

The National Amīr/ President
Jamā‘at Aḥmadiyya,

Dear Brother,

السلام علیکم ورحمة اللہ وبرکاتہ

Summary of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V (May Allāh be his Helper) on 06th September 2024 at Mubārak Mosque Islāmabād, Tilford, UK

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: Today, I will speak about the Battle of the Trench, also known as the Battle of Aḥzāb, which took place in 5 AH, corresponding to February and March 627 CE. Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) recited following verses of Surah Al-Aḥzāb:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ جَآءَتْكُمْ جُنُوْدٌ فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيْحًا وَّجُنُوْدًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا ۗ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرًا ۝۱۰۰ اِذْ جَآءَؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ اَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَاِذْ رَاَعَتِ الْاَبْصَارُ الْاَنْجَارَ وَتَطَّنَ عَلٰى الْاَنْبِيَاۤءِ بِاللّٰهِ الْاَلْمُنَوْنَآ ۝۱۰۱ هُمَا لَكَ الْبَتْلٰى اَلْبَتْلٰى الْمُنْمُوْنُوْنَ وَاَنْزَلْنَا زُلْزَلًا شَدِيْدًا ۝۱۰۲ وَاِذْ يَقُوْلُ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَّا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗٓ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ۝۱۰۳ وَاِذْ قَالَتْ طٰاٰلِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يٰۤاَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مَقٰمَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوْا ۝۱۰۴ وَيَسْتَاْذِنُ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ النَّبِيَّ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّ بُيُوْتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ ۝۱۰۵ وَمَا هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ اِنَّ يُّبَيِّدُوْنَ اِلَّا فَرٰلًا ۝۱۰۶ وَلَوْ دَخَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سٰلَمُوْا الْفِتْنَةَ لَآتَوْهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوْا بِهَا اِلَّا يَسِيْرًا ۝۱۰۷ وَكَفَدَ كٰلُوْا عٰهَدُوا اللّٰهَ مِنْ قَبْلِ لَا يُؤْتُوْنَ الْاَذْيٰرَ ۝۱۰۸ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللّٰهِ مَسْئُوْلًا ۝۱۰۹ قُلْ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْفِرَارُ اِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ اَوْ الْقَتْلِ وَاِذَا لَا تُنْتَعُوْنَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۝۱۱۰ قُلْ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ يَعْصِمُكُمْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُؤًْا اَوْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً ۝۱۱۱ وَلَا يَجِدُوْنَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وٰلِيًا وَّلَا نَصِيْرًا ۝۱۱۲ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللّٰهُ الْمُتَوَعِّجِيْنَ وَمِنْكُمْ وَالْقٰاٰلِيْنَ لِاٰمَنِيْنِهِمْ هَلُمَّ اِلَيْنَا ۝۱۱۳ وَلَا يَأْتُوْنَ الْاِنْسَآءَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۝۱۱۴ اَسْحَبَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝۱۱۵ فَاِذَا جَآءَ الْخَوْفُ رَاٰهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ تَدُوْرًا عٰبِيْنُهُمْ كَالَّذِيْ يُغْشٰى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ۝۱۱۶ فَاِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقْتُمْ بِالْمٰسِنَةِ حِدَادَ اَسْحَبٍ عَلٰى الْخَيْرِ ۝۱۱۷ اَوَّلِيْكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوْا فَاَحْبَطَ اللّٰهُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ۝۱۱۸ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا ۝۱۱۹ يَحْسِبُوْنَ الْاَحْزَابَ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوْا ۝۱۲۰ وَاِنْ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الْاَحْزَابُ يَدُوْدًا اَوْ اَنْتُمْ بٰدُوْنَ فِي الْاَحْزَابِ يَسٰلُوْنَ عَنْ اَنْبِيَآئِكُمْ ۝۱۲۱ وَكَوْ كٰلُوْا فِيْكُمْ مَّا فَتَلٰوْا اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۝۱۲۲ نَقَدَ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ اَسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللّٰهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْاٰخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا ۝۱۲۳ وَلٰمَّا رَاَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الْاَحْزَابَ ۝۱۲۴ قَالُوْا هٰذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗٓ وَصَدَقَ اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗٓ ۝۱۲۵ وَمَا آذٰهُمْ اِلَّا اِيْمَانًا وَّتَسْلِيْمًا ۝۱۲۶ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوْا مَا عٰهَدُوا اللّٰهَ عَلَيْهِ ۝۱۲۷ فَبِمَنْهُمْ مِّنْ قَطِيْعٍ نَّجَبَةٍ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّتَمَتَّزُ ۝۱۲۸ وَمَا يَدَّوْلُوْا تَبَدُّلًا ۝۱۲۹ لِيَجْزِيَ اللّٰهُ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ اِنْ شَاءَ اَوْ يَشْرِبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝۱۳۰ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۝۱۳۱ وَرَدَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِعَيْنِهِمْ لَمْ يِنَالُوْا حٰثِرًا ۝۱۳۲ وَكَلَّمَ اللّٰهُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الْغِتَالِ ۝۱۳۳ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيْزًا ۝۱۳۴

