

Chapter 40: The Events of The Sixth Year of Migration

In the sixth year of migration the military power of the Muslims was appreciably strong, so much so that their special units could freely approach places adjoining Makkah and then return. However, this military strength had not been acquired to conquer the territories of the tribes or to seize their properties.

If the polytheists had not deprived the Muslims of their freedom, the Prophet would not have purchased even one sword and would not have dispatched even one soldier. As, however, the Muslims and their missionary parties were continuously threatened by the enemies, the Prophet was naturally and morally obliged to strengthen the defensive power of Islam.

The real causes of these battles, which took place up to the sixth year of migration and in fact up to the last moment of the Prophet's life were as follows:

1. To give replies to the cowardly attacks by the idolaters (like the Battles of Badr and Uhud and the Battle of the Ditch).
3. To punish the tyrants, who had killed the Muslims or their missionary parties in the deserts or at far-off places, or those who had violated the pacts concluded by them with the Muslims. To this category belong the battles fought against the three tribes of the Jews and the one against Bani Lihyan.
3. To neutralize the enthusiasm which was brewing up amongst the tribes who wished to collect force to attack Madina. Most of the skirmishes took place on this account.

The Battle Of Bani Mustaliq

Bani Mustaliq were a branch of the tribe of Khuza'ah who were the neighbours of Quraysh. Reports were received in Madina that Harith bin Abi Zirar (chief of the tribe) intended to besiege Madina. As on other occasions, the Prophet decided to check this mischief and, therefore, marched towards the tribe of Bani

Mustaliq along with his companions and encountered them by the Well of Marysi'. Fighting started between the two parties.

The valour of the Muslims and the fear which had overtook the Arab tribes on this account made the enemies disperse after a brief skirmish, in which ten of their men and one Muslim by mistake were killed. Consequently a large booty fell to the share of the army of Islam and the women of the enemies were also taken prisoners. 1

The instructive points of this battle are the policies which the Prophet adopted afterwards keeping in view the events of this battle.

Dissensions, however, flared up between the Muhajirs and the Ansar for the first time and but for the prudence of the Prophet their unity would have been destroyed on account of the avarice of some short-sighted persons.

The cause of this incident was that after the conclusion of the battle two Muslims, one of whom was named Jahjah bin Mas'ud (a Muhajir) and the other Sinan Juhani (an Ansar) quarrelled over water. Each of them called his people for help. The result of these calls for help would have been that the Muslims should have fought with one another at a place far off from the centre and should have thus put an end to their own existence.

The Prophet came to know about the incident and said: "Leave these two persons to themselves. This call for help which is very abominable, resembles the calls of the Days of Ignorance and the inauspicious relics of ignorance have not yet been removed from their hearts. These two persons are not acquainted with the programme of Islam and do not know that Islam considers all Muslims to be the brothers of one another and every call which creates dissensions is against the religion of monotheism."2

A Hypocrite Fans The Flame Of Dissensions

In this way the Prophet prevented differences and kept the two groups from attacking each other. However, Abdullah Ubayy, one of the hypocrites of Madina, who nursed extraordinary grudge against Islam and participated in the battles only to share the war booty, expressed his enmity and hypocrisy and spoke thus to those who had gathered around him:

"All this is the result of our own doing. We provided quarters to the Muhajirs of Makkah in our land and protected them from their enemies. Our condition conforms with the well-known saying: *Nourish your dog and it will bite you*. By Allah! When we return to Madina it will be necessary that the strong and dignified people (of Madina) should turn out the weak ones (i.e. the Muhajirs)".

The speech of Abdullah before the people, in whose minds the Arabian party-spirit and the ideas of the Age of Ignorance still lurked, had a very unwholesome effect on them and it was possible that their unity might be jeopardized.

Fortunately, however, a zealous Muslim named Zayd Arqam, who was also present there, replied to his satanic words with full force and said: "By Allah! You are the person, who is mean and humble. You are the person, who doesn't enjoy the least position amongst his kinsmen. On the contrary Prophet Muhammad is respectable amongst the Muslims and their hearts are filled with love for him".

Then he departed from there and came to the Prophet and informed him of the seditious speech of Abdullah. To keep up appearances the Prophet rejected the words of Zayd thrice and said: "Maybe you are mistaken. Probably anger has actuated you to say this. It is possible that he considered you to be low and foolish and meant nothing else". However, Zayd replied in the negative with regard to all these possibilities and said: "No; his intention was to create differences and to fan dissensions.

The Second Caliph requested the Prophet to permit him to kill Abdullah. The Prophet, however, replied: "It is not proper to do so, because the people will say that Muhammad kills his own friends".³

Abdullah learned about Zayd bin Arqam's conversation with the Prophet. He came before the Prophet immediately and said: "I never said any such words". Some well-wishers of his also supported him and said that Zayd had erred in quoting him.

