

On the Path of the Beloved ﷺ

The Siege

Today's lecture: Quraysh was a very powerful tribe and the Muslims were very fragile! However, who won in every battle? The Prophet ﷺ and the Companions did and the reason behind that is that righteousness is always strong, whereas all that Quraysh had was power and violence. Quraysh tried brutality, war, persuasion, negotiation, and even temptation, but nothing ever worked.

Finally, Quraysh decided that there was no other solution but to kill the Prophet ﷺ.

Does anyone have an idea of the number of assassination attempts that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was subjected to? Close to seven or nine attempts. Quraysh alone tried to do it for three continuous years.

Examples of other attempts are: the day of the Prophet's migration to Madinah; the Jews of Khaibar and the poisonous sheep, where one of the Companions ate a piece and actually died; and Abu-Jahl's actual throwing of a big stone on the Prophet ﷺ while praying.

Also, when Fudalah hid a dagger in his cloak and followed the Prophet ﷺ with the intent of killing him. The Prophet sensed it, turned around, and asked him, **"What has your spirit tempted you to do, Fudalah?" The Prophet ﷺ smiled, asked him to watch for Allah, and patted Fudalah's chest. Fudalah later said that before that touch, the Prophet was the most hideous person on earth to him, but after that, he became the dearest to his heart.**

One point worth mentioning is that throughout all of this, the Prophet ﷺ never lost his faith or steadfastness at any time. One might think: well, he had a guarantee that Allah ﷻ would protect him.

The answer is no, because the ayah where Allah ﷻ says , **"...And Allah safeguards you from mankind..." (5:67)** had not yet been revealed. Let us not forget that other Prophets have been killed before, like Zakariya عليه السلام and Yahya عليه السلام. Moreover, there was no promise from Allah that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would not be killed. In spite of that, the Prophet had always been steadfast and never did he turn his back on his message. Thus, he set an example for all leaders, scholars, and callers to Islam to follow suit.

Back to Quraysh's conspiracy to kill the Prophet, Abu-Talib (the Prophet's uncle) noticed some suspicious activities. Serious, secret meetings had been going on without his knowledge and without him being invited! He received news of their intent. He decided to send Quraysh a very strong message. He gathered all the young men of

Banu-Hashem, asked each of them to carry an iron rod (not a sword, since the intent is only to threaten), and hide it under his clothes. He then instructed them to go to the Ka'ba and stand behind each one of Quraysh's leaders.

So far, the Prophet ﷺ was unaware of these attempts, especially because such a thing had never happened before. Abu-Talib then took his nephew, who was going about his mission, to the Ka'ba and raised his hand up. He asked Quraysh if they knew what he was about to do and called upon the young men of Banu-Hashem to expose their iron rods. Each of Quraysh's leaders found a man standing behind him. Abu-Talib then said, "By Allah, should Muhammad get killed, we would declare war against you until we both die". He then gathered the young men and left. At that time, he was 80 years old.

Quraysh was instantly overcome, and the one who was most defeated was Abu-Jahl. It was particularly hard on him because of his history with the Prophet ﷺ: every time Abu-Jahl tried to hurt the Prophet, something happened that would hurt him back.

Nevertheless, the idea of killing the Prophet ﷺ had not died. It was still brewing in the minds of Quraysh. Abu-Talib was not yet satisfied; he gathered all of Banu-Hashem, Muslims and non-Muslims, and put together a plan to protect the Prophet's life.

I now ask you all, men and women: Has any one of you stood by the Prophet ﷺ and believed in him as Abu-Talib did, even though he was not a Muslim? How about the youth, young men and young women? There could be many who did, but we need that number to increase.

I am not denying that there is goodness in this Ummah and that there are many people who travel to study, work hard, do good deeds, and are life-makers. The Ummah has been on the down-side for 200 years. It needs hundreds, thousands, and millions of people to wake up and rise; that is the goal of this program. Let us carry out a revival. Do you not love the Prophet ﷺ? He was the first to improve upon all fields; he improved upon the field of women, the field of education, and every other field.

