

*Factors in the Spiritual Preparation and
Motivation of Muslim Armies*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the major factors affecting the performance of the Muslim armies in five important battles fought during the first two decades of their Islamic history. The study comprises an introduction, seven central chapters, and a conclusion (an Arabic English summary is placed at the end of the study).

The first chapter includes a general introduction which incorporates an explanation of the need for the research of the study. It provides a review of the study's primary and secondary sources and a brief literature on the subject of warfare and military activities. It also includes a list of the terms and phrases used, an outline of the organization of the study, and a list of the abbreviations used.

The second chapter provides a historical account of the transition from pre-Islam and considers its political, social, and economic conditions. It illustrates some of the main features of the Islamic society and the rise of the Muslim empire. It also discusses the two great empires of the world at that time, the Byzantine and Sassanid empires.

The third chapter discusses the five battles under study, i.e. Badr, Uhud, at Khaybar, the Trench, and the Battle of Muta. It provides a brief account for the subsequent developments in the Islamic history.

The fourth chapter discusses the factor of the Muslim army's morale in the performance of the five battles. It provides a brief account of the morale in the five battles.

The fifth chapter discusses the factor of the Muslim army's leadership upon the performance of the five battles. It provides a brief account of the leadership in the five battles under study.

The sixth chapter discusses the factor of the Muslim army's intelligence, its task in relation to the performance of the Muslim armies, and how it was conducted in the battles in question.

The seventh chapter considers the factor of the adversaries' strengths and weaknesses using both narrative and analysis. This chapter provides a necessary examination of the assets of the forces confronting the Muslim armies.

The eighth chapter focuses on the factor of Islamic military strategy, its importance for the performance of the Muslim armies, and its implementation in the five battles.

The ninth chapter summarizes and discusses the study's most important findings and draws conclusions from them, indicates to what extent the study's principal aims have been achieved, and makes suggestions for future research.

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to shed light on the major factors affecting the performance of the Muslim military in five important battles fought during the first two decades of Islam (2/624-16/638). The study comprises an introduction, seven central chapters, and a conclusion (an Arabic-English glossary is placed at the end of the study).

The first chapter includes a general introduction which incorporates an explanation of the method to be followed in the study. It provides a review of the study's primary and secondary sources and of the Arabic literature on the subject of warfare and military activities. It also explains the nature and scope of the study and closes with an outline of the organisation of the chapters.

The second chapter provides a brief background account of the region prior to Islam and considers in particular the region of al-Hijāz. In addition it illustrates some of the main features of the neighbouring powers in the north and south of Arabia, and of the two great empires that still dominated the region.

The third chapter narrates the significant events of the battles under discussion, i.e. Badr, Uḥud, al-Khandaq, al-Yarmūk, and al-Qādisiyyah, thus providing a reference for the subsequent chapters.

The fourth chapter investigates the factor of Islamic military doctrine, its role in the performance of the Muslim armies, and its importance for the conduct of the five battles.

The fifth chapter examines the factor of Islamic military leadership, its impact upon the performance of the Muslim armies, and how it was exercised during the battles under study.

The sixth chapter discusses the factor of Islamic military intelligence, its task in relation to the performance of the Muslim armies, and how it was conducted in the battles in question.

The seventh chapter considers the factor of the adversaries' strengths and weaknesses using both narrative and analysis. This chapter provides a necessary examination of the nature of the forces confronting the Muslim armies.

The eighth chapter focuses on the factor of Islamic military strategy, its importance for the performance of the Muslim armies, and its implementation in the five battles.

The ninth chapter summarises and discusses the study's most important findings and draws conclusions from them, indicates to what extent the study's principal aims have been achieved, and makes suggestions for future research.

Diagram of the Study

Major Factors in the Performance of the Muslim Military in Battle: A Study of the Battles of Badr, Uḥud, al-Khandaq, al-Yarmūk, and al-Qādisiyyah with reference to

Islamic Textual Sources

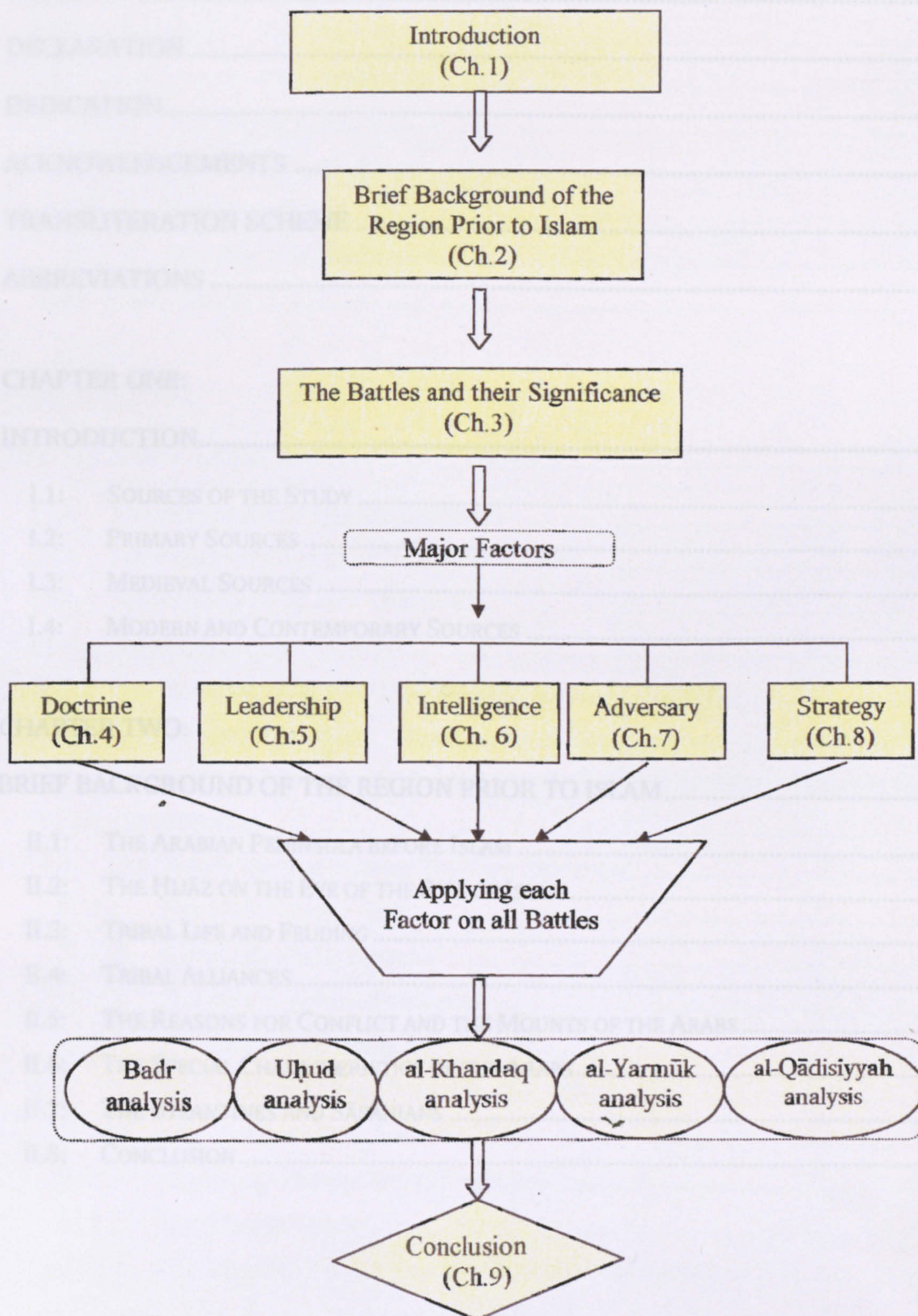


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Declaration

I, the author of this thesis, declare that none of the material in this thesis has been previously submitted by me or any other candidate for a degree in this or any other university

Dedication

*This work is dedicated to
my beloved father and mother, who have shown
so much patience during my long absences from my country.
Without their prayers – and definitely the help of Allàh – I
would certainly not have embarked upon the work at all. I
also thank my oldest brother Talal and my wife Naifah for
their unlimited support. May Allàh bless their
souls in this life and the life hereafter.*

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عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴾

(Qur'ān, 27: 19)

“O my Lord! So order me that I may be grateful for thy favours, which thou has bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please thee, and admit me, by Thy Grace, to the ranks of Thy Righteous Servants.

The Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) said:

“ مَنْ لَمْ يَشْكُرْ النَّاسَ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ اللَّهَ ”

Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Birr*, No. 1955, v.4, p. 339)

“Whoever does not express thanks to people is not grateful to Allāh”

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career. At the same time I should not forget to mention the patience of my children, Bedaḥ, Alʿanoud, Ṭalal, and ʿAbdulaziz, as well as my cousin Al-Fughom, Naif T. who have shared the trials of this testing period of my life without complaint.

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I would like to send respectful greetings to all my friends and colleagues in the UK in acknowledgement of due to their assistance and advice.

Finally, sincere appreciation and many thanks are due to HRH prince ʿAbdulaziz b. Fahad for his support and encouragement.

Transliteration Scheme

1. Constant

| Arabic | LC | Arabic | LC |
|--------|----|--------|----|
| ء | ' | ض | ḍ |
| ب | b | ط | ṭ |
| ت | t | ظ | ẓ |
| ث | th | ع | ʿ |
| ج | j | غ | gh |
| ح | ḥ | ف | f |
| خ | kh | ق | q |
| د | d | ك | k |
| ذ | dh | ل | l |
| ر | r | م | m |
| ز | z | ن | n |
| س | s | ه | h |
| ش | sh | و | w |
| ص | ṣ | ي | Y |

2. Diphthongs

| | |
|--------|--------|
| ي (ay) | و (aw) |
|--------|--------|

3. Vowels

| Arabic (short vowels) | LC | Arabic (long vowels) | LC |
|--------------------------|----|-------------------------|----|
| ـَـ | a | ا | ā |
| ـُـ | u | و | ū |
| ـِـ | i | ي | ī |

4. Others

| | |
|----|-------------------|
| ال | al- (for article) |
| أ | an |
| و | un |
| ي | in |

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|
| AD | (<i>Anno Domini</i>) Christian era |
| AH | (<i>Anno Hegirae</i>) Muslim era |
| b. | (<i>ibn</i>) son of |
| c. | (<i>circa</i>) about |
| d. | (<i>bent</i>) daughter of |
| [d. | [died |
| ed. | edited |
| edn | edition |
| ibid. | (<i>ibidem</i>) in the same book |
| fn: | footnote |
| n.d. | no date |
| n.p. | no place |
| pl | plural |
| sing. | singular |
| trans. | translated |

XVI
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction



Arabian Peninsula and the Two Empires

*The Muslim, the shariʿa is not a manmade law; it is the *divine* law of *Allah*, governing all aspects of life in the Qurʾān (ETMO), 4: 78, verse: "Then We put them on the *right* way of Religion". The word's use of "Shariʿa" rather than "law" is intended to prevent the misimpression that the law under discussion is to be considered in the same way as secular or manmade legislation. See al-Ruhaywāl, *Qibla al-ʿArab*, p. 216 and Hefner, *A People's Dictionary of Islam*, p. 280.*

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Military activities are an important part of any nation's culture. Focusing on its respected past will enlighten its present, as an understanding of the past will guide future action. This is as true of warfare as it is of politics or social affairs. However, Islamic warfare is a very broad subject. Many books and articles have been written on Islamic warfare, which tend to deal with battles, locations, equipment, and matters of organisation. However, such studies inevitably neglect some of the complexities that are crucial to victory or defeat. In any battle, success depends on a range of factors, which will vary in importance according to circumstances. With this in mind, Islamic military doctrine, military leadership, Islamic military intelligence, the strengths and weaknesses of the adversary, and Islamic military strategy have been chosen as major factors to be considered in this study. This concentration on an Islamic perspective has been prompted by the fact that, as far as the researcher is aware, no military study referring primarily to Islamic sources has discussed or analysed all these factors in relation to the decisive battles of the early period of Islam i.e. Badr (2/624), Uḥud (3/625), al-Khandaq (5/627), al-Yarmūk (13/634), and al-Qādisiyyah (15/636). It must be acknowledged that these factors are not Islamic in themselves; they have been the subject of theoretical discussion and practical application for many centuries, from long before Islam to our own time. Nevertheless Islam has given them a special character, guiding, controlling, and directing them to follow a clearly defined path. The study's concentration on the Islamic characteristics of the factors under discussion is the basis of its uniqueness and interest. During the course of the analysis these major factors will be carefully examined to find out to what degree they are in conformity with Islam, that is, whether their basis is to be found in human thought and practice or in the *sharī'a*¹ originating in the will of Allāh. A related question raised by the study is whether these battles would have proved so decisive had the Muslim army not been inspired by a transcendent doctrine. Thus these factors, each of which could itself be the subject of a thesis, will be examined from an Islamic military perspective in order to narrow the focus in accordance with the purposes of the study.

¹ For Muslims, the *sharī'a* is not a manmade law; it is the *holy law of Islam*, governing all aspects of life as the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 18, states: "Then We put thee on the (right) Way of Religion". The study's use of 'Sharī'a' rather than 'law' is intended to prevent the misconception that the law under discussion is to be considered in the same way as secular or manmade legislation. See al-Khuḍrawī, *Qāmūs al-Alfāz*, p. 216 and Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, p. 230.

Put another way, this study is concerned with the social transformation of a people through religion and its effects on the conduct of military affairs. Its interest could be said to lie in its complexity: although the events of the battles are relatively straightforward, they will be shown to be the locus of interaction of many different dimensions, some of which will be discussed in great detail. It is the interdependence and interaction of these factors, rather than their separate influence, which is the study's focus of attention.

To look for sources of data may be considered a relatively easy matter nowadays due to the unprecedented developments in electronic communications. It is also not difficult to find works of scholarship devoted to specific subjects; but the sources relevant to this study are many and varied, and investigating them all has involved a lengthy process of discovery. Relying largely on Islamic sources has made the task easier. Thus, the information necessary to the study is contained in a great many historical, religious, and narrative works, all of which have been examined from a number of perspectives. In addition, on those occasions where consultation with Islamic scholars was impracticable, the researcher had to form an opinion on the basis of his own knowledge and understanding.

If we consider the few works of recent times which are pertinent to our discussion, we find that they rarely use the Qur'ān as a main source, and thus their applicability is limited. In addition, the method followed by the classical writers such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Waqidī, and others was largely to collect information without assuring its reliability. For example al-Ṭabarī includes small number of narrations that appear dubious or stretch credulity, admitting in his introduction that the reader might reject or disbelieve them, in which case the burden of proof lies with the narrator, not with al-Ṭabarī.² Moreover, there appears to be no consensus among the modern works that might be referred to, many of which flatly contradict one another, chiefly due to their being affected by the views of opposing sects and by their widely differing aims.³ Therefore it has been considered fitting to rely on the Qur'ān as the main source, which provides our basic ground, and the books of the *ḥadīth*. It is also fitting for any Islamic study to use the two references that all Muslims acknowledge as pre-eminent. Hence, these sources will guide our discussion of the factors in question as well as the narration of the battles.

