

On the Path of the Beloved ﷺ

The Battle Of Khaibar

In the name of Allah, The All-Merciful, The Ever-Merciful. Praise be to Allah (SWT) and all Prayers and Blessings of Allah be upon our master, the most noble Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). We are in the last nights of Ramadan, just very few more days and this blessed month will be over. May Allah (SWT) accept good deeds from us all, and be pleased with all of us.

Now, we are in the month of Moharram in the 7th. year after Hijra. The Prophet (SAWS) had just concluded the Hodaybia treaty with Quraish which implied an armistice for ten years. The Prophet's (SAWS) attention moved to focus on Khaibar. But why Khaibar in particular? Because it had become a meeting point of conspiracy against the Muslims. For three or four years conspirators from all over the Arab peninsula were gathering in Khaibar. Every time the Prophet defeated some traitors, they found shelter there!

The Jews of Bani An-Nadeer tribe moved there when they left Madinah after they betrayed the Prophet (SAWS), and from there Hodaybia went to meet Abu-Sofian in Makkah to collaburate with him in fighting the Prophet (SAWS) and so he did with other tribes. Additionally Ka'b Ibn Al-Achraf wrote a poem- as poetry was a means of media at that time- insulting the Prophet (SAWS), his wives and companions and attacking their honor. Such poems sprung from Khaibar! Moreover, it was Khaibar who supported the army of Al-Ahzab in the battle of Al-Khandaq (the trench). Also it was Khaibar that encouraged the Jews of the tribe of Bani-Quraiza to break the treaty with the Prophet (SAWS).

The Prophet wasn't an instigator of war. Every time he had to lead a war, it was either because he was obliged to do so, because he was prevented to transmit his message or as a means to reach peace (as we will see in today's lecture)! He was not blood-thirsty. I challenge any Orientalist to prove the opposite.

Khaibar went far in its enmity to Muslims. It even sent messengers to the Romans and the Persians suggesting collaboration to destroy The "new state". We should pay attention here to the fact that These had already started hearing about Muslims (for instance from the Prophet's letters as we saw in yesterday's lecture)! Therefore Khaibar's role became very dangerous, it was inciting the international powers to lead a war against the Muslims!

Before we talk about how the Prophet fought Khaibar, let us first describe it:

- ◆ It was very near to Madinah, as it was just 150 km far.
- ◆ It had a huge military and economic power: It had a lot of agricultural lands, for instance in Kutaiba-on its own-there were 40000 palm trees! It also had 10000 well armed soldiers!

- ◆ They all lived inside fortified fortress! Khaibar was divided into two regions: The first region contained five fortresses, while the second one contained three ones. The most fortified fortress was the first one.
- ◆ These fortresses were situated one behind the other and on very high mountains.
- ◆ They had food and water enough for a year! Tunnels were dug to allow the water of the wells to flow inside the fortress.

If the Muslims didn't react, they would have given the opportunity to more and more conspiracy from their part. They might even have convinced the Romans and the Persians to lead a war against them. Therefore the Prophet (SAWS) had to fight them! Any politician in his place would have done the same thing; otherwise he would have been a loser!

The Prophet moved to fight them with only 1500 soldiers! How can this number fight such people? It was a moment at which faith and enthusiasm are tested. Yet due to the Prophet's deep political analysis he concluded that the people of Khaibar are not brave attackers; to the contrary they built these fortresses to hide, their military mentality is based on defense not on attacking. The Prophet concluded that they would never attack the Muslims! Allah said referring to the people of Khaibar, **"They will not fight against you all together except in fortified towns or from beyond walls" (59: 14)**. The Prophet's plan was to besiege the first fortress then the second; and so on till they surrender and lose the war. As a result, they would accept all his conditions. How could all this come true? Through the determination and faith of the Muslims which their enemies lack!

Faith can do a lot! If you want to make a revival, let faith strengthen inside the youth and it will surely change into a potential. Why do our countries fear faith? Why do not we make faith our slogan for revival?

