

THE BATTLE AT BADR

The stage for a battle was set with two opposing groups, one on each side. Firstly, the well-equipped and well-armed Makkan army with its superior weaponry and numbers was heading towards Badr. The Muslims were coming from the other side with a much smaller army which had very few weapons and armour. They were only armed with swords and sticks to defend themselves against this daunting goliath of a Makkan force.

After a long and gruelling march, the Muslims arrived first at Badr. The prophet (pbuh) commanded his exhausted men to make camp. Al-Hubab ibn al Mundhir asked the prophet (pbuh) whether it was a command from Allah to camp here. The prophet (pbuh) said that it wasn't a command from Allah but his own choice. Al-Hubab sought permission to advise the prophet (pbuh) and was granted permission immediately.

He advised that it was better to camp at the furthest well which would be the closest to the advancing Makkan Army. There they should gather as much water as possible then cut off the supply from the other wells. This would mean that the Muslim army would have the only water source and was also at a better location to face such a big army.

The prophet (pbuh) followed this advice and the Muslims marched on to the furthest well. It rained lightly which caused the ground to become firmer, helping the small army to move quickly to the new location. The Muslims then created a large pond filled with water and then blocked all the other wells.

Sa'd bin Mu'adh suggested that a tent be setup for the prophet (pbuh), away from the fighting front. This would also provide a means to escape for the Muslims if the Makkans were to overcome them. Sa'd also appointed some companions to guard the tent, as it would be a major target for the Makkans. The Muslims always put their prophet (pbuh) and their beloved deen before their own personal safety.

After setting up camp, the Muslims had a light nap which was a blessing from Allah. They awoke rested, refreshed and well-motivated - ready to face this mighty Makkan army. Scouts were despatched to gather information about the Makkan army which was now approaching Badr. The scouts reported that the Makkan army had over a thousand men - well equipped, with horses, armour and weapons. The scouts also reported that they had been greatly hindered by the light rain. There

were many noble leaders and imminent warriors within this army.

Umair bin Wahab, one of the scouts despatched by the Makkans also reported back and gave details about the Muslim army. He said that it was a small army of three hundred or so men who were poorly armed and protected with only their swords. He also said that his men had checked the rest of the valley and concluded that no reinforcements were on the way.

However, Umair also advised the Makkans that the Muslims would not be taken easily because the men were brave and dedicated with high morale. They would fight to their last man to defend their deen. They advised that a peaceful settlement would be better for both sides. Abu Jahl refused this straight away and instead said that their army would crush the Muslims in the coming battle.

The Makkans gloated over the situation; they had a far larger force than the Muslims. They were also better armed and better prepared for war than the Muslims were. However, even with this in mind, many people in the Makkan army were not happy about fighting the Muslims. The Muslims had not caused them any harm and in fact, the Makkans had been the aggressors by persecuting and oppressing the Muslims for many years.

The prophet (pbuh) always preferred the peaceful solution as this was demonstrated throughout his life but when a conflict was inevitable, the prophet was prepared to take this difficult step. He would plan carefully and take the opinions of his companions about how things should proceed.

Utbah bin Rabi'a didn't want the Makkan army to attack the Muslims either since they had only come to defend their caravan and not to fight a war. The caravan had already reached safety with some clever navigation by Abu Sufyan. Utbah bin Rabi'a suggested that the only bone they had to pick with the Muslims was the death of a Makkan by the hands of some Muslims. He himself would pay the blood money so that the conflict could be averted.

However, Abu Jahl, the great enemy of Islam was also ready for him and anyone else who had second thoughts about fighting. He called them cowards and other names so that they would be reluctant to leave. He used every trick under the sun to keep them there. Abu Jahl had a great hatred for Islam and he knew that this was a great opportunity to finish Islam and the Muslims for good.

The Makkkan army marched forward to face the Muslims. They were confident that they would beat the Muslims. Abu Jahl in his pride and arrogance said that the army of truth will be victorious today. This would prove to be true and that the Makkans would get more than they bargained for from the Muslims.

Both armies faced each other across the sand dunes of Badr. The prophet (pbuh) inspected his own ranks and gave his men encouragement. He reminded them that they had more noble goals of defending the truth than any worldly gain. There was a lot at stake here with the Muslims facing their biggest trial, the future of Islam and the Muslims was in the balance.

The Prophet threw some pebbles or stones in the direction of the Makkkan forces and said, "May confusion seize their faces". The wind carried the dust towards the Makkkan army, causing a sand storm and causing much confusion within their ranks.