² See al-Funaysān, *Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, p. 14.

³ See Newby, "Muḥammad: Bibliographies", in Esposito and others (eds), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, v. 3, p. 162.

This study therefore aims to analyse these factors and determine their effect on the outcomes of the five battles mentioned above in the light of Qur'ānic and other Islamic teachings.

The lack of useful works specialising in military affairs necessitated a thorough exploration of the *Qur'ān*, *ḥadīth*, *al-sīrah* (biography), *al-maghāzī* (battles), *al-futūḥ* (conquests), and of general histories in order to fulfil the requirements of the study. Al-ʿAsāf has remarked that: “No study concerning human beings can be perfect due to the nature of the case study.”⁴ Given that our study is an exploration of a particular form of human behaviour and an analysis of some of the factors influencing that behaviour, we accept his judgment, while striving to minimise any defects that might compromise the validity of our conclusions. Thus, it is hoped that the footnotes will demonstrate that the researcher has been concerned to find the most comprehensive references, without compromising the purposes of the study. Further, the period covered by the study has been strictly limited to that of the five battles in question, i.e. c. 2/624 to the 15/637. A great number of documents covering this period have been compared and analysed.

Further, the study will make use of the Islamic sources according to their seniority and status. Thus the Qur'ān, as the word of Allāh, is the first to be consulted. The *ḥadīth* is next in importance. Then follow the exegeses of the Qur'ān, and the books of the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH).⁵ Finally, the works of selected Islamic scholars will be investigated according to the expected priority of usage including some western works as needed.

I.1: Sources of the Study

It is useful at this point to provide the reader with some information on the primary and secondary sources used in this research. As we have noted, these are almost exclusively Islamic in nature. The sources are divided into primary sources, medieval sources, and modern sources. They mostly consist of:

Primary: The Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and historical works.

Medieval: Religious and historical works.

Modern and Contemporary: Religious and historical works, theses, periodicals, internet sites, and the like.

⁴ Al-ʿAssāf, *al-Madkhal*, p. 57.

⁵ The phrase (Peace Be Upon Him) will be used at the beginning of each section only.

I.2: Primary Sources

No studies on the military arts have survived from the early period of Islam. It is thought that the earliest texts were mainly either religious treatises or historical narrations, and even later writings are fragmentary and of limited usefulness. Therefore, the Qur'ān and its exegesis, the *ḥadīth* and works dealing with biography and the battles in question will be consulted as the most important sources. In addition some modern works will be considered whenever necessary.

The Qur'ān mentions and comments upon several battles, among which are three of interest to the study: Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq. References to the battles of al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah are in the *Sīra and Maghāzī* literatures.

The Qur'ān is the Word of Allāh, which was revealed to Prophet Muḥammad. It is indispensable for Muslims as a book of guidance. It is of great importance for our purpose, as it contains information and guidance, especially relating to the first three battles, since the Prophet Muḥammad took part in them. To indicate the view of this scripture adopted by the study, the researcher would like to refer to the preface of a recent English translation of the meanings and commentary of the holy Qur'ān, from which the following quotation is taken:

“Before the reader begins to study the Qur'ān, he must realise that unlike all other writings, this is a unique book with a supreme author, an eternal message and universal relevance. Its contents are not confined to a particular theme or style, but contain the foundations for an entire system of life, covering a whole spectrum of issues, which range from specific articles of faith and commandments to general moral teachings, rights and obligations, crime and punishment, personal and public law, and a host of other private and social concerns. These issues are discussed in a variety of ways, such as direct stipulations, reminders of Allāh's favours to His creation, admonitions and rebukes. Stories of past communities are narrated, followed by the lessons to be learned from their actions and subsequent fates.”⁶

The preface also argues that, given the depth, as well as the sublimity, of the Qur'ānic text, a faithful translation of it into another language is virtually impossible.⁷ The various translations that exist today, however accurate they may be, cannot be designated as the

⁶ *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. iii. It should be noted that the edition used by this study is the large (2082 pages) translation issued by King Fahad Holy Qur'ān Printing Complex, in Medina, (the 1990's Print) and titled “THE HOLY QUR'ĀN; English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary”. It will be referred to as *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*.

⁷ See *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. vi.

Qur'ān, since they can never hope to imitate the diction or the style of the Book of Allāh. Nevertheless translation is one of the few ways to export the knowledge among the nations, and so it is the duty of those in a position to do so to fulfil this task.⁸ This linguistic limitation should be noted by readers of the translated passages quoted in this study.

Second only to the Noble Qur'ān, the most important text for Muslims is the *ḥadīth*. The term *ḥadīth* denotes 'what was transmitted on the authority of Muḥammad, his deeds, sayings, tacit approval, or description of his physical appearance.'⁹ The *ḥadīths* are collected into many books,¹⁰ whose veracity depends on their *isnād*¹¹ to the Prophet. However, there are six main books, known as the *Kutub al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah* (The six authentic Books of *ḥadīth*).¹² These six books will be used extensively; the other books of *ḥadīth* will be used as the study requires. It should be noted that every *ḥadīth* consists of two parts, the *isnād* (the chain of authorities) and the *matn* (the main text of the *ḥadīth*), but the study will be concerned only with the main text due to the limitation of space.¹³

An exhaustive exegesis that will be much referred to is the exegesis of *al-Ṭabarī*, Muḥammad b. Jarīr [224/839-310/923] known as *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, which is collected in thirty volumes. It contains both the *ʿIlm* of *al-Riwāyah* and *al-Dirāyah* (the Sciences of Transmission and Cognizance) and as such it remains a much-used work of reference. Al-Ṭabarī illustrates each verse in full detail and usually without repetition. At the end of his discussion he often makes a sound and reasonable judgment. Al-Qurṭubī not only depended on this exegesis in order to complete his own, but he also generally followed the same style. It should be noted, however, that each exegesis used in this study has a distinctive character due to the influence of time

⁸ See *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. iv.

⁹ The *sunna*, often used as a synonym for the *ḥadīth*, is more properly the mode of life of the Prophet. There is a slight difference between them, for a *ḥadīth* may not contain any *sunna* or a single *ḥadīth* may contain more than one *sunna*. Similarly see al-Khuḍrawī, *Qāmūs al-ʿAlfāz*, p. 204 and Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, p. 238. Also see Ḥusayn, *al-ʿAqīdah al-ʿAskariyyah*, p. 38 and al-Funaysān, *Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, p. 55.

¹⁰ They were collected and written by the order of the Caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz [61/681-101-720].

¹¹ *Isnād* means the chain of authorities given at the beginning of a *ḥadīth*. See Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, p. 128.

¹² They are Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī [194/810-256/870], Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim [206/822-261/875], Sunan Abū Dāʿūd [202/818-275/889], Sunan al-Tirmidhī [209/824-279/892], Sunan al-Nasāʿī [215/831-303/916], and Sunan Ibn Mājah [207/822-275/255]. See al-Suyūṭī [849/1446-911/1505], *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, v.1, pp. 100-103 and al-Khuḍrawī, *Qāmūs al-ʿAlfāz*, p. 234.

¹³ It should be noted that the text of a *ḥadīth* is sometimes differently narrated in the different Books of the *ḥadīth*. These differences will not be considered due to the limitation of space. However, any book used as a reference will be acknowledged. In addition, it should be noted that this study will use mostly the translation of the Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī by Dr. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khan, *The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Dār al-Salām, al-Riyadh, 1997, v.9.

and place. For example, al-Qurṭubī excludes the fabricated and weak *ḥadīths* mentioned in al-Ṭabarī.

One of the most interesting historical works used in this study is also by al-Ṭabarī. This book, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk*, contains a great deal of military information, much of it covering the period of the study. It is considered one of the most extensive of the extant early works of Islamic scholarship, and the richest and one of the most detailed sources for the beginning of Islamic history. In this particular respect the *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* is more valuable than any other historical work, and has proved especially useful to the study in its discussions of leadership, tactics and strategy, and the strengths and weaknesses of the adversary. On the negative side, the information is not well organised and needs to be teased out of the historical and narrative material. This work consists of ten volumes. It is organised chronologically, beginning with the creation of Adam and continuing up until the time of the author. Al-Ṭabarī's information is generally trustworthy, and he places particular emphasis on the *isnād* of his sources. His book contains much unique matter that cannot be obtained from any other source, especially with respect to the battle of al-Qādisiyyah. His chief source of information was Sayf b. ʿUmar al-Tamīmī, although the narrations of Shuʿayb b. Ibrāhīm and Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm, al-Wāqidī, ʿAwānah b. al-Ḥakam, and al-Madāʿinī were particularly valuable when it came to dealing with the regions of Syria and al-Ḥijāz.¹⁴

Another important book is the *al-Sīrah*, compiled by Ibn Hishām [d. c. 213/833] in six volumes. It is customarily designated as the leading narration of the biography of the Prophet, and has become the cornerstone for all later studies of his life. It should be noted, however, that Ibn Hishām is said to have relied on the work of Ibn Ishāq in composing his narration, while omitting poems included by Ibn Ishāq but not found in any other source. Ibn Hishām's *al-Sīrah* narrates the events of the life of the Prophet, but first deals with the life of the Arabs before Islam. His history continues with an account of the life of the Muslims in Mecca during the first decade of Islam before the *Hijrah*. He then relates in detail the life of the Prophet, including in his discussion some of the military activities of the Companions nominated by the Prophet. He ends his work with the election of Abū Bakr as the first Caliph.

Another important and wide-ranging work of Islamic history is that of al-Balādhurī [d. c. 279/892] entitled *Futūḥ al-Buldān*. It deals with the Islamic conquests, *futūḥ*, of the early

¹⁴ This study will use Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī; the English Version*, as the main sources for transliteration.

Islamic period, beginning with the emigration, *Hijrah*, of the Prophet Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina and continuing up to the third/ninth century. Its broad scope encompasses a great deal of information about the Islamic art of war and the Muslims' military activities. Even though al-Balādhurī does not discuss the battles of Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq from the tactical viewpoint, his *Futūḥ al-Buldān* contains much valuable information of a military nature, especially with regard to al-Qādisiyyah. It discusses military tactics, equipment, and leadership, relying in this respect on the narrations of al-Wāqidī and al-Haytham b. ʿAdī al-Ṭāʿī.¹⁵

Al-Wāqidī [130/748-207/823] wrote another book besides his famous *al-Maghāzī*, which he called *Futūḥ al-Shām*. Compiled in two volumes, it covers the period from the end of the *Riddah* wars to the middle of the first Islamic century. As the title indicates, al-Yarmūk is the only battle to receive detailed attention. None of the factors to interest of this study are discussed separately, but they are mentioned indirectly.

I.3: Medieval Sources

Islamic literature has been developed over many centuries. This applies to works on military subjects as much as to those on any other topic, and many Muslim books or parts of books have been devoted to the arts of war. Jihād has perhaps been the main subject of Islamic military literature, being examined from the perspective of jurisprudence in the first centuries of Islam.¹⁶

Al-Qurṭubī completed a huge work (in twenty volumes) of exegesis of the Qurʾān, which is known as *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī: al-Jāmʿ li Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*. Abū ʿAbdullah Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī [d. 761/1273] was influenced by Ibn ʿAṭiyyah, Abū Jaʿfar al-Naḥās, al-Māwardī, al-Ṭabarī, and Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī. Other eminent scholars learnt from him, including Abū Ḥiyyān al-Andalusī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Shawkānī. Al-Qurṭubī's exegesis provides much valuable information in many areas of Qurʾānic studies. It also furnishes documentation concerning the chain of *isnād* for each *ḥadīth*. Al-Qurṭubī explains the five pillars of Islam and illustrates the various Islamic principles as the need arises. It must be admitted, however, that in spite of his care in discovering and exposing forged *ḥadīth* his exegesis is not free of them.¹⁷ In addition, as one of the main exegetical works, it deals with the analysis of the construction of words and sentences, since it is known that the Qurʾān is of supreme importance not only legislatively but also lexically. It is therefore

¹⁵ See Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, p. 53.

¹⁶ Awsī, *Tafriḥ al-Kurūb*, p. 4.

¹⁷ See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.1, p. 9.

necessary to have sufficient knowledge of the etymology of the words of the Qur'ān since this study sometimes needs to make judgements based on linguistic evidence.

Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [701/1302-774/1373] compiled another valuable exegesis, entitled *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*. He learnt from many scholars, among whom were Ibn 'Asākir, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn al-Zakī. He was recognised as the most knowledgeable scholar of his time, expert in exegesis, *ḥadīth*, and history. His exegesis deals with most of the Qur'ānic sciences. He discusses the reasons for revelations, the pillars of faith, and many other subjects. In the first volume he discusses and comments upon the meaning of the verses. In the later volumes the commentaries are omitted in order to avoid repetition, but reference is made to those in the first volume. He does not draw on al-Qurṭubī's work since al-Qurṭubī was raised and mainly studied in al-Andalus (Spain) and the northernmost part of Africa. Ibn Kathīr also differs from al-Qurṭubī in that he extensively discusses almost every point in his first and second chapters before reaching a decision, unlike al-Qurṭubī, who briefly considers some strongly related points and then states his judgement.

Ibn Kathīr also compiled an enormous historical work entitled *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*. The unique significance of this book is that it considers in detail not only the events of the past but also those which are to come. He uses a chronological method, starting from the moment of creation and continuing to his own lifetime. He also writes about the Day of Judgment and what might happen in the life after death. More pertinently, he proves a great deal of military information regarding the battles under discussion. He is indebted to his eminent predecessors, notably Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Hishām, and al-Wāqidī. His work will be relied on mainly for the events of the battle of al-Yarmūk.

Ibn Taymiyyah Abū 'Abdullah Aḥmad [661/1263-728/1328], who is considered to be one of the greatest Muslim scholars of his time, wrote several books that are used in various ways in this study. He earned the cognomen *Shaykh al-Islām* due to the huge store of his Islamic knowledge. His works deal with Islamic warfare, though indirectly, and always from a *fiqh* point of view. However there is a good deal of military information to be discovered between the lines in his discussions. His works include *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, *al-Ṣārim al-Maslūl*, *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, and *Minhāj al-Sunnah*.

Ibn al-Qayyim, Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad [691/1292-751/1350] was a brilliant student of Ibn Taymiyyah. He composed many books on Islamic matters, and in one of them, *al-Furūsiyyah*, he discusses in detail means of riding, weapons, and military courage. Again his viewpoint is mainly that of jurisprudence, and it should be noted that he was

writing during a period of peace. He particularly discusses and compares types of horsemanship and weapons. He illustrates each weapon in detail and makes a final judgement. A few of his other books containing discussions of some aspects of warfare are *Zād al-Ma'ād*, *Badā' al-Fawā'id*, and *Hidāyat al-Ḥayārā*.