One might ask: Where does steadfastness come from nowadays?

Steadfastness comes from Ibadah in Ramadan, from Dua'a, from reading the Qur'an, and from having faith in Allah ﷻ to carry out this revival. No revival in any place in the world happened without sacrifices or without the people who stayed steadfast to their belief.

Let us go back to Abu-Talib's plan. You need to know first where Banu-Hashem lived. In Makkah, there was the Ka'ba in the middle, and surrounding it were the mountains. In between those mountains, there were tight passages called she'eb; the leaders lived on the mountains and the others lived in those She'eb. Abu-Talib's plan was to get those from Banu-Hashem living on the mountains down to the she'eb. Then, he brought the

Prophet ﷺ to live among them so that everybody would be able to keep an eye on any suspicious activity.

The question now, one might ask, is: Did everybody accept this inconvenience, including the non-Muslims? Yes, everyone did! Muslims and non-Muslims, without animosity, men, women, and children all built a united front, and the goal was to protect the Prophet ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ stayed there and did not leave the area for three years, except during the pilgrimage season. At that time, Quraysh did not dare commit any mischief to avoid marring its image as a religious leader in the area and to protect its thriving commerce.

The fact that the Prophet ﷺ was out of reach enraged Quraysh that decided to besiege Banu-Hashem's she'eb. They set an economic and social embargo. Thus, no business was to be made with Banu-Hashem, prices were to skyrocket if they need to buy anything, and no one was to marry from them. This lasted for three years.

Quraysh saw that Banu-Hashem was one large and prominent tribe; therefore, they put the conditions of the embargo in writing and posted it on the most sacred place, the Ka'aba. Furthermore, no one from outside Banu-Hashem could speak to them, which froze the propagation of Islam completely for three years. Three years out of only 23 years for the spread of the message is too long, relatively speaking.

Quraysh also set up supervisory points to check if anyone smuggled in food. Banu-Hashem had no alternative but to feed on tree leaves to the point that they got ulcers in their mouths. The only way out for Banu-Hashem from this ordeal was easy – all they had to do was declare their opposition to Muhammad!

Quraysh would not lift the embargo unless either Prophet Muhammad ﷺ abandoned his message, or his Companions surrendered him. The problem was that no one, not even the non-Muslims, did what Quraysh was hoping for. The Muslims did not do it because of their faith in Allah ﷻ. Likewise, the non-Muslims felt the duty of protecting Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and standing by their tribe.

It is to be noted here the role of Abu-Lahab during this period as he teased Banu-Hashem and poked fun at what they got in return for following and protecting the Prophet ﷺ. He also enticed Quraysh into raising prices for the Prophet's Companions, promising to pay them tenfold the amount they asked for their merchandise. No one in Quraysh helped, even when implored by Banu-Hashem to give food for the children.

Strangely enough, Abu-Talib, along with the Muslims and non-Muslims, remained steadfast, despite their hardships in spite of the fact that they had no idea of how long the embargo would last. No scholar of Islam read or heard of even one story that would state otherwise.

How about what the Prophet Muhammad himself suffered during this affliction?

In an authentic hadith narrated by Ahmed, At-Tirmidhi, and Ibn-Majah, the Prophet explained that he was harmed and hurt like no body else had and that he even went through the ordeal of enduring the hunger of 30 days having no food but the morsels that Bilal would smuggle for both of them under his armpit. With Quraysh's watchful eye, he could only get in what he could hide under his arm.

How about Abu-Talib? At 80, he made the Prophet ﷺ sleep in a different spot every night in order to protect him just in case he is to be attacked at night. That was the Prophet's life for three years. He was not able to get in touch with the Muslims in Ethiopia, nor did they have any contact with him during the pilgrimage season.

