let the camel go on its own accord. The camel was commanded by Allah and started to wander through the streets of Madina.

The camel travelled through Madina with the crowds of people following it. The

camel finally stopped on a plot of land belonging to two orphans. A deal was negotiated and a price agreed for the land, even though the guardians of the land wanted to gift it to the Prophet (pbuh). The land was purchased and a Masjid was built on that very site. The Prophet (pbuh) himself was involved in the construction of the Masjid. He carried the materials and helped to erect the Masjid.

Next to the Masjid, they constructed some living quarters for the prophet's wives and also an area was set-aside for any homeless and destitute people. In those days, the Muslims used to face Jerusalem for their prayers so the Qibla was set in that direction.

Until his living quarters were ready, the prophet (pbuh) had stayed as a guest in Abu Ayub's house. Abu Ayub lived adjacent to the site of the Masjid and was actually related to Muhammad (pbuh) from his mother's side. Abu Ayub moved to the upper story of his house with his family during those few days. Abu Ayub was amongst the people who made the pledge with Muhammad (pbuh) in Aqabah.

With the construction of the Masjid, the Azan (call to the prayer) was also instituted. There was a bit of discussion about how to call the people to prayer. One of the companions, Abdullah bin Zayd, had a dream during which he was shown the best way to call the people to prayer. He related the dream to the Prophet (pbuh) who said that it was a true dream. Another Sahabah, had the same dream so it was decided that this would be the universal call to the prayers.

Abdullah bin Zayd taught the words of the Azan to Bilal just as he had heard in the dream. Bilal became the first Mu'azin, the caller to prayer, in Islam. From that day onwards, the azan has been used all over the world call the faithful to the worship of their Lord in Salah. The Azan is said five times a day in every mosque.

There were other immediate problems that needed to be resolved. People would come to the prophet (pbuh) in the masjid Nabwi that had now been completed. The prophet (pbuh) would listen to their problems and advise them on the best solutions. Whenever there was a dispute amongst the inhabitants of Madina, they would always turn to the prophet (pbuh) for guidance and advice.

Another major issue the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) would need to deal with was the large number of Muslims who had emigrated to Madina. Many of them had left everything behind, their only belongings were the clothes they were wearing. The

Muslims of Madina were not very wealthy and the size of the community had swelled with these new Muslims. The welfare of these Muslims, who were known as the Muhajireen (the people who made Hijra), had to be looked after by the Ansar (the helpers of Madina).

The prophet (pbuh) proposed that each of the Muhajir would be paired with the Ansar. Each would become a brother to the other thus sharing food, shelter and wealth with each other. Many of the Muslims of Makkah had left empty handed and were indeed destitute, without shelter, food or family.

Without any hesitation, the Ansar embraced the Prophet's instructions and welcomed their new brothers. They knew Allah sent the prophet (pbuh) with true guidance so they adhered to his every command. This became a hallmark of the Ansar. The tribal differences and pride that had existed amongst the people was removed and they became true brothers. They helped and supported each other and through this unity the community thrived.

The Muslims shared everything with each other. They became brothers in faith and whatever little they had for sustenance was shared between them. With these solid foundations of love and brotherhood, the deen of Islam and the welfare of the community flourished.

The Muslim community was new and hence a little fragile and even vulnerable. However, their hearts were forged together with Iman and brotherly love that gave them immense strength. There were many new problems which were beginning to appear and would take time and patience to fully resolve.

The other large group that co-existed in Madina was the Jews. A treaty was agreed with them that allowed everyone complete freedom to worship their own deen. They were equal citizens and nothing would be imposed upon them. They would unite to defend Madina and their advice and opinions would be listened to, as long as it did not cross the boundaries of justice and truth. The Jews readily accepted this agreement even though some of them had their reservations about many matters.

Some of the Jews accepted Muhammad and whole-heartedly followed Islam. However, a large number of them were now enemies of Islam even though they knew that Muhammad (pbuh) was a true prophet! They could not accept the fact that Muhammad (pbuh) was from the children of Ismael and not from the

descendents of Ishaq. They held many evil intentions in their hearts.

The Jews had enjoyed a privileged position in Madina because of the past tribal warfare between the Aws and Khazraj. Both these tribes had been weakened because of the years of fighting and bloodshed. They needed to borrow money from the Jews to continue the war that pushed them into debt and poverty. This meant that the Arab tribes were weakened because of the fighting but at the same time were financially crippled.

The Jews were also annoyed at the new unity and brotherhood amongst the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. They were looking at ways to cook up trouble between them hence breaking the unity of the Muslims. They continued to exploit past differences to inflame hatred and misunderstandings between them.

In one instance, they nearly succeeded in causing a new war between the Khazraj and Aws. They got a youth to recite past poetry that highlighted the strength of each tribe, promoting enmity between these tribes. The swords were drawn and ready for war until Muhammad (pbuh) intervened and ended this madness. He reminded them of the favours Allah had given them by guiding them to the truth. He reminded them that they were now brothers and were united in Islam. When the prophet (pbuh) finished, they became very remorseful about the fighting and asked each other for forgiveness. They shed many tears and embraced each other, vowing never to make this error again.