The celebrated *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*¹⁸ contains a section devoted to a discussion of warfare and the different methods of fighting of different nations. Here Ibn Khaldūn, 'Abd al-Raḥmān [732/1332-808/1406] investigates the causes of war and the methods of mobilisation.¹⁹ However, these discussions form only a small part of this richly varied work by a great philosopher of history.

Al-Ḥalabī, 'Alī b. Burhān al-Dīn [975/1568-1044/1635] is the other important writer of the *Sīra* of the Prophet. He relies on two works: *al-Sīrah al-Shāmiyyah* and *'Uyūn al-Athār*, and follows in the footsteps of Ibn Hishām in his narration, but with greater depth of detail and more discussion of different views. However, he adopts a judgmental style in concluding most of his discussions of each point. His outlook and style could be said to be almost modern, and because of this his work has been particularly useful to the study, especially as his comprehensive account of the first three battles is generally more valuable than that of Ibn Hishām.

In addition, most of the early Islamic writers on military conflict did not mention their sources and depended mainly on their own experience.

I.4: Modern and Contemporary Sources

The modern sources consulted by the study are more specialised than their medieval forerunners, which are known to be general and comprehensive. They usually rely on the traditional sources but are better organised, particularly al-Zuḥaylī. In addition some of them limit themselves to either discussing one factor or investigating one battle.

Al-Zuḥaylī, Wahbah Muṣṭafā composed a modern work of Qur'ānic exegesis, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*. His thirty-two volume work covers most aspects of what is now known as *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (the Qur'ānic Sciences) such as *asbāb al-nuzūl* (reasons of revelation), *al-'aqīda* (Islamic doctrine), *al-sharī'a* (Islamic legislation), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), lexicography and semantics. It is useful since it goes straight to the point but without omitting to discuss briefly other points of view. It is also valuable due to its well-designed appearance and

¹⁸ It should be noted that the full title of this book is *Kitāb al-'Ibar wa Dīwān al-Mubbtada' wa al-Khabar fī Ayām al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam wa al-Barbar wa min 'Aṣarahum min Dhawī al-Sultān al-Akbar*. See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, p. 7.

¹⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, pp. 271-279.

clear organisation and the great amount of information it contains. Thus sometimes it is used to confirm a particular point.

Aḥmad Ḥusayn, *al-ʿAqīdah al-ʿAskariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, is a relatively concentrated work concerning Islamic military doctrine and its aspects, for instance its importance and sources. In addition Ḥusayn also briefly compares the Islamic military doctrine with its Western equivalent.

Another writer on military doctrine was Aḥmad Baṣbūṣ, whose book on the role of Islamic doctrine in warfare, *al-ʿAqīdah al-Qitāliyyah fi al-Islām*, concentrates on the concept of 'doctrinal fighting' in Islam and the way it is instilled in the troops. He also draws comparison with other schools of doctrinal fighting, and compares the principles of Islam with those of international law.

Muḥammad al-Raṣhīd's large volume, *al-Qiyādah al-ʿAskariyyah fi ʿAhd al-Rasūl*, is the one of the first purely military works to be considered by this study. It discusses some general aspects of leadership, and the leadership of the Prophet in detail. This work illustrates the role of the Prophet's leadership in some of his more important battles, among them the three covered by this study: Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq. The book also deals briefly with intelligence and doctrine.

Afzalur Rahman composed an extensive work entitled *Muḥammad as a Military Leader*. Writing in English, he concentrates on the leadership of the Prophet, examining the different aspects of military activities from this specific point of view.

Another specialist work is ʿAbdullah Manāṣarah's *Al-Istikhbārāt al-ʿAskariyyah fi al-Islam*, in which the author is concerned with jurisprudence rather than history, specifically in section two. In the third section, counter-intelligence is also examined systematically and methods of collecting intelligence data are discussed.

ʿĀrif ʿAbd al-Ghanī's *Nuḣm al-Istikhbārāt ʿind al-ʿArab wa al-Muslimīn* covers an extensive period: from the beginning of Islam, through the age of the first four Caliphs, up until the middle of the fifth century [c. 550/1155]. Spying operations are also judged from a *fiqh* point of view. Unlike Manāṣarah, he discusses the system and means of intelligence data transference and the organisation of what was called the *Shuraṭ* (Police) of that time. On the other hand, like Manāṣarah, he covers a long period of time in a limited number of pages, and this does not allow him to devote much detail to the points he raises for discussion, which it must be admitted is a defect of both authors.

Ali Naseef's interesting doctoral thesis, entitled *Military Organization in Early Islam*, is concerned with the first forty years of Islam [1/622-40/661]. The study is a general discussion of early Islamic military affairs, drawing on the main Islamic historical sources

such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Balādhurī, al-Wāqidī, and Ibn Hishām. Naseef also makes use of some Western works as secondary sources. His discussions are brief but cover a wide range of issues, including administration, tactics, equipment, means of riding and transportation, and the army's financial affairs, all of which are well described, although their specific roles in the battles of the period are not investigated thoroughly. Thus the study could be considered as a basis for further research.

Among the Western works consulted for use in this study are two comprehensive volumes edited by John Kelsay and James Johnson and entitled *Just War and Jihād* and *Cross, Crescent, and Sword*. They comprise a number of articles written by several authors. Adopting a generally juridical approach, they mostly deal with their subjects from a secular viewpoint, employing historical and philosophical analysis to discuss and indicate the links between the Islamic conceptions (both Sunni and Shi'a) of the just (or justifiable) war and their Western equivalents. In other words, they are generally concerned with comparing and contrasting the Islamic and Christian traditions and discourses with regard to the notion of justified warfare and trace their historical development. The historical and theoretical essays explore a wide range of information, dealing with the subject analytically and comparatively. They follow the deviation of the religious and secular concepts of war and peace over a long period, from the earliest Christian formulations to the arguments of the present day. Despite their many virtues, however, as they are written from a secular perspective and include many matters unrelated to this study their usefulness is limited, and some contain opinions which contradict Muslim belief. To cite only one example, Donner argues that the Qur'ān is "ambivalent" in its attitude to violence, drawing attention to the apparent inconsistencies to be found on comparing certain verses.²⁰ These seeming contradictions will be clarified and resolved in the eighth chapter of the study.

Nevertheless, Donner's summary of the background of the juridical tradition may serve to indicate the study's scope:

"The attitudes of the first generations of Muslims toward questions of war and peace were shaped by several factors. Paramount among them were (a) the cultural norms of the pre-Islamic societies to which they had belonged, (b) the attitudes toward war contained, implicitly or explicitly, in the Qur'ān, and (c) the dramatic events of their own lifetimes.

²⁰ Donner, "The Sources of Islamic Conceptions of War", in Kelsay and Johnson, *Just War and Jihād*, p. 47.

All of these factors contributed to the formation of the “classical” Islamic conception of war, that is, the juridical notion, as well as to popular attitudes.”²¹

As we will see, the cultural norms of the pre-Islamic Arab society were of great importance in providing the structure within which Islam was revealed. So without a knowledge of the cultural norms that preexisted Islam it is impossible to understand the transformation that took place through Islam. Thus Donner’s first point applies to the Muslims’ adversaries in the first three battles and to the background to the study’s argument. His second point indicates the main focus of the thesis: “the attitudes toward war contained, implicitly or explicitly, in the Qur’ān”, since the Qur’ān is used as its main source and substantive basis. Donner’s third point can be said to concern the events referred to in the study, not only the drama of the battles themselves, but also the transformative power of revealed religion, which first made the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) speak out against what he saw as the degenerate and corrupt society of Mecca and so eventually drove his fellow-citizens to react against his message, to persecute his followers and later to attempt to destroy the faith in its newly established base in Medina. These ‘dramatic events’ were commented on in the Qur’ān, whose revelation was a continuing phenomenon in the lives of the Prophet’s Companions, helpers and followers.

What this suggests is that for the leader and the ordinary soldier alike, the concept of the just war from the Islamic point of view was of the greatest importance, and so the study has taken the Qur’ān as its main source chiefly because of the unimpeachable nature of its judgements and pronouncements for Muslims. The study is therefore not concerned to describe the external practices of warfare, which can be done from a secular perspective, but rather to explore its moral basis, which, we will argue, is inseparable from religious doctrine for the committed Muslim. An important aspect of the study’s discussion is the attempt to discover why the Muslims acted as they did, why their behaviour conformed to strict limits, and why they did not return to the barbarous practices of their warrior kin (such as the intimidating custom of dismemberment) after the Prophet’s death.

Thus the study cannot be categorised as being concerned with juridical matters only, since it is a synthetic study which ranges across a number of aspects. It is unified by its focus on the Qur’ānic text and *ḥadīth* and by its scope, which is limited to these five important battles. It also deals with one particular dimension of the vast subject of Islam, which is all-embracing and none of whose aspects can be isolated from the others. So its subject is not only jurisprudence, or military history, or the psychology of the early Muslims, or a

²¹ Donner, “The Sources of Islamic Conceptions of War”, p. 33.

historical analysis of the change from pre-Islamic Arab tribal culture to Islam, but it is an attempt to elucidate a relatively brief period of history by examining it through the lens of military affairs and in the light of Islam. Its intention is, through a concentration on military affairs, to illuminate the whole process of transformation of a group of relatively ordinary Arabs into Muslim warriors capable of toppling empires. Further, although it uses a theological approach this does not mean that it is a theological study where, for example, doctrine is examined and judged; it is rather an examination of a phenomenon of history using a theological framework and evaluating the matters under study accordingly. Therefore in one sense the study is a work of military history, but only in the sense that it seeks to explain 'the cause of the people' and how they managed to defeat two empires and begin to spread their faith so rapidly. So it can be argued that this is an exploratory study, which moves beyond the boundaries of military history proper in the attempt to discover the most likely reasons for the extraordinary military achievements of the early Muslims.

The study is divided into nine chapters: an introduction, seven main chapters and a conclusion. It will be noticed that some of the chapters have certain distinctive characteristics due to the nature of the topic under discussion. The first chapter contains a general introduction which reviews the method and plan followed in the study. It also discusses the primary and secondary sources of the study and of the Arabic literature of war, and closes with an outline of the organisation of the study.

The second chapter presents a brief background account of the region prior to Islam. It discusses the general atmosphere of the region of al-Hijāz. It also illustrates some of the main features of the neighbouring powers in the north and south of the Arabian Peninsula and of the two great empires of that time. Hence it is closely connected to the matter of the seventh chapter. It is a 'bridge' chapter, describing the environment of the peninsula both before and after Islam.

The third chapter narrates, in chronological order, the events of the battles under discussion: Badr, Uḥud, al-Khandaq, al-Yarmūk, and al-Qādisiyyah. It is thus an essential preface to the discussion and analysis contained in the succeeding chapters, and is intended to be used as a reference by those following the argument presented in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and eighth chapters in particular.

The fourth chapter investigates the factor of the Islamic military doctrine, its role in the performance of the Muslim army, and its function and implementation in the five battles in question. Islamic military doctrine, as the first major factor, can be considered the most important influence on the Muslim soldier, as it is not imposed from without, nor is it a

matter of mere external obedience or of intellectual conviction. It is a matter of faith, of internal certainty, which, it can be argued, has been essential to the successful conduct of military activities throughout history.²² The chapter attempts to distinguish between doctrine, Islamic doctrine, and Islamic military doctrine. It also discusses the sources of the Islamic military doctrine (its validity) in the *sharī'a*, its significance, virtue, principles, and warfare management guidelines. Within the discussion of each point a proof of its application and degree of involvement will be provided.

Lastly, the insufficient effect of this factor on its own will be briefly discussed.

The fifth chapter deals with the factor of Islamic military leadership, its role in the performance of the Muslim troops, and how it was exercised in the five battles. Extensive use will be made of the references to leadership found in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. Its concept and principles, according to the Islamic view, will also be discussed. The chapter is divided into two main parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part will cover several issues of Islamic military leadership based on the *sharī'a* as to definition, validity, necessity, unity of command, and types and qualities of leaders. From a practical point of view, the reader will be provided with the method of applying the theoretical concepts to each battle, first separately and then as a related group.

The sixth chapter investigates the factor of Islamic military intelligence in the same way as the previous chapters discussed their topics. It is also divided into two separate parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part furnishes the reader with a definition of Islamic military intelligence, as well as its validity in the *sharī'a*. It also discusses the various types of intelligence; the role of manpower; leadership and its degree of response; the importance and value of intelligence to soldiers; the role of divine information, and the element of *al-tawriyah* 'dissimulation' from the point of view of the *sharī'a*. On the practical side we show how these theoretical considerations were implemented in the battles considered separately, after which a comparison is made between the battles and conclusions are drawn.

The seventh chapter stands alone to a certain extent in that it analyses the adversaries' strengths and weaknesses. Here the focus is on the Muslims' enemies and their conduct in the five battles. At the same time it examines this conduct in the light of the other factors considered by the study. This chapter provides an essential counterbalance to the discussion of the Muslim army's strengths and weaknesses as explored in the other central chapters.

²² For example the Middle-East case i.e. Jerusalem.

The eighth chapter examines the factor of Islamic military strategy. The plan and method of the chapter are similar to those used in chapters five and six. The theoretical part constructs a definition of Islamic military strategy, considers its validity, formulates the concept of the 'two pillars', explores the relationship between military and religious decisions and between strategy, operations, and tactics, and analyses its principles by reference to the *sharī'a*. The chapter then illustrates the practical application of these theoretical aspects to the battles, first separately and then through a comparison.

The ninth chapter summarises and discusses the findings of the study and draws conclusions from them, indicates to what extent the study's principal aims have been accomplished, and makes some suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam

This chapter aims to furnish the necessary background to the study's subject matters, and to briefly describe the environment - geographical, cultural, and political - of the region prior to the period of the battles under study. It is hoped that the following discussion will shed some light on the great changes wrought on those within the Arabian Peninsula whose lives were transformed by the message of Islam, bearing in mind that these people had long resisted any comprehensive changes to their way of life. First of all, the terrain of the Arabian Peninsula will be described, providing a geographical overview. In addition its position in relation to the empires that surrounded it during the period in question will be briefly explored. The characteristics and structure of the Arabs' social life and other matters pertinent to the study will be briefly considered.

The location of a city - that is, its cultural and political, as well as its geographical, position and climate - is known to have a very important bearing on the lives of its inhabitants, and it is therefore difficult to discuss any nation without discussing its location, which would surely "affect its way of living".¹

II.1: The Arabian Peninsula before Islam

Much of the Peninsula² was subject to the influence of the two great neighbouring empires of that time.³ In the north, the Byzantines occupied northeast Africa and al-Shām⁴ while the Persians⁵ occupied Iraq and Yemen.⁶ Also there were two Arabian kingdoms: al-Manādhirah⁷, which was subject to the Sāsānians, and al-Ghasāsinah⁸,

¹ Furayḥāt and Yāsīn, *Madkhal ilā Tārīkh al-Ḥaḍārah*, p. 44.

² See Weiss and Green, *A Survey of Arab History*, pp. 41-89.