A question arises here: Where were the miracles, the angels, and where was Jibril? What do the new Qur'anic Revelations say? Be patient. Does anyone nowadays love Islam to this extent, to willingly make that kind of sacrifice? Even Khadijah (RA), who was by this time 65 years old, chose to stay with her husband, despite the fact that Quraysh was willing to allow her food and drink and to stay at her own home.

One great example of a disbeliever with exceptional magnanimity was Hisham Ibn-Amr-Al-Amerey. He trained a camel to travel among the she'eb's to deliver food in the middle of the night. This greatly emphasizes the fact that just because someone is not a Muslim is no reason to alienate him taking him as an enemy. Had the Prophet ﷺ treated the disbelievers with animosity, they would not have converted to Islam.

When Quraysh learned of what Hisham was doing, they asked him if he had become a follower of Muhammad and he negated that stating that there were family ties with the Muslims inside the she'eb that obliged him to do what he was doing. He was indeed an example of the calibre of the Arabian man that existed in those days.

Quraysh warned Hisham to discontinue, however, he did not oblige. Thus, they took him and started beating him until another disbeliever, a nobleman from Quraysh named Abu-Sufyan, rebuked them saying, **"Are you torturing a man who wants to keep family ties tight? Do not ruin the rest of our moral values!"**

Hence, in spite of Quraysh's hostility with the Muslims, they did not want to ruin the society's belief system just because of this animosity.

Where are those kinds of people today, who prefer all of society's benefit over their own?

Had the non-Muslims of Banu-Hashem not seen such high moral values from the Prophet, they would not have accepted to stand by him the way they did.

Coexistence is very important. We all need to have peace around us so that we can have a revival.

The siege lasted for three years; the conditions were very grave, but the Companions did not fold. The Prophet ﷺ was upset because the spread of Islam froze for three years. The Companions were dispersed in three places: one-third in Ethiopia, one-third in the she'eb, and the last third in Makkah outside the she'eb where they were being tortured and humiliated. Nevertheless, they were neither desperate nor frustrated. Are you ready to remain steadfast for the revival of the Ummah ?

Allah ﷻ says what can be translated, **"And if your Lord had (so) decided, whoever is in the earth would indeed have believed, all of them, altogether. Would you then compel mankind until they are believers? (10:99), and "And say, "The Truth is from your Lord; so whoever decides, then let him believe, and whoever decides, then let him disbelieve." (18:29).** Observe the freedom of choice. Other ayahs were revealed to further strengthen the Prophet ﷺ, Allah ﷻ, **"And Messengers even before you were indeed already cried lies to, (yet) they were patient against what they were cried lies to (i.e., patient with what they were accused of lying about) and were hurt, until Our victory came up to them... (6:34).**

Jibril ﷺ went to the Prophet ﷺ to urge him to remain patient, but did not tell him that the siege would end after three years. Allah ﷻ says , **"And none can exchange the Words of Allah" (6:34), "So (endure) patiently; surely the (fair) end is for the pious" (11:49), and "Surely whoever is pious and (endures) patiently, then surely Allah does not waste the reward of the fair-doers" (12:90).**

You have to apply these ayahs to yourself. For example, after Ramadan, if you are exposed to temptations and distress, you have to be patient. Allah ﷻ says what can be translated, **"Till, when the Messengers finally despaired and expected that they were counted liars, Our victory came to them. So, whoever We decided will be safely delivered" (12:110).** That is why you have to read the Qur'an as much as you can to reinforce your belief and to acquire endurance and patience.

Why did Allah ﷻ leave the Muslims for three years in this distress? Allah ﷻ wanted to teach them that the truth is valuable and requires sacrifice so that coming generations can imitate them in steadfastness of concept and faith in hearts. Muslims had many chances to think carefully about their stand in the matter and their condition throughout the three years: Should they abandon the concept or should they stick to it? Nevertheless, those three years made them insist on the truth and sacrifice for it. The result was that during the battle of Honayn, those very Muslims stood beside the Prophet ﷺ, while the other Muslims fled.

