

MUHAMMAD'S BIOGRAPHY (PART 8 OF 12): THE CAMPAIGN OF BADR

Rating: 4.6

Description: One of the most decisive battles in human history changed the political balance of the Arabian Peninsula.

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The Campaign of Badr

On one expedition, the Quraishite caravan on route to Syria had escaped the Muslims. The Muslims were in wait for its return. Some scouts of the Muslims saw the caravan, led by Abu Sufyan himself, pass by them, and hurriedly informed the Prophet of it and its size. If this caravan were intercepted, it would have an economic impact of great measure, one which would shake the entire society of the Meccans. The Muslim scouts reported that the caravan would be halting at the wells of Badr, and the Muslims now prepared themselves to intercept it.

News of these preparations reached Abu Sufyan on his southward journey, and he sent an urgent message to Mecca that an army should be dispatched to deal with the Muslims. Grasping the catastrophic consequences if the caravan were intercepted, they immediately rounded as much power as possible and departed to encounter the Muslims. On way to Badr, the army received news that Abu Sufyan managed to escape the Muslims by driving the caravan to an alternative route along the seashore. The Meccan army, numbering about a thousand men, persisted to Badr in order to teach a lesson to the Muslims, dissuading them from attacking any caravans in the future.

When the Muslims came to know of the advance of the Meccan army, they knew that a daring step must be taken in the matter. If the Muslims did not encounter them at Badr, the Meccans would continue undermine the cause of Islam with all their ability, possibly even proceeding to Medina desecrating lives property and wealth there. The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, held an advisory meeting to determine the course of action. The Prophet did not want to lead the Muslims, especially the Helpers who were the far majority of the army and were not even bound by the Pledge of Aqaba to fight beyond their territories, into something they did not agree to.

A man from the Helpers, Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh stood reaffirmed their devotion to the Prophet and the cause of Islam. From his words were the following:

“O Prophet of God! 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 obey you most willingly in whatever you command us, and by God 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 God will show you through our hands those deeds of valor which will please your eyes. Kindly lead us to the battlefield in the Name of God.

After this show of extreme support and love for the Prophet and Islam by both the Emigrants and the Helpers, the Muslims, numbering a little over 300, made their way as best they could to Badr. They had only seventy camels and three horses between them, so the men rode by turns. They went forward to what is known in history as *al-Yawm al-Furqan*, the Day of Discrimination; discrimination between light and darkness, good and evil, right and wrong.

Preceding the Day of the battle, the Prophet spent the whole night in prayer and supplication. The battle was fought on 17 Ramadan in the second year of the Hijra; 624 C.E. It was customary for the Arabs to start the battles with individual duels. The Muslims gained an advantage in the duels, and some notaries of the Quraish had been killed. The Quraish enraged, they fell upon the Muslims in order to exterminate them once and for all. The Muslims kept a strategic defensive position, which in turn produced heavy losses for the Meccans. The Prophet was beseeching His Lord with all his might by this time, extending his hands so high that his cloak fell off his shoulders. At that point, he received a revelation promising of the help of God:

***“...I will help you with a thousand of the angels one behind another in succession.”
(Quran 8:9)***

Upon hearing the good news, the Prophet ordered the Muslims took an offensive. The great army of Quraish was overwhelmed by the zeal, valor and faith of the Muslims, and after facing heavy losses, they could do nothing but flee. The Muslims were left alone on the field with a few doomed Meccans, amongst them the arch-enemy of Islam, Abu Jahl. The Quraish were defeated and Abu Jahl was killed. The promise of God came true:

“Their multitude will be defeated, and they will turn their backs (in flee).” (Quran 54:45)

In this, one of the most decisive battles in human history, the total casualties were between only between seventy and eighty.

Mecca reeled under the shock, where Abu Sufyan was left as the dominant figure in the city, and he knew better than anyone that the matter could not be allowed to rest there. Success breeds success, and the bedouin tribes, never slow to assess the balance of power, were increasingly inclined towards alliance with the Muslims, and Islam gained many new converts in Medina.

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