

The Battle Of Badr



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Transliteration key

أ-'	ض - ḍ
آ - ā	ط - ṭ
ب - b	ظ - ḏ
ت - t	ع - ʿ
ث - th	غ - gh
ج - j	ف - f
ح - ḥ	ق - q
خ - kh	ك - k
د - d	ل - l
ذ - dh	م - m
ر - r	ن - n
ز - z	و - w, ū
س - s	ه - h
ش - sh	ي - y, ī
ص - ṣ	

The Battle Of Badr

The First Decisive Battle In The History Of Islam

وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

And indeed He [Allah ﷻ] aided you at Badr when you were few in number. So fear Him so that you may show gratitude.¹

REASON OF THE BATTLE

It all began with the al-Ushayrah Invasion when a caravan belonging to Quraysh had escaped an imminent military encounter with Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his men. When their return from Syria approached, Rasūlullāh ﷺ despatched Sayyidunā Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh and Sayyidunā Sa‘īd ibn Zayd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا northward to scout around for any movements of this sort. The two scouts stayed at al-Ḥawrā’ for some days until Abū Sufyān, the leader of the caravan, passed by them. The two men hurried back to Madīnah and reported to Rasūlullāh ﷺ their findings. Great wealth amounting to fifty thousand *dinars* (gold coins) guarded by 40 men moving relatively close to Madīnah constituted a tempting target for the Muslim military, and provided a potentially heavy economic, political and military strike that was bound to shake the entire structure of the Makkan polytheists.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ immediately exhorted the Muslims to rush out and waylay the caravan to make up for their property and wealth they were forced to give up in Makkah. He did not give orders binding to everyone, but rather gave them full liberty to go out or stay back, thinking that it would be just an errand on a small scale.

The Muslim army was made up of 300-317 men, 82-86 Muhājirīn—61 from Aws and 170 from Khazraj. They were not well-equipped nor adequately prepared.

1 Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 123

They had only two horses belonging to Sayyidunā al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām and Sayyidunā al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad al-Kindī رضي الله عنه, 70 camels, one for two or three men to ride alternatively. The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم himself, Sayyidunā ‘Alī and Sayyidunā Murthid ibn Abī Murthid al-Ghanawī رضي الله عنه had only one camel. Disposition of the affairs of Madīnah was entrusted to Sayyidunā Ibn Umm Makhtūm رضي الله عنه but later to Sayyidunā Abu Lubābah ibn ‘Abd al-Mundhir رضي الله عنه. The general leadership was given to Sayyidunā Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umayr al-Qurashī al-‘Abdarī رضي الله عنه, and their standard was white in colour. The little army was divided into two battalions, the Muhājirīn with a standard raised by Sayyidunā ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه, and the Anṣār whose standard was in the hand of Sayyidunā Sa’d ibn Mu‘ādh رضي الله عنه. Sayyidunā al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām was appointed to the leadership of the right flank, Sayyidunā al-Miqdād ibn ‘Amr to lead the left flank, and the rear of the army was at the command of Sayyidunā Qays ibn Abī Ṣaṣa‘ah رضي الله عنه. The General Commander-in-Chief was Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, of course.

Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, at the head of his army, marched out along the main road leading to Makkah. He then turned left towards Badr and when he reached al-Ṣafrā’, he despatched two men to scout about for the camels of Quraysh.

Abū Sufyān, on the other hand, was on the utmost alert. He had already been aware that the route he was following was attended with dangers. He was also anxious to know about the movements of Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. His scouting men submitted to him reports to the effect that the Muslims were lying in ambush for his caravan. To be on the safe side, he hired Damdam ibn ‘Amr al-Ghifārī to communicate a message asking for help from the Quraysh. The messenger rode fast and reached Makkah in a frenzy. Felling himself from his camel, he stood dramatically before the Ka‘bah, cut off the nose and the ears of the camel, turned its saddle upside down, tore off his own shirt from front and behind, and cried, “O Quraysh! Your merchandise! It is with Abū Sufyān. The caravan is being intercepted by Muḥammad and his Companions. I cannot say what would have happened to them. Help! Help!”

The effect of this hue and cry was instantaneous and the news stunned Quraysh and they immediately remembered their pride that was wounded when the Muslims had intercepted the Ḥaḍramī caravan. They therefore swiftly mustered almost all of their forces and none stayed behind except Abū Lahab, who delegated someone who owed him some money to go on his behalf. They also mobilized some Arab tribes to contribute to the war against Rasūlullāh ﷺ. All the clans of Quraysh gave their consent except Banū ‘Adī. Soon an excited throng of 1300 soldiers including 100 horsemen and 600 mailed soldiers with a large number of camels, were clamouring to proceed to fight the Muslims. For food supplies, they used to slaughter an alternate number of camels of ten and nine every day. They were however afraid that Banū Bakr, on account of old long deep-seated animosity, would attack their rear. At that critical moment, *Iblis* (Satan) appeared to them in the guise of Surāqah ibn Mālīk ibn Ju’sham al-Mudlajī—chief of Banū Kinānah—saying to them, “I guarantee that no harm will happen from behind.”

Allah speaks of this:

وَأِذْ زَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَكُمْ

And [remember] when Satan made their deeds pleasing to them and said, “No one can overcome you today from among the people, and indeed, I am your protector.”¹

They set out burning with indignation, motivated by a horrible desire for revenge and exterminating anyone that might jeopardise the routes of their caravans:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَطْرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

Do not be like those who left their homes boastfully and to be seen of men, and hinder (men) from the path of Allah.²

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 48

2 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 47

Or as Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

O Allah these are the haughty and conceited; they have come defying Allah and defying His Messenger.

