

Detailed Biography of Prophet Muhammad - Madinan Period (part2 of 3)

Description: A three-part lesson detailing the life of Prophet Muhammad after migrating to Madina until his passing away. Part 2: Role of the hypocrites and the Jewish tribes, and the Battles of Uhud and Trench.

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Objectives

- To learn about the new enemies in Madina.
- To learn about the betrayal of allies.
- To learn about the Battle of Uhud and Trench

New Enemies in Madina

In Madina, two new hostile forces arose, particularly after the Battle of Badr.



There were still several Arabs in Madina who clung to idol worship and detested Islam such as ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy and his followers. However, after the victory at Badr, most of them professed to be Muslim, at least outwardly. It was clear from their behavior that true faith had not entered their hearts, but they saw a political advantage of pretending to be Muslim. Several verses of the Quran were revealed informing the true Muslims of the threat this group of hypocrites posed to the community. However, the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, never singled out anyone and taught his followers to judge people by their actions.

The second threat came from the Jewish tribes that had lived both inside and around

Madina for centuries. Upon arriving in Madina, the Prophet had made a treaty with the Jewish tribes to clearly define relations between them and the Muslims. Among the main elements of the agreement were: both the Muslims and Jews were free to practice their own religion, they would mutually support one another in case a foreign enemy attacked and no treaty would be made with the Quraysh against the Muslims. Many of the Jews looked down upon the Prophet due to their ancestral pride. But the Prophet continued to teach the Muslims to behave respectfully with them. A revelation later came that Muslims are allowed to eat meat slaughtered by the People of the Book and even intermarry with them. Some of the Jews even accepted Islam. One of the leading Rabbis of Madina, ‘Abdullah ibn Salam, believed that the Messenger of Allah was mentioned in the Torah and accepted Islam.

Treachery of the Qaynuqa

A few months after Badr, the Prophet received intelligence that the Jews from the tribe of Qaynuqa, who lived inside Madina, were planning to break their covenant. The Qaynuqa prepared for war, hoping that some of the hypocrites would come to their aid as promised. After two weeks without receiving any supplies or outside help, they surrendered. They were asked to leave and took up residence with some other Jewish tribes around the area.

The Battle of Uhud

In 3 AH, the Prophet received intelligence that 3000 soldiers were on their way to attack Madinah. The Prophet assembled an army of 1000 soldiers and consulted his companions on whether to meet the army out in the open or remain in the city and defend. The Prophet gave in to their zeal and the army set out for Mount Uhud, about two miles from Madina, where they could meet the enemy. On the way, ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy (the leader of the hypocrites) decided to abandon the Muslim army because they did not take his advice and stay in the city. He and his men, which comprised one-third of the army, withdrew.

The Prophet stationed 50 archers on a nearby hill to guard a small mountain pass that could be exploited by the enemy. The battle began and the Muslims began to overcome the Quraysh. The battle-flag of the Quraysh fell and they began to retreat, while the Muslim soldiers continued to pursue them. At that very moment, most of the archers who were positioned on the hill decided to leave their posts, eyeing the spoils of war which they were eager to collect. The mountain pass was now unprotected and the cavalry of the enemy rode through the gap and fell on the exultant Muslims. As a result, 70 Muslims lay dead on the battlefield while only 22 of the Quraysh were killed. The victory at Uhud turned into a bitter defeat. Verses were revealed to the Prophet making it clear that the calamity was a result of the spiritual disease of greed.

Expulsion of Nadir

In 4 AH, the Messenger of Allah received intelligence that the Jews of Nadir were planning to betray the Muslims. The Prophet went to visit them, but they made an attempt on his life. He fled the scene and gave them 10 days to leave. But they insisted on war and began to make alliances with some Arab leaders. A Muslim army was sent to besiege their fortress. After ten days, the Prophet ordered that some of their palm trees, their most valuable possession, be cut down. They finally surrendered and relocated to the heavily fortified city of Khaybar, a few hundred miles to the north. Again, rather than expressing any appreciation, they immediately began to plot against the Muslims.

Battle of the Trench

Huyayy, the chief of the Nadir, went to Mecca to incite a final attack against Madina. He easily managed to convince the Quraysh that it was time for one final assault against the Muslims. Abu Sufyan began to recruit allies from different parts of Arabia. The Quraysh managed to muster up 4000 soldiers themselves with another 6000 soldiers coming from the eastern part of Arabia. Salman Al-Farsi, who was a companion of the Prophet and originally from Persia, suggested a foreign war tactic of building a trench to join the defensive strong points formed by the lava fields and by fortified buildings. This was something unheard of in Arab warfare, but the Prophet immediately appreciated the merits of the plan and work began at once. The Prophet himself participated in carrying the rubble from the diggings on his back. When the coalition army arrived, they had never seen such a military strategy used before.

Huyayy, who accompanied the allied army, paid the only remaining Jewish tribe in Madina, the Qurayza, who lived in the south, and convinced them to defect from the treaty with the Muslims.

The siege of the Muslims lasted for almost a month. Abu Sufyan finally decided to give up and the allies returned, unsuccessful. With the help of Allah, not only were the Muslims saved from fighting but it was a symbolic victory for them.

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