If anyone, Muslim or non-Muslim, seeks to achieve a revival, one has to go through trials and tribulations. The Companions succeeded in the test every day for three years; that

is why Allah ﷻ did not inform them of when the siege would end. Not all members of Banu-Hashem were Muslims, yet they stood by the Muslims for those three years. Did they convert to Islam? Nobody knows. The Prophet ﷺ did not offer them Islam; he further thought that if they saw Muslims' morals and steadfastness, it would make them feel how valuable the message was.

The Companions did not blame Banu-Hashem for being disbelievers. Sometimes, practicing dawah by morals, ethics, and steadfastness is more effective than mere preaching. If some youth have parents who do not pray, they should not embarrass them or blame them; rather, it is better to let their parents see them praying, so that the parents will be touched and gradually come to like the religion. This does not mean that dawah should not be practiced verbally; on the contrary, dawah is necessary and obligatory. However, one must choose the suitable time and suitable way.

During the final days of the siege, Banu-Hashem were extremely exhausted and Quraysh was fed up because the Muslims did not fold, nor did they hand over the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ went outside the she'eb during the pilgrimage season and offered Islam to the visitors of Makkah. Quraysh wanted to kill him, but they could not do so during pilgrimage season and the Prophet stood near the Ka'ba, challenging Quraysh.

A man named Amr ibn-Absa saw the Prophet ﷺ and went to him (Amr did not believe in idols): 'Amr b. 'Abasa Sulami reported: I in the state of the Ignorance (before embracing Islam) used to think that the people were in error and they were not on anything (which may be called the right path) and worshipped the idols. In the meanwhile I heard of a man in Makkah who was giving news (on the basis of his Prophetic knowledge); so I sat on my ride and went to him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was at that time hiding as his people had made life hard for him. I adopted a friendly attitude (towards the Makkans and thus managed) to enter Makkah and go to him and I said to him: **Who are you? He said: I am a Prophet (of Allah). I again said: Who is a Prophet? He said: (I am a Prophet in the sense that) I have been sent by Allah. I said: What is that which you have been sent with? He said: I have been sent to join ties of relationship (with kindness and affection), to break the Idols, and to proclaim the oneness of Allah (in a manner that) nothing is to be associated with Him. I said: Who is with you in this (in these beliefs and practices)? He said: A free man and a slave. He (the narrator) said: Abu Bakr and Bilal were there with him among those who had embraced Islam by that time. I said: I intend to follow you. He said: During these days you would not be able to do so. Don't you see the (hard) condition under which I and (my) people are living? You better go back to your people and when you hear that I have been granted victory, you come to me.**¹

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ was able to address him in the way that matches his understanding. Abu Bakr (RA) released Bilal (RA) from slavery. Omar Ibnul-Khatib once

¹ Sahih Muslim, Book 004, Number 18102.

said, **"Abu-Bakr is our master and released our master."** When Amr-Ibn-Absa saw Abu-Bakr (RA) standing with Bilal (RA), he was profoundly touched because this religion did not differentiate between classes.

Some people think that the Companions were steadfast because they lived with and around the Prophet. Amr, on the other hand, met the Prophet ﷺ for only a few minutes, left him, went home, and remained steadfast until the Prophet ﷺ conquered Makkah. Amr then went to meet the Prophet ﷺ and was so happy that the Prophet ﷺ still remembered him and embraced him. The Prophet's greatness lies in his tenderness, planning the reformation of earth, and steadfastness.

Allah ﷻ wanted to release the Muslims' from the embargo, after having been successful in the test. He prepared the means for raising the siege. Quraysh came to realize that the siege failed and that the Prophet ﷺ won this round. Consequently, another three prominent figures in Quraysh appeared: Abu-Al-Bukhturi Ibn-Hisham, Hisham Ibn-Amr-ALAmeri, and Mut'am Ibn-Adey. They lived and died as disbelievers. They announced their refusal of the siege among Quraysh and the necessity of tearing up the document posted inside the Ka'ba. They made a plan, which was to be implemented the next day. They spread in Makkah in different places and, while Abu-Jahl was present, one of them said, "This sheet is false and must be torn up." The other two men agreed in order to make it look like it was a public opinion. Abu-Sufyan tried to steady Quraysh, but they were fed up and the three men repeated the same thing the next day. Accordingly, Quraysh decided to tear up the document. Jibril ﷺ revealed to the Prophet that woodworms had eaten the document and left nothing but the words "In the Name of Allah".