They moved swiftly northward to Badr. On the way they received another message from Abū Sufyān asking them to go back home because the caravan had escaped the Muslims. Incidentally, Abū Sufyān, on learning the intention of the Muslims, led his caravan off the main route, and inclined it towards the Red Sea. By this manoeuvre, he was able to slip past the Muslim ambush and was out of their reach.

On receiving Abū Sufyān's message, the Makkan army showed a desire to return home. The tyrant Abū Jahl, however haughtily and arrogantly insisted that they proceed to Badr, stay three nights there for making festivities. Now they wanted to punish the Muslims and prevent them from intercepting their caravans, and impress on the Arabs that Quraysh still had the upper hand and enjoyed supremacy in that area.

Notwithstanding Abū Jahl's threats and insistence, Banū Zahrah, acting on the advice of al-Akhnas ibn Shurayq, broke away and returned to Makkah. Thenceforth al-Akhnas remained 'the well-rubbed palm-tree' for Banū Zahrah and was blindly obeyed in all relevant matters.

Banū Hāshim were also inclined to break away, but Abū Jahl's threats made them desist from that idea.

The rest of the army, now 1000 soldiers, approached Badr and encamped themselves beyond a sand dune at al-'Udwat al-Quswā.

'The intelligence corps' of the Madanī army reported to Rasūlullāh ﷺ that a bloody encounter with the Makkans was inescapable, and that a daring step in this context had to be taken, or else the forces of evil would violate the inviolable

and would consequently manage to undermine the noble cause of the Islam and tread upon its faithful adherents. The Muslims were afraid that the pagan Makkans would march on and start the war activities within the headquarters of Islam, Madīnah. A move of such nature would certainly damage and produce an infamous impact on the dignity and stance of the Muslims.

On account of the new grave developments, Rasūlullāh ﷺ held an advisory military emergency meeting to review the ongoing situation and exchange viewpoints with the army leaders. Admittedly, some Muslims feared the horrible encounter and their courage began to waver; in this regard, Allah says:

كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكَارِهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ يُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ
بَعْدَمَا تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَافِقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

As your Rabb caused you [O Muḥammad ﷺ] to go out from your home with the Truth, and verily, a party among the believers disliked it, disputing with you concerning the Truth after it was made manifest, as if they were being driven to death while they were looking (at it).¹

Rasūlullāh ﷺ apprised his men of the gravity of the situation and asked for their advice. Sayyidunā Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the first who spoke on the occasion and assured Rasūlullāh ﷺ of the unreserved obedience to his command. Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the next to stand up and supported the views expressed by his noble friend. Then Sayyidunā al-Miqdād ibn ‘Amr got up and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Proceed where Allah directs you to, for we are with you. We will not say as the Banū Isrā’īl said to Sayyidunā Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ:

فَاذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ

Go you and your Lord and fight. We will stay here.²

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 5, 6

2 Sūrah Mā'idah: 24

Rather we shall say:

اذهب أنت وربك فقاتلا إنا معكما مقاتلون ، فوالذي بعثك بالحق لو سرت بنا إلى برك الغماد لجالدنا معك من دونه ، حتى تبلغه.

Go you and your Lord and fight and we will fight along with you. By Allah! If you were to take us to Bark al-Ghimā, we will still fight resolutely with you against its defenders until you gained it.¹

Rasūlullāh ﷺ thanked him and blessed him.

Allah ﷻ guaranteed His Messenger ﷺ:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O Nabī, sufficient for you is Allah and whoever follows you of the believers.²

The three leaders who spoke were from the Muhājirīn, who only constituted a minor section of the army. Rasūlullāh ﷺ wanted, and for the more reason, to hear the Anṣār's view because they were the majority of the soldiers and were expected to shoulder the brunt of the war activities. Moreover, the clauses of the 'Aqabah Pledge did not commit them to fighting beyond their territories.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ then said, "Advise me, my men!" by which he meant the Anṣār, in particular. Upon this Sayyidunā Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ stood up and said, "By Allah, I feel you want us (the Anṣār) to speak." Rasūlullāh ﷺ directly said, "O yes!" Sa'd said:

O Rasūlullāh! We believe in you and we bear witness to what you have vouchsafed to us and we declare in unequivocal terms that what you have brought is the Truth. We give you our firm pledge of obedience and sacrifice. We will obey you most willingly in whatever you command us,

1 Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah by Ibn Hishām

2 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 64

and by Allah, Who has sent you with the Truth, if you were to ask us to plunge into the sea, we will do that most readily and not a man of us will stay behind. We do not grudge the idea of encounter with the enemy. We are experienced in war and we are trustworthy in combat. We hope that Allah will show you through our hands those deeds of valour which will please your eyes. Kindly lead us to the battlefield in the Name of Allah.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was impressed with the fidelity and the spirit of sacrifice which his Companions showed at this critical juncture. Then he said to them, “Advance and be of cheer, for Allah has promised me one of the two (the lucrative course through capturing the booty or martyrdom in the cause of Allah against the polytheists), and by Allah it is as if I now saw the enemy lying prostrate.”

