

## DOUBLE TRAGEDY

The Muslims of Madina had just finished a gruelling battle against the Makkans as they defended Madina from their aggression. The Muslims suffered some losses and were forced to retreat when the Makkans made a counter strike, just as the Muslims were winning the battle. The archers who were defending the rear side of the Muslim forces had left their post, thinking that the battle was over. The Makkan cavalry saw this weakness and quickly exploited it causing havoc in the Muslims ranks.

However, the Muslims had managed to regroup and rally around the Prophet (pbuh). They even chased after the Makkan army in case they change their minds and returned to fight the Muslims again.

The news of the Muslim's 'defeat' had reached Madina and there were many groups who were ecstatic about the Muslim losses. The two main groups were the Jews of Madina and the Hypocrites. Both of these groups had enjoyed the peace Islam had brought to Madina but deep down they wanted nothing more than the Muslims to be crushed by the Makkans.

The Jews openly expressed their happiness of the Muslim losses and took this opportunity to invent lies against the Prophet (pbuh). They began to say that Muhammad (pbuh) was no more than an impostor.

The hypocrites in Madina celebrated the defeat of the Muslims at Uhud. They openly boasted that they had walked away from the battlefield even though this had been a cowardly act. They encouraged the people in Madina to leave Islam saying that Muhammad (pbuh) was no more than a normal leader. However, the Muslims knew better - he was the true messenger of Allah for all humanity.

One of the results of Uhud was that many tribes around Madina were now thinking about attacking the Muslims and began planning their own raids on Madina. Previously, the Muslims had seemed invincible but now this image had been shattered in their minds. This ill-will and hostility had become a major menace to

peace in Madina.

When finally the heroic Muslims returned to Madina; this was the atmosphere they were welcomed with. They were utterly exhausted by the fighting and the long marches they endured. Many of the Muslims were injured and nursing wounds. However, despite this, they were ready to defend Islam and their community by following the command of their beloved Prophet (pbuh).

Peace was shattered by two horrific events of treachery and deceit. These events saw a new type of evil which led to the death of some very pious and learned Muslims.

A mixed delegation came to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) requesting him to send some Muslims to teach their tribes about Islam. After considering their request, Muhammad (pbuh) sent with them some knowledgeable Muslims. However, this delegation had no intention of learning about Islam from these Muslims but had other more sinister motives.

As the small group reached a place called al-Raji. The tribe of Abu Lihyan were already waiting to ambush the Muslims with 100 archers. The tribe attacked the Muslims who were all killed in the fighting apart from two Muslims - Khubaib and Zaid bin Ad Dathna. The tribes arrested these two Muslim so that they could sell them to the Makkans.

These prisoners knew that the Makkans would not show them any mercy or compassion and they would be facing death soon. The Makkans would take revenge on them for the deaths of their comrades in the battle of Badr. Both these Muslims had fought in the battle against the Makkans at Badr. The Makkan tribes would be ready to pay a handsome price so that they could witness the death of this two brave youngsters.

On arrival in Makkah, Khubaib was the first to be taken for crucifixion to a place outside Makkah called at Tan'im. They allowed Khubaib to make a final prayer and he prayed two Rakahs. He turned to the executioner after salah and said that he

would have prayed longer but he did not want them to think that he was afraid to die.

Abu Sufyan stepped forward and asked "Would you not wish that Muhammad (pbuh) was here and you were safe with your family?" Khubaib replied that he wish that Muhammad wasn't even hurt by a thorn whilst he (Khubaib) was safe with his family! Abu Safyan was shocked at how much love and respect the people had for Muhammad (pbuh).

Zaid bin Ad Dathna was purchased and murdered by Safwan bin Omayyah in revenge for the death of his father. This was another cold-blooded execution that saw the end of another pious Muslims at the hands of the Makkans.

Shortly after this appalling incident at al-Raji, another delegation came to visit the Muslims in Madina. Their spokesman, Abu Bara, requested that a small group of Muslims should be sent to the people of Najd to teach them about Islam This time Abu Bara gave his personal protection and promise to the Prophet (pbuh) saying that the Muslims would not be hurt.

