

THE MILESTONE

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Sachar Samachar

18 Years after the Report



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Private Circulation

EDITORIAL

ABU UMAR

A look at the world scenario shows that there are signs of major change everywhere. There is a restless and chaotic atmosphere. Russia-Ukraine war, tensions and clashes in Afghanistan and Pakistan, The conflict between Iran and Israel, the situation in Palestine, or the ongoing protests around the world as a result of this, indicate that we are on the verge of a major change. **It feels like the old world is crumbling and a new one is starting to build. It is not possible to review each of these issues here, but some points will be highlighted, God willing.**

During the Cold War in the last century, the world was divided into two factions - the American block and the Russian block, both were trying their best to defeat each other in different arenas. Although during this period, many countries fought against each other in ideological conflict, diplomatic skirmishes and arms race, but no major war and huge casualties occurred during this entire period. As a result of this silent tension, there was an unstable balance that existed in the world. **This situation started to change when the powerful Soviets ran away after being severely beaten by the mujahideen of Afghanistan.** Although this rescue measure saved the lives of some of its soldiers, but everything from its ideology to its global reputation dissolved into thin air. This was the occasion when the intellectuals of the United States declared with great pomp that the world has now reached its final stage and the sun of Western or American dominance in the world will only set on the morning of the Day of Judgment. This was accepted by all, that the world has become unipolar. And everyone must circumambulate this new Qiblah. Considering the worldly standard, there was no power at that time that could dare to challenge America. So the conspiratorial minds thought that it was necessary to strangle the emerging Islamic and Chinese powers at the same time. Therefore, a new philosophy of clash of civilizations was invented, as a result of

which these two powers became enemies of humanity, and using the attacks of 9/11 as an excuse, Afghanistan was once again thrust into the furnace of war. But after 23 years of American brutality, those who see its actions today will say that America has hit its own foot and lost its international reputation. The re-emergence of this Sunnah is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: **"If Allah had not removed one group of people from another group in this way, then the system of the earth would have deteriorated, but the great grace of Allah on the people of the world."** (Qur'an 2:251). By the way, today the American dominance in the world is seen to be taking its last breaths. **And today the world is being called "Messy-Polar World" which means that there is an upheaval, and as a result of which some powers will rise and the sun of some will set forever.**

What happened in Russia - Ukraine war? When Ukraine became a member of NATO, Russia felt that this would undermine US allies in the region. So it rushed to Ukraine. As a result of this, the United States and other NATO countries should have attacked Russia or forced it politically and economically to withdraw from its actions. But the US and its allies giving Ukraine financial aid and sanctions against Russia could not stop the ongoing Russian brutality in Ukraine. Which means that again Russia is emerging against American allies on the global horizon. This is also seen in the Afghanistan-Pakistan problem. Afghanistan, which has been fighting against Russia and America for four decades, has become so strong militarily that it has also started showing its red eyes in the border dispute with the neighboring country Pakistan. Although according to contemporary standards, Afghanistan is nowhere compared to Pakistan, but the internal political problems of Pakistan and the moral weakness of the its leadership as compared to the Afghan leadership has weakened it significantly. This is an indication that there is going to be a big change in the balance of power in this region in the future.

Be it Iran-Israeli or Hamas clashes that

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have been going on for eight months. The same message is implied in the Israeli war. **Israel is the illegitimate child of the Western powers in the Middle East.** The West used every trick of politics to create it and it is still rotting till today. It is provided with military equipment from the hard earned money of the American people. Before the recent attacks by Hamas, Israel's ugly face was not exposed to the people of Western countries. Therefore, they also openly supported it. Today's protests from the streets of Great Britain to the American colleges and universities are clear evidence that the blessings of eight months of jihad and martyrdom have changed the public opinion of the world. The world now considers anyone who stands with Israel as a supporter of terrorism. In contrast, the Mujahideen have proved that their Jihad is right and their sacrifices will not go in vain. **If the situation continues, the day is not far when Al-Aqsa Mosque will also be able to breathe in a free atmosphere. In this entire manifesto, those who are gaining power should remember that honor and disgrace are in the hands of Allah. He favors righteousness over corruption, and the authority of this world is granted to those who can manage it well. Meaning, the people who will attain power as a result of this change, if they also descend into injustice tomorrow, they will have to face the same consequences.**

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Creator's Call

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۝ ۱ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝ ۲ أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ الْغَافِقِينَ ۝ ۳ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۝ ۴ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۝ ۵

“Read, in the Name of your Lord Who created. Created human from a clinging clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught humanity what they knew not.”