The Prophet (SAWS) fought them, but did he intend to kill them all? Not at all! All he wanted was to oblige them to make peace, to reach a kind of peaceful coexistence with them! The same end as in the Hodaybia but with different means! I have a proof for this, for the number of those who were killed was just ninety soldiers and most of them died in side or sword fights.

War was never the Prophet's aim (SAWS). He had a clear sight of what he wanted. He was the leader of an Ummah that had a message to transmit, but that aimed at peace and craved to establish it except if the message is hindered! An Ummah with high moral standards, that didn't lie nor betray. An Ummah that reformed the world! **"You have been the most charitable nation brought out to mankind..." (3: 110)**. Why have we got so far away from the Prophet's path? Why are we ashamed of our religion? Why do we say that jihad doesn't exist in our religion and say that Islam urges only for counterattack? Our religion urges for jihad but in its right time and place!

You may wonder why the Prophet (SAWS) didn't tackle the problem of Khaibar a long time ago, because he didn't want to open two battlefronts at the same time. He had to settle things with

Quraish first! How clever! An illiterate person is teaching political skills to the whole world! Yes, not only Muslims are meant; even Non-Muslims and Occidentals need to learn from him! When the Prophet (SAWS) was moving to fight Khaibar, the women asked him the permission to accompany him. He accepted, although the battle was expected to be very difficult! Yet, twenty women were allowed to accompany him.

There was still a minority of Jews—those who didn't break the treaty with the Prophet (SAWS) - inside Madinah, which was a good example of peaceful coexistence between people of different religions. And of course there were transactions between them. It happened that a Jew, called Abu-Shahm lent some money to a companion of the Prophet whose name is Abdullah Bin Abi Hazrag, Abi Hazrag was leaving among the soldiers and, Abu-Shahm asked him to give him his money back. The Abi Hazrag, however refused to give him the money until they came back from the battle of Khaibar because the debt was not due yet. Moreover, they were promised by the Prophet to defeat Khaibar and gain its booties. Yet The Jew complained to the Prophet (SAWS), and accordingly the Prophet (SAWS) ordered his companion to give the money back to the Jew and when Abi Hazrag argued that the debt is not yet due the Prophet explained that it is his right to have his money for he may not come back alive! You see how just he was with the minorities! Now, some people accuse him of encouraging terrorism and violence! We have to exert efforts in order to change this image and show to the whole world who Muhammad was. Therefore, the companion was obliged to sell his clothes in order to be able to pay the man back! You see how eager they were to the Prophet's (SAWS) fellowship! Are you willing to do the same? To you're your clothes to be among the Prophet's army? Abi Hazrag narrates that while he was setting so sad that he sold one of the only two Gilbab's he owned, a woman asked him about the reason of his sadness and offered him her only cloak she had in order the share the reward with them. Can you see how the society is supporting each other, how they sacrifice for the sake of this message, the woman told Abi Hazrag that she did not mind remaining home till they get back as she had nothing to protect her from the cold weather except this cloak. This is a story of a humble companion who was not mentioned in the Prophet's biography except this one time yet it is enough to be honored with. It is worth mentioning here that after the battle Abi Hazrag gained slave women (slavery was widely spread and universally accept at that time) that happened to be a relative of Abu-Shahm, and amazingly enough he had to pay Hazrag 1000 dirham to set her free, this was Allah's endorsement to Abi Hazrag's faith in what the Prophet (SAWS) told them.

Those people used to live for the sake of the message and Muslims while we live nowadays for the sake of our personal interests. We are a long way behind because we don't believe in such values. In order to step forth and make revival, we have to care for our society and work hard for the sake all of its members.

