

PART 7

41. THE BATTLE OF THE DITCH (KHANDAQ) (5 A.H.)

Another problem was to confront the Islamic State of Madinatul Munawwarah.

41.1 ENEMIES OF ISLAM UNITE

The Jews of the Banu Nadir, who were expelled from Madinatul Munawwarah by Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), now planned a massive invasion of Madinatul Munawwarah. They raised huge funds for the war. They rallied the support of the other Jewish tribes, the Meccans, the munafiqs and the other pagan tribes from around Arabia.

Soon, a huge army of 24 000 soldiers assembled and marched towards Madinatul Munawwarah. Abu Sufyaan was the leader of this army.

41.2 TRENCHES DUG AROUND CITY

The Sahaba were shocked at the news of such a large army. The Muslims were few in number. How could they fight such a great army?

As the Sahaba were in consultation and discussions with each other, Sayyiduna Salman Farsi (radi Allahu anhu), a Persian Muslim, suggested an idea. He advised Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) to dig trenches all around Madinatul Munawwarah to hold off the enemy. It was a war strategy employed by the Persians.

Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and the Sahaba agreed to this idea. They immediately began the task of digging the trenches around the city. It was a difficult job because the land was rocky and hard. It took 3 000 Sahaba to complete the trench in 20 days. Soon the trench was ready. It was 15 feet wide and 15 feet deep. 500 Sahaba were made to guard the Sahabiyah (Muslim women) and 3 000 archers to defend the city at important points.

41.3 SEIGE OF MADINATUL MUNAWWARAH

Soon the huge army of the Kuffar arrived outside the city of Madinatul Munawwarah. They were beating their drums and singing their war songs. They were ready to attack the city when they saw the ditch that was dug around the city. They did not know what to do. They had never faced a ditch in a battle before. Crossing it was impossible. So they pitched up their tents on the other side.

The Kuffar decided to lay siege to the city. No food supplies were allowed to enter the city. Days and night passed. Four weeks had gone by and nothing happened during the long siege except for a few exchanges of arrows. Now and then, the Kuffar made attempts to cross the trench. The Sahaba were too vigilant and killed the Kuffar who tried crossing into Madinatul Munawwarah.

41.4 PLAN OF THE BANU QURAIZA

The Jews of the Banu Quraiza were still residents of Madinatul Munawwarah. Thinking that the Muslims were now finally defeated, they began secretly planning to attack the Muslims from inside Madinatul Munawwarah at night. Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) heard of this plot. He sent strict warnings to the Jews of Banu Quraiza not to try attacking the Muslims. He told them to think of their position should the Kuffar be defeated!

41.5 ALMIGHTY ALLAH'S HELP

Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) prayed to Almighty Allah for help and victory.

The next day, Almighty Allah sent strong winds (cyclone) accompanied by severe lightning and thunder. The Kuffar were terrified. Their tents were torn apart. Their horses and camels were frightened and ran away in all directions. Finally, the Kuffar army fled in confusion. Almighty Allah says in the Holy Quran: "O you who believe! Remember the Grace of Allah (bestowed) on you, when there came down on you Hosts (to overwhelm you): But we sent against them a hurricane and forces that you saw not: But Allah Sees clearly all that you do." (Surah Ahzaab: 9)

Thus, the Muslims were given an unexpected victory. Almighty Allah had tested the faith of the Muslims. He had seen how brave they were. And Almighty Allah had promised them victory if they

kept faith. Their faith and patience were rewarded by Allah. They gave praise and thanks to Allah for His help.

Thus, the Islamic State of Madinatul Munawwarah was saved!

42. END OF THE BANU QURAIZA (5 A.H.)

The Muslims wanted to live in peace with the Jews but the Jews did not like the Muslims. They were always planning to destroy Islam.

One of the agreements that the Jews signed with the Muslims was that if Madinatul Munawwarah was attacked by the enemy, both the Jews and the Muslims shall join hands in its defence. But, in spite of these clear undertakings, the Jews went against their word and plotted against the Muslims during the Battle of the Trench.

Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) knew that as long as the Jews of the Banu Quraiza were in Madinatul Munawwarah they will continue to plan to kill him and to weaken Islam. He had to take action against them.

42.1 SIEGE OF THE BANU QURAIZA

Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) first sent a few Sahaba to the Banu Quraiza to discuss and sort out the matter. But the Jews were arrogant and said, "Who is the Prophet of Allah? We have no pact or pledge with Muhammad." They were not prepared to resort to a peaceful solution. In fact, the Banu Quraiza began making preparations to fight against the Muslims.

The Banu Quraiza lived in forts. Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) ordered his Sahaba to surround the Banu Quraiza in their forts. The siege lasted for a month. At last, the Jews surrendered.

They sent a message to Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) to allow them to leave Madinatul Munawwarah just as the Banu Nadir did. But, Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi

wasallam) thought about how they had already broken the treaty with him by planning to attack the Muslims during the Battle of the Trench. So, he refused them from leaving.

42.2 A JUDGE IS CHOSEN BY THE JEWS

The Jews of the Banu Quraiza wanted to seek justice in this issue. They chose Saad bin Mu'aad to act as a Judge and pass judgement on the issue. Saad was the Chief of the Auz tribe. He was responsible for getting the Banu Quraiza to sign a peace treaty with Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). He was a very fair person. Saad took oaths from both sides that they follow whatever decision he makes. The Jews and the Muslims agreed to abide by his final decision.

42.3 SAAD'S VERDICT

Both sides waited eagerly for his judgement. Saad finally came to the following decisions:

- (a) All those Jews who took up arms against the Muslims should be executed,
- (b) Their women and children be held prisoners, and
- (c) Their properties be divided amongst the Muslims as war booty.

The Jews were horrified by this decision. The Muslims were pleased.

Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) ordered his Sahaba to carry out the order. All the Jewish men were put to death, except 4 Jews who accepted Islam. The real culprit of this incident was Huyayy ibn Akhtab. He instigated the Banu Quraiza to join the allies and plot against the Muslims. He was put to death.

42.4 PEACE IN MADINATUL MUNAWWARAH

The Muslims were now in complete control in the Islamic State of Madinatul Munawwarah. After the victory of the Battle of the Trench and the complete eradication of the Banu Quraiza, Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) could now attend to other problems facing the Ummah. His followers could now live in peace, security and comfort.

Many Munafiqun, seeing the power of Islam, came to the Muslims and said, "We truly believe in Allah and His Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), and we are Muslims."