وإِذْ يَعِدُّكُمْ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧﴾ لِيُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

[Remember, O believers], when Allah promised you one of the two groups - that it would be yours - and you wished that the unarmed one would be yours. But Allah intended to establish the truth by His words and to eliminate the disbelievers. That He should establish the truth and abolish falsehood, even if the criminals disliked it.¹

In the immediate vicinity of Badr, Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his Companion of the cave Sayyidunā Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ conducted a scouting operation during which they managed to locate the camp of Quraysh. They came across an old bedouin nearby whom they manipulated and managed to extract from him the exact location of the army of the polytheists. In the evening of the same day, he despatched three Muhājirīn leaders: Sayyidunā ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Sayyidunā al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām, and Sayyidunā Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ to scout about for news about the enemy. They saw two men drawing water for the Makkan army. On interrogation, they admitted that they were water carriers working for Quraysh. But that answer did not please some Muslims and they beat the two boys severely

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 7, 8

in order to extract from them an answer, even if it was not true, alluding to the caravan laden with wealth. The two boys thus lied, and so they were released. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was angry with them and censured them saying, “On telling the truth, you beat them, and on telling a lie, you released them!” He then addressed the two boys and after a little conversation with them he learned a lot about the enemy: the number of soldiers, their exact location and names of some of their notables. He then turned to the Muslims and said, “Harken, Quraysh has sent you their most precious lives.”

The same night it rained on both sides. For the polytheists it obstructed further progress, whereas it was a blessing for the Muslims. It cleaned them and removed from them the stain of Shayṭān. Allah sent rain to strengthen their hearts and to plant their feet firmly therewith.

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنزِلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيَطَهَّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُدْهَبَ عَنْكُم رِجْسَ الشَّيْطَانِ
وَلِيُرِيطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيَتَّبِعَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ ﴿١١﴾

[Remember] when He covered you with a slumber as a security from Him, and He caused rain to descend on you from the sky, to clean you thereby and to remove from you the rijz [whispering, evil suggestions, etc.] of Satan, and to strengthen your hearts, and make your feet firm thereby.¹

They marched a little forward and encamped at the farther bank of the valley. Rasūlullāh ﷺ stopped at the nearest spring of Badr. Sayyidunā al-Ḥubāb ibn Mundhir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked him, “Has Allah inspired you to choose this very spot or is it a stratagem of war and the product of consultation?” Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied, “It is stratagem of war and consultation.” Al-Ḥubāb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “This place is no good. Let us go and encamp on the nearest water well and make a basin or reservoir full of water, then destroy all the other wells so that they will be deprived of the water.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ approved of his plan and agreed to carry it out, which they actually did at midnight.

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 11

Sayyidunā Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ suggested that a trellis be built for Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to function as headquarters for the Muslim army and a place providing reasonable protection for the leader. Sayyidunā Sa'd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ began to justify his proposal and said that if they had been victorious, then everything would be satisfactory. In case of defeat, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would not be harmed and he could go back to Madīnah where there were more people who loved him and who would have come for help if they had known that he was in that difficult situation, so that he would resume his job, hold counsel with them, and they would strive in the cause of Allah with him again and again. A squad of guards was also chosen from amongst the Anṣār under the leadership of the same man, Sayyidunā Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, in order to defend Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in his headquarters.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ spent the whole night preceding the day of the battle in prayer and supplication. The Muslim army, wearied with their long march, enjoyed sound and refreshing sleep, a mark of the Divine favour and of the state of their undisturbed minds.

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النَّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِنْهُ وَيُنزِلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيَطَهِّرَ كُمْ بِهِ وَيَذْهَبَ عَنْكُم رِجْزَ الشَّيْطَانِ
وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ ﴿١١﴾

[Remember] when He covered you with a slumber as a security from Him, and He caused rain to descend on you from the sky, to clean you thereby and to remove from you the Rijz [whispering, evil suggestions, etc.] of Satan, and to strengthen your hearts, and make your feet firm thereby.¹

That was Friday night, Ramadan 17th, the year 2 A.H.

In the morning, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ called his men to offer the prayers and then urged them to fight in the way of Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى. As the sun rose over the desert, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ drew up his little army, and pointing with an arrow which he held in his hand, arranged the ranks. Quraysh, on the other hand, positioned

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 11

their forces in al-‘Udwat al-Quswā opposite the Muslim lines. A few of them approached, in a provocative deed, to draw water from the wells of Badr, but were all shot dead except one, Ḥakīm ibn Ḥizām, who later became a devoted Muslim. ‘Umayr ibn Wahab al-Jumahī, in an attempt to reconnoitre the power of the Muslims, made a scouting errand and submitted a report saying that the Muslim army numbered as many as 300 men keen on fighting to the last man. On another reconnaissance mission he came to the conclusion that neither reinforcements were coming nor ambushes laid. He understood that they were too brave to surrender and too intent on carrying out their military duties to withdraw without slaying the largest possible number of the polytheists. This report as well as kindred relations binding the two belligerent parties together, slackened the desire to fight among some of the Quraysh. To counteract this reason-based opposition advocated by a rival of his, ‘Utbah ibn Rabī‘ah and others, Abū Jahl started an anti-campaign seeking vengeance on Muḥammad’s ﷺ followers for the Quraysh killed at Nakhlah. In this way, he managed to thwart the opposite orientation, and manipulated the people to see his evil views only.

When the two parties approached closer and were visible to each other, Rasūlullāh ﷺ began supplicating to Allah ﷻ, “O Allah! The conceited and haughty Quraysh are already here defying You and belying Your Messenger. O Allah! I am waiting for Your victory which You have promised me. I beseech You Allah to defeat them (the enemies).” He also gave strict orders that his men would not start fighting until he gave them his final word. He recommended that they use their arrows sparingly and never resort to sword unless the enemies came too close. Abū Jahl also prayed for victory, saying, “Our Lord, whichever of the two parties was less kind to his relatives, and brought us what we do not know, then destroy him tomorrow.” They were confident that their superior number, equipment and experience would be decisive. The Noble Qur’ān, with a play on the word, told them that the decision had come, and the victory—but not in the sense they had hoped for:

إِنْ نَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ ۗ وَإِنْ نَنْتَهُوا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ تَعُودُوا نَعُدْ وَلَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ
فِتْنَتُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

[O disbelievers] if you ask for a judgement, now has the judgement come unto you and if you cease [to do wrong], it will be better for you, and if you return [to the attack], so shall we return. And your forces will be of no avail to you, however numerous it be. And verily, Allah is with the believers.¹

The first disbeliever to trigger the fire of the battle and be its first victim was al-Aswad ibn ‘Abd al-Asad al-Makhzūmī, a fierce bad-tempered idolater. He stepped out swearing he would drink from the water basin of the Muslims, otherwise, destroy it or die for it. He engaged with Sayyidunā Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, who struck his leg with his sword and dealt him another blow that finished him off inside the basin.