The first encounter began when six Makkkan soldiers tried to go for water. They were warriors and did not fear anyone as they arrogantly strode forward. The Muslims were more than a match for them and quickly they were all beaten with the exception of Hakeem bin Hizam who survived and later became a Muslim.

Then three Makkkan soldiers stepped forward, Utbah bin Rabia and two of his family members. They wanted to combat three Muslims. Without hesitation, three brave Muslims stepped forward to fight them. However, the Makkans protested at this because these men were from the Ansar and they wanted to face their own tribesmen.

The prophet (pbuh) commanded three of his beloved companions to step forward to challenge these aggressors and the Ansar returned to their ranks. Ubaidah bin Al-Harith, Ali and Hamzah stepped forward and duelled with the three Makkans. Hamzah and Ali quickly beat their opponents and then helped Ubaidah who was seriously injured in the combat. Hamzah and Ali finished the last man and then helped Ubaidah back to safety. This signalled the beginning of the battle and both armies clashed.

Ubaidah was injured badly with his leg being cut off. The prophet (pbuh) attended to his injured companion but knew that Ubaidah would die from this horrendous injury. He gave him the glad tidings of an abode in Jannah that was awaiting his arrival. Ubaidah became the first martyr (shaheed) in the battle of Badr.

PEACE RESTORED TO MADINA

The victorious Muslims were making the long return journey to Madina. News of the Muslim victory over the mighty Makkans had already reached Madina and the people were looking forward to receiving their heroes. However, certain groups of people refused to believe these facts and instead said the Muslims had been soundly beaten! These groups included the Jews of Madina and the hypocrites. They knew deep down that the Muslims had won but hoped that the news was false.

On the journey to Madina, the war booty was divided amongst the Muslims that had taken part in the battle. A fifth of it was put aside for Allah and His messenger (pbuh). There was still an issue with what should be done with the prisoners who were now accompanying the Muslim army - this issue would be resolved on arrival in Madina.

The Prophet (pbuh) was with the first group of Muslims to arrive at Madina and the thrilled Muslims greeted them with much enthusiasm. This had been no ordinary victory because the Makkans were much superior in number and weaponry. It would have been almost impossible for any army to overcome them let alone this small ill-equipped army.

The return to Madina was a happy occasion. The only sadness came when Uthman bin Affan returned after having performed the funeral prayer and burial of his beloved wife Rukhiya. He had remained behind to nurse his extremely ill wife and had not gone to Badr. The Prophet (pbuh) had also wished that Uthman remain behind and look after Rukhiya who was also one of Muhammad's (pbuh) beloved daughters.

The prisoners followed the next day accompanied by the rest of the Muslim army. The prophet (pbuh) commanded that the prisoners should be well looked after and not mistreated in any way. He told different Muslims to look after the prisoners in their own homes. The prisoners were effectively treated as guests as the Muslims shared with them their food and drink.

Afterwards, one of the Makkans prisoners said that he felt ashamed at times because he was given such good treatment and the food he was given was better than the food the family ate themselves. He recalled how he would eat bread whilst his hosts would be eating only dates.

After the battle of Badr, the Makkans had decided that they would not go to Madina to collect their relatives and would not pay any ransom. They also agreed that they would not mourn the death of the deceased in case the Muslims found out. They felt that the news of mourning would please the Muslims.

Abu Sufyan was effectively the chief of Makkah and he stuck to this rule by not sending anyone to collect his son or paying a ransom. However, Abu Sufyan arrested one of the pilgrims from Madina who was later swapped for his son. This aggression against the pilgrim was against the rules of the pilgrimage, which had been honoured from the time of Ibrahim (as) by everyone.

The rest of Makkans made a journey to Medina to collect their captured family members and pay the ransom for their release. Some of the poor Makkans who could not afford freedom were set free on the condition that they wouldn't get involved in any conspiracy against the Muslims again.

Some of the prisoners were allowed freedom after they had taught ten children to read and write. Being literate was the honour of very few people in Arabia at the time. This deal improved the situation of the children and allowed the prisoners to earn their freedom through this noble act.

One of the prisoners was Abbas, the prophet's uncle. During the journey to Madina, he had been tied up like the other prisoners. The shackles of Abbas were then loosened due to his discomfort at the request of the Prophet (pbuh). The condition of all the prisoners was kept comfortable throughout the journey to Madina.

Abbas later told prophet Muhammad (pbuh) that he was a Muslim now and was

unable to pay any ransom because of poverty. The prophet (pbuh) reminded him of a private incident where Abbas had told Umm al-Fadl (his wife) to bury some money for him. This money would be divided up between his three sons if Abbas had been killed in the battle.