The Quraish hadn't finished their bidding either. Even now they were consulting Abdullah bin Ubai, the former chief of the tribes. They were encouraging him to fight against the Muslims in Madina. Abdullah bin Ubai started propagating this idea of fighting the Muslims and was amassing an army to put an end to this new power in Madina.

How much havoc would these different groups cause in toppling the Muslims in Madina? Would the Makkans cause civil war in Madina by calling on past favours and new promises? Would the Muslim community be able to survive in this new environment, away from their wealth and trade in Makkah?

THE BUILD UP TO BADR

The Makkans had been determined to finish off Islam from the earliest days. However, the Muslim community had escaped their grasp by migrating to safety in

Madina. In Madina, they were safe from the persecutions and abuse they had suffered at the hands of the Makkans. They also had some protection offered by local tribes of Madina who had now accepted Islam. The two main tribes of Madina were the Aws and the Khazraj.

The Makkans still tried to attack the Muslims in Madina by instigating fighting and hatred against them. They exploited past relationships with the different tribes and groups who stayed in that area. The previous Madinan leader, Abdullah bin Ubai, had already got a small army together to attack the Muslims. He was bitter because there was a power shift towards Muhammad (pbuh), the new spiritual leader of the Muslim community. Before Muhammad (pbuh) came, Abdullah bin Ubai had been an important and influential figure within the community.

When the prophet (pbuh) heard about a new threat from this army, he quickly headed out with some of the Sahabah to meet them. The situation was quickly pacified when the prophet (pbuh) intervened and spoke to them. He explained to these pagan tribes that the Makkans had no control over them anymore and they should stop their aggression. The small army of non-believers was disbanded and they soon headed back home.

There was still a lot of hostility and evil plotting against the Muslims and the safety of the prophet (pbuh) was compromised, even in Madina. The command was given in the Quran for the Muslims to fight back and defend themselves against all these hostile elements. Sometimes, the Sahabah would voluntarily guard the prophet's house, in case the Makkans tried anything.

The Muslim community began to grow and prosper in Madina. The prophet (pbuh) sent out small groups of Muslims to the different tribes around Madina. These groups made some agreements with the tribes as they had done with the Jews of Madina. They managed to develop good relationships with these tribes and to also make some agreements. They ensured mutual safety and cooperation between both parties leading to peace and prosperity.

The Muslims would also try to intercept the Makkan caravans who used the caravan

routes passing close to Madina. This in particular would aggravate the Makkans who were relying on the trade route for their wealth and status. However, usually there was little or no confrontation between the Muslims and the Makkans.

In one incident, the prophet (pbuh) sent out a small group of Muslims to get information about the caravan route between Taif and Makkah. This small group of Muslims were despatched from Madina and when they arrived at Naklah, they camped where the caravan was expected to pass. However, to their amazement, the caravan came and camped very close to where they were hiding.

This small group of Muslims were in turmoil about the situation. A great opportunity had developed to attack the caravan but the prophet (pbuh) had told them to gather information about the caravan but did not say anything about attacking it. The caravan included some of the Makkans who were hostile towards the Muslims in the past. This was also in the sacred months where all forms of fighting were forbidden. In the past, there had been the odd battles like the Fijar war, which was fought through these months.

The Muslims did not know what to do so they remained in hiding. Finally, they decided to seize the opportunity by attacking the caravan. There was a small skirmish where one of the Makkans was killed. The Muslims managed to capture the caravan with all its goods and then escorted it to Madina. They also took the captured prisoners to Madina with them.

In Madina, they gave one fifth of the booty to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and divided the rest amongst themselves. The prophet (pbuh) refused their offer and instead was angry with them because they had not followed his clear orders. Instead they had attacked the caravan and had also fought in the holy months.

The Makkans were also angry saying the Muslims had broken the tradition by fighting in the sacred months. They said the Muslims themselves had violated the law that had been followed since the time of Ibrahim (as). They began to tell all the Arabian tribes about this incident and told them that they would get even with the Muslims whenever the opportunity arose.

The Makkans had attacked and abused the Muslims for many years and had taken their wealth, businesses and homes in Makkah. The amount of wealth they confiscated from the Muslims far outweighed any material gain the Muslims would get from attacking the caravans. The Makkans had committed many horrendous crimes against the Muslims and had been hardhearted and inhumane with their treatment of the Muslims. Many of these outrages had taken place in the holy months!

The prisoners were released from captivity and allowed to return to their families. Blood money was paid to the family of the Makkan killed in the battle. This situation had caused a few problems and increased the tension within the community. However, this had simply been a misunderstanding and the situation was laid to rest when an ayah of the Qu'ran came down.