The battle had actually started. Protected by armour and shields, ‘Utbah ibn Rabīah stepped forth between his brother, Shaybah, and his son, al-Walīd ibn ‘Utbah, from the lines of Quraysh and hurled maledictions at the Muslims. Three young men of the Anṣār came out against them: ‘Awf and Mu‘awwadh—the sons of Ḥārith—and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Rawāḥah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. But the Makkans yelled that they had nothing to do with them. They wanted the heads of their cousins. Upon this Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ asked Sayyidunā ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Ḥārith, Sayyidunā Ḥamzah—his uncle, and his cousin Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to go forward for the combat. The three duels were rapid. Sayyidunā Ḥamzah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ killed Shaybah, while Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ killed al-Walīd. Sayyidunā ‘Ubaydah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was seriously wounded but, before he fell, Sayyidunā Ḥamzah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ fell upon ‘Utbah and with a sweep of his sword, cut off his head. Sayyidunā ‘Alī and Sayyidunā Ḥamzah carried Sayyidunā ‘Ubaydah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ back with his leg cut off. He passed away four or five days later of a disease in the bile duct. Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was possessed of a deep conviction that Allah’s Words:

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 19

هَذَا خَصْمَانِ اخْتَصَمُوا فِي رَبِّهِمْ

These two opponents (believers and disbelievers) dispute with each other about their Lord.¹

were revealed in connection with men of Faith who confess their Lord and seek to carry out His Will (i.e. Muḥammad 's followers at Badr Battle), and men who deny their Lord and defy Him (the people of Quraysh).

The duel was followed by a few more duels but the Makkans suffered terrible defeats in all the combats and lost some of their most precious lives. They were too much exasperated and enraged and fell upon the Muslims to exterminate them once and for all. The Muslims, however, after supplicating to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, calling upon Him for assistance, were made to hold to their position and conduct a defensive war plan that was successful enough to inflict heavy losses on the attackers. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to pray to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى ceaselessly and persistently, day and night to come to their succour. When the fierce engagement grew too hot he again began to supplicate to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى saying:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ تُهْلِكُ هَذِهِ الْعِصَابَةَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْإِسْلَامِ لَا تُعْبَدُ فِي الْأَرْضِ

O Allah! Should this group of Muslims be defeated today, You will no longer be worshipped on the earth.²

He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ continued to call out to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, stretching forth his hands and facing al-Qiblah, until his cloak fell off his shoulders. Then Sayyidunā Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ came, picked up the cloak, and put it back on his shoulders and said:

يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ ، كَفَاكَ مُنَاشِدَتَكَ رَبِّكَ ، فَإِنَّهُ سَيُنْجِزُ لَكَ مَا وَعَدَكَ

1 Sūrah al-Ḥajj: 19

2 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim hadith no. 3315

O Nabī of Allāh, you have cried out enough to your Lord. He will surely fulfil what He has promised you.¹

Immediate was the response from Allāh, Who sent down angels from the heavens for the help and assistance of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. The Glorious Qur’an observes:

إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَأَلِقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ

Remember when Allāh revealed to the angles, “Verily, I am with you, so keep firm those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who have disbelieved.”²

Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, the All-Mighty, also inspired another message to His Messenger ﷺ, saying:

إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِأَلْفٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرَدِّفِينَ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ ۚ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

[Remember] when you asked help of your Lord, and He answered you, “Indeed, I will reinforce you with a thousand of the angels, each behind the other (following one another) in succession.” And Allāh made it not but good tidings and so that your hearts would be assured thereby. And victory is not but from Allāh. Indeed, Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise.³

Rasūlullāh ﷺ, in his trellis, dozed off a little and then raised his head joyfully crying:

O Abū Bakr, glad tidings are there for you: Allāh’s victory has approached!
By Allāh, I can see Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام on his mare in the thick of a sandstorm!”

1 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim hadith no. 3315

2 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 12

3 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 9, 10

He then jumped out crying:

سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Their multitude will be put to flight, and they will show their backs.¹

At the instruction of Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ took a handful of sand, cast it at the enemy and said, “Confusion seize their faces!” As he flung the dust, a violent sandstorm blew like furnace blast into the eyes of the enemies. With respect to this, Allah says:

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ

And you [i.e. Muḥammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ] threw not when you did throw but Allah threw.²

Only then did he give clear orders to launch a counter-attack. He was commanding the army, inspiring confidence among his men and exhorting them to fight manfully for the sake of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ, reciting the Words of Allah:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

And be quick for forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth.³

The spirit he infused into his men was clearly witnessed by the valour of Sayyidunā ‘Umayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, a lad of sixteen, who flung away some dates he was eating crying out, “These (the dates) are holding me back from Jannah.” So saying he plunged into the thick of the battle and died fighting bravely. Unique deeds of valour,

1 Sūrah al-Qamar: 45

2 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 17

3 Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 133

deep devotion, and full obedience to Rasūlullāh ﷺ were exhibited in the process of the battle. The army of the faithful was borne forward by the power of enthusiasm which the half-hearted warriors of Makkah miserably lacked. A large number of the polytheists were killed and the others began to waver. No wonder! The standard-bearers of Truth were given immediate help, and supernatural agencies (the angels), were sent to their assistance by Allah ﷻ to help them defeat the forces of evil.