‘O ye who believe! remember the favour of Allah on you when there came down upon you hosts, and We sent against them a wind and hosts that you saw not. And Allah sees what you do. When they came upon you from above you, and from below you, and when your eyes became distracted, and your hearts reached to the throats, and you thought diverse thoughts about Allah. There and then were the believers sorely tried, and they were shaken with a violent shaking. And when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease said, ‘Allah and His Messenger promised us nothing but a delusion.’ And when a party of them said, ‘O people of Yathrib, you have possibly no stand against the enemy, therefore turn back.’ And a section of them even asked leave of the Prophet, saying, ‘Our houses are exposed and defenceless.’ And they were in truth not exposed. They only sought to flee away. And if entry were effected against them into the town from its environs, and then they were asked to join in the disturbances, they would have at once done so, and would not have tarried in their houses save a little. And truly they had already covenanted with Allah that they would not turn their backs. And a covenant with Allah will have to be answered for. Say, ‘Flight shall not avail you if you flee from death or slaughter; and even then you will enjoy but a little.’ Say, ‘Who is it that can save you against Allah if it be His wish to do you harm or if it be His wish to show you mercy?’ And they will not find for themselves any friend or helper other than Allah. Verily Allah knows those among you who hinder men and those who say to their brethren, ‘Come to us;’ and they come not to the fight but a little, Being niggardly with regard to you. But when danger comes, thou seest them looking towards thee, their eyes rolling like one who is fainting on account of

death. But when the fear has passed away, they assail you with sharp tongues being greedy for wealth. These have never believed; so Allah has rendered their works null and void. And that is an easy thing for Allah. They think that the confederates have not gone away; and if the confederates should come again, they would wish to be among the nomad Arabs in the desert, asking for news about you. And if they were among you they would not fight save a little. Verily you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model, for him who fears Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much. And when the believers saw the confederates, they said, 'This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us; and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth.' And it only added to their faith and submission. Among the believers are men who have been true to the covenant they made with Allah. There are some of them who have fulfilled their vow, and some who still wait, and they have not changed their condition in the least; That Allah may reward the truthful for their truth, and punish the hypocrites if He so please, or turn to them in mercy. Verily Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. And Allah turned back the disbelievers in their rage; they gained no good. And Allah sufficed the believers in their fight. And Allah is Powerful, Mighty.' (33:10-26)

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) explained that this battle is called the Battle of Trench because, unlike traditional Arab warfare, the Muslims dug a trench to defend the city for the first time. It is also known as the Battle of Aḥzāb, a name given in the Holy Qur'ān. 'Aḥzāb' is the plural of 'Ḥizb,' meaning groups or parties, as several Arab factions and tribes united to launch an attack against the Muslims.

The reason for this battle stemmed from the fact that in Rabī' al-Awwal, 4 AH, the Jewish tribe Banu Naḍīr was exiled from Madinah due to their betrayal, rebellion, and conspiracy to assassinate the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him). The tribe then settled in Khaibar. Just four months later, these treacherous Jews, ungrateful for past favours, devised a devious plan against the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) and Islām. Their leader, Ḥuyyā bin Akḥṭab, along with key associates, went to Makkah and met with Abu Sufyān and other prominent Quraish leaders, assuring them of Jewish support and proposing a united front against the Muslims. Abu Sufyān welcomed them and said, 'You are like family to us, and we value those who help us against Muḥammad the most.'