The Prophet (pbuh) initially was very reluctant and concerned that there might be sinister motives behind this request. The death of the last group of Muslims was still fresh in everyone's mind.

After much consultation and guarantees of protection from Abu Bara who headed this delegation, the Prophet (pbuh) decided to send forty or so Muslims to teach the people of Najd about Islam. On the way, they passed through the locality of Bani Saleem and Bani 'Amir. This tribe did not honour the guarantee and protection given by Abu Bara and decided to attack the Muslim. They were encouraged by Amir bin at-Tufail to quickly armed themselves and lay waiting for the Muslims.

The Muslims were unaware of any possible hostilities. They would travel during the day and pray during the night. They were a very peaceful and learned people, many of whom had learned directly from Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The Bani Saleem

attacked this peaceful group at a place near Ma'una well. This time the enemy had no intention of taking Muslims prisoners but instead wanted to murder them all.

The Muslims were on a peace mission to teach about Islam and were not prepared for battles. However, they fought off these aggressors with the customary bravery and acts of great heroism. However, this bigger and well-armed army overpowered them.

The fact that the protection offered by Abu Bara had not been enforced was also a shock which went against the honour of Arabs. The Muslims were now reeling from this second shameless act of aggression.

Amr bin Omayyah and Al-Mundir bin Ubayyah were two of the survivors from this group of Sahabah who returned to Madina with this bad news. He had been tending to the sheep whilst this battle took place. When he returned, he saw the carnage that had taken place. However, as he returned to Madina, he attacked and killed two men from Bani Kilab. He was angry that their tribe had been involved in the massacre of the unarmed and peaceful Muslims.

This was also a grave mistake especially because these two people were returning from Madina under the Prophet's protection. The news of this massacre of the Muslims reached Madina; they were utterly devastated by the loss of these innocent lives. When the news of the death of two innocent people reached the Prophet (pbuh), he was very angry with Amr. The Prophet (pbuh) decided to pay the blood money in compensation for the death of these two innocent victims.

The Muslims and the Jews had an agreement that they would jointly pay the blood money when the need arose. The Prophet (pbuh) decided to visit Bani Nadeer to collect this money. Little did anyone know that the Bani Nadeer would try and action their own plan trying to kill the Prophet.

What would happen with this fragile peace that existed in Madina? Would Bani Nadeer succeed in their sinister plan and how would the Muslim community react to such an act of treachery? The Bani Nadeer were no weak tribe who had much

support from groups inside Madina as well as outside communities - would they call for an all out war against the Muslims?

## **BANI NADEER EXPULSIONS AND THE TRENCH**

The cold-blooded massacre of two groups of Muslims was a horrific crime against Islam. They had been invited by the tribes on a mission of education and peace but had been ambushed on route. They were unarmed and had no intention of fighting whilst their attackers wanted to take advantage of their kind nature by massacring them all.

During these events, 'Amr Bin Omaiya survived and made his way back to Madina. On route, he murdered two Arabs from the tribe of ambushers although they had not taken part in the fighting. This meant that blood money would need to be paid by the community of Madina to the tribe of Bani Kalib. This is a form of compensation for the lives that are taken wrongly or mistakenly.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and a few of his companions set off to meet Bani Nadeer to collect a share of the blood money. They had a treaty that if blood money needed to be paid by either party, they would work together to raise this money. Both parties had signed this treaty and this was the first time that this step had to be taken.

The Bani Nadeer invited Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his companions into their homes, which was in a fortified part of Madina. They listened to the Prophet (pbuh) as he explained what happened and the need for this money to be raised. They then asked the Prophet (pbuh) to remain seated near the wall whilst they went upstairs to discuss this amongst themselves.

The leaders already knew the details of the treaty well and that they were obliged to pay this money. However, this was an opportunity for the Jews to rid Madina of Muhammad (pbuh); after all Muhammad (pbuh) wasn't armed and only had a few companions with him. They thought that it would take little effort to attack the Prophet (pbuh) and put an end to Islam.