This woodworm was a slave and a soldier of Allah ﷻ; it ate away injustice and left the truth. Allah ﷻ did not send it until now so that we may learn, and the Muslims in that time may learn, that steadfastness is the key to success. The Prophet ﷺ informed his uncle Abu-Talib of Allah's message about the woodworms; Abu-Talib went to Quraysh, not yet knowing of their intent to tear up the document. He said to them, "My cousin told me that his God ordered the woodworm to eat the sheet. Enter the Ka'ba, and if my cousin is truthful, and he never lies, let us end this boycott." Quraysh entered the Ka'ba and found that what the Prophet ﷺ said was true.

Allah ﷻ is The Omnipotent; trust in Him, for He changes the circumstances. For example, Allah ﷻ ordered the knife not to cut so that Isma'il would not be slaughtered; He ordered fire not to burn Ibrahim ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says, **"We said, "O fire, be coolness and peace upon Ibrahim!" (21:69).** He ordered the whale to take Yunus ﷺ but not to swallow him. Allah ﷻ makes water come out of rocks as he says, **"And (remember) as Mûsa (Moses) asked Allah) for water for his people, so We said, "Strike with your staff the stone." Then there gushed forth from it twelve springs." (2:60).**

You have to be certain that Allah ﷻ can do anything; do not be pessimistic because the Ummah is now very weak and lost. You have to do your best if you want miracles to ever take place. Allah ﷻ brings security from fear. He says , **"So, when you fear for him, then cast him in the main" (28:7)**. He also brings faith from disbelieving, **"Then the house of Firaawn picked him out to be an enemy to them and (a source of) grief" (28:8)**. He says , **"Surely Our only Saying to a thing when We have willed it, is that We say to it, "Be!" so it is."** (16:40). Allah ﷻ makes Muslims' hearts close to Him in Ramadan, even the disobedient people, every year. Why then accept weakness and submissiveness?

Finally, the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions went back to their homes; they were very exhausted. However, both the concept and the truth were strong. Although no one converted to Islam during the three years, they were still triumphant. Allah ﷻ says , **"We hurl the Truth against the untruth; so (Truth) smashes it; then, only then does (untruth) expire" (21:18)**. Thus, Abu-Lahab was excluded from the siege because he thought he was right by not following the Prophet ﷺ and the truth, he was alienated by everyone and died of a terrible skin disease, where his skin began to fall off his body that nobody wanted to touch him after his death to the point that his sons decided to bring the house down over his body instead of actually burying him.

Surat Al-Masad is not about Abu-Lahab alone; it is rather a symbol of everyone who fights against truth for his personal interests. Allah ﷻ says what can translated as, **"Would the hands of Abu Lahab be cut up, (i.e., perish) and would he be cut up (too)" (111:1)**.

I realize how Abu-Lahab is damned even by children 1400 years after his death. Allah ﷻ put this short surah at the end of the Qur'an to teach our children not to fight against the truth.

Today we have valuable lessons:

- Steadfastness for the truth by worshipping Allah ﷻ to support you during distress, **"We hurl the Truth against the untruth; so (Truth) smashes it; then, only then does (untruth) expire" (21:18)**.
- Faithfulness and loyalty
- Resorting to dua'a during ordeals.

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Seerah: Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisam, Ibn Kathir and Diya al-Nabi were used in the compilation of these lecture notes as well as various books of Hadith.

The selective topics and format is from Amr Khaled's Arabic lecture on Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ with renditions from the "dar al tarjma" convoy.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oDLD8B-has>

I have included modifications for the sake of readability and clarity.