Surah Alaq Verse - 1-5

When Prophet’s ﷺ age reached his forties, he hated the polytheistic and immodest atmosphere of Makkah and turned towards seclusion. He ﷺ began to engage in the worship of the Lord in the solitude of the cave of Hira, adjacent to the city of Makkah, for many days and nights, as is the way of ascetics. He ﷺ used to visit his relatives before going to the cave and then he would carry food and drink for a few days. When these requirements would finish, he would return home, refill his pack, and go back to the cave.

One night, during Ramadan (13 Before Hijri) the Holy Prophet ﷺ was staying in the cave, when the Angel Jibreel (A.S.) appeared and said to Him ﷺ, “Read!”. The Prophet replied, “I cannot read”. It would have been okay to excuse the Prophet ﷺ from reciting because of his illiteracy. But the angel grabbed the Prophet ﷺ and shook him so much that his strength began to give in. The angel repeated the dialogue, and as if the extraordinary powers that are required to lift the bar of revelation were transferred to the holy body by angelic means, the Prophet, at the third time of asking, could read. Thereafter, the first five verses of

Surah Al-Alaq were recited by Jibreel (A.S.) and were memorized by the Prophet ﷺ.

The awe of the revelation, especially the first experience, was extremely fear inducing. Hence the Prophet ﷺ came home trembling. There, He ﷺ shared the whole event with his wife Khadija (R.A.), the life partner and eternal supporter. She knew the depth of goodness in Him ﷺ; hence she comforted Him. Moreover, she took Him ﷺ to her cousin Warqa bin Naufal, and the words of Warqa increased the faith and confidence.

The above five verses are the first Quranic revelation according to the consensus of scholars of the Ummah.

In the first verse, Allah Almighty says, “Read in the name of your Lord, who created the whole universe”, that is, present the Qur’an in front of the people of the world in the name of your Lord, who is the creator of all the worlds. This is a very important warning. It has been said that you should present it with the obligatory acknowledgment of God’s command, so that the people will know that the person who is in front of them with the word is not a claimant. He is not a requester which can be rejected. so don’t ever dare to turn your back, make fun of, or oppose it. **A very important point for us as students is that whatever education we get, our aim should be to seek the pleasure and satisfaction of Allah, not the worldly achievement.**

If our goal is to achieve the world, that teaching will go against us on the Day of Judgment, and if God’s pleasure is obtained through our teaching, then we will be successful in this world and in the Hereafter.

If the first verse was about the general creation, the second is about humans. In this verse, it is meant to convey the special words of the creator of the universe to the people in his name and let him know that the body of man has been created from a small drop of blood, and He is able to create him again and ask him about his deeds.

After that, another truth comes to light, and that is the truth about knowledge. The Lord teaching humans knowledge through the pen, is the proof is that the pen is the broadest source of knowledge and has impacted the human life on the largest scale. This is the reason that Allah mentioned it in the first instance of the last revelation for humanity. **Indeed, the source of knowledge is Allah, and man will know what he knows and what he will know only from Him.**

From these verses, the Prophet ﷺ revealed a belief that a wide and broad rule is established that every matter, every movement, every action, every deed is in the name of Allah. His name is full, in the name of Allah is his beginning, and in the name of Allah is his journey. To Allah is his turn and to Allah is his end! Allah has created us, and He has given knowledge! From him is the beginning of life and from him is knowledge and wisdom. The source of all that man learns and teaches is Allah, who created and gave knowledge!

In the end, we pray to Allah Almighty to grant us all the opportunity to make full use of these verses and purify our education for the sake of Allah.