The leader of Bani Nadeer hatched a plan where they would throw a large millstone on the Prophet (pbuh) as he rested against the wall. This would be certain death for the Prophet (pbuh) who was the spiritual leader of the Muslims. Just as they had agreed to the plan and were ready to put it into action, the Prophet (pbuh) got

up and without saying a word, walked away and headed towards his own house.

The Jews became worried and asked his companions why the Prophet (pbuh) had left in such a hurry. This also confused the companions and they replied that they too did not know.

The Prophet (pbuh) returned to the Muslim area of Madina and revealed to the Muslims what had happened. He told them that the Angel Jibrael had revealed to him the details of an assassination plot by Bani Nadeer and that's why he had left in such a hurry from there. The Muslims were all horrified, especially because this was treachery of the highest order. This went against the code of conduct of the Arabs and against all their treaties and agreements.

A message was sent to Bani Nadeer to leave Madina for this was an act of treachery and breaking of the treaty. The Muslims waited patiently for the reply from Bani Nadeer, the answer to which could either mean a war between them both or Bani Nadeer leaving Madina.

Bani Nadeer had already decided that they would surrender and leave Madina. They had made the mistake and broken the treaty with the Muslims. They were in the wrong. However, Abdullah ibn Ubaya, the leader of the hypocrites told Bani Nadeer that he would support them along with many of his followers. If needed they would come to their rescue with hundreds of fighters along with other Jewish tribes such as Bani Quraizah.

The Jews began to rethink their situation. They had a great advantage because their quarters were fortified and any enemy would find it difficult to attack them. Bani Nadeer was also well-armed and were experienced fighters through the many battles they had fought in the past. They now had the backing of many allies who would help them if fighting broke out. They decided that they would stay and fight the Muslims.

This message was sent to the Prophet (pbuh) and he ordered the Muslims to gather their forces and march onto Bani Nadeer. When this command was given, the Muslims immediately rushed to prepare for war and before very long they were ready to march. The Muslims began their march to Bani Nadeer through the streets of Madina. When the Muslims reached Bani Nadeer they found that the Jews had fortified their position and were also ready for battle.

Bani Nadeer attacked the Muslims by shooting arrows and throwing rocks at them from their forts. The Muslims were in a very weak position and the trees that surrounded Bani Nadeer's forts, were a nuisance which prevented them from counter attacking. Despite this, the Muslims fought bravely and counter attacked as best as they could.

The command was given to cut down the trees and Bani Nadeer were under siege with many small skirmishes between both parties. As the week dragged on, Bani Nadeer became worried, especially since there were no signs of the promised reinforcements from the hypocrites and other tribes. Allah put fear inside their hearts and soon Bani Nadeer wanted an end to this siege. The siege had only lasted for a few days and there were very few casualties from either side.

A peace deal was decided and Bani Nadeer were banished from Madina. They were allowed to carry their wealth upon their camels with the exception of weapons. Bani Nadeer took their wealth and left Madina never to return. They settled in Syria and made a fresh start there. A few of them settled inside other Jewish communities in Arabia.

This battle had only lasted a few days but Madina was rid of this troublesome tribe who had caused so much friction amongst the people of Madina. There was now peace and everyone was happy with the outcome.

Peace was restored in Madina and the Muslims lived in harmony with the freedom to follow their Deen. However, this was not the end of this episode as a delegation of Jews travelled to Makkah to encourage them to raise another army to fight the Muslims. They offered their full support in such an attack as well as promises of many more tribes joining them. The Makkans already had a score to settle with the Muslims and were very eager to join this campaign.