The records of Ḥadīth speak eloquently of the fact that the angels did appear on that day and fought on the side of the Muslims.

عن ابن عباس قال بينما رجل من المسلمين يومئذ يشتد في إثر رجل من المشركين أمامه إذ سمع ضربة سوط فوقه وصوت الفارس يقول أقدام حيزوم فنظر إلى المشرك أمامه فخر مستلقيا فنظر إليه فإذا قد حطم أنفه وشق وجهه كضربة السوط فأحضر ذلك أجمع فجاء الأنصاري فحدث ذلك رسول الله فقال صدقت ذلك من مدد السماء الثالثة

Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbas رضي الله عنه said, “While on that day a Muslim was chasing a disbeliever and he heard over him the swashing of a whip and the voice of the rider saying, ‘Go ahead Ḥayzūm.’ He glanced at the polytheist who had (now) fallen down on his back. The Anṣārī came to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and related that event to him. Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied, ‘You have told the truth. This was the help from the third heaven.’”¹

One of the Anṣār captured ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who said, “O Messenger of Allah, by Allah this man did not capture me. I was captured by a man who was bald and had the most handsome face, and who was riding a piebald horse. I cannot see him here among the people.” The Anṣārī interrupted, “I captured him, O Rasūlullāh.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied, “Be quiet, Allah, the All-Mighty strengthened you with the help of a noble angel.”

Iblīs, the arch satan, in the guise of Surāqah ibn Mālik ibn Ju’sham al-Mudlajī, on seeing angels working in favour of the Muslims, and Quraysh rapidly losing

1 Sahih Muslim hadith no. 1763

ground on the battlefield, made a quick retreat despite the polytheists' pleas to stay on. He ran off and plunged into the sea.

فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتِ الْفِئْتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَى عَقَبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ

But when the two armies sighted each other, he (Satan) turned on his heels and said, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I see what you do not see; indeed I fear Allah."¹

The ranks of Quraysh began to give way and their numbers added nothing but confusion. The Muslims followed eagerly their retreating steps, slaying or taking captive all that fell within their reach. Retreat soon turned into ignominious rout; and they fled in haste, casting away their armour, abandoned beasts of burden, camp and equipage.

The great tyrant Abū Jahl, on seeing the adverse course of the battle, tried to stop the tidal wave of the Islamic victory by nerving the polytheists and encouraging them by all means available and adjuring them by Lāt and 'Uzzā and all symbols of paganism to stand firm in place and retaliate against the Muslims, but to no avail. Their morale had already been drastically reduced to zero, and their lines broken down. He then began to realize the reality of his arrogance and haughtiness. None remained around him except a gang of doomed polytheists whose resistance was also quelled by an Islamic irresistible storm of true devotion-based valour and Islam-orientated pursuit of martyrdom. Abū Jahl was deserted and left by himself on his horse waiting for death at the hand of two courageous lads of the Anṣār.

Sayyidunā 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf رضي الله عنه related the following interesting story in this regard:

I was in the thick of the battle when two youths came to me, still seemingly inexperienced in the art of fighting, one on the right and the second on the left. One of them spoke in a secret voice asking me to show him Abū Jahl. I

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 48

asked about his intention, to which he replied, that he had a strong desire to engage with him in a combat until either of them was killed. It was something incredible to me. I turned left and the other said something to the same effect and showed a similar desire. I acceded to their earnest pleas and pointed directly at their target. They both rushed swiftly towards the spot, and without a moment's hesitation struck him simultaneously with their swords and finished him off. They went back to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, each claiming that he had killed Abu Jahl to the exclusion of the other. Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked if they had wiped the blood off their swords to which they answered in the negative. He then examined both swords and assured them that they both had killed him. When the battle concluded, Abū Jahl's spoils were given to Sayyidunā Mu'ādh ibn 'Amr ibn al-Jamūh رضي الله عنه, because the other—Sayyidunā Mu'awwadh ibn al-'Afrā' رضي الله عنه—was later killed in the course of the same battle. At the termination of the battle, Rasūlullāh ﷺ wanted to look for this archenemy of Islam, Abū Jahl. Sayyidunā 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه found him on the verge of death breathing his last. He stepped on his neck addressing him, "Have you seen how Allah has disgraced you?" The enemy of Islam still defiantly answered, "I am not disgraced. I am no more than a man killed by his own people on the battlefield." He then inquired "Who has won the battle?" Sayyidunā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه replied, "Allah ﷻ and His Messenger." Abū Jahl then said with a heart full of grudge, "You have followed difficult ways, you shepherd!" Sayyidunā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه used to be a shepherd working for the Makkan aristocrats. Sayyidunā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه then cut off his head and took it to the Rasūlullāh ﷺ who, on seeing it, began to entertain Allah's praise, "Allah is Great! Praise belongs to Allah, Who has fulfilled His Promise, assisted His servant and defeated the confederates alone."

He then set out to have a look at the corpse. There he said, "This is the Pharaoh of this nation."

Some Significant Instances Of Devotion:

1. Rasūlullāh ﷺ advised his Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم to preserve the lives of the Banū Hāshim who had gone out to Badr with the polytheists unwillingly

because they had feared the censure of their people. Among them, he named al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Abū Bukhtarī ibn Hishām. He ordered the Muslims to capture, but not to kill them. Sayyidunā Abū Hudhayfah ibn ‘Utbah رضي الله عنه showed great surprise and commented saying, “We kill our fathers, children, brothers, and members of our clan, and then come to spare al-‘Abbas? By Allah! If I see him I will surely strike him with my sword.” On hearing these words, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, addressing Sayyidunā ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه, said, “Is it fair that the face of the Messenger’s uncle be struck with a sword?” Sayyidunā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه got incensed and threatened to kill Sayyidunā Abū Ḥudhayfah رضي الله عنه if he does not obey the command of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. The latter later said that extreme fear had taken firm grip of him and he felt that nothing except martyrdom could expiate for his mistake. He was actually martyred later on during al-Yamāmah events.