SACHAR SAMACHAR: 18 YEARS AFTER THE REPORT

WASEEM REZA, Independent Researcher

After more than half a century of independence, on March 9, 2005, the Indian government, under the then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, set up a high-level committee, headed by the former chief justice of Delhi High Court, Rajindar Sachar, to enquire into the social, economic, and educational status of the Indian Muslims. The 7-member panel submitted their report on October 17, 2006, and the report was presented in the Parliament on October 30 of the same year, which later came to be known as the Sachar Committee Report (SCR). The committee tabled a total of 76 recommendations, out of them the UPA government accepted 72, refused to accept 3 and deferred 1. The report unmasked an egregious indifference of the government towards the socio-economic plight of the said community, and sparked a widespread controversy on the disparity, exclusion, and alienation of religious minorities in India, especially Muslims. The data not only unveiled the abysmal incompetency of the government but also punctured the often-blabbered hollow rhetoric of “Muslim appeasement”. It has been a long eighteen years since then. Has the socio-economic and educational status of Muslim community changed? Has it improved or worsened? Have the tall promises met, or it remained unmet? Has any paradigm shift in Muslim Community happened?

How much efforts have been made to ameliorate the dolorous state of the Muslims? We will try to answer the questions In Shaa Allah. But before that, let’s have a glimpse of the landmark report.

The 404-page document mentioned, “The condition of Muslims is worse than Dalits”. The report also stated, “The literacy rate among Muslims in 2001 was 59.1%. This is far below the national average which is 65.1%”. The committee also revealed that “one fourth of Muslim children in the age group of 6-11 have either never attended school or are dropouts. Only 50% of Muslims who complete middle schools are likely to complete secondary education, compared to 62% at the national level.” Their exclusion increases exponentially as the level of education increases and that “in some instances the relative share for Muslims is lower than scheduled castes (SC) who are victims of long-standing caste system”. The committee recommended 15 % of posts in all cadres under the Central and State Governments should be earmarked for minorities, with a break-up of 10 % for Muslims. But several reports note that Muslims are still under-represented in both State and Central government jobs. The report cited that in the premier universities and colleges in India, only 1 out of 25

undergraduate students (4%) and 1 out of 50 postgraduate students (2%) were Muslim. There are so many reasonable recommendations – if you are really interested to know those, a simple google search will help. However, my concern is to investigate the palpable plight of the community – has it changed or worsened? Let’s delve into the reality.

As per the 2011 Indian government census, Muslims rank at the bottom of the higher education ladder along with Scheduled Tribes (ST). A 2018 study titled “Intergenerational Mobility in India” concluded that in terms of educational mobility, Muslims in India are worse off than their African-American counterparts. Apart from the African-American analogy, other findings, which are quite striking, affirm that there has been no meaningful change in the educational status of Muslims. An article titled “Untouched by economic growth states: One in 4 beggars in India is a Muslim, reveals census” published by The Hindu uncovers an utter apathy of the government towards the community that every fourth person in India categorized as a beggar is Muslim. Though Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) strongly discouraged Muslims to opt mendicancy as a profession. Another report by National Sample Survey of India mentions that Muslims religion

is the poorest religious group in India. Muslims' average per capita spending is Rs. 32.66, while it is Rs. 37.50 for Hindus, Rs. 51.43 for Christians and Rs. 55.30 for Sikhs.

Of the many myths the Rajindar Sachar Committee busted, the Muslims were well off in the Left-ruled states was one. It was not true at all. The report placed West Bengal as the "worst" performing state. The data showed that the Muslims in West Bengal were more deprived than the Muslims of Gujrat. This embarrassed the Left to no end and provided the BJP with a propaganda point which ended up in inflaming the Modified anti-Muslim carnage in 2002. This also led to the alienation of Muslim Community from the Left in Bengal and resulted in the Left's defeat in West Bengal in 2011, after ruling a long period of 34 years. In Bengal Muslims fix the "magic figure". Still all political parties whether it is Left or Right give them nothing but hollow promises and use them as "taken for granted" vote bank since time immemorial.

As far as higher education in Bengal is concerned, there are so many instances of denial of admission of Muslim candidates to PhD programs. Students often claim that some eminent universities such as University of Calcutta (CU), Jadavpur University (JU), University of Burdwan (BU), and Kalyani University (KU) do not follow the PhD admission procedure properly. Nepotism seizes seats, merits do not fit. In some cases, it is found that all the seats of different categories are filled up except that of OBC-A. They brazenly write "no suitable candidates found". There is a famine of Muslim faculty in the universities and colleges of West Bengal as well. While the Sachar Committee talks about inclusivity, the state accelerates the process of ghettoization of Muslim community, be it Mumbra in Maharashtra or Jamia Nagar in Delhi or Park Circus