³ See al-ʿĀrif, *al-Jaysh al-ʿArabī al-Islāmī*, p. 9. Also see the section "The Adversary at the Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Adversaries' Strengths and Weaknesses" (Ch.7).

⁴ Al-Shām refers to the region comprising Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon.

⁵ For the origins of the Sāsānian Empire see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī; the English Version*, v.XII, p. 43, fn: 178.

⁶ See al-ʿĀrif, *al-Jaysh*, p. 9.

⁷ They were from the tribe of Tanūkh and had migrated from Yemen to the land of al-Ḥīrah on the west bank of the Euphrates River in Iraq after the destruction of the Ma'rib Dam. They were Lakhmids and were known as *al-Manādhirah*. Having built a powerful ruling state in the region, they entered into a reciprocal agreement with the Sāsānians whereby they accepted subject status in return for protection. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.1, p. 182 Ibn al-Athīr [d. 630/1233], *al-Kāmil*, v.1, p. 316, and Furayḥāt and Yāsīn, *Tārīkh al-Ḥaḍārah*, pp. 43-44. Further see Sālīm, "Siyāsat Dawlat al-Rasūl", in al-Anṣārī (ed), *al-Jazīrah al-ʿArabiyyah*, No.3, v.1, p. 135.

⁸ The Ghasāsinah were originally from Yemen, from the tribe of Jifnah; after the destruction of the Ma'rib Dam they took up residence in the land of Ḥurrān and al-Balqā'. They were the Byzantines'

which was subject to the Byzantines.⁹ The centre of the Peninsula was under the control of the free-living Arabs. However, there was interference from the surrounding cultures, causing political, religious, social, and cultural laxity in both kingdoms and to some extent in the rest of Arabia.¹⁰ This laxity and disunity increased what is known as *al-‘aşabiyyah al-qabaliyyah*, ‘tribal solidarity’, as we shall presently see. Relationships in Arabia as a consequence became infected by deception, cruelty and treachery, which kept the Arabs in an inferior position vis-à-vis the surrounding powers.¹¹

The region of al-Ḥijāz, where three out of the five battles in question occurred, was important to the Arabs for several reasons. The central position of the region, its accessibility and its location on the main caravan routes running north and south, offered an unexcelled opportunity for both religious and commercial activities.¹² In addition, there were several merchandise routes to the south; some of these began in Yemen and ran eastwards along the coast of the Arabian Sea as far as Oman,¹³ where they turned to the north, towards Bahrain. The main cities of al-Ḥijāz were Mecca and Medina.¹⁴ The western route ran through Mecca, which grew prosperous, being half-way between South Arabia and Palestine. Therefore, the great Arab fair of ‘Ukāz flourished there because of these conditions.

The area surrounding Mecca was poor in resources,¹⁵ but due to its location on the main caravan routes between Yemen and al-Shām it developed quickly.¹⁶ Its citizens were for the most part involved in mercantile activities. Also it was the main centre of pilgrimage,

subjects, charged with maintaining order and peace among the Bedouin and assisted them in their wars against the Sāsānians and the Manādhirah. See Furayḥāt and Yāsīn, *Tārikh al-Ḥaḍārah*, p.43.

⁹ See Mu’nis, *Atlas*, pp. 48-49 and al-‘Ārif, *al-Jaysh*, p. 9.

¹⁰ See the sections “Tribal Life and Feuding” and “The Byzantines and Sāsānians” in this chapter. Also see al-‘Ārif, *al-Jaysh*, p. 9.

¹¹ See al-‘Ārif, *al-Jaysh*, p. 10.

¹² These routes were known and used by both caravans and individual travellers since they passed through the locations of water wells, including the well of Badr. Further see al-‘Alī, *Muḥāḍarāt*, v.1, p. 78.

¹³ See Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 50.

¹⁴ Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 102. Also the Qur’ān (ETMC), 106: 2, mentions journeys through these important routes: “For the familiarity of the Quraysh, their familiarity with the journeys by winter and summer.”

¹⁵ See al-Fākihī [217/832-275/889], *Akhbār Mecca*, v.2, p. 9. Further see al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī [21/642-110/729], *Faḍā’il Mecca*, v.1, p. 14.

¹⁶ In the book of *The Holy Qur’ān ETMC*, p. 2014, the following sentence is found: “If the Quraysh were fond of Mecca and proud of it, if they profited, by its central position and its guaranteed security, from their caravans of trade and commerce, let them be grateful, adore the One True God, and accept His Message.”

visited by all Arabs and, later, by all Muslims capable of making the journey.¹⁷ The various Arab tribes were drawn to the city by the many idols the Quraysh made for them there.¹⁸ It should also be noted that the practice of usury had increased the wealth of the people of Mecca and especially of the nobility, who were determined to maintain their power and prestige.¹⁹ The tribes of the Quraysh had taken control of Mecca after gaining ascendancy over the Khuzā'ah; the latter had previously taken the leadership from the tribe of Jurhum, the first builders of the city.²⁰ Later on and prior to Islam, the duty of serving the Pilgrimage, which was considered to be the most honourable obligation in the region, devolved upon the tribes of the Quraysh.²¹

In contrast, the land surrounding Medina,²² which lay about 450 kilometres north of Mecca, was much richer than that of Mecca. Medina also lay on the main caravan route, which connected Mecca with al-Shām.²³ Unlike Mecca, it was not a religious centre, but it had the advantage of being a fertile oasis, especially adapted for the cultivation of date-palms, which provided nourishment to most of the main tribes. These tribes were the Aws and al-Khazraj and their neighbours, the Jewish tribes of Banū al-Naḍīr, Banū Qurayzah, and Banū Qaynuqā', and their interest in the town made it a leading agricultural centre,²⁴ with an economy that guaranteed independence. Like Mecca, Medina did not have a supreme leader. In fact, the town witnessed several wars which sometimes lasted for decades.

On the other hand, by the time of the Prophet's birth, said to be in 571 AD, the inhabitants of South Arabia had occupied the land for a millennium or more. Their country was very different from northern Arabia, consisting mostly of civilised settlements, although the two parts of the peninsula were linked by caravans. There were various different tribes, among whom were the Ḥimyer, Khawlān, Ḥamdān, Murād, and the

¹⁷ The Qur'ān mentions its important position in: Qur'ān, 2: 125, 127, 144, 158, 159, 197, & 200, 3: 96, 5: 97, 16: 112, 17: 1, 9: 19, 22: 26, 27, & 29, 27: 91, 28: 57 & 126, 34: 15, and 106: 3,

¹⁸ See Furayḥāt and Yāsīn, *Tārīkh al-Ḥaḍārah*, p. 54.

¹⁹ Due to the great negative effect of usury on society, as Muslims believe, the Qur'ān discusses the practise in several places, including Qur'ān, 2: 275, 276, & 278, 3: 130, 4: 161, and 30: 39. Also see the rest of the Books of *ḥadīth*.

²⁰ See Furayḥāt and Yāsīn, *Tārīkh al-Ḥaḍārah*, p.46.

²¹ This would explain why Mecca did not have one supreme leader. See the section "The Adversary at the Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Adversaries' Strengths and Weaknesses" (Ch.7). For the virtues of Mecca see *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. 2015 and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, *Faḍā'il Mecca*, pp. 11-25.

²² For the virtues of Medina see al-Jundī [d. 308/921], *Faḍā'il al-Madīnah*, pp. 18-27.

²³ See Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 104.

²⁴ See *ibid*.

kingdom of ‘Abdu Jayifar in Oman.²⁵ The land was rich, watered by regular rainfall, and agriculture was well developed. Irrigated, terraced fields produced a variety of foods and aromatics. The people of the major states - Saba, Ma‘īn, Oatabān, Awsān, and the Ḥaḍramawt - were skilled architects and visual artists and the region had grown wealthy through trade.

II.2: The Hijāz on the Eve of the Rise of Islam

During the period before the coming of Islam the Arabs lived in a condition which was later to be called the *jāhiliyyah*. In fact, the period is generally referred to by this term, which is usually translated as the “time of ignorance”.²⁶ The *jāhiliyyah* is thus the period in which Arabia had no dispensation, no inspired Prophet, and no revealed book.²⁷ “*Jāhiliyyah*” occurs in the Qur’ān in its original form²⁸ and in various different forms several times and has been discussed in these contexts by many scholars.²⁹

During the *jāhiliyyah* the Arab tribes tended to resort to violence in order to solve their problems, although killing was regarded as a very serious matter and was usually avoided. How their feuds, vendettas, and wars were regulated will be considered in the following sections.

II.3: Tribal Life and Feuding

In pre-Islamic Arabia Arab society was based upon families, kinship, clans, and tribes, and religious belief was of relatively little importance.³⁰ Tribal solidarity (*‘aṣabiyyah*) was the main characteristic of social life.³¹ Even in matters of belief they usually preferred to follow their leaders and their tribal customs even when they suspected they were

²⁵ See Mu’nis, *Atlas*, p. 61.

²⁶ Ibn Manẓūr [630/1233-711/1312], *Lisān al-‘Arab*, v.11, p. 129.

²⁷ The Qur’ān (ETMC), 5: 104, states: “When it is said to them: “Come to what Allāh Hath revealed; come to the Messenger”: They say: “Enough for us are the ways we found our fathers following.” What! Even though their fathers were void of knowledge and guidance?” Also see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, v.11, p. 129.

²⁸ The Qur’ān (ETMC), 5: 50, states: “Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days of) Ignorance? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allāh?” Also see the Qur’ān, 3: 154, 33: 33, and 48: 26. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 87, mentioned other two verses which are in fact not relevant; these verses are 3: 148 and 5: 55.

²⁹ Bashier, in his book *The Makkah Crucible*, p. 25, mentions that the Qur’ān describes the *jāhiliyyah* as the age of darkness and described the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad as bringing people from darkness into light. See the Qur’ān, 2: 257, 6: 35. The Qur’ān also discusses other aspects of *jāhiliyyah*; see for example 6: 136-140.

³⁰ See Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, p. 20.

³¹ See the chapter “The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy” (Ch.8).

misguided.³² The Qur'ān confirms this by saying: “While the Unbelievers got up in their hearts Heat and cant-the heat and cant of Ignorance.”³³ *‘Aṣabiyyah* was also the basic element in all matters concerning human relations and the rule of law in the Arabian Peninsula and the two small northern kingdoms of al-Manādhirah and al-Ghasāsinah. This was also the case in the settled communities of Mecca and Medina.

The nomads (Bedouin) of Arabia traveled in groups due to the harsh climate and the need for security during their constant search of water and grazing. These conditions led to alliances between tribes and reinforced their unity, as we will see in the next section. Although there were no fixed borders between the tribal territories, each tribe had its own lands, which no one could pass through or use without the permission of the owner. Each tribe had its own *shaykh* (ruler). He was a permanent leader who was rarely supplanted and who obtained his power from his tribe through kinship, alliance or loyalty. The *shaykh's* leadership was called for on many occasions such as in warfare, in making alliances (*aḥlāf*), and in settling blood feuds.³⁴ Wars often occurred between tribes or clans for various reasons several times within a single year. Each tribe's small and close-knit society also led to the development of individual dialects.

II.4: Tribal Alliances

Despite being strongly connected by tradition and commercial factors, the Arab tribes in the region of al-Ḥijāz were not united by one central or ruling party which could play an important part in keeping order and peace.³⁵ It is surprising that these tribes, which resolved most of their disagreements by resorting to war in an apparently hostile climate, managed to survive, let alone flourish.³⁶ However, if we make the effort to understand the system by which they tried to overcome these difficulties, our astonishment might abate. One means of survival was the tribal alliances (*aḥlāf* sing. *ḥilf*), where two or more tribes would agree to support each other against other tribes in case of clashes or movement

³² See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 131, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 277, and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.6, p. 327.

³³ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 48: 26. Further see *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. 1584, fn: 4907.

³⁴ This phenomenon was used by Islam later to the benefit of the Muslim army in all five battles but especially the last two, al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah. See the sections “The Battle of al-Yarmūk” and “The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah” in the chapter “The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy” (Ch.8).

³⁵ See Furayḥāt and Yāsīn, *Tārīkh al-Ḥadārah*, pp. 44-45.

³⁶ It should be noted that for a long period the harsh climate had the effect of keeping the Arabian Peninsula from being conquered or undergoing change, although there were, of course, other reasons.

outside of the sacred months (these months are discussed later in this chapter).³⁷ A few of the strongest tribes, however, did not seek alliances with other tribes; these were called the *Jamarāt al-ʿArab*, ‘the ‘life-coals’ [tribes] of the Arabs’.³⁸ However, two out of the four *Jamarāt al-ʿArab* tribes could not sustain their independence and, as the Arabs said, became *ṭufiʿat*, ‘extinguished’.³⁹ An alliance could be agreed between individuals, clans, or tribes.⁴⁰ In addition there was no restriction on the size or power of the two parties to the alliance, which meant that a small tribe could ally itself with a much bigger one. There were, however, certain rules and regulations which the smaller tribe was expected to abide by. Within certain limits, the smaller tribe had to go along with the wishes of the bigger tribe in exchange for protection and the guaranteeing of its members’ rights, which it could not have secured without such an alliance.⁴¹ When the tribes were equally powerful, however, one could not subjugate the other and each would keep its independence and control of its lands.⁴² The purposes of *aḥlāf* were to end fighting between the tribes, to unite them for purposes of common defence and offence, for raiding operations (*ghazwah*), for acts of revenge, for mutual aid in the payment of settlements to third parties, and for the common use of grazing land. If one or more of these interests ceased to obtain, *khalʿ* (annulment) would be the fate of the alliance until a new one was entered into.⁴³ After agreeing on the plan of the alliance it was customary to swear to a

³⁷ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.9, p. 55, al-Fayrūzabādī, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, p. 1035, al-Rāzī [d. 721/1321], *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, p. 63, and al-Farahīdī, *al-ʿAyn*, v.3, p. 231.

³⁸ The *Jamarāt al-ʿArab* tribes were the Banū ʿAbs b. Dhūbyān, Banū Numayr b. ʿAmir, Banū al-Ḥārith b. Kaʿb, and Banū Ḍabbah b. Ad. For example, Banū ʿAbs fought against the tribes of Qays. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.4, p. 145, al-Fayrūzabādī, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, p. 469, al-Farahīdī, *al-ʿAyn*, v.6, p. 122, and al-Fayyūmī [d. 770/1369], *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr*, v.1, p. 108.

³⁹ They were Banū ʿAbs b. Dhūbyān and Banū al-Ḥārith b. Kaʿb, which formed alliances with the tribes of ʿAmr b. Ṣaṣaʿah and Nahden respectively. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.4, p. 145.

⁴⁰ Such alliances were used and bore fruit in the battles of Uḥud and al-Khandaq. See the sections “The battle of Uḥud” and “The Battle of al-Khandaq” in the chapter “The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence” (Ch.6).

⁴¹ See Naseef, *Islamic Military*, p. 38.