2. Sayyidunā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf رضي الله عنه and Umayyah ibn Khalaf had been close friends during the pre-Islamic era. When the battle of Badr ended, Sayyidunā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān رضي الله عنه saw Umayyah and his son among the captives. He threw away the armour he had as spoils, and walked with them both. Sayyidunā Bilāl رضي الله عنه, Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم mu’adhin, saw Umayyah and all the torture he had been put to at the hand of this man dawned upon him. He thus swore he would have revenge on Umayyah. Sayyidunā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān رضي الله عنه tried to ease the tension and address the embarrassing situation amicably, but with no success. The Muslims gathered around and struck Umayyah’s son with swords. At this point, Sayyidunā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān رضي الله عنه called upon his old friend to run for his life but he was put to swords from different people and lay down dead. Sayyidunā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān رضي الله عنه, completely helpless and resigned said, “May Allah have mercy on Bilāl, for he deprived me of the spoils, and I have been stricken by the death of my two captives.”
3. On the moral level, the Battle of Badr was an inescapable conflict between the forces of good and those of evil. In this context, Sayyidunā ‘Umar ibn

al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not spare the life of any polytheist even his uncle on the maternal side al-‘As ibn Hishām ibn al-Mughirah.

4. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ shouted at his son ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, still a polytheist and fighting with them, “Where is my wealth, you wicked boy?” The son answered that it was gone with the wind.
5. When the battle ended, the Muslims began to hold some polytheists in captivity. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ looked into the face of Sayyidunā Sa’d ibn Mu‘ādh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, the head of the Prophet’s guards, and understood that he was hateful to taking the enemy elements as prisoners. Sayyidunā Sa’d رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ agreed to what Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said and added that it was the first victory for the Muslims over the forces of polytheism, and he had more liking for slaying them than sparing their lives.
6. On the Day of Badr, the sword of Sayyidunā ‘Ukkāshah ibn Miḥsan al-Asadī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ broke so Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave him a log of wood which he shook and it immediately turned into a long strong white sword. Sayyidunā ‘Ukkashah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ went on using that same sword in most of the Islamic conquests until he was martyred in the fight against the apostates after the demise of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.
7. When the war activities had been concluded, Sayyidunā Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr al-‘Abdarī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ saw his brother, still a polytheist, being handcuffed by an Anṣārī. Sayyidunā Muṣ‘ab رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ recommended that the Anṣārī tighten the knot for the prisoner’s mother was wealthy enough to ransom her son. ‘Abū ‘Azīz, Muṣ‘ab’s brother, tried to appeal to his brother through their family ties, but the latter firmly replied that the Anṣārī was more eligible for brotherhood than him.
8. When Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ordered that the corpses of the polytheists be dropped into an empty well, Sayyidunā Abū Ḥudhayfah ibn ‘Utbah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ looked sadly at his dead father, who fought on the side of the polytheists. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ noticed that and asked him about it. Sayyidunā Abū

Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said that he had never held the least doubt that his father met his fate deservedly, but added that he wished he had been guided to the path of Islam, and that is why he felt sad. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ whispered in his ears some comforting words.

The outcome of the battle was as aforementioned an ignominious rout for the polytheists and a manifest victory for the Muslims. Fourteen Muslims were killed, of whom six were from the Muhājirīn and eight from the Anṣār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The polytheists sustained heavy casualties, seventy were killed and a like number taken prisoners. Many of the principal men of Makkah, and some of Rasūlullāh's صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ bitterest opponents, were among the slain. Chief of these was Abū Jahl.

On the third day, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ went out to look at the slain polytheists, and said, “What an evil tribe you were as regards to your Messenger. You belied me but the others believed; you let me down while the others supported me; and you expelled me whereas the others sheltered me.”

He stood over the bodies of twenty-four leaders of Quraysh who had been thrown into one of the wells, and started to call them by name and by the names of their fathers, saying, “Would it not have been much better for you if you had obeyed Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى and His Messenger? Behold, we have found that our Lord's promise do come true; did you (also) find that the promises of your Lord came true?” Thereupon, Sayyidunā ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “O Messenger of Allah! Why do you speak to bodies that have no souls in them?” Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ answered, “By Him in Whose hand is Muḥammad's soul! You do not hear better what I am saying than they do.”

Reaction In Makkah

The polytheists having received a large dose of disciplining and heavy defeat, fled away in great disorder in the vales and hillocks heading for Makkah panicked and too ashamed to see their people. Ibn Ishāq related that the first herald of bad tidings was al-Hayṣaman ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Khuzā‘ī. He narrated to them

how their notables were killed. People there did not believe him at first and thought that he had gone mad, but soon the news was confirmed and a state of incredible bewilderment overwhelmed the whole Makkan scene. Abū Sufyān ibn al-Ḥārith gave Abū Lahab a full account of the massacre and the disgraceful rout they sustained, with emphasis on the role that the angels played in bringing about their tragic end. Abū Lahab could not contain himself and gave vent to his feelings of resentment in beating, abusing, and slapping Sayyidunā Abū Rāfi‘ رضي الله عنه, a Muslim, but reticent on his conversion, for reiterating the role of the angels. Sayyidah Umm al-Faḍl رضي الله عنها, another Muslim woman, greatly exasperated by Abū Lahab’s thoughtless behaviour, struck him with a log and nearly cracked his skull. Seven days later, he died of an ominous ulcer and was left for three days unburied. His sons, however, for fear of shameful rumours, drove him to a pit and keeping their distance, hurled stones and dust at him.