and Rajabazar in Kolkata. There are also so many incidents in Indian academia where burqa and hijab-clad Muslim students made to choose between hijab and exam. What a sheer shame! Finding a paying guest or a rental accommodation for a Muslim student in almost every Indian city is getting harder day by day owing to the prejudice the majority community holds in their manipulated minds against the Muslims; nevertheless, I would urge young minds irrespective of creed to come forward to dismantle this doddering castle of hate. Above all one of the prime reasons behind this pathetic state of the Muslims might be the fact that they are not leading their lives in accordance with the commands of Allah. As Allah says in the holy Quran, "Allah would never change a people's state (of favor) until they change their own state (of faith)".

However, it goes without an iota of doubt that the plight of Muslim community in India has been deteriorating. Vilification and alienation of the largest minority in India has become an everyday job of un/paid far-right Hindutva nationalists, better say chauvinists. After 2014 victory of the BJP, the chest-thumping BJP netas started spewing xenophobic, racist, hateful, genocidal rhetoric against this community openly. They want anti-Muslim sentiments to traverse in the psyche of common Hindus, and they have managed to do so. Consequently, India witnessed many anti-Muslim incidents, i.e., killing, abusing, and lynching even in the broad day light. The first such case reported after BJP's win in 2014 was a mob-lynching of a 28-year-old techie Mohsin Shaikh in Maharashtra. The second innings of NDA govt. came into power with a new scheme of declaring India as a Hindu Rashtra. Muslims were again made to feel "traitorous others" and politically "untouchable" community by brining discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, to make

them second class citizen with this 21st century's new Nuremberg law. Abrupt order of eviction of Muslim ghettos, bulldozing Muslim houses without court order have become the official policy of world's biggest Democracy. In an interview in Frontline Aakar Patel, journalist, and the author of "Our Hindu Rashtra", says, "Structurally, we have already arrived at a Hindu Rashtra". We got acquainted with some neologism, e.g., "Corona Jihad", "Love Jihad", "Gharwapsi", and "Gauraksha" – these all made a deadly cocktail, which is often served to malign Muslim identity and infect the once-peaceful-society with animosity. Christophe Jaffrelot, a French political scientist, in his book "Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy" argues that "India has changed, perhaps irreversibly, from a liberal secular democracy less than a decade ago to a majoritarian "ethnic democracy" today." Muslims especially university students erected walls of resistance against all these pernicious odds, but in most of the cases efforts went in vain. The authoritarian state either muzzled their voice by hook or by crook or slapped draconian law like UAPA against them, and then they ended up languishing in jails.

Of late the incumbent prime minister has turned the General Elections 2024 into a war between Hindu vs. Muslims only to create monopoly on Hindu votes. How on earth a PM can call his own citizens "infiltrators"? He handpicks the destructive game to practice his old detrimental tactics. Don't be surprised! He is the same person who, as a chief minister, had addressed the relief camps for Gujrat riot survivors as "child-producing factories". But what if Congress, who claims to do just to all, would win the election? Would they implement the recommendations of the Sachar Committee? The question remains.

EMBRACING ISLAM

A GREAT STEP

Religion plays a pivotal role in reshaping the beliefs, values, and cultures of societies around the world. **There are so many sects, cults, religions, philosophies, and movements in the world, all of which claim to be the right way. But the true religion is only Islam. It is the first and oldest religion on the earth. Islam is the religion which was given to Adam (A.S.), the first man and the first Prophet of Allah. It is the religion of all the Prophets sent by Allah towards mankind.** The Arabic word 'Islam' means submission or surrender of one's will to the only true God worthy of worship, Allah. Islam also implies 'peace' which is the natural consequence of total submission to the will of Allah. The name 'Islam' was chosen by Allah Himself and clearly mentioned in the Holy Quran as follows.

"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion." (Qur'an 5:3)

"Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam." (Qur'an 3:19)

Besides being a divine religion, Islam is a complete way of life, which means everything we do in life falls within the boundary of Islam. Islam not only teaches worship and spirituality, but also it shows the absolute method of living a perfect life. **Islam covers all the aspects of life from cradle to grave.** In Islam every routine activity of daily life, whether mundane or crucial, whether personal, social, educational, economic, or political are part of the religion and following the guidelines prescribed by the Almighty in all walks of life is essential. **All the routine and natural activities that a person enjoys doing and gets pleasure from, like eating, drinking, sleeping, dressing appropriately, gaining knowledge, earning livelihood, getting married, spending time with family,**

being active in the society for promoting good and removing evil are part of religion and counted as worship if they are done as per the guidelines of Islam.