This delegation travelled far and wide, encouraging many other tribes to join them in this final showdown with the Muslims. Soon the foundations were laid for the biggest army seen in Arabia to descend upon Madina. At a secret time, all the armies would meet in a location just outside Madina and then attack the Muslims. They also had the advantage of a surprise attack, which would mean that the Muslims wouldn't have time to make preparations to defend themselves. As the Makkans started making preparation to mobilize their forces, news of this impending invasion was sent to the Prophet (pbuh). The Prophet (pbuh) quickly called a meeting of the prominent Muslims to consult tactics against such a huge

army. This army was bigger and better armed than anything they had ever faced before. This was the biggest army the Muslims had ever seen and indeed the biggest army that had been raised in Arabia.

After much discussion, Salman Farsi suggested that a trench be dug between the two armies. It would be at a strategic point which would prevent the army attacking the Muslims. Madina was well protected from three sides by mountains and forts of the different tribes in Madina. The trench would only need to be dug on the north side, which would be enough to defend Madina.

The Muslims immediately put this plan into action as they quickly began assigning different jobs out amongst themselves. They divided themselves into groups of ten with each group digging one section of the trench. It had to be wide and deep enough so that the army could not penetrate it. This in itself was no easy task in such a short time. It would require hard work from all quarters of the Muslim community for the trench to be completed on time.

The Muslims hurried and started work with the hope of finishing the trench before the enemy arrived. They had news that the armies had already begun the long march to Madina and would be there in a matter of days. The work was very difficult but the Muslims put their heart into it, working through the hot midday sun and long into the night.

During the digging of the trenches, even the Prophet (pbuh) was involved in the hard work of labour. He would dig the trench as well as carry the sand and rocks on his shoulders. The Muslims struggled on, even though there was a shortage of food and other supplies.

In one incident, a companion complained to the Prophet about the extreme hunger he was suffering. He showed the Prophet (pbuh) that he had tied a rock to his stomach to subdue the pain of hunger. **The Prophet (pbuh) also lifted his shirt and revealed to him that he had two rocks tied to his stomach.** The Prophet (pbuh) was suffering like the rest of his companions as well as working shoulder to shoulder with them.

One of the companions, Jabir bin Abdullah, invited the Prophet (pbuh) to join him in a meal of meat and barley. There must have been enough food for about ten people. The Prophet (pbuh) invited the rest of the Muslims. Jabir watched in astonishment as group after group of people came and ate from the same food. When everyone

had eaten their fill, he noticed that the food remained the same as if no one had eaten it. This was a miracle of the Prophet (pbuh).

A similar incident took place when a lady brought some dates to the Prophet (pbuh). The Prophet (pbuh) spread the dates out over a cloth and asked the people to eat from them. Before long, the cloth was overflowing with dates and all the Muslims managed to eat from this blessed food.

During the digging of the trench, one group of diggers came across a problem which they could not solve. A huge boulder prevented them from digging any further and despite their best efforts; they could not move it nor break it. They called upon the Prophet (pbuh) to come and advise them.

The Prophet (pbuh) took a pickaxe and hit the rock with all his might three times before it broke into tiny pieces. On each strike, there was a spark and the Prophet (pbuh) said a few words. When the people asked the Prophet about this. He explained that after the first strike, he had seen the palaces of sham which meant that the Muslims would conquer Syria. After the second strike he had seen the palaces of Persia which meant the Muslims would conquer Persia. After the Third strike, the Prophet (pbuh) saw the gates of Sana which meant that the Muslims would conquer Yemen.

These visions were like prophecies that foretold some of the many successes the Muslims would achieve in the future. Despite the fact that the Muslim numbers were small and they were facing a formidable army, the Muslims were pleased with these glad tidings.

The trench was finally completed as the huge armies of the Kuffar approached Madina. Would the trench prevent the Army from attacking the Muslims or would this be a minor obstacle for this huge army? Would the Muslims be able to last a long siege, even though their supplies were low and many were suffering from hunger? How would the Hypocrites fare in the battle? Would they double cross the Muslims like at Uhud or would they stand and fight with their Muslim comrades? Would the Bani Quraizah honour the treaty between them and the Muslims by defending against the enemies or would they let them into Madina through their forts?

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