Before they arrived to Khaibar, the Prophet asked his companions to move in columns; when suddenly they had a big surprise! An Army of 4000 soldiers from Ghatfan was behind them, they came to support the people of Khaibar who asked for their help—although they were 10000 soldiers and inside fortress! The Prophet tried to negotiate with them in order to convince them to retreat, but they didn't accept his propositions. The Prophet even threatened them

with the sword, but in vain. Therefore, He resorted to Talha Ibn-Ubaidullah and Sa'id Ibn-Zaid who were known for their skillfulness at war strategies. They had two friends of theirs from Ghatfan who converted but hid their Islam. They asked them to spread the rumor that the Prophet had sent another army to conquer their country. The ruse succeeded and the army of Ghatfan hurried back to rescue its tribe!

Talha and Sa'id are among the ten who were announced to be in Jannah (paradise). That is because they were skillful and saved the Muslims. Islam is not just praying and fasting.

Worshipping is very important in Islam, but it is not enough. A Muslim has, on the other hand, to be good at skills that can help in the development of his society and country! For instance, the Muslims have also to excel in medicine, technology, scientific research, inventions, etc. These are, in deed, dear people to the Prophet!

By reaching the first fort, the Prophet (SAWS) commanded the army to stop. He made a Dua'a (supplication) for entering a new country. The Prophet's (SAWS) intention was peace and not war nor destroying. His aim was to make a treaty with the Jews but he had to bring an army to force them to do it. It was night when they arrived. Although it would be easier for Muslims to make their attack at night, the Prophet (SAWS) did not allow them to make any attack till the morning in order not to frighten the women and the children. Notice that it was not the first time that he (SAWS) said that, he always commands his warriors not to kill a woman, a child or to burn a plant and to leave the worshippers in their cells. These are the war morals mentioned by Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) 1400 years ago.

The Prophet (SAWS) set the camp outside Khaibar. Hubaba Ibnul-Mundher (remember him, he was the same man who advised the Prophet to choose the camp location at the battle of Badr) came to the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) asking him, "Is your choice of the location a command from Allah, so I hold my tongue? Or it is your personal opinion so I may speak?" the Prophet (SAWS) answered, "It is rather my own opinion and war tactics", so he said, "O Messenger of Allah, I approached the forts and found that the enemy can see us and know what we do while we can not see them. We are in the range of their arrows. Therefore let us move and stay away from them, and so they will not know anything about us nor can they hit us with their arrows." The Prophet (SAWS) agreed and said, "You are right, but we shall stay for today lest they would think that we were frightened on the first day." He did not want to raise his enemy's spirits.

The Muslims besieged Khaibar's first fort for 15 days. Notice that Khaibar had eight forts. The army began to starve. Abdullah Ibn-Magfal Al-Mozanie said, "While we were very hungry and began tying stones around our stomachs, I found a bag contains some fat. I was so happy and I took it saying in a low voice, 'By Allah I will not give a piece to any body' when I just turned I found the Messenger of Allah looking at me and smiling with enrage. I felt ashamed of myself, so I shared it with five of the companions". This is teaching through a look and a smile. The Prophet (SAWS) did not speak but he taught the man a lesson through a look and a smile. What type of a society is this? What type of people were they? We have many people now who do not understand by

To raise his soldier's spirits he asked one of his poets to sing a song that was originally sung on the battle of the Trench, He (SAWS) participated with them in the singing and acted like the chorus to the Muslims, we can conclude that He (SAWS) was not against culture and all fields of respectable and fruitful arts that are to be used to elevate the spirits of people and strengthen their morals. Yet we are against the immoral songs and video clips that arose the instincts and help spreading the immoralities.