Currently, we have many philosophies and conflicts in various theories of science, atheism, materialism, and religion. The development of atheism as a serious intellectual option is an important part of the progress of western modernity and increasing doubts about religion have gone hand in hand with the rise of modern science. Prominent 'New Atheist' leaders come from a scientific background. Thus, the rise of science and atheism have been mutually reinforcing. Stories about science and atheism both usually start with Greek and Roman antiquity. India or China might also deserve mention, with their developed philosophical traditions, even including occasional rejection of their gods. Though full-blown atheism remained practically unknown, the Greek philosophical tradition contains hints of materialism and doubts about the gods. Muslims developed medieval science to its furthest extent. Some examples, such as Ibn Haytham's work on optics, show that some areas of Muslim science were poised on the verge of something like modern science, anticipating a fruitful coupling between formal experiments and mathematical modelling. Later, scientific advancements took place in Western Europe, along with modern secular ways of life, eventually including atheism as a noticeable social presence along with its perils. However, we should note that Islam is the friendliest to science among all religions, and Muslims need to master modern technology to resist European dominance.

This spiritual and scientific essence of Islam has always pulled people to accept it as their way of life. Muhammad (PBUH)

prayed to Allah with to strengthen Islam with either Umar or Abu Jahl, and His prayer was answered. Umar (R.A.) then went to the Prophet (PBUH) with the same sword he intended to kill him with and accepted Islam in front of him and his companions.

Umar's conversion to Islam granted power to the Muslims and to the Islamic faith in Mecca. **It was after this event that Muslims offered prayers openly in Masjid al-Haram for the first time.** Similarly, Allah has been always strengthening Islam by making renowned personalities convert to Islam. Recently, many celebrities and famous individuals have also converted to Islam. **Professor Henry Klassen, famous scientist in the field of stem cells, has converted to Islam this Ramadan and named himself Abdul Haque. Popular American rapper and DJ, "Lil Jon" Jonathan Smith, has converted to Islam.** Active since the 1990s and regarded as a pioneering influence in the field, **Smith took his shahadah in the presence of Imam Ahson Syed at the King Fahad Mosque in Los Angeles in the first week of Ramadan 1445. UFC legend Royce Gracie embraced Islam on 3 March 2024.** Royce Gracie converted to Islam after he received backlash on social media for a post. He supported Israel in an Instagram post made on 19 February. Then, in a show, he opened up about his thoughts on Islam, the genocide taking place in Gaza, and his intention to visit the holy city of Makkah. Ultimately, his hatred towards Islam ended up taking him to Shahada. Indeed, Allah is the best of all planners. **Shaun King, a prominent figure in social activism, particularly in movements advocating for Black Lives Matter and against police brutality, accepted Islam at the Valley Ranch Islamic Center in Dallas, TX, with Imam Omar Sulaiman on March 10, 2024.** He was a vital voice in Instagram activism against the genocide in Gaza at a time when corporate media was not reporting from the ground. The immense devotion and faith of the Palestinian people softened his heart and became a way of embracing Islam.

The Quest for AUTHENTIC FAITH

Atifa Aimen
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Being born into Islam is a blessing that most of us fail to appreciate. They believe it is enough for them to enter paradise as if being a Muslim is a free ticket to Jannah. **Most of us are born in a Muslim household with an Islamic upbringing and yet fail to recognize the true reason for our existence.** On the other hand, some people have had a very different upbringing and after being impressed by true Muslims or the Islamic way of living, they accepted Islam. **One of the beautiful things about revert Muslims is that they seek Islam out of love and respect towards the religion.** If they can do it despite being from a different background and very little support from their own family, we can also learn Islam and seek guidance from Allah (SWT). Indeed the act of seeking knowledge through the proper means is a virtue. It entails many rewards for the seeker. In other words, one does not have to be an accomplished scholar to attain its rewards but by the sincere effort of learning. In a hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“Whoever takes a path in search of knowledge, Allah will cause him to walk in one of the paths to Paradise. Indeed the angels will lower their wings in great pleasure with the one who seeks knowledge.” (Sunan Abi Dawud)