The defeat was a matter of great shame and grief for the Makkans. In almost every house there were silent tears for the dead and the captives. They were burning with humiliation and were thirsty for revenge. Wailing, lamenting, and crying however were decreed strictly forbidden lest the Muslims should rejoice at their affliction.

Madīnah Receives The News Of Victory

Two heralds, Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn Rawāḥah and Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Ḥārithah رضي الله عنهما were despatched to Madīnah to convey the glad tidings of victory to the Muslims there. The multi-ethnic and ideological structure of Madīnah featured different respective reactions. Rumour-mongers amongst the Jews and hypocrites spread news to the effect that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم had been killed, and tried to impress their false assumption on the fact that Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Ḥārithah رضي الله عنه was riding al-Qaswā’, Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم camel-cow. Having reached, the two messengers imparted to the Muslims the happy news of victory, and furnished accurate information about the course of events in order to establish the sense of reassurance deep in the hearts of the anxious, but now, joyous Muslims. They immediately started acclaiming Allah سبحانه وتعالى’s name and entertaining His praise

at the top of their voices. Their chiefs went out of the city to wait and receive Rasūlullāh ﷺ on the road leading to Badr.

Sayyidunā Usāmah ibn Zayd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ related that they received the news of the manifest victory shortly after Sayyidah Ruqayyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا—Rasūlullāh's ﷺ daughter and the wife of Sayyidunā 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ—had been buried. She had been terminally ill and Rasūlullāh ﷺ had asked Sayyidunā 'Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to stay in Madīnah and look after her.

Before leaving the scene of the battle, dispute concerning the spoils of war arose among the Muslim warriors, as the rule relating to their distribution had not yet been legislated. When the difference grew wider, Rasūlullāh ﷺ suspended any solution whereof until the Revelation was sent down. Sayyidunā 'Ubādah ibn al-Sāmit رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said:

We went out with Rasūlullāh ﷺ and I witnessed Badr with him. The battle started and Allah, the Exalted, defeated the enemy. Some of the Muslims sought and pursued the enemy, some were intent on collecting the spoils from the enemy camp, and others were guarding the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and were on the alert for any emergency or surprise attack. When night came and the Muslims gathered together, those who had collected the booty said, “We collected it, so no one else has any right to it.” Those who had pursued the enemy said, “You do not have more right to it than we do; we held the enemy at bay and then defeated them.” As for the men who had been guarding Rasūlullāh ﷺ, they also made similar claims to the spoils. At that very time, a Qur'ānic verse was revealed saying:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ ۗ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ ۗ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ ۗ
وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١﴾

They ask you [O Muḥammad ﷺ] about the spoils of war. Say, “The spoils are for Allah and the Messenger.” So fear Allah and

adjust all matters of difference among you, and obey Allah and His Messenger if you are believers.¹

On their way back to Madīnah, at a large sand hill, Rasūlullāh ﷺ divided the spoils equally among the fighters after he had taken *al-Khums* (one-fifth). When they reached al-Ṣafrā', he ordered that two of the prisoners should be killed. They were al-Naḍr ibn al-Hārith and 'Uqbah ibn Abī Muṭīṭ, because they had persecuted the Muslims in Makkah and harboured deep hatred towards Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. In a nutshell, they were criminals of war in modern terminology, and their execution was an awesome lesson to the oppressors. 'Uqbah forgot his pride and cried out, "Who will look after my children, O Messenger of Allah?" Rasūlullāh ﷺ answered, "The fire (of Hell)!" Did 'Uqbah not remember the day when he had thrown the entrails of a sheep onto the head of Rasūlullāh ﷺ while he was prostrating himself in prayer, and Sayyidah Fatimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا had come and washed it off him? He had also strangled Rasūlullāh ﷺ with his cloak if it had not been for Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to intervene and release Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The heads of both criminals were struck off by Sayyidunā 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

At al-Rawhā', a suburb of Madīnah, the Muslim army was received by the joyous people of Madīnah who had come to congratulate Rasūlullāh ﷺ on the manifest victory that Allah had granted him. Sayyidunā Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, acting as a mouthpiece of the other true believers, after entertaining Allah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ's praise, excused himself for not having joined them on the grounds that Rasūlullāh's ﷺ intention was presumably, an errand aiming to intercept a caravan of camels only. He added that if it had occurred to him that it would be real war, he would have never tarried. Rasūlullāh ﷺ assured Usayd that he had believed him.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ now entered Madīnah as a man to be counted for in a new dimension—the military field. In consequence, a large number of the people of

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 1

Madīnah embraced Islam, which added a lot to the strength, power, and moral standing of the true religion. Rasūlullāh ﷺ exhorted the Muslims to treat the prisoners so well to such an extent that the captors used to give the captives their bread (the more valued part of the meal) and keep the dates for themselves.