⁴² Among the thirty-five alliances mentioned by al-Baghdādī in his book, *al-Munammiq*, p. 55, two of these equal alliances were attended by the Prophet and the Companions: firstly, the *ḥilf al-Muṭayyabīn* (the Perfumed Alliance) between the tribes of Usd, Taym, and Zuhrah, was attended by the Prophet and Abū Bakr. Secondly, the alliance of *al-aḥlāf*, which was between the tribes of ʿAbd al-Dār, Jumah, Sahm, Mukhzūm, and ʿAdy b. Kaʿb was attended by, among others, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. The first alliance was called *ḥilf al-Muṭayyabīn* because the parties dipped their hands in perfume and rubbed it on the wall of al-Kaʿbah. Their aim was to spread justice and to help aggrieved people from the Quraysh and other tribes. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.1, p. 565, & v.9, p. 53 and al-Ḥarbī [198/814-285/898], *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, v.3, p. 1053.

Also it should be mentioned that the *ḥilf al-Muṭayyabīn* was also called the *ḥilf al-Fuḍūl*. See al-Azharī, *al-Azhār*, p. 288.

⁴³ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.8, p. 76 and al-Ḥarbī, *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, v.3, p. 1053.

binding pact. All parties swore on some sort of subjectively significant but tangible substance or object, for example blood, perfume, salt, ash, water, or even the place where the alliance was concluded.⁴⁴

Also it should be added that there was a special form of alliance called *al-Nasī'*.⁴⁵ This was sometimes entered into by tribes which were intent upon revenge although the period of the sacred months was about to begin.⁴⁶ Therefore, they made payment to the people whose responsibility it was to count and trace the months, so that the order of the months could be changed, allowing them to pursue their vendetta.⁴⁷

II.5: The Reasons for Conflict and the Mounts of the Arabs

Clashes often occurred over access to water and grazing land, especially in summer as it was enormously important for any tribe to gain control of these vital resources, which would strengthen it and promote its position among the other tribes. If for any reason a tribe was not able to secure such resources it would raid the lands of other tribes to capture them. It was a matter of life or death; if the tribe succeeded it increased its stock of food, camels, and horses. The Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe, had to fight in order to take control of the trade route in western Arabia for economic reasons.⁴⁸

Another important reason, which was often connected with the previous one, was the vendetta (*tha'r*). This institution forged strong bonds among the tribe's members since any member of a tribe responsible for the death of a member of another tribe was vulnerable to a revenge attack.⁴⁹ In this way victims became killers and killers victims, the lethal pattern being sustained for generations.⁵⁰ Sometimes the relatives of the victims would give up women, wine, and perfume until they had fulfilled their promise to destroy their

The question arises here of the attitude of Islam towards these practices among the Arabs. This is discussed in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁴⁴ There was another important alliance, the *ḥilf al-Aḥābīsh*, which was named after the mountain called *Ḥubshī*. It was made between the tribes of Quraysh, Banū al-Muṣṭaliq, and Banū 'Udī b. Khuzaymah. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, v.6, p. 278, al-Fayrūzabādī, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, p. 759, and Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī [d. 626/1229], *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, v.2, p. 214.

⁴⁵ *Al-Nasī'* means to transpose one of the sacred months; for example, to exchange the position of the last of the sacred months with the one after. Further see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, v.1, p. 167.

⁴⁶ See Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā [384/994-458/1066], (*Bāb: al-Nasī' min Amr al-Jāhiliyyah*, No. 9553, v.5, p. 165) and al-Nawawī [631/1234-676/1278], *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.8, p. 225.

⁴⁷ See Qur'ān, 9: 36 & 37, al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 275, and Maḥfūz, *Fann al-Ḥarb*, p. 17.

⁴⁸ See Naseef, *Islamic Military*, p. 37.

⁴⁹ See Maḥfūz, *Fann al-Ḥarb*, p. 9.

⁵⁰ This was one of the main reasons why the Quraysh made the final decision to fight the Muslims at Badr. See the section "The Adversary at the Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Adversaries' Strengths and Weaknesses" (Ch.7).

enemy. These promises might not be fulfilled in many years of war between the tribes. For a small tribe the only escape was to subject itself and pay tribute taxes - or protection money - to a bigger and more powerful tribe.⁵¹

Attacks on caravans also provoked conflict among the tribes. In order to protect themselves some of the caravans made agreements with particular tribes, which permitted them to travel unmolested through those tribes' lands. The winter and summer caravans traveling through Mecca brought their security in this way. In addition, the problems associated with social activities such as marriage and divorce also gave rise to tribal conflicts.

The Arabs depended on two mounts when engaged in war: the horse and the camel. The favoured mount in combat, however, was the horse. But to buy and maintain such a prestigious animal was beyond the means of many men of the desert.⁵² The camel, though less prized, was much more useful to the Arabs and had many advantages over the horse. It was able to endure both heat and cold, and was perfectly suited to the harsh climate and the desert terrain. Yet, in war the camel was usually used for carrying supplies or for the long journey to the battlefield and was rarely involved in the actual combat.⁵³ Nevertheless Muslims have considered it as the gift of Allāh and the Qur'ān praises it in several verses.⁵⁴

The infantry played a crucial role in the period prior to Islam as well as in the first battles of Islam during both the Prophet's lifetime and the Caliphate of Abū Bakr. However, its importance as a major resource of the Muslim army began to decrease as the importance of the cavalry grew due to the nature of the later battles and the extensive areas they covered. Also the bigger the armies became the more cavalry was needed. Its duty was to make close contact with the adversary and particularly to halt or repel the first assault. In addition they are used as mounted archers against the cavalry of the adversary.⁵⁵

So the cavalry came to be the main force of the Arabs. In the battles in question horses were expensive, and even after the revelation of Islam the Muslims at first had few horses.

⁵¹ See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.1, p. 150 and Naseef, *Islamic Military*, p. 35.

⁵² The horse had been imported into the Arabian Peninsula. See Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 20.

⁵³ See the statement of the Prophet toward the end of the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

⁵⁴ See the Qur'ān, 16: 5-8 and 88: 17. According to Hitti: "The dowry of the bride, the price of blood, the profit of *maysir* (gambling), the wealth of a sheikh, are all computed in terms of camels." Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 21.

⁵⁵ See al-ʿArif, *al-Jaysh al-ʿArabī al-Islāmī*, p. 67.

They the cavalry was not used as the main attacking force, especially in the first three battles in question. Later, in the era of the second Caliph, and after the state's income increased, it became the backbone of the Muslim armies. Cavalry were used for reconnaissance, protection of the front and wings, close contact, raids deep into the adversary's territories, and chasing the fleeing enemy.⁵⁶

Of the adversary's mounts, the elephant was scarcely known and was certainly not used in the Arabian Peninsula since it was totally unsuited to the climate, unlike the horse or the camel. The Arabs had some experience of fighting against elephants but this happened rarely. One of these rare occasions occurred when Abraha [d. 543 AD], an Abyssinian leader, sought to destroy the Ka'bah.⁵⁷

The Arabs' weapons were mainly limited to the sword, the javelin, the bow, the knife, and their own battle-gear,⁵⁸ in other words only what an individual could carry; and of these the sword was the Arab warrior's inseparable companion.⁵⁹ In addition, among the large siege weapons were the *manjaniq* (mangonel) and *dabbābah* (siege tower).⁶⁰ Battles usually began with a number of single combats or duels: one warrior would step forward between the two armies and make a general challenge or call upon someone by name. This opponent would usually be his equal in nobility and rank, and the duel would be a test of skill and strength. The aim was to kill the adversary's best warriors and thus to strengthen and encourage one's own tribe and to weaken and dishearten the enemy.⁶¹ The battle would then continue, but again the warriors fought as individuals, not in organised and disciplined groups, and the tactic employed was that of 'hit and run' (*al-karr wa al-farr*).⁶²

Since the conduct and outcome of the battles considered by the study cannot be discussed without reference to the nature of the Arabs, the next section will examine some of their characteristics.

⁵⁶ See al-ʿArif, *al-Jaysh al-ʿArabī al-Islāmī*, p. 68-69.

⁵⁷ The Qurʾān, 105: 1-5, refers to this confrontation. Also al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.30, pp. 298-304, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.20, pp. 199-201, al-Mustadrak ʿala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn [321/933-405/1014], (*Bāb: Tafsīr Surah al-Fīl*, No. 3974, v.2, p. 583), and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyyah*, v.1, p. 95. In this study the books of *ḥadīth* will be referred to by their titles only. The word Ka'bah is referred to in the Qurʾān in several places. See the Qurʾān, 2: 152, 3: 96 & 97, 5: 95 & 97, and 22: 26.

⁵⁸ See Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Furūsiyyah*, p. 81 and Maḥfūz, *Fann al-Ḥarb*, pp. 10-14.

⁵⁹ See the Qurʾān, 9: 37, al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 275, Maḥfūz, *Fann al-Ḥarb*, p. 17, and Swayyid, *al-Fann al-ʿAskarī*, p. 18.

⁶⁰ These were often used in the conquests period as well as in the late battles of the Prophet. See ʿAbd al-Raof, *al-Handasah al-ʿAskariyyah*, p. 6 and al-Zardakāsh, *al-Anīq fī al-Manjaniq*, p. 16.

⁶¹ See Maḥfūz, *Fann al-Ḥarb*, p. 8.

⁶² See Maḥfūz, *Fann al-Ḥarb*, p. 9.

II.6: The Special Characteristics of the Arabs

The moral system of the pre-Islamic Arabia was not entirely condemned by Islam: some aspects and practices were accepted while others were rejected. The Arab's morality was practical rather than religious. Particularly valued were the virtues of honour, hospitality, truthfulness, pride, and loyalty to his group. His social life called upon him to be brave and capable of great endurance in the harsh conditions of the Arabian Peninsula.⁶³ These noble ideals, however, were not always realised, and the pre-Islamic Arab's defects were enumerated by Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib, who summarised them for the enlightenment of Aṣḥamah Negus, King of Abyssinia. He told him that before Islam the Arabs were sunk in an abyss of ignorance and barbarism, adored idols, lived unchastely, ate carrion, spoke abominations, and disregarded every human feeling. They neglected the duties of hospitality and neighbourliness, and no law was known but the triumph of the strong over the weak. The revelation of Islam eliminated these vices.⁶⁴

Other important features of Arab life need to be briefly explained; among these is their great love of poetry and the prestige earned by those skilled in the use of language. The Arabs were much concerned with language and greatly admired eloquence, that of the poet above all.⁶⁵ It is known that the poet, especially in his capacity as propagandist, or even as journalist, had a strong effect on their daily life and daily activities.⁶⁶ A tribe's poet could attack and humiliate an opponent's whole tribe and exalt his own.⁶⁷

The Arabs had little devotion to any religion; in fact their religious practice usually involved no more than following tribal custom and respecting tradition.⁶⁸ The Qur'ān states in several places that the Arabs were mainly content to follow their fathers and grandfathers in matters of religion.⁶⁹ Even when a conception of deity existed, "natural objects such as trees, wells, caves, stones, remained sacred objects"⁷⁰ to the Arab

⁶³ See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqdimat Ibn Khaldūn*, p. 125 and Nicole, *The Military Technology*, v.1, p. 269.

⁶⁴ See Musnad Aḥmad [164/780-241/855], (No. 1740, v.1, pp. 201-202), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 238, and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 145. It should be noted that Musnad Aḥmad was the editor of the works of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, and that his son Ṣāliḥ contributed more than one third to the edition after his father's death. Some of the references, however, contain neither an indication of the *Kitāb* or *Bāb*, nor even sometimes the number of the *ḥadīth*.

⁶⁵ Among the variety of poetic forms were the lament, the satire, and the panegyric.

⁶⁶ See al-Bakrī [d. 487/1094], *Muʿjam ma Istuʿjm*, v.3, p. 960.

⁶⁷ Similarly see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.1, p. 389. Further see al-Rushood, *The Poet*, pp. 89-90. The Qur'ān discusses this phenomenon without condemning it. Instead it limits the poet's power. See the Qur'ān, 26: 224-227.

⁶⁸ See Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 96.

⁶⁹ See the Qur'ān, 5: 104, 7: 28, 10: 78, 21: 35, 16: 74, 31: 21, and 43: 22 & 23.

⁷⁰ Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 97.

worshippers.⁷¹ This lack of interest in religion gave rise to a variety of different beliefs.⁷² In the south, many gods and goddesses were worshipped.⁷³ Also, Judaism had been brought to the Yemen, it was said, by two Jewish scholars from Medina⁷⁴, and Christianity had also flourished due to the involvement of the Abyssinians. Further, there were sanctuaries in the South Arabia, among which was a building called Dhū al-Khalṣah, also known as *al-Ka'bah al-Yamāniyyah*, built by the people of Yemen in imitation of the original Ka'bah in Mecca, which they visited regularly.⁷⁵

It may be useful at this point to consider in some detail the system of dating events known as *ayyām al-ʿArab*.

The term *ayyām al-ʿArab* (the days of the Arabs) is used to refer to the battles of the Arabs prior to the rise of Islam.⁷⁶ It is known that one of the means by which the Arabs recorded a particular event was its relationship to the date of a battle. An important event was referred to by its 'day' (*yawm*, pl. *ayyām*), and this was (and still is) used to place other events in time.⁷⁷ They still say that this event happened before, during or after the day of such-and-such.⁷⁸ They called a battle lasting a single day '*yawm*',⁷⁹ whereas longer conflicts were called *ḥarb* 'war' (pl. *ḥurūb*); these might continue for several days, months, or even years.⁸⁰ These days or battles were named after events, places, individuals, or even animals. Some of them were given more than one name since they lasted more than one day or were conducted in different places.⁸¹

⁷¹ For example, Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī speak of a sacred palm tree in Najrān known as Dhātu Anwāt. Gifts were offered in the form of weapons, garments, and rags, which were suspended from it. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.5, p. 110 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 325. Similarly see Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, No. 2180, v.4, p. 475).

⁷² See Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 26.

⁷³ These included 'Athtar, the god personifying the planet Venus, and the lunar gods, who included Almaqah. See Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 13-14 and Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 61. There was some regional variation; Ri'ām and 'Imyānis were venerated in the Yemen, Marḥab and Dhūrayikh in the Ḥaḍramawt, and Dhū Allba in the Bahrain region. See Mu'nis, *Atlas*, p. 61.

⁷⁴ See Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, v.3, p. 110.

⁷⁵ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ḥarq al-Dūr wa al-Nakhīl*, No. 2857, v.3, p. 1100) and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.5, p. 75.

⁷⁶ See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.1, p. 391.

⁷⁷ The researcher relied on this way of recording events to give his final judgement regarding the battle of al-Yarmūk. See the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

⁷⁸ Naseef, *Islamic Military*, p. 35.

⁷⁹ This idea will be used later to clarify the duration of the battle of al-Yarmūk in the next chapter.

⁸⁰ *Ḥarb al-Basūs* lasted for about forty years. See Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, v.1, p. 113.

⁸¹ This point is especially pertinent to the battle of al-Qādisiyyah. See Naseef, *Islamic Military*, p. 36.

