

SUMMER IMMERSION

THE BATTLEFIELDS OF FAITH



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SESSION 2

The Arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ)

- Prior to Prophethood:
 - The Prophet's arrival was an answer of Ibrahim's supplication to Allah.

رَبَّنَا وَأَبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

Our Lord! Raise from among them a messenger who will recite to them Your revelations, teach them the Book and wisdom, and purify them. Indeed, You 'alone' are the Almighty, All-Wise. (2:129)

- Long before the Prophet's arrival, Allah provided the Quraysh with numerous signs to demonstrate that the supplication of their ancestor, Ibrahim (AS), was being fulfilled. Among them was the dream of the Prophet's grandfather, Abdul Muttalib.
- Abdul Muttalib received divine instructions in his dreams to locate the Zamzam well, which had been buried for centuries. The Quraysh initially doubted him, believing it was made up. Uncovering the lost spring cemented his position as the supreme leader of Makkah.
- The Quraysh were aware of the prophecies and signs surrounding the Prophet's arrival. Despite these signs, they generally rejected the reluctance to abandon ancestral polytheism.

- In the Qur'an, Allah clearly establishes a principle of divine justice: He will not destroy a population or bring about utter destruction until He has first sent a messenger or warner to make the truth clear.
- Allah granted numerous chances and opportunities to the Arabian Peninsula, along with the Persian and Roman empires; however, they failed to accept the message.
- Beginning of Prophethood:
 - The Prophet's prophethood began when Jibril appeared to him in the Cave of Hira. The angel embraced him and commanded him "Iqra!" (Read). This caused the Prophet (ﷺ) great physical distress that he returned to his wife, Khadijah, fearing for his sanity and life.
 - Khadijah calmed and reassured him by affirming his good character— stating that God would never forsake him. She then took him to her cousin, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, a scholar of previous scriptures, who confirmed that he had received the same divine call as previous prophets.
 - Waraqah told the Prophet (ﷺ): "I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out." The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: "Will they drive me out?" Waraqah replied in the affirmative, stating: "Anyone who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly."
 - Just as Waraqah predicted, the early Muslim community in Makkah faced an escalating wave of persecution, boycotts, and torture at the hands of the Quraysh.

- After facing violent rejection and persecution in Ta'if, the Prophet (ﷺ) was divinely granted permission to migrate to Madinah. However, this move was violently opposed by the Quraysh, who plotted to assassinate him before he could escape Makkah.

The Battle of Badr

- When Muslims migrated to Madinah, the Quraysh seized their abandoned properties, resulting in a loss estimated at five million dollars. To seek compensation and weaken the Quraysh's economy, the Prophet mobilized a small force aiming to intercept a trade caravan led by Abu Sufyan, sparking the Battle of Badr.
- The Prophet's initial objective was just the caravan, but upon learning the Quraysh army was marching, he consulted his companions. They resolved to advance toward the strategic water wells of Badr to intercept the looming threat.
- Despite relying on only two horses and roughly 300 fighters, the Muslims won a miraculous victory by the will of Allah against overwhelming odds. The death of key Quraysh leaders like Abu Jahl firmly established the Ummah as a formidable force, serving as a divine demonstration of truth over falsehood.
 - Allah summarizes Badr in this verse:

إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الدَّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوَى وَالرَّكْبُ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدْتُمْ لِاخْتِلَافْتُمْ فِي الْمِيعَادِ وَلَكِنْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

‘Remember’ when you were on the near side of the valley, your enemy on the far side, and the caravan was below you. Even if the two armies had made an appointment ‘to meet’, both would have certainly missed it. Still it transpired so Allah may establish what He had destined—that those who were to perish and those who were to survive might do so after the truth had been made clear to both. Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (8:42)