After allying with the Quraish, the Jewish delegation went to other tribes. They first approached Banu Ghaṭfān, a tribe already hostile to the Muslims and promised them a year's worth of Khaibar dates. Banu Ghaṭfān agreed to support them and committed 6,000 troops. The delegation then went to Banu Sulaim, who had previously attempted to attack the Muslims and failed. Upon hearing of this larger campaign, they eagerly joined. Similarly, Banu Fazārah, led by 'Uyainah, was also prepared to fight the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him). 'Uyainah invited his ally tribe, Banu Asad, who also readied themselves for battle against the Muslims. Other tribes also joined this Jewish alliance. These tribes were known throughout Arabia for their bravery and military prowess.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashīr Aḥmad (May Allāh be pleased with him) writes that due to their cunning nature and expertise in conspiracies, the Jews' efforts bore fruit, and the Arab tribes united against the Muslims. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ Mau'ūd (May Allāh be pleased with him) explains that Khaibar was a major Jewish stronghold in Arabia. After arriving there, Banu Naḍīr incited the Arabs against the Muslims, and after extensive preparations, a grand alliance of powerful Arab tribes was formed. This alliance included the tribes of Makkah and its surrounding areas, as well as those from Najd and the northern regions of Madinah, as well as the Jews. Together, they assembled a massive army to march on Madinah. The Quraish of Makkah set out with 4,000 troops under the leadership of Abu Sufyān. The cavalry was commanded by Khālīd bin Walīd. Seven hundred men from Banu Sulaim joined the Quraish under the command of Sufyān bin 'Abd Shams. Banu Asad set out under Ṭulaihah bin Khuwaylid. Banu Fazārah sent 1,000 men led by 'Uyainah. Four hundred men each from Banu Ashja' and Banu Murrah also participated. Banu Ghaṭfān committed 6,000 troops, and the Jews contributed a reserve force of 2,000. The total force was at least 10,000 strong, with some estimates reaching up to 24,000. All these forces were led by Abu Sufyān bin Ḥarb, making this the largest military campaign in Arab history up to that time.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashīr Aḥmad (May Allāh be pleased with him) writes that even if the estimate of 10,000 is accepted, it was still an extraordinarily large number for that era, possibly the largest ever

gathered in any Arab tribal war up to that point. Provisions and weapons were also more than sufficient. This army advanced toward Madinah in Shawwal, 5 AH (February/March 627 CE).

Ḥaḍrat Muṣṣleḥ Mau‘ūd (May Allāh be pleased with him) says that historians have estimated the army to be between 10,000 and 24,000, and it is clear that the combined forces of all of Arabia would not have been limited to just 10,000 men. The estimate of 24,000 is likely more accurate. At the very least, the army must have numbered around 18,000 to 20,000. Madinah was a small town, and such a massive attack from all of Arabia was no small matter. Madinah could only muster around 3,000 men, including the elderly, young, and boys, while the enemy’s force ranged from 20,000 to 24,000, all of whom were trained fighters.

When news of the enemy’s preparations reached the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him), he decided to have a trench dug around Madinah. It is reported that the Holy Prophet’s intelligence network was well-informed, with reports constantly arriving from all directions. Upon learning of the Quraish and Jewish alliance, the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) assembled the Ṣaḥāba, informed them of the enemy’s plans, and sought their counsel on whether to confront the enemy outside Madinah or stay and defend the city. According to narrations, Ḥaḍrat Salmān (May Allāh be pleased with him) suggested that in Persia, they would dig a trench when faced with a cavalry threat. The idea was well-received, and the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) instructed the Muslims to remain in Madinah and dig the trench. Some sources note that the decision to dig the trench was not solely based on Ḥaḍrat Salmān’s suggestion, but was also divinely guided, as this strategy was entirely unfamiliar to the Arabs.

It is also mentioned that when the enemy army was unable to cross the trench, Abu Sufyān wrote a letter to the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him), mentioning the idols Lāt and ‘Uzzāh, and mocking the Muslims for digging the trench to avoid battle. In response, the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) wrote back to Abu Sufyan, saying, 'I received your letter, and I know that you have always been arrogant against Allāh. As for your mention of leading your grand army to destroy us, know that it is the decree of Allāh that has stood in the way of your evil plans, and He will make a decision that will cause you to forget the names of Lāt and ‘Uzzāh. You asked who taught me to dig the trench. It was revealed to me by Allāh. In the end, Allāh will grant us victory.' This letter makes it clear that although Ḥaḍrat Salmān (May Allāh be pleased with him) may have given the suggestion, the Holy Prophet’s decision to act upon it was indeed divinely inspired.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said that he would continue with these accounts in future.
Inshā’ Allāh

At the end of the sermon, Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) asked for prayers for Aḥmadīs in Pakistan, especially in light of the current circumstances. Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) urged Aḥmadīs in Pakistan to focus on prayer and charity. Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) also appealed for prayers for the betterment of the world at large.

Wassalām,

Abdul Majid Tahir
Additional Wakīlut Tabshīr
ISLĀMĀBAD (UK)
Dated: 11 September 2024