There was another caravan that was going to pass between Madina and the Red Sea. This caravan would be loaded with goods that had been purchased in Syria. The caravan had already passed this way on its way to Syria so was expected back very soon. The caravan had a special significance because it was run by one of the leaders of Makkah, Abu Sufyan. It was carrying the wealth and goods of the Makkans. A hundred well-armed men also heavily guarded the caravan.

The Prophet (pbuh) decided that this caravan should be intercepted and all its goods confiscated. He sent out some scouts who watched the caravan route, keeping an eye out for the caravan. When the caravan was sighted, they would inform the prophet (pbuh) and he would then send out a small army of Muslims to intercept it.

There were many factors in the success of this mission. The first was that the details of the plan had to be kept a secret. If the plan leaked out, the caravan would take a different route making it difficult for the Muslims to intercept it. The information about the movement of the caravan also had to be very precise so that it could be intercepted. Another factor that could affect the success of this

mission was the different people in Madina who were against the Muslims. They did not want the Muslims to succeed in anything and were always looking at ways they could bring down Islam. Despite these factors, the prophet (pbuh) decided to continue with the plan.

About this time, the prophet's daughter, Rukhiya, the wife of Uthman bin Affan, was very ill. She had been suffering for some time and was now very ill and weak. The prophet (pbuh) was very concerned for her well-being and remained by her side for much of her illness. The prophet (pbuh) asked Uthman to remain behind and look after his daughter whilst he accompanied the army to take the caravan.

Finally, the caravan was sighted and the scouts headed back to Madina. The prophet (pbuh) had already left with a group of three hundred or so sahabah. They were making a plan to intercept the caravan at a certain point near Badr. This army was not well armed and they also lacked transport - a camel was shared between four or five people. Even though the details of the plan were kept secret, information about the movements and intentions of the Muslims leaked out to the caravan.

Abu Sufyan received information that Muhammad (pbuh) had despatched an army to intercept the caravan. Abu Sufyan was very sly and had a plan up his sleeve. He sent Damdam, from the Ghifari tribe, with a message for the Makkans, asking them to send an army to protect the caravan. He then changed his route and speeded up so that he could avoid the Muslim army.

When Damdam arrived in Makkah, he ripped his clothes and wounded his own camel causing it to bleed. He then went to the Ka'bah, creating a dramatic scene. He announced to the Makkans to hurry with an army to protect the caravan. He claimed that Muhammad(pbu) was about to capture the caravan. He encouraged them to quickly organise their weapons and move out towards the Muslims.

The Makkans had invested a lot of their wealth in this caravan so they quickly gathered an army of some thirteen hundred soldiers - fully armed and ready for combat. This was the opportunity they were waiting for so they quickly started the

march towards the Muslims. They could save the caravan and also fight the Muslims with whom they had a score to settle.

Abu Sufyan and his caravan had managed to escape from the Muslims. He sent another message to the Makkans that the caravan was safe so they can all return back to Makkah. When the Makkan Army got the message, some of them disbanded and returned to Makkah.

However, some Makkans were ready to fight the Muslims and did not want to lose this opportunity. They decided to continue their march to Badr and encouraged everyone else to continue with the mission. In Badr they would enjoy themselves, have a feast and return back to Makkah after a few days of enjoyment. This way the Arabs would know that the Makkans were still in control of their territory. If they encountered the Muslims, they would fight them and easily beat them with their superior weaponry and numbers.

The Muslims were camping near Badr. The news reached them that a well-equipped Makkan army containing some of their finest soldiers was close by, ready to fight them. They were also informed that the caravan had evaded them and was on its way to Makkah through a different route.

The Prophet (pbuh) consulted the Sahabah. He told them of the situation, asking their advice and opinions. Some of the Sahabah replied that they were ready to either attack the caravan or to fight the Makkan Army. They would stand shoulder to shoulder with the prophet (pbuh) and follow whatever he commanded. The Prophet (pbuh) repeated this question because he had only received replies from the Muhajirun and not from the Ansar.

Sa'd bin Mu'adh from the Ansar spoke; he confirmed that Allah had sent Muhammad (pbuh) with the truth. He said that they would be prepared to fight with the Makkans and would not stay behind or stand back from any of the Prophets commands. They said that they were ready to lay down their lives for the noble cause of Islam. They would not hesitate to follow any of Allah's commands and would support any decision the Prophet (pbuh) made.

The scene was thus set for a massive confrontation between the Muslims and the Makkans. The Muslims were not well equipped with weapons - some of them didn't even have swords or spears. The Makkans on the other hand were a fully equipped army dawning its finest armour and parading its military might as it marched towards Bard. The Makkan Army was more than three times bigger than the Muslim army.

It was inevitable that there would be a confrontation between the small Muslim Army against the might of the Makkans. However, there was much more at stake because Islam had newly been established in Madina. If the Muslims were beaten they would lose the cream of the community. The tribes near Madina would then want to take the opportunity to attack the weakened Muslims community.

The Makkans needed to re-assure everyone that they were still a power in Arabia and this battle would prove their status. They also had a score to settle with the Muslims and wanted to use this opportunity to crush the Muslims and Islam.

Source: Musalla.org