

## **Khalifa Abu Bakr - Makkah Revisited**

### ***Battle of the Ditch***

Combined opposition of the Quraish and other hostile tribes. In 627 C.E. the Muslims had to face the combined opposition of the Quraish and other tribes. The Quraish and their allies mustered a force ten thousand strong and marched to Madina. The Holy Prophet was advised that a face to face fight against such a large force was not possible for the Muslims, and the safest course for them was to remain on the defensive. It was accordingly decided that a trench should be dug round Madina for protective purposes.

The ditch. The entire Muslim community in Madina was turned to dig the ditch. When the Muslims dug the ditch, the following war song was on their lips: "By God, had not Allah guided us, we would not have seen the right path, or given Sadaqa nor offered the prayers; May Allah bestow on us confidence and calmness of mind; And make our steps firm to face the enemy. The enemy has risen against us, and he intends insurrection, but we refuse to submit. O God there is no welfare except that of the next world, shower Thy Grace on the Ansars and the Muhajirs."

The site for the ditch was demarcated by the Holy Prophet. He allotted ten yards of ditch to be dug by each party of ten persons. One of such parties was led by Abu Bakr. The ditch was dug in twenty days. It was five yards deep.

The siege. When the Quraish and their allies arrived they found that a ditch which could not be crossed lay between them and the Muslims. This was a mode of warfare with which the Quraish were not familiar. They camped beyond the ditch and decided to besiege the Muslims.

The Holy Prophet divided the ditch into a number of sectors and a contingent was posted to guard each sector. One of such contingents was under the command of Abu Bakr. The enemy made frequent assaults in the attempt to cross the ditch. All such assaults were repulsed. Abu Bakr showed great courage in guarding the belt of the ditch in his sector. To commemorate this event a mosque was later constructed at the site where Abu Bakr had heroically repulsed the charge of the enemy. The mosque was known as 'Masjid-i-Siddiq'.

Victory of the Muslims. The siege prolonged for a month and the Muslims were subjected to great hardships. Food ran short, and subsistence became a problem. The Muslims nevertheless preserved and hoped that God would come to their relief.

And God did come to the relief of the Muslims. There were dissensions in the camp of the enemy. Provisions with them ran short. Above all a strong storm lashed the countryside. The Muslims were safe in their houses in Madina, but the Quraish and their allies who had to bear the brunt of the fury of the storm were unnerved. In a fit of desperation Abu Sufyan ordered that the siege should be withdrawn and the Quraish should return to Makkah. Their allies also dispersed. The Muslims won the day due to the Grace of God, and on account of their unusual perseverance against heavy odds.

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