The search for knowledge is clearly a human activity intertwined with human nature, which is curious and cannot help but think. We seek answers to important questions and feel the value of information. **In this world, religious knowledge is a state that benefits the soul and personality of its seeker, even if it does not provide immediate material benefit. Isn't it amazing when you try to learn Islam on your own and try to be a better person due to your own will and not by the pressure of family and society?** Indeed, a child learns mostly about Islam from their parents or they usually copy what their parent does. But there is a generation gap between us and our parents. It is impossible

to judge which generation is more religious because everyone has a different upbringing. Some were taught to practice religion out of fear and some do it for the sake of Allah's love. But as the society is evolving, the new generation is questioning the old-age customs and traditions. And it makes them wonder whether it is something that people invented or something that is approved by Allah (SWT). Some practices have become so common that people believe them to be a part of Islam, which they certainly are not. With all these made-up customs & traditions, the true essence of Islam is lost somewhere. Those who are guided by Allah (SWT) seek answers on their own rather than blindly continuing doing practices their forefathers used to do. But the path they choose has many thorns laid by their own family or local maulvis. When someone starts practising religion through baby steps, instead of appreciating it, people often interrupt them and set expectations of perfection. **No one can be perfect but at least they try and must be appreciated or rather left to do what they are trying to do i.e. embracing Islam on their own will.**

Nowadays, maulvis don't let kids enter the mosque, the reason being that they may create a nuisance or spoil the atmosphere of the mosque. You see, that's conservative thinking. If kids don't spend time in the Mosque in the early stages of their lives, how can we expect them to come there in the long run? **Kids shouldn't be denied entering the Mosque, rather they should be taught the manners and importance of spending time at the Mosque.** When they start loving spending time at the Mosque in their childhood, it will become their happy place throughout their lives. Not only kids but even the youth are intimidated, they are asked to come in proper attire or not come at all. For example- not allowed to wear a T-shirt, not allowed to wear jeans etc. These things detach them from practising Islam, thinking it is too tough for them to follow. That's why we often observe the absence of

youth from the Mosques. When any female suddenly or occasionally starts wearing hijab, they are bullied and lectured by many people. People expect them to observe complete hijab from day one or say things like “You aren't even religious, don't do this show-off”, “the length of your hijab is too short”, “your hair is showing”, etc. Upon hearing these words, they lose morale and stop doing it at all. In this ever-evolving society, observing hijab has become a major challenge for most women. There are some places of the World, where a women's hijab is questioned or being banned. In such circumstances, it is more hurtful when the people of their own community lose their confidence.

Instead of mocking someone, we can approach them nicely and appreciate their minor efforts and encourage them to be a better Muslim. People mostly say that the youth is spoiled, they don't listen to elders etc. but the reason is quite simple, we don't give them credibility for their little efforts, and we don't give them space to learn from their mistakes. Everyone wants their child to become righteous. The best way to guide them towards Islam is by making them love the glory and mercy of Allah (SWT). **When anyone practices Islam as a burden from family or society, there is no reward for them.** What's best for them is to read the book of Allah i.e. Quran by meaning and understanding what Allah (SWT) is telling us to do and what favours he has granted us in this world. To get a better insight into how one should spend their life, we must go through the Seerah of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Islam isn't just a religion but a way of living, dictated by our creator; Allah (SWT). Once we understand this, It will make our life and hereafter beautiful.

SEALED NECTAR

THE BATTLE OF BADR *Part - 1*

SAFIUR RAHMAN MUBARAKPURI

We have already spoken about Al-‘Ushairah Invasion when a caravan belonging to Quraish had escaped an imminent military encounter with the Prophet [pbuh] and his men. When their return from Syria approached, the Prophet [pbuh] despatched Talhah bin ‘Ubaidullah and Sa‘id bin Zaid northward to scout around for any movements of this sort. The two scouts stayed at Al-Hawra’ for some days until Abu Sufyan, the leader of the caravan, passed by them. The two men hurried back to Madinah and reported to the Prophet [pbuh] their findings. Great wealth amounting to 50 thousand gold Dinars guarded by 40 men moving relatively close to Madinah constituted a tempting target for the Muslim military, and provided a potentially heavy economic, political and military strike that was bound to shake the entire structure of the Makkan polytheists.