However, the matter did not end there, because temporary stillness is just like lull before the storm. The Holy leader of Islam wanted to do something which might make the parties concerned forget the matter completely. To achieve this end he ordered the people to move, although otherwise it was not the time for departure.

Usayd came to the Prophet and said: "It is not the appropriate time for departure. What is the reason for this order?" The Prophet replied: "Are you not aware of the speech of Abdullah and what he has sparked off?"

Usayd swore and said: "O honourable Prophet! The power is in your hands. You can turn him out. Dear and respectable are you. Mean and humble is he. Be lenient to him, for he is a defeated person. Before your migration to Madina the Aws and Khazraj tribes had agreed to make him the Ruler of Madina and were thinking of collecting gems so that he might be crowned. However, with the rising of the star of Islam his position underwent a change and the people deserted him. And he considers you to be the cause of all this".

Orders for departure were given and the soldiers of Islam continued their march for more than twenty four hours and did not stay at any place except for offering prayers. On the second day when the atmosphere was very hot and all had lost strength to continue their march any longer orders were given for them to encamp. As soon as they dismounted, all of them went to sleep on account of fatigue and all the bitter memories were washed away from their minds. By acting on this plan, therefore, their dissensions subsided.⁴

Conflict Between Faith And Sentiments Of A Soldier

Abdullah bin Ubayy was a pious Muslim. In accordance with the sublime teachings of Islam he was more kind than anyone else to his father a hypocrite though he was. He came to know about what his father had done and thought that the Prophet would put him to death. He, therefore, said to the Prophet:

"If it has been decided that my father should be executed I myself am prepared to enforce the sentence and would request that this job may not be entrusted to any other person. I make this request because I am afraid that, on account of Arabian emotions and filial sentiments, I may lose my self-control and may kill the person who executes my father and may thus smear my hands with the blood of a Muslim and may consequently spoil my own life.

The remarks of this man are the most excellent manifestation of faith. Why did he not request the Prophet to forgive his father? He did not do so, because he knew that whatever the Prophet did was in compliance with the orders of Allah. However, the son of Abdullah found himself in a peculiar psychological predicament. Filial sentiments and Arabian code of morality prompted him to take revenge on his father's executioner and thus to shed the blood of a Muslim.

On the other hand love for peace in the zone of Islam made him think that it was necessary that his father should be killed. To overcome this mental conflict he chose the third course so that the superb interests of Islam might remain safe and his sentiments might not also be injured. And the third course was that he himself should enforce the order of his father's execution. Although such an action is tormenting and heart-rending but the strength of faith and submission to Allah's will provides consolation to some extent.

However, the kind Prophet said to him: "Nothing of the sort is intended, and I will be lenient towards him".

These remarks got circulated amongst the Muslims and all of them wondered at the spiritual greatness of the Prophet. A shower of objections and reproaches were let loose at Abdullah. He was so much humiliated in the eyes of the people that thereafter none paid any heed to him.

During these events the Prophet taught memorable lessons to the Muslims and manifested some wise political policies of Islam. After this incident the leader of the hypocrites did not attract attention and was hated and despised by people in all matter. Once the Prophet said to Umar: "You asked for my permission to kill him. The people who might have been moved on that day on his being killed and might have risen in his support, despise him so much today that if I give orders for his execution they will kill him instantaneously".

The Prophet Marries Juwayriyah

The Prophet married the daughter of Harith, the leader of the insurgents. Different versions of this marriage are given in various books on the Prophet's biography. However, the result of this marriage was that an unbreakable relationship was established between the Prophet and this community and most of the women of this tribe who had been captured by the Muslims were released unconditionally as a gesture of respect for the relationship between them and the Prophet. This marriage was a blessed one because it resulted in the freedom of one hundred women.⁵

1. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 260.

2. Comments on Seerah Ibn Hisham by Suhayli.

3. A study of the biography of the second Caliph proves the fact that he never displayed his strength in the battlefields and was always in the rear rows. However, whenever an enemy was captured he was the first person to request the Prophet for permission to execute him. Here are some of the examples: (i) One of such occasions was that he wanted to kill Abdullah, the hypocrite. (ii) Just before Makkah was conquered he requested the Prophet to grant him permission to cut off the head of Hatib bin Abi Balti'ah, who had been spying for the idolaters. (iii) When Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet brought Abu Sufyan to the camping-place of the Muslims he (the second Caliph) requested the Prophet to permit him to kill him (i.e. Abu Sufyan) immediately.

4. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, pp. 261-262 and Majma'ul Bayan, vol. X, pp. 292-295.

5. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol II, page 264

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