Abbas was shocked that the prophet (pbuh) knew this as the conversation had taken place privately between Abbas and Umm al-Fadl only. At this point Abbas knew that Muhammad (pbuh) was the true messenger of Allah and whole-heartedly accepted Islam.

Abu al-As ibn al-Rabi had also been taken prison by the Muslims. He was the husband of Zaynab, another daughter of the prophet (pbuh). The prophet (pbuh) had held him in esteem because he remained faithfully married to Zaynab when the Makkans had pressurised him to leave her. They had offered Abu al-As marriage to any woman he chose as long as he left Zaynab. In the early days, they wanted to hurt Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in every way possible.

Zaynab sent the ransom for her husband, which included a necklace given to her by her mother Khadija. When the prophet (pbuh) saw this, he recognised it instantly and was greatly saddened. He returned the necklace to Zaynab along with the rest of the money. The Ansars released Abu al-As on the condition set by Muhammad (pbuh) that he sends Zaynab when he returns to Makkah.

Abu al-As was freed and soon returned to Makkah to join his wife. Zaynab made the preparations for the journey to Madina before departing. During the journey to Madina, she was stopped and harassed by the Makkans brandishing spears that caused Zaynab to have a miscarriage. She was taken back to Makkah and a few days later made the journey to Madina in secrecy, accompanied by her brother-in-law, Kinanah and an Ansar.

Many years later, Abu al-As accepted Islam and became a Muslim. He declared his conversion to the Makkans after completing all his unfinished business. He then migrated to Madina to his wife Zaynab. Both Abu al-As and Zaynab continued to

live happily in Madina after that.

Umayr Ibn Wahb and Safwan were sitting together and talking about the grave situation caused by the defeat of the Makkan Army. Umayr said to Safwan that if it wasn't for the fact he was poor; he had a young family to look after and he had many debts to repay, he would have gone to Madina and assassinated the Prophet (pbuh). He said he had the perfect excuse to go to Madina to collect his son. In Madina, whenever he had the opportunity, he would attack the prophet (pbuh).

Safwan said that he would pay all his debts and look after his family if Umayr was to carry out this treacherous deed. In Madina, Umayr would kill the prophet (pbuh) as soon as the first opportunity arose. If Umayr was slain during his mission, Safwan himself would make sure his family was looked after and all his debts were paid.

This dreadful plan was hatched and the two men agreed on this deal. Umayr sharpened his sword that morning and applied some poison to its blade before he made the trip to Madina. As soon as he got to Madina, he went to see the Prophet (pbuh). Umar thought something sinister might be going on so he intercepted Umayr and accompanied him to the mosque.

Both men appeared before the prophet (pbuh) and the prophet asked Umar to leave Umayr alone. The Prophet (pbuh) questioned Umayr and asked him why he had come. Umayr tried to trick the Prophet (pbuh) by saying that he had only come to collect his son. Umayr tried to deceive the prophet (pbuh) by hiding the real motive.

The Prophet (pbuh) then recounted the conversation Umayr had with Safwan in exact detail. He then told him of the real reason why Umayr had come to Madina. Umayr was gob smacked and immediately accepted Islam. He was taught all about Islam from the Muslims so that he could follow Islam fully and adhere to its noble principles. Umayr became a just and pious Muslim

Umayr then requested permission to return to Makkah where he could speak to his

people about Islam in that hostile environment. The prophet (pbuh) gave him permission and Umayr began preaching in Makkah. People did not like it but a few of them accepted Islam and became Muslims. Umayr had been hostile towards Islam in the past and this courageous act was a way of putting some of those wrongs to right.

Thus the problem with all the prisoners was resolved with all of them being returned to their families and tribes or were set free by the noble Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This was the first time people had witnessed such kind and humane treatment to prisoners of war. This led some people to question their opposition and hostilities towards Islam and some of the prisoners also accepted Islam.

In the meantime, some of the allies and friends of the Makkans were causing problems for the Muslims and many were collecting together their small armies to attack them. There were a few small skirmishes against the Muslims including Abu Sufyan bringing an army to the outskirts of Madina and then returning after hassling and attacking a few people.

The prophet (pbuh) despatched a number of units against these rebels and soon they were brought to justice with little or no bloodshed in most cases. This strengthened the Muslim's position and also helped peace to prosper throughout the region.

However, as normality was returning to the Madina, there was another great danger looming over the Muslim community. There were rumours that the Makkans were planning to amass a large army with the intention of attacking Madina itself. They wanted to take revenge for their humiliating defeat. This time, the Makkans were more determined than ever before and were maddened with rage and humiliation. They had sworn that they would take revenge and had looked forward to this encounter from the day of Badr itself.