On the 13th day of siege, the Prophet was suffering from a severe semi-headache. He used to suffer from this semi-headache since he was strongly hit on his head in the battle of Uhud. Consequently he asked Abu-Bakr to take the banner, but he could not enter the fort. On the 14th day Omar Ibnul-Khattab took the banner and fought but also could not enter the fort. The moral of the Muslims became too weak but skillfully, the Prophet told the army that he is going to give the banner on the following day to a man who loves Allah, whom Allah loves and he was not a runner from the battlefield, and the fortress will be open by Him. All the Muslims spent the night praying to Allah to be this man. On the Fajr prayers, the Prophet

Then the Prophet (SAWS) chose Ali (RA) for that mission. Ali (RA) asked the Prophet (SAWS) about what shall he do with them. He (SAWS) answered him, "Invite them to Islam first. If only one of them embraced Islam it would be much better than all of Khaibar's treasures." Ali (RA) went off to the fort's door. One of the Jews came out asking him, "Who are you?" he answered, "Ali Ibn-Abu-Taleb" then the Jew said, "You (the Jews) are defeated, by the Torah" That is because they learned from their book that Ali (RA) will defeat them. Then he told Ali (RA), "We shall duel" so it turned to a dueling rather than war. 3 giants brothers approached to swordfight with Ali (RA), he killed the first, and second was defeated with Al Zubayer Ibn Al Awam whom the Prophet named " his disciples" .

On the 15th day the first fortress was conquered. The Prophet (SAWS) did not kill the Jews, instead he let them go to the second one because He knew they would surrender, and because he wanted peace and not bloodshed.

A black slave shepherded, who was in the fort, heard from the Jews that Muhammad (SAWS) is actually a Prophet, so he took his folk and went out to Muhammad (SAWS) and embraced Islam. The Prophet (SAWS) told him about the Jannah (paradise) and that he will enter it if he was killed for the sake of Allah. The slave told the Messenger of Allah that he shall return those sheep back and he did. The Prophet was very pleased with him. The black slave was martyred although he had not performed a single prayer.

Why did not the Muslims take those sheep as booty? That is because the one who took it out was a citizen in Khaibar and not a warrior like them yet. You see the concept of citizenship in the society.

The second fort was conquered and the Muslims gained many booties, which were divided between the 1400 warriors. One of the companions refused to take his share and said, "I did

not follow Muhammad for that but for the sake of having an arrow here (he pointed at his throat)" After half an hour of saying those words, one of the Jews hit an arrow exactly where that companion pointed. The Prophet (SAWS) said, "He was truthful to Allah, so Allah was truthful to him"

This is a great lesson. If you are truthful to Allah and actually wanted to have a message for His sake then be sure that he will utilize you. However you shall first show to Allah your insistence and determination.

The Muslims went on conquering the forts until they reached the last one. They collected Jews' catapults which were never known to the Muslims before and were hidden in the forts. The Prophet (SAWS) commanded the Muslims to show up the catapults to the Jews just to threaten them. Consequently the Jews asked for a treaty. The Prophet (SAWS) told them that they must agree on his conditions. They surrendered.

This is what we mean by; development through faith.

We have the strongest weapon of all which is Faith and belief , whether Muslims or Christians, let us build our nations on the base of faith.

The Prophet's (SAWS) conditions were:

1. Disarmament.
2. The Jews should leave Khaibar. Notice that this is a kind of negotiation which means that the Prophet (SAWS) did not want them actually to leave but he wanted something else. They asked him, "Let us stay and saw the land" The Prophet (SAWS) agreed on the condition that half of the products of the land would be the Muslim's share.

The Prophet (SAWS) turned the situation from enmity to a peaceful coexistence and also used the Jews as a tool of development. And kept them busy from fighting the Muslims by working in the lands.

Finally the battle of Khaibar had a great influence on Quraysh. It was their last hope that a war could be waged against Muhammad (SAWS). It is well known that Makkah was conquered by the help of three things:

1. The treaty of Hodaybia.
2. The Writings of the Prophet (SAWS) to the kings, and so he became an international person.
3. The Battle of Khaibar and the treaty with its people.

Makkah was conquered peacefully without any bloodshed because of the Battle of Khaibar.

What are the lessons learnt from Khaibar

- 1- to have development through faith.
 - 2- We are people of peace, we fight for peace not for the sake of war.
 - 3- We should not be selfish, do not live for yourselves, live for the sake of Allah and the success of your nation.
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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.