The Prophet [pbuh] immediately exhorted the Muslims to rush out and waylay the caravan to make up for their property and wealth they were forced to give up in Makkah. He did not give orders binding to everyone, but rather gave them full liberty to go out or stay back, thinking that it would be just an errand on a small scale.

The Muslim army was made up of 300- 317 men, 82- 86 Emigrants, 61 from Aws and 170 from Khazraj. They were not well-equipped nor adequately prepared. They had only two horses belonging to Az-Zubair bin Al- ‘Awwam and Al- Miqdad bin Al- Aswad Al- Kindi, **70 camels, one for two or three men to ride alternatively.** The Messenger of Allâh [pbuh] himself, ‘Ali and Murthid bin Abi Murthid Al-Ghanawi had only one camel. Disposition of the affairs of Madinah was entrusted to Ibn Umm Maktum but later to Abu Lubabah bin ‘Abdul Mundhir. The general leadership was given to Mus‘ab bin

‘Umair Al- Qurashi Al- ‘Abdari, and their standard was white in colour. The little army was divided into two battalions, the Emigrants with a standard raised by ‘Ali bin Abi Talib, and the Helpers whose standard was in the hand of Sa‘d bin Mu‘adh. Az- Zubair bin Al- ‘Awwam was appointed to the leadership of the right flank, Al- Miqdad bin ‘Amr to lead the left flank, and the rear of the army was at the command of Qais bin Abi Sa’sa’ah. The General Commander- in- Chief was the Prophet [pbuh], of course.

The Prophet [pbuh], at the head of his army, marched out along the main road leading to Makkah. He then turned left towards Badr and when he reached As- Safrâ, he despatched two men to scout about for the camels of Quraish. Abu Sufyan, on the other hand, was on the utmost alert. He had already been aware that the route he was following was attended with dangers. He was also anxious to know about the movements of Muhammad [pbuh]. His scouting men submitted to him reports to the effect that the Muslims were lying in ambush for his caravan. To be on the safe side, he hired Damdam bin ‘Amr Al- Ghifari to communicate a message asking for help from the Quraishites. The messenger rode fast and reached Makkah in frenzy. Felling himself from his camel, he stood dramatically before Al- Ka’bah, cut off the nose and the ears of the camel, turned its saddle upside down, tore off his own shirt from front and behind, and cried: “O Quraish! Your merchandise! It is with Abu Sufyan. The caravan is being intercepted by Muhammad [pbuh] and his companions. I cannot say what would have happened to them. Help! Help!”

The effect of this hue and cry was instantaneous and the news stunned Quraish and they immediately remembered their pride that was wounded

when the Muslims had intercepted Al-Hadrami caravan. They therefore swiftly mustered almost all of their forces and none stayed behind except Abu Lahab, who delegated someone who owed him some money. They also mobilized some Arab tribes to contribute to the war against the Prophet [pbuh]. All the clans of Quraish gave their consent except Banu ‘Adi. **Soon an excited throng of 1300 soldiers including 100 horsemen and 600 mailed soldiers with a large number of camels, was clamouring to proceed to fight the Muslims. For food supplies, they used to slaughter an alternate number of camels of ten and nine every day.** They were however afraid that Banu Bakr, on account of old long deep- seated animosity, would attack their rear. At that critical moment, Iblis (Satan) appeared to them in the guise of Suraqa bin Malik bin Ju’sham Al- Mudlaji — chief of Bani Kinana — saying to them: “I guarantee that no harm will happen from behind.”

They set out burning with indignation, motivated by a horrible desire for revenge and exterminating anyone that might jeopardize the routes of their caravans:

“...boastfully and to be seen of men, and hinder (men) from the path of Allâh.”

[Al- Qur’an 8:47]

Or as the Prophet [pbuh] said: **“O Allâh these are the haughty and conceited; they have come defying Allâh and defying His Messenger.”**

They moved swiftly northward to Badr. On the way they received another message from Abu Sufyan asking them to go back home because the caravan had escaped the Muslims. Incidentally, Abu Sufyan, on learning the intention of the Muslims, led his caravan off the main route, and inclined it towards the Red Sea. By this manoeuvre, he was able to slip past the Madinese ambush and was out of their reach.



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