Prisoners of war constituted a problem awaiting resolution because it was a new phenomenon in the history of Islam. Rasūlullāh ﷺ consulted Sayyidunā Abu Bakr and Sayyidunā ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا as to what he should do with the prisoners. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ suggested that he should ransom them, explaining this by saying, “They are after all our relatives, and this money would give us strength against the disbelievers. Moreover, Allah سبحانه وتعالى could guide them to Islam.” Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ advised killing them saying, “They are the leaders of kufr (disbelief).” Rasūlullāh ﷺ preferred Abū Bakr’s suggestion to that of ‘Umar’s. The following day, Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ called on Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Sayyidunā Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to see them weeping. He was extremely astonished and inquired about the situation so that he might weep if it was worth weeping for, or else he would feign weeping. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that a Qur’ānic verse had been revealed rebuking them for taking ransom from the captives rather than slaying them:

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَى حَتَّى يَبْتَخِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَصَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ
 وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٧﴾ لَوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيمَا أَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾

It is not for a Prophet that he should have prisoners of war [and free them with ransom] until he had made a great slaughter [among his enemies] in the land. You desire the good of this world [i.e. the money of ransom for freeing the captives], but Allah desires [for you] the Hereafter. And Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. Were it not a previous ordainment from Allah, a severe torment would have touched you for what you took.¹

The previous Divine ordainment went as follows:

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 67, 68

فَإِمَّا مَنًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّى تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا

Thereafter (is the time) either for generosity (i.e. free them without ransom) or ransom.”¹

Which included an area providing permission to take ransom. That is why no penalty was imposed. They were rebuked only for taking prisoners before subduing all the land of disbelief. Apart from this, the polytheists taken to Madīnah were not only prisoners of war but rather arch-criminals of war whom modern war penal law brings to justice to receive their due sentence of death or prison for life.

The ransom for the prisoners ranged between 1000 and 4000 dirhams (silver coins) in accordance with the captive’s financial situation. Another form of ransom assumed an educational dimension. Most of the Makkans, unlike the Madanīs, were literate and so each prisoner who could not afford the ransom was entrusted with ten children to teach them the art of writing and reading. Once the child had been proficient enough, the instructor would be set free. Another clan of prisoners were released without ransom on grounds of being hard-pressed. Sayyidah Zaynab رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, the eldest daughter of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, paid the ransom of her husband Abū al-‘Āṣ with a necklace. The Muslims released her prisoner and returned the necklace in respect to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ but on condition that Abū al-‘Āṣ allows Sayyidah Zaynab رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا to migrate to Madīnah, which he actually did. In captivity, there was also an eloquent orator called Suhayl ibn ‘Amr. Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ suggested that they pull out his front teeth to disable him from speaking, but Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ turned down his suggestion for fear that Quraysh should retaliate in the same manner on one hand, and on the other for fear of Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى’s wrath on the Day of Resurrection.

Sayyidunā Sa’d ibn al-Nu‘mān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, a pilgrim detained in Makkah, was released in return for setting Abū Sufyān’s son, a captive, free.

1 Sūrah Muhammad: 4

The Battle Of Badr In Its Qur'ānic Context

The Chapter of *al-Anfal* (spoils of war) was revealed on the occasion of the Battle of Badr, 17 Ramaḍān 2 A.H. It constituted a unique Divine commentary on this battle. Allah, the All-High, in the context of this Chapter draws on major issues relating to the whole process of Islamisation. Allah ﷻ, here draws the attention of the Muslims to the still lingering moral shortcomings in their character. He wants them to build an integrated, purified society. He speaks about the invisible assistance he sent down to His obedient servants to enable them to accomplish their noble objectives. He wants the Muslims to rid themselves of any trait of haughtiness or arrogance that might sneak in. He wants them to turn to Him for help, obey Him, and His Messenger ﷺ.

After that He delineated the noble objectives for which Rasūlullāh ﷺ launched that bloody battle, and directed them to the merits and qualities that brought about the great victory. The polytheists, hypocrites, the Jews, and prisoners of war were also mentioned, being admonished to surrender to the Truth and adhere to it only. The question of the spoils of war was resolved and the principles and basics relevant to this issue were clearly defined.

The laws and rules pertinent to war and peace were legalised and codified, especially at this advanced stage of the Islamic action. Allah wanted the Muslims to follow war ethics dissimilar to those of pre-Islamic practices. The Muslims are deemed to outdo the others in ethics, values, and fine ideals. Allah ﷻ wants to impress on the world that Islam is not merely a theoretical code of life, it is rather mind cultivation-orientated practical principles. In this context, Allah ﷻ established inter and intrastate relations. The fast of Ramaḍān was established as an obligatory observance in the year 2 A.H, appended by the duty imposed upon Muslims of paying *zakāh* (mandatory alms) in order to alleviate the burden of the needy Muhājirīn ﷺ.

A wonderful and striking coincidence was the establishment of Shawwāl Īd (the Festival of the Fast-Breaking) directly after the manifest victory of Badr. It was actually the finest spectacle ever witnessed of Muslims leaving their

houses praying, acclaiming Allah ﷻ's Name, and entertaining His praise at the top of their voices in recognition of His favour and grace, and last but not least, the support He rendered them and through which the forces of the Truth overpowered those of evil.

وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ فَأَوَّكُمُ وَأَيَّدَكُم بِنَصْرِهِ
وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

And remember when you were few and were reckoned weak in the land, and were afraid that men might kidnap you, but He provided a safe place for you, strengthened you with His help, and provided you with good things so that you might be grateful.¹

Allah ﷻ commends the faith of the Muhājirīn and Anṣār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ in these glowing words and assures them forgiveness and Jannah:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ أَوْوُوا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا ۚ
لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

Those who have believed and emigrated (i.e. the Muhājirīn) and fought in the cause of Allah and those who gave shelter and aided (i.e. the Anṣār)— it is they who are the believers, truly. For them is forgiveness and noble provision.²

And Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said in their regard:

لعل الله اطلع على من شهد بدرا فقال اعملوا ما شئتم فقد غفرت لكم

Allah ﷻ glanced at the participants of Badr and said, “Do as you please for I have indeed forgiven you.”³

Adapted from *Al-Rahīq al-Makhtūm* by Sayf al-Raḥmān Mubārakpūrī

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 26

2 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 74

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* hadith no. 3966