The Battle of Uhud

- Enraged by their humiliating defeat at Badr, the Quraysh gathered a massive army for revenge, culminating in the Battle of Uhud. They were partially successful in their quest for vengeance.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) initially preferred to stay inside the fortified city of Madinah and defend from within. However, many eager young warriors who had missed the opportunity to fight at Badr were eager to prove their valor, passionately argued to meet the Quraysh army on the open battlefield.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) eventually agreed to their plan and retired to his quarters to put on his armor. Realizing they had pressured the Prophet (ﷺ) against his better judgment, the young companions felt remorseful and told the Prophet (ﷺ) they were now happy to follow his original strategy.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) refused to back down, declaring: "It is not fitting for a prophet that he should lay down his arms once he has put them on, until Allah has decided between him and his enemy."
- The process of shura (mutual consultation) was executed prior to the battle, highlighting success in the Prophet's leadership and adherence to protocol. He made the right decisions. Even though the battle resulted in a loss, his principled decision-making laid the foundation for the ultimate success that Allah eventually granted them.
- Badr and Uhud remind believers that worldly results are not the true measure of success.
 - Badr (worldly success): It provided an immediate, worldly triumph.
 - Uhud (worldly loss, success in the akhirah): It brought both worldly loss and spiritual reward leading to success in the akhirah.

- Allah said He forgave those who made the mistake:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

Indeed, those 'believers' who fled on the day when the two armies met were made to slip by Satan because of their misdeeds. But Allah has pardoned them. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Forbearing. (3:155)

- Khalid ibn al-Walid who was a key figure that turned the tide at Uhud, later became the legendary Sword of Allah, the general who conquered vast lands for the Muslims.
 - Observing the Prophet (ﷺ) perform Salah al-Khawf (the Prayer of Fear) left a profound mark on Khalid. Impressed by the tactical brilliance that allowed Muslims to pray without lowering their guard, his respect for the faith grew — a realization that ultimately led to his conversion to Islam a few months prior to the Battle of Mu'tah.

The Prophet's Letters to Global Rulers

- The unification of the Arabian Peninsula established the first centralized Islamic state. This marked a major turning point, prompting the Prophet (ﷺ) to dispatch a series of diplomatic letters to global rulers, inviting them to Islam.
- The letters were signed with a silver seal engraved with the words "Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah". All the rulers gave different responses.
 - Chosroes (Emperor of Persia): Angered by the invitation, he tore up the letter. Upon hearing this, the Prophet prophesied that Chosroes' empire would be fractured.
 - Heraclius (Emperor of the Byzantine Empire): The emperor received the letter with respect but did not officially convert due to fear of losing his throne and the hostility of his courtiers.

- Al-Muqawqas (Vicerent of Egypt): He did not convert, but replied respectfully and sent gifts to the Prophet.
- Ghassanid Governor (Governor of Damascus/Syria): He cruelly executed the Prophet's ambassador. This violation triggered the Battle of Mu'tah.

The Battle of Mu'tah

- In response, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent a retaliatory force of 3,000 men to the region. At Mu'tah, this small Muslim force faced a massive Byzantine (Roman)-Ghassanid army.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) appointed three specific commanders in a strict succession: Zayd ibn Harithah, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, and Abdullah ibn Rawahah, who all fell in succession.
- At this critical moment, Thabit ibn al-Arqam al-Ansari took up the standard and passed it to Khalid ibn al-Walid, insisting he assume leadership. The surviving forces readily agreed to serve under Khalid's command.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) miraculously watched the engagement unfold and provided real-time updates to the Companions, announcing the tragic martyrdom of the commanders as they fell.
- He saw Khalid ibn al-Walid take control of the army without official appointment. While his eyes filled with tears, his face lit up with a smile, and he announced, "The flag was taken by a Sword amongst the Swords of Allah (i.e. Khalid) and Allah made them victorious".
- The Battle of Mu'tah became the legendary turning point that cemented Khalid ibn al-Walid's military legacy in Islam. Although he may have been the child of Islam's greatest enemy, upon converting, he dedicated his life completely to the service of Allah and was ready to die for the sake of Allah.

- Though a brilliant general in his own right, Khalid ibn al-Walid required the mentorship and guidance directly from the greatest military general of them all, the Prophet (ﷺ).
- When Khalid made a severe error in judgment on one occasion, resulting in casualties, the Prophet (ﷺ) raised his hands and declared twice: "O Allah! I am innocent of what Khalid has done."
- The special bond between the Prophet (ﷺ) and Khalid was also a spiritual one. For instance, Khalid opened up to the Prophet (ﷺ) when experiencing severe nightmares and feelings of fear at night. The Prophet taught him to recite the following supplication for protection:

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ الَّتِي لَا يَجَاوِزُهَا بَرٌّ وَلَا فَاجِرٌ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا
وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا ذَرَأَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا
وَمِنْ شَرِّ فِتَنِ اللَّيْلِ وَفِتَنِ النَّهَارِ
وَمِنْ شَرِّ طَوَارِقِ اللَّيْلِ وَالتَّهَارِ إِلَّا طَارِقًا يَطْرُقُ بِخَيْرٍ يَا رَحْمَنُ

A'ūdhu bi-kalimāti-llāhi-t-tāmmāti-llatī lā yujāwizuhunna barrun wa lā fājir, min sharri mā yanzilu min-as-samā'i wa mā ya'ruju fihā, wa min sharri mā dhara'a fī-l-ardī wa mā yakhruju minhā, wa min sharri fitani-l-layli wa-n-nahār, wa min sharri ṭawāriqi-l-layli wa-n-nahāri, illā ṭāriqan yaṭruqu bi-khayrin, yā Raḥmān

I seek refuge in the Most Perfect Words of Allah which no righteous or evil person can pass from the evil that comes down from the sky and ascends it. And from the evil that is sowed in the earth and the evil that comes out from it. And from the evil of the tribulations of the night and the tribulations of the day. And from the evil of all the ones who come knocking during the night and day except someone who comes knocking with good, O Most Merciful One.

Abu Bakr's Transformation of the Islamic State

- Following the passing of the Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Bakr assumed leadership of the Muslims as the first Caliph. On the very day the Prophet (ﷺ) died, Abu Bakr demonstrated his resolute leadership by immediately dispatching the army of Usama ibn Zayd, honoring the final command of the Prophet (ﷺ).

- Before his passing, the Prophet (ﷺ) appointed Usama ibn Zayd, the son of Zayd ibn Harithah, who was martyred in Mu'tah, to lead an expedition to the Roman borders at Mu'tah. The primary goal was to avenge the Muslim martyrs there.
- Upon learning of the Prophet's passing, the army led by Usama ibn Zayd halted its march just outside the city and returned. Although several Companions urged Abu Bakr to delay the campaign or recall the troops, he firmly refused to alter the Prophet's original mandate. Instead, he ordered the army to march out that very night to fulfill its mission without delay.
- During Abu Bakr's reign, the Roman (Byzantine) Empire was winning the centuries-long Roman-Persian wars. The Qur'an foretold a major shift in the balance of power in Surah Ar-Rum (30:2-5): the Roman Empire, which was severely defeated by the Persians, would regain victory.
- Following a crushing defeat by the Roman Emperor Heraclius, the Persian King Chosroes II was overthrown by a palace revolt led by his son, Kavadh II. He was subsequently executed by being slowly shot with arrows. His demise triggered Persia's (Sassanid Empire) internal collapse — fulfilling the predictions found in the Qur'an.
- Abu Bakr took advantage of the severe political instability within the weakened Persian Empire. He dispatched the first Muslim army into Persian territory. After successfully suppressing the Ridda Wars across the Arabian Peninsula, he linked up the forces of Khalid ibn al-Walid and Al-Muthanna ibn Haritha, with the mission to capture the strategic city of Al-Hira.
- Khalid marched from Yamamah and merged with Al-Muthanna's existing force near Al-Hira. Together, they spearheaded an invasion and laid successful siege to Al-Hira.

- Following the successful campaigns in the Muslim conquest of Persia, Abu Bakr altered the trajectory of history. To protect the expanding Islamic state from Roman threats, Abu Bakr redirected troops from the Persian front to the Levant. This strategic shift culminated in the Battle of Yarmuk.