Several tribes could be involved in a battle, and fighting could also break out within the tribe itself or even within clans.⁸² These conflicts could also involve non-Arabs, as in the day of *Dhū Qār*.⁸³ It was necessary, however, that long conflicts should cease for a time in order that the people might look to their social affairs. Wars, therefore, were restricted by the system of the sacred months.

The Arabs' annual calendar included four holy months, whose significance was recognised throughout the Arabian Peninsula. These months were called the sacred months '*al-ashhur al-ḥurum*'.⁸⁴ Three of them followed one another at the turn of the year; the fourth was in the middle of the Arabic year.⁸⁵ The three consecutive months were *Dhū al-Qi'dah* (the eleventh month), *Dhū al-Ḥijjah* (the twelfth month), and *Muḥarram* (the first month), while the isolated month was *Rajab* (the seventh month).⁸⁶ How these months came to be designated as sacred is not known to the researcher, but it is likely that they were organised to serve the customs and practices of the early Arabs. For example, pilgrims would have needed many days to perform their pilgrimage and return safely to their homelands. These months also allowed the people to venerate their idols around the Ka'bah, to flock to their annual fairs (*aswāq* sing. *sūq*) to buy and sell goods, especially animals and food, and to be certain of traveling unmolested and in peace; and usually peace prevailed. However, sometimes these sacred months were interrupted by fighting among the tribes, for example the 'sacrilegious war', *ḥarb al-Fijār*.⁸⁷ It was reported that the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) had taken part in such a war prior to Islam along with his tribe.⁸⁸ In addition, it is worth mentioning in connection with the *tha'r* (vendetta) that the Arabs could use the *aswāq* to identify the killer of a father or other relatives.

⁸² It occurred between the Arabs and the Sāsānians. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.1, p. 472 and Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, v.4, p. 249. Also the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 103, states: "And remember with gratitude Allāh's Favour on you; for ye were enemies and he joined your hearts in love, so that His Grace, ye became brethren."

⁸³ This battle occurred between the Arabs and the Sāsānians. See al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr (No. 1238, v.2, p. 46), Ibn Ḥajar [773/1372-852/1448], *Fath al-Bārī*, v.6, p. 262, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.1, p. 472, and Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, v.4, p. 249.

⁸⁴ See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.3, p. 211, Maḥfūz, *Fann al-Ḥarb*, p. 17. Also see the Qur'ān, 2: 194 & 217, 6: 2, and 9: 5.

⁸⁵ The Qur'ān (ETMC), 9: 36, mentions such months and assures their position in Islam: "The number of months in the sight of Allāh is twelve (in a year)- So ordained by Him the day He created the Heavens and the earth; Of them four are sacred."

⁸⁶ Five wars had occurred in the sacred months according to Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.1, pp. 467, 534, 537, & 572. Also see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.3, p. 211 and al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, p. 124.

⁸⁷ ʿAbd al-Karīm, *Quraysh*, p. 55, reports that four main wars occurred in the sacred months.

⁸⁸ It was reported to be around the years 585-591 AD. See al-Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ*, v.2, p. 233 and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 73.

Since this study is essentially a religious one it is necessary to discuss briefly the great powers in the wider region which are directly involved in our study.

II.7: The Byzantines and Sāsānians

Islam came into existence on the margins of two great Empires, those of the Byzantines and Sāsānians. The Byzantines ruled over a Christian empire of enormous extent, covering the lands north and northwest of the Arabian Peninsula to Bādiyat al-Shām, and beyond. The climate was mostly dry from mid-April to mid-November; then the rains came, lasting until the end of March. Snow also fell in winter, especially on the mountains. Summers were dry and the wind carried the dust of the desert from the east and south-east.⁸⁹ The Empire's citizens were of mixed origins and it seems that every region of al-Shām was occupied by a different sect. Its leaders - religious, political, and military - were motivated by the desire to maintain and increase the power and influence of Christianity. They had lately defeated the Sāsānian army and managed to reoccupy al-Shām.⁹⁰ Its religion had spread throughout Europe and some Arabian lands, as in the city of Najarān in the south and the kingdom of Ghassān in the north.⁹¹ Its strategy in the region was to achieve dominance and make use of its natural resources, as well as to consolidate its power in the Holy Land, and especially Jerusalem, and to spread Christianity.⁹²

The Sāsānian Empire began just beyond the eastern border of the Arabian Desert, occupying *Bādiyat al-Irāq* or *al-Simāwah*, where the wind blew mainly northwest most of the year, providing alternately cold and hot seasons; further north the climate changed, growing increasingly colder due to the effects of the uplands.⁹³ There were many grassy areas fed by the rivers running from the north, where the battle of al-Qādisiyyah

⁸⁹ See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, pp. 19-20.

This climatic phenomenon was used to the advantage of the Muslim army at the battle of al-Yarmūk. Further see the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁹⁰ See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Madā'in*, p. 124.

⁹¹ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Quṣat Ahli Najrān*, No. 4119, v.4, p. 1592) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Ādāb*, No. 2135, v.3, p. 1685).

⁹² It appears that some of the Arabs in the Kingdom of al-Manādhirah were not prohibited by the Sāsānians from embracing Christianity, while it is not recorded that the subjects of the other Arab kingdom, that of al-Ghasāsinah, which owed allegiance to the Byzantines, were permitted to embrace Mazdaism. This disparity in toleration was likely to affect the cooperation and support they might have provided to defend their religions against Islam. The Sāsānians' tolerance of Christianity, however, was probably practised for essentially political reasons.

⁹³ The word Sāsānian denotes a dynasty and refers to the rulers of the Persian lands. Therefore the study will use both 'Sāsānians' and 'Persians' interchangeably. See Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, p. 226 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Madā'in*, p. 103.

occurred. This powerful empire also encompassed the region of Yemen.⁹⁴ Similarly to the Byzantines, the Sāsānians had an official religion, Zoroastrianism, in honour of which a Holy Fire was kept burning in their capital, al-Madā'in, or 'the towns', the chief of which was Ctesiphon.⁹⁵ They were rich, with access to bountiful natural resources and having a strong military capability, and they added to their wealth by collecting taxes from the lands they occupied.⁹⁶ They were not respected by the Muslims, since they could not be numbered among the people possessing a divine Book, as the Qur'ān mentions.⁹⁷

It must be emphasised that what follows is taken from the works of Western scholars, and their conclusion that both empires were exhausted by the 630s does not tally with the view of Muslim historians.

In the fourth century the centre of Roman imperial power moved eastwards from the old capital to Constantinople, where the emperor was the symbol of cohesion and the focus of loyalty. The majority of the population was Christian, although pagan philosophers taught at the school of Athens until the sixth century, and Jewish communities lived in the cities.⁹⁸

In 328 AD Constantine made Byzantium his capital mainly because it was a good position from which to direct the defence of the Danubian frontier, the most vulnerable stretch of the Roman border. Rome had no proper communication with the sea and was cut off from the main body of the Empire by the Alps. By 328 Rome had little or no commercial importance, while Byzantium was 'a strategic centre of the first order'.⁹⁹

The greatest emperor of the sixth century was Justinian (527-565), who reconquered North Africa from the Vandals, Italy from the Ostrogoths and parts of Spain from the Visigoths. The unified Roman world empire, which had stretched from Scotland to the Sahara and from Gibraltar to the Euphrates, had been replaced by a polycentric system of barbarian states, whereas in the East Roman empire there was cultural and political unity.

⁹⁴ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sirah*, v.1, p. 191, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 134, and al-Nāṣir and Dirwish, *al-Ḥayāh al-Dīniyyah*, p. 80.

⁹⁵ They were viewed by the Muslims as "Fire-Worshippers". See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, v.13, p. 16 and al-Nāṣir and Dirwish, *al-Ḥayāh al-Dīniyyah*, pp. 78-81.

⁹⁶ See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.1, p. 353.

⁹⁷ As the Qur'ān, 30: 4, records, the reaction of the Muslims when the Byzantine army defeated the Persian army indicates that they considered that the Persians did not follow a divine religion. Further see al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.1, pp. 75-76 and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.3, pp. 423-427. See the section "The Adversary at the Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Adversaries' Strengths and Weaknesses" (Ch.7).

⁹⁸ Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 7.

⁹⁹ Foord, *The Byzantine Empire*, p. 5.

Justinian's programme of reconquest was based on this unity. He desired to restore the world empire but was less than completely successful.¹⁰⁰

A catastrophic decline in manpower took place during Justinian's wars. This was exacerbated by a severe outbreak of bubonic plague in 542. Both had lasting effects. In addition the wars produced chronically undermanned and underpaid armed forces and an empty treasury. Last but not least, religious (Christological) feuds in Egypt and Syria threatened the Empire's stability.¹⁰¹ Though it is possible to overemphasise the importance of these religious disputes, which continued to plague the Empire until the Muslim wars of conquest, they centred around a burning issue - how could the Incarnation of God in a human body be explained? These matters exercised almost everyone in the Empire, not just the theologians of the Church.¹⁰²

The Byzantines were skilled in the military arts; indeed war was studied as an art in the East, although there is no evidence that the Muslims studied the Byzantine books on the subject. The army in the seventh century owed its form to the reorganisation carried out by Maurice (582-602). His *Strategikon* is one of the most important works of the period. It was probably written in 579, when Maurice was a general of Tiberius II. His reforms lay behind the later successes of Heraclius. Maurice reorganized the army on the basis of the regiment or *numeros*, which were combined into what we would call brigades and divisions, but there was no fixed corps. Since the foreign auxiliaries who had been a feature of Justinian's armies were no longer available, Maurice decided to make the Empire self-supporting in military affairs and to recruit the army entirely from within. This was only partially achieved.¹⁰³

It is important to note that Byzantine strategy from 600-800 was less considered than tactics and organisation and was essentially defensive rather than offensive, since the rulers were engaged in a strenuous fight for survival. They tended to be careful to avoid great battles and thought it absurd to expend resources and the valuable lives of experienced soldiers unnecessarily. They had a strong predilection for stratagems, ambushes and simulated retreats and boasted of their cunning and skill in deception, but in all these they were to be bested by the Muslims.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 15.

¹⁰¹ See Jenkins, *Byzantium*, p. 9.

¹⁰² See *ibid*, p. 25.

¹⁰³ Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*, pp. 172-177.

¹⁰⁴ See *ibid*, pp. 200-202.

Before turning to the decades preceding the Muslim victory at al-Yarmūk it is important to consider the Byzantines' main enemy, the Sāsānian Empire, which at its height was the second greatest power in the ancient world, ruled all the lands between the Euphrates and the Indus, and was the master of vast wealth. Its capital was a group of seven cities on the Tigris, not far from modern Baghdād.¹⁰⁵

The Empire consisted of two distinct geographical areas: the very fertile lowlands of Mesopotamia and the Iranian uplands, separated by the Zagros chain. Mesopotamia supported a network of major cities including Ctesiphon, while the Iranian plateau was sparsely settled. There were few passes through the Zagros. The Sāsānian heartland lay in Fars, the fertile region at the south-western end of the Iranian plateau. From the first, conflict with the Romans was a defining feature of the dynasty's regional policy, and until the late fourth century this centred on contested frontier lands. Then came a long period of relative peace, after which hostilities resumed in the sixth century, during which the Persians generally took the offensive, and ended in the "Endless Peace" of 532, which turned out to be far from endless.¹⁰⁶

Khusro I (531-579) was suspicious of Justinian's ambition and attacked in 540. Peace was concluded in 562 and lasted for a decade. It was broken by the Byzantines, who objected to paying large sums to preserve the peace. In 590 this war ended and Khusro II (590-628) was deposed by Vahram, a successful general. Khusro appealed to Maurice for aid and was reinstated by a Byzantine army in 591. When Maurice was murdered in 602 Khusro took advantage of the situation and initiated an exhausting conflict that was to last for twenty-five years.¹⁰⁷

It will be useful at this point to consider briefly Sāsānian military organisation. The Sāsānian dynasty had overthrown the Parthians in 226, and one constant of the society of the first Sāsānian Shahanshah (King of Kings), Ardashir I (226-224) and of the last Zoroastrian ruler, Yazdagird III (633-651) was the hegemony of a small number of noble families, several of which had been eminent in Parthian times. Their role was to provide candidates for top military and administrative positions in the Empire. Maurice's *Strategikon* notes that the Persians "stress an orderly approach", "join battle with calmness and determination" and "do not attack in a disorderly fashion". Persian military references from the same period (c. 580) contain instruction on many points such as

¹⁰⁵ Rodinson, *Muhammad*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁶ Rubin, "The Sāsānid Monarchy", in Cameron, Ward-Perkins, and Whitby (eds), *Cambridge Ancient History*, v.XIV, pp. 638-641.

¹⁰⁷ See *ibid*, p. 644.

tactics and ambushes. Standard deployment for large armies was usually in five parts: a main battle line, a reinforcing line, a small reserve of elite cavalry and two cavalry wings. The cavalry was certainly the most effective component of the Sāsānian military, and occasionally no infantry at all was used, but generally the cavalry constituted about one third of the army. Elephants were usually accompanied by large infantry contingents, and were often used in conjunction with cavalry to terrify the horses of the enemy, as at al-Qādisiyyah.¹⁰⁸

Although Zoroastrianism or Mazdaism was the dominant religion of the Sāsānian Empire, it did not enjoy the status that Christianity was given by the Byzantine rulers. Since the early Muslims looked down on Zoroastrianism as mere fire-worship and treated its adherents as polytheists, it is necessary to consider briefly some aspects of this religion.¹⁰⁹

The Sāsāninans' original power lay among the Persian-speaking peoples of southern Iran. The family ruled their state through a hierarchy of officials, and in the fifth century they tried to provide a solid basis of unity and loyalty by reviving the ancient religion of Iran, traditionally associated with the teacher Zoroaster.¹¹⁰ He is believed to have lived in the Iranian Bronze Age, when his people were one of numerous Iranian tribes inhabiting the south Russian steppes; that is, sometime before 1200 BC. The temple cult of fire, however, was not established until the fourth century BC.¹¹¹

There is a debate among the jurists concerning how the Persians should be regarded. The Muslims did not consider them a people of a divinely revealed Book. However, they were not treated as atheists because the Prophet had taken the *jizyah*¹¹² as 'Umar also did with the people of al-Sawād.¹¹³ It seems that they fell between being a People of the Book and being atheists; and like Jews and Christians they were not forced to convert, but suffered from restrictions. For example, they could not marry Muslims,

¹⁰⁸ Cornuelle, "An Overview of the Sassanian Persian Military", pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁹ See Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ See *ibid*, p. 9.

¹¹¹ See Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 1-3, and 222.

¹¹² A tax levied upon adult non-Muslims living in an Islamic state. See al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, v.1, p. 157. Further see the section "The Concept of the Just War" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

¹¹³ The region of *al-Sawād* (darkness) may have been so called because of: 1) the great number of palm trees, 2) the heterogeneous mixture of people and sects, or 3) the large population of that area. Respectively see Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muḥjam al-Buldān*, v.3, p. 201, v.1, p. 309, and v.2, p. 290. Further see al-Bakrī, *Muḥjam ma Iṣṭuḥm*, v.1, p. 286, al-Manāwī, *al-Ta'ārīf*, p. 393, and al-Nawawī, *Taḥrīr al-Fāḥ al-Tanbih*, v.1, p. 82.

their meals could not be shared by Muslims, and they were excluded from positions of power.¹¹⁴

For this religion the universe was a battleground, beneath the supreme God, between good and evil spirits. The good would eventually triumph but men and women of virtue and purity could hasten the victory. Zoroaster's teachings were revived in a philosophical form by the Sāsānians in order to provide divine sanction for royal legitimation, but with greater emphasis on the dualism of good and evil, and with a priesthood and formal worship.¹¹⁵ But although Mazdaism was the dominant religion, generally variety was encouraged. Manichaeism and the cult of Anahita were accommodated, Nestorian Christians found a refuge in the Empire, and central Iraq was the main locus of Jewish religious learning and a refuge for pagan philosophers and medical scientists from the Greek cities of the Mediterranean world.¹¹⁶

Great changes took place in the fortunes of the two Empires in the sixth and early seventh centuries, gravely weakening both. They engaged in a series of long wars, which lasted with intervals from 540 to 629. These were mainly fought in Syria and Iraq. The Sāsānian armies reached the Mediterranean, occupying Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem, and were not driven out until the 620s. For a while Sāsānian rule extended to Yemen.¹¹⁷ This was possible because of the contradictions and weaknesses of the Byzantine Empire, which became apparent during the last years of Justinian's reign and during the reigns of his successors, especially the incompetent and brutal Phocas (602-610), a former centurion and the murderer of Maurice. The threats to the Empire now came from the Avars in the north and the Persians in the east. The Avars destroyed much of the Byzantines' political authority in the Balkans. In the west, by the time of Muḥammad's birth, northern Italy had been lost, and soon afterwards the Persians took a number of cities. It was obvious that the territories were too widely dispersed to be defended.¹¹⁸

The war in the east continued to drain the treasury until 591, when civil war in Persia enabled Maurice to aid Khusro II and conclude a favourable peace agreement. After Maurice's death Phocas abandoned the Balkans and was faced with the renewed threat from the east - the war with Khusro II. The next twenty-five years saw the Byzantines deprived of huge areas including all of Egypt and Syria. It can be said that Phocas

¹¹⁴ See Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 47.

¹¹⁵ Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 10.

¹¹⁶ See *ibid*, p. 11.

¹¹⁷ See *ibid*, p. 11.

¹¹⁸ Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 35.

presided over a military and economic disaster.¹¹⁹ The Justinian expansion of the sixth century had overextended the resources of the state, and Phocas had neither the ability nor the experience to rectify the situation or to deal with the acrimonious divisions within the Church. He was deposed and executed in 610 by Heraclius (610-641). Heraclius is justifiably regarded as one of the Empire's greatest rulers, but the first years of his reign were not successful and in 618 he even considered abandoning Constantinople for his home city of Carthage. In 613 the Persians took the Anatolian provinces and occupied Jerusalem in 614. They overran Armenia - the main source of Byzantine gold and the homeland of Heraclius' family - and reached the Bosphorus in 616. The fact is that Heraclius' overthrow of Phocas did not stabilise the Empire. The armies virtually collapsed between 610 and 615.¹²⁰ Heraclius' great achievement was to reverse this trend, and the 620s saw some notable successes. Building upon the system initiated by Maurice, Heraclius defused the danger the Avars posed to the Empire in the Balkans. From 622 to 628 he outmanoeuvred the Persian forces in Anatolia and Armenia and took the war to the heart of the Sāsānian Empire. The Persians and Avars tried unsuccessfully to take Constantinople in 626, and in the 630s the Bulgars rebelled against and defeated the weakened Avars. Thus the decade witnessed the partial resurgence of the Empire. Heraclius had been able to restore its eastern territories and stabilize its position in the Balkans.¹²¹

The last decade of the Sāsānian dynasty saw a series of violent upheavals which exposed the inherent weaknesses of the huge empire. The reforms of Khusro I (531-579) had attempted to cope with these weaknesses and strengthen the Emperor's position, but the Empire proved resistant to centralization: the political and military organisation was too inefficient to remain stable. In addition, the hundred years of almost continuous war with the Byzantines from 527 to Heraclius' victory in 628 weakened the social structure. The Sāsānians were, like the Byzantines, involved in wars on several fronts, notably against the Turkish federation in the 570s and 580s, which proved hugely expensive.¹²² In spite of Khusro's reforms the Sāsānian state remained a fairly simple structure in which economic and military power rested with the feudal nobility. The wars against the Byzantines provided short-term gains and their peace payments were useful, but much of this revenue was expended in defending the Empire against other dangers. Even the most successful

¹¹⁹ Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 11.

¹²⁰ See Kaegi, *Byzantium*, p. 33.

¹²¹ Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 48.

¹²² Rubin, "The Sasanid Monarchy", v.XIV, p. 659.

conqueror, Khusro II, expanded the Empire too far to the west.¹²³ Heraclius' successes against the Empire gave rise to the most severe bout of dynastic instability the state had ever experienced. In 628 Heraclius prompted the Persian nobility to overthrow Khusro and the humiliated Sāsānian Empire degenerated into civil war and chaos. In 629 the Persians abandoned Egypt and Byzantine western Asia.¹²⁴ Thus the last Sāsānian ruler, Yasdagird III (633-651) found himself confronted by the Muslim forces at a point when the return of booty to the Byzantines combined with the destruction caused by the Mesopotamian campaigns had left the monarchy gravely weakened.¹²⁵

As for the Byzantines, Heraclius' achievement was remarkable, but the restored Empire was no longer a great power. All the resources of Church and state had been expended on the war effort. Heraclius owed the Church a vast sum, a substantial army still needed to be maintained, and taxes were slow in coming from Asia Minor. Economically the Empire was in a precarious condition.¹²⁶ The hold of the Byzantines on Syria remained tenuous.¹²⁷ In addition theological disputation continued to undermine the affairs of the Church. After Mu'ta (629) Heraclius taxed the provinces in order to liquidate the loan made by the Church and this exacerbated the sectarian tensions within the Empire.¹²⁸ The Muslim invasions followed Heraclius' victory over the Persians too swiftly to allow imperial restabilisation. The rapid succession of internal and external crises kept Heraclius and his government perpetually off balance.¹²⁹ But it is difficult to measure how exhausted the Empire was after 628. It was certainly not in a state of collapse at the moment of the first Islamic raids and invasions, yet it was fiscally, psychologically and militarily unstable.¹³⁰ Nevertheless the Muslims were justified in regarding the restored Empire as a formidable foe against whom victory was by no means certain in the short term. Nor was the Sāsānian Empire to be considered a spent force militarily. But the Muslims were an unknown quantity. Heraclius had good intelligence on the topography, roads and communications, climate and other factors in Syria. On the eve of al-Yarmūk he was very experienced in war, but as a result his military repertory was well known to the Muslims, who by contrast were far less well known to Heraclius and his advisors, except in

¹²³ See *ibid*, p. 661.

¹²⁴ Kaegi, *Byzantium*, p. 26.

¹²⁵ Rubin, "The Sasanid Monarchy", v.XIV, p. 661.

¹²⁶ Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 50

¹²⁷ Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 23.

¹²⁸ See Foord, *The Byzantine Empire*, p. 113.

¹²⁹ See Kaegi, *Byzantium*, p. 33.

¹³⁰ See *ibid*, p. 46.

so far as they conformed to earlier Arab patterns of conducting war.¹³¹ Oman's verdict on the Muslims' success against the Byzantines applies equally well to their campaign against the Sāsānians: "The Muslims who conquered Syria and Egypt were not superior in arms or organisation to the Byzantines but their fanatical courage enabled them to face and defeat better-armed and better-disciplined troops."¹³²

II.8: Conclusion

This chapter has covered some important aspects of the political, religious, and social life of the Arabian Peninsula in the era prior to the rise of Islam. It first explained the Arabs' critical location in relation to the two giant empires and their Arabian subject kingdoms. Then, it focused on the particular nature of al-Hijāz and of its two cities of Mecca and Medina. After that, the social life of the tribes, their feuds and their alliances were examined. Next, the causes of inter-tribal conflict and the mounts of the Bedouins were considered. The special characteristics of the Arabs which were to have an effect on the five battles in question were briefly discussed, and this was followed by an explanation of *ayyām al-ʿArab*, including the sacred months. Finally a brief history of the Byzantine and Sāsānian empires was given.

This chapter has made clear that the Arabs had no notion of strategy, no centralised leadership, no one single religion, and were far from being a united military power. Their loyalty was to their own belligerent tribe, and they were continually at war with each other. How these aggressive and unruly warriors were disciplined and inspired to win decisive victories against apparently superior forces will be considered in the next chapter.

¹³¹ See *ibid*, p. 63.

¹³² Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*, p. 208.

CHAPTER THREE

The Battles and their Significance

Islam was revealed in Mecca in about 609 AD. The Prophet then remained in the city for thirteen years, calling the people to Islam. In the beginning it was a secret call but three years after the revelation he declared it openly. Mecca at that time was considered an important religious city, since it sheltered the Ka'bah, to which people had been making pilgrimage for many centuries.¹ During the sixth century AD the tribe of Quraysh had come to occupy positions of power within the religious and commercial hierarchy.² The Quraysh's wealth was mainly derived from the organisation and financing of caravans; journeys took place twice a year, to Yemen in winter and to Syria in summer.³ The Prophet's message was directed against the ideas and practices of polytheism and slavery. These two elements among others formed the backbone of trade for the Quraysh.⁴ During the pilgrimage season, the Prophet and his Companions started to call the Quraysh and other tribes to Islam. The reaction quickly grew violent: they were tortured, disgraced, and humiliated increasingly day after day. Consequently, they had to seek a place of refuge and look for shelter elsewhere.⁵ Some - though not the Prophet himself - were forced to migrate to Abyssinia (a Christian land); and finally to escape to Medina. Many did so under cover of darkness, leaving behind their wealth and their families.⁶ After most of the Muslims had migrated to Medina, the Quraysh were concerned that the Prophet himself would travel to Medina and establish a power base which could be used to strike against their interests. As a result they laid plans to assassinate him, but he was aware of the

¹ The Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 9-97, refers to this: "The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Becca (another name for Mecca): full blessing and guidance for all the worlds. In it are Signs Manifest; the station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah".

² See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.1, p. 156.

³ See the Qur'ān, 106: 2.

⁴ See Musnad Aḥmad (No. 4258, v.1, p. 446) and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.1, p. 438.

⁵ Al-Ḍaḥḥāk [d. 774/1373], *al-Aḥād*, v.2, p. 179, claimed that there were two kinds of migration: first, one went to Medina and stayed there in order to serve Islam; second, one migrated to Medina, then returned home and stood by, awaiting the call of the Prophet in Medina. Of these, the first was considered the better course of action, and is called *Hijrat al-Battah*.

⁶ In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 22: 39, it is found: "To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged;- and verily, Allah is Most Powerful for their aid;- (they are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right,- (for no cause- except that they say: "Our Lord is Allah."

danger and left the city with his closest Companion, Abū Bakr.⁷ The Quraysh then offered a substantial reward for the capture of Muḥammad.⁸ Upon the Prophet's (PBUH) arrival in Medina, the Islamic community, the Muslim Umma (nation), was born.⁹ Most of the emigrants had to start from scratch.¹⁰ Three groups basically formed the society of Medina; firstly, the two tribes newly converted to Islam, *al-Aws* and *al-Khazraj*, known as the Helpers (*al-Anṣār*); secondly, the Emigrants (*al-Muhājirūn*); and lastly, the three Jewish tribes of Banū Qurayzah, Banū al-Naḍīr, and Banū Qaynuqā'. The Prophet was received as the unchallenged leader of Medina. The location of Medina provided the newly Islamic community with a strategic position on the mercantile route from Mecca to Syria. The migration of the Prophet Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina took place in 622 AD.¹¹ The Prophet immediately built a mosque, which was to become the headquarters of the fledgling Islamic state. One of the first acts of the Prophet in Medina was to create bonds of *Ikhā'* (brotherhood)¹² between the Emigrants and the Helpers.¹³ In addition, treaties were concluded with the Jewish tribes. Now that they were settled in their new home, one of the main tasks of the Prophet and his Companions was to spread Islam by

⁷ Abū Bakr [c. AD 573-13/634] was the first Caliph to rule the Islamic community after the death of the Prophet. He was also the first man to embrace Islam and later fought at the battle of Badr. Further see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Manāqib al-Muhājirīn*, v.3, p. 1336) and Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Bāb: Manāqib Abū Bakr*, v.5, pp. 606-616).

⁸ The reward was about 100 camels, which was considered at that time a huge amount. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Hijrat al-Nabī*, No. 3692, v.3, p. 1417) and Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 12.

⁹ Umma often translated "Muslim community". See Dallal, "Ummah", in Esposito and others (eds), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, v. 4, p. 267.

¹⁰ The Qur'ān (ETMC), 59: 8, states: "(Some part is due) to the indigent Muhājirs, those who were expelled from their homes and their property, while seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure, and aiding Allah and His Messenger: such are indeed the truthful".

¹¹ See Kennedy, *The Prophet*, p. xii. Further see Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Fi Ḥadīth al-Hijrah*, v.4, pp. 2309-2311).

¹² Brotherhood was initiated between individuals of different tribes, who were encouraged to share their wealth and property with one another. For example, Sa'd b. al-Rabī', who was one of the Helpers, offered 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf, who was an emigrant, half of his wealth and property and even offered to divorce one of his wives. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, however, simply thanked him and asked for directions to the market. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Buyū'*, No. 1944, v.2, p. 722), al-Sunan al-Kubrā [215/831-303/916], (*Bāb: al-Hadiyyat li man 'Arras*, No. 5580, v.3, p. 336), and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.1, p. 228.

The Qur'ān (ETMC), 59: 9, states: "And those who before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith, show their affection to such as came to them for refuge and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves even though poverty was their (own lot). And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,- they are the ones that achieve prosperity."

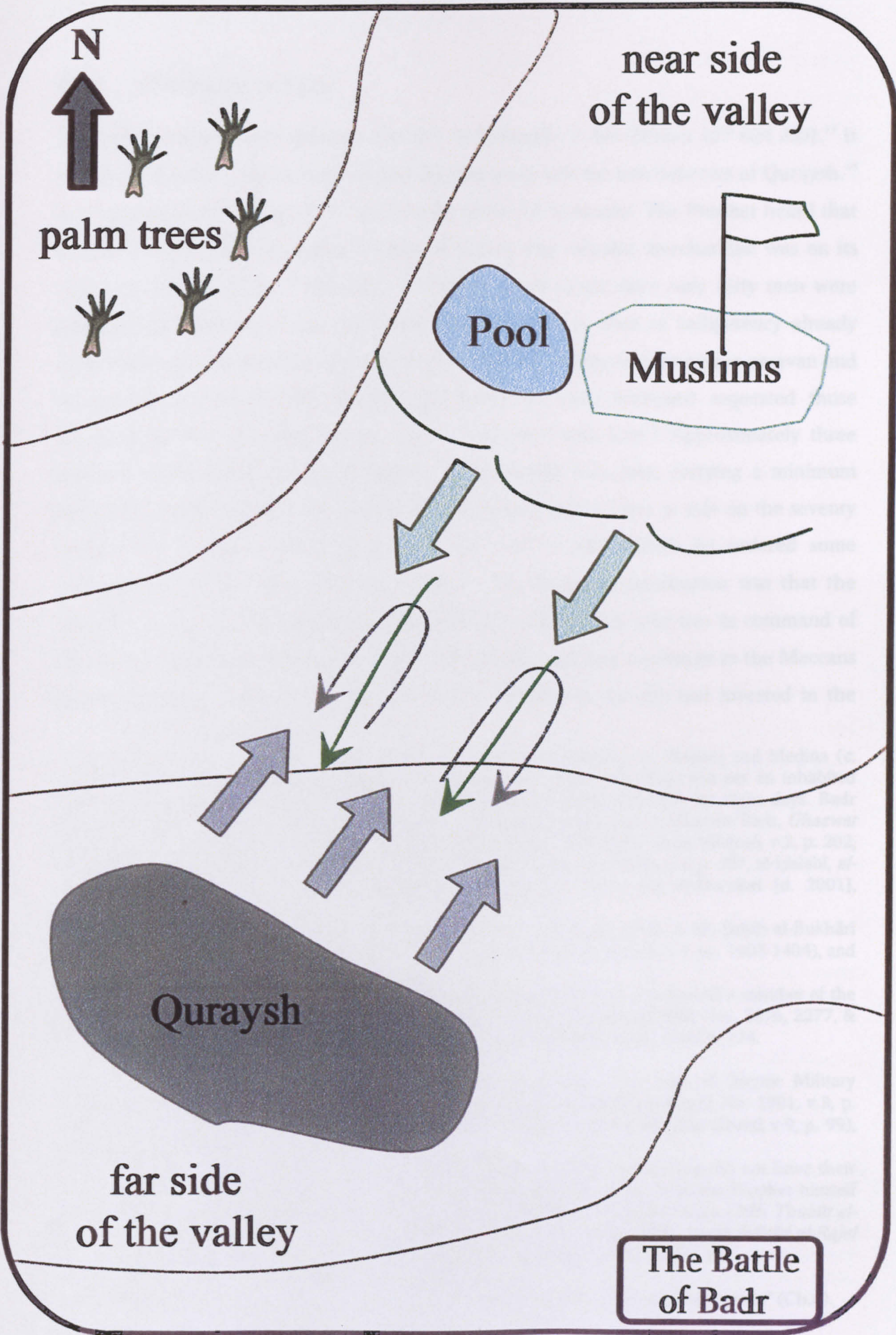
¹³ It should be noted here that this was another state of alliance, but between individuals not tribes, and based upon different norms of formation than the ones that had been known in Arab society. Similarly see the section "Tribal Alliances" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

word and deed.¹⁴ Naturally, this resulted in conflict with many of the neighbouring tribes and nations. As we shall see, however, these conflicts became decisive turning points for the Muslims and it can be argued that their importance for the very survival of the community led the Muslim army to change its method of warfare to one in which “It moves swiftly and attacks quickly in every battle.”¹⁵

This chapter proposes to survey the five major battles considered by this study with the intention of furnishing the reader with a general background and a source of references for the succeeding chapters. In addition, at the end of the account of each battle its specific characteristics will be highlighted. What makes these battles (Badr, Uḥud, al-Khandaq, al-Yarmūk, and al-Qādisiyyah) significant is that they took place in the early stages of Islam, between the second year and the fifteenth year AH (in the seventh century AD, about 624-636). It is important to note that the revelation of the Qur'ān had begun before, and continued until after, the first three battles. The last two battles were fought against the two huge empires which dominated the region. Some Companions fought in both periods, at first to ensure the survival of the Islamic state, and then during the period of conquests. It should be emphasised that in these battles the Muslim army fought only with non-Muslim armies. Historians have long regarded these battles as turning points for the Muslim Umma.

¹⁴ For more detail see the section “Definition of Islamic Strategy and the Two ‘Pillars’” in the chapter “The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy” (Ch.8).

¹⁵ Al-Turkumānī, *al-Madhāhib*, p. 183.



III.1: The Battle of Badr

The battle of Badr¹⁶ took place on the 17th of Ramaḍān, 2 AH (March 15th 624 AD).¹⁷ It was the first major conflict between the Muslim army and the non-believers of Quraysh.¹⁸ It is considered by the Qur'ān to be a turning point for humanity. The Prophet heard that a great caravan carrying a large amount of money and valuable merchandise was on its way back from al-Shām.¹⁹ Militarily, it seemed a soft target since only forty men were guarding the caravan; it was considered an easy prize. A state of belligerency already existed between the Muslims and the Quraysh and so, hoping to capture the caravan and seizing the opportunity, the Prophet (according to some accounts) requested those Companions who had their mounts ready to proceed with him.²⁰ Approximately three hundred and fourteen of his Companions rode rapidly with him, carrying a minimum amount of weapons and (according to other accounts) taking turns to ride on the seventy camels they had at their disposal.²¹ At the well of Abū 'Utbah he ordered some inexperienced youths to go back to Medina.²² The Prophet's information was that the caravan would pass through Badr.²³ Nevertheless, Abū Sufyān, who was in command of the caravan, was somehow made aware of the danger and sent a message to the Meccans urging them to come to the rescue, as almost everyone in the city had invested in the

¹⁶ Badr is the site of a number of wells, and is located between Mecca (c. 300km) and Medina (c. 153km). It was named after Badr b. Yakhliḍ b. Kinānah [d. c. 300 AD]. Badr was not an inhabited area, but a fair was held there every year at the beginning of Dhū al-Qi'dah for eight days. Badr became renowned after the battle. The battle was given several names such as *Ghazwat Badr*, *Ghazwat Badr al-Kubrā*, and *Ghazwat Badr al-Thāniyah*. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.2, p. 202, al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam ma Istu'jim*, v.1, p. 231, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, v.1, p. 357, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 390, Yamānī, *Badr al-Kubrā*, pp. 19-23, and al-Sha'rāwī [d. 2001], *Ghazawāt al-Rasūl*, p. 25.

¹⁷ For the main references to the battle see the Qur'ān, 8: 5-19, 41-45, 49-50, & 67, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat Badr*, v.4, pp. 1435-1458), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Ghazwat Badr*, v.3, pp. 1403-1404), and the rest of the books of *ḥadīth* and biography.

¹⁸ The major tribe in Mecca at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, who was himself a member of the Qurayshite clan of Banū Hāshim. See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Faḍil Nasab al-Nabī*, Nos. 2276, 2277, & 2278, v.4, p. 1782), Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.6, pp. 529 & 530, and Firestone, *Jihād*, p. 174.

¹⁹ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 375.

²⁰ Further see the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6). Also see Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Thubūt al-Jannah li al-Shahīd*, No. 1901, v.3, p. 1510), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Jawāz Infirād al-Rajul wa al-Rajulān fi al-Ghazū*, v.9, p. 99), and al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.13, p. 45.

²¹ This account is not consistent with others holding that two-thirds of the army did not have their camels with them and that each camel was ridden by three men alternately. Even the Prophet himself is said to have shared his camel with Marthd and 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Thubūt al-Jannah li al-Shahīd*, No. 1901, v.3, p. 1510), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Jawāz Infirād al-Rajul wa al-Rajulān fi al-Ghazū*, v.9, p. 99), and al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.13, p. 45.

²² See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 380.

²³ The section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

caravan.²⁴ Remembering the story of Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī, the men of Mecca reacted angrily and with no time to spare one thousand warriors including 100 cavalymen marched to defend their caravan. Abū Sufyān, however, did not wait for the Quraysh; he avoided Badr and the caravan escaped. Although many of the Quraysh, having been informed of the escape, wanted to turn back - and some did - the great majority continued to march towards Badr, and the Muslims realised that an encounter with the Quraysh army was inevitable.²⁵ At this point, after evaluating the loss of the caravan and the potential threat posed by the Quraysh army, the Muslims needed to prove three things: firstly, that they were not afraid of the Quraysh, and were determined to protect their dignity and uphold their position in the region;²⁶ secondly, that they would stand for Islam even if it meant fighting against their relatives, many of whom were with the Quraysh army - in other words, their decision to stand and fight can be considered a forward defensive plan against the Quraysh; thirdly, that they would at all costs prevent the Jews in Medina gaining dominance over the fledging Islamic state.²⁷ In addition, the Prophet was promised one of two alternatives by Allāh: either the caravan, or the Quraysh army.²⁸ As for the Quraysh, their intention, after being informed that the caravan had escaped, was either to celebrate in Badr for three nights or to punish the Muslims so severely that they would not dare to intercept any more caravans, as their inevitable victory would impress on the Arabs that the Quraysh were still supreme in the region.²⁹ After the Prophet had called upon his forces to prepare for the expected confrontation, the Muslim army moved towards Badr.³⁰ That night it rained, hindering the progress of the Quraysh to Badr by impeding their mounts, but proving a blessing for the Muslim army as it hardened the ground and made

²⁴ For the incident of Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī see the Qur'ān, 2: 217 and Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Qismat al-Ghanimah*, v.9, p. 58).

²⁵ See the Qur'ān, 8: 6. Also see the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6). In addition, it should be noted that the Qur'ān makes it clear that the two armies were brought into conflict by the will of Allah. See the Qur'ān, 8: 42.

²⁶ Firestone, *Jihād*, p. 131 and al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah al-Askariyah*, pp. 49-50.

²⁷ In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 22: 39, it is mentioned: "To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, Allah is Most Powerful for their aid".

²⁸ Al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 208, states: "The Muslims were afraid that the pagan Meccans would march on and initiate the war within the headquarters of Islam, Medina." This judgment seems to be weak since they had been promised they would meet the Quraysh or take the caravan. The Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 7, states: "Behold! Allah promised you one of the two parties, that it should be yours: Ye wished that the one unarmed should be yours, but Allah willed to establish the Truth according to His words and to cut off the roots of the Unbelievers."

²⁹ See al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, pp. 212-213.

³⁰ Before continuing the march he consulted with his Companions and asked them whether the army should proceed to Badr. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 162, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 26, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 262, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 385.

it easier for them to march.³¹ The next day the Muslims proceeded with caution to Badr, camping on the further bank of the valley. A squad of guards from the Helpers was assigned to defend the Prophet at his headquarters. A trellis-like structure was built in a dominant position, from which the Prophet, acting as commander, could observe and supervise the confrontation.³² Al-Ḥubāb b. al-Mundhir, an experienced warrior, evaluated the battlefield and advised the Prophet that the Muslims should go to the nearest well, construct and fill a large water container (pool), and fill in the remaining wells. Such an action, he explained, would deprive the Quraysh army of water, which was rightly considered a vital natural resource. This suggestion was accepted and executed at midnight. Meanwhile, the Quraysh drew closer and camped on the nearer bank of the valley. On the morning of the conflict, they marched into the valley and took up a fighting position designed to disadvantage the Quraysh army.³³ Before their advance the Prophet had called his men together, performed the *Fajr* (dawn) prayer and urged them to fight bravely. As the sun rose, he ordered them into ranks.³⁴ From an Islamic perspective, as the two armies became clearly visible to each other, it is recorded in the Qur'ān that the Devil, who had been with the Quraysh army, fled as he caught sight of the Angels sent by Allāh to assist the Muslims. Satan had accompanied the Quraysh in the shape of Surāqah b. Mālik, one of the leaders of the Banū Kinānah, and had promised to help the Quraysh achieve victory.³⁵

The battle was started by al-Aswad b. 'Abd al-Asad, who challenged the Quraysh to drink from the pool protected by the Muslims; he was later killed. An arrow was then fired into the Muslim army, fatally wounding Muhji'. Muslims consider him to be the first martyr of

³¹ In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 11, it is mentioned: "Remember He covered you with drowsiness, to give you calm as from Himself, and He caused rain to descend on you from heaven, to clean you therewith, to remove from you the stain of Satan, to strengthen your hearts, and to plant your feet firmly therewith."

³² See Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.7, p. 289 and Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 168.

³³ See the exegesis of Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 319, regarding verse, 8: 49.

³⁴ See Musnad Aḥmad (No. 948, v.1, p. 117) and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 393.

³⁵ In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 48, it is found: "Remember Satan made their (sinful) acts seem alluring to them, and said: "No one among men can overcome you this day, while I am near to you." But when the two forces came in sight of each other, he turned on his heels, and said: "Lo! I am clear of you; Lo! I see what ye see not; Lo! I fear Allah; for Allah is strict in punishment." Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.10, pp. 18-20, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.8, p. 27, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 318-319, maintain that it is indeed Satan who is referred to in this verse. Also, al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq, the English Version*, p. 220, refers to this event when he cited the exhortation of Abū Jahl, the Prophet's sworn enemy, to the Quraysh army: "Do not fear the betrayal of Surāqah" (Satan, it seems, appeared in the form of Surāqah)." Also see Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 36.

the battle.³⁶ ‘Utbah b. Rabī‘ah stepped out from the ranks of the Quraysh accompanied by his brother and son, and called for single combat.³⁷ ‘Ubaydah b. al-Ḥārith, Ḥamzah b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib³⁸, and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib³⁹, the closest relatives of the Prophet, represented the Muslim force. Ḥamzah and ‘Alī killed their opponents, and then helped the injured ‘Ubaydah to kill his. At first, the Muslim army followed a defensive plan devised by the Prophet: first, to rain arrows on the enemy as they marched closer, as a temporary disruption; second, not to break ranks and fight as individuals, but to maintain discipline and protect one another’s lives with their swords as the Quraysh closed in on them. This unique method of fighting, quite unfamiliar among the Arabs, was to prove a highly successful tactic. The Muslim army, unlike the Quraysh, were thus a united force, and this was a more important factor than the greater numbers of the Quraysh army.⁴⁰ It can be argued that if they had not been united they might have been easily defeated.⁴¹

As the armies drew closer together, the Prophet went to his shelter and prayed fervently to Allāh to support the Muslim troops. Nadawī writes: “Putting his head (PBUH) on the dust..., he knew full well that if the victory in the battle was to go by the numbers and strength, prowess and weapons of the two forces, the result was a foregone conclusion.”⁴²

Then the Prophet dozed a little and waking, said: “O Abū Bakr, glad tidings are there for you: Allāh’s victory has approached; by Allāh, I can see Gabriel on his mare in the thick of

³⁶ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 175, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.3, p. 33, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 274, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 404.

³⁷ ‘Utbah b. Rabī‘ah called for a duel in order to defend his honour against Abū Jahl’s accusation of cowardice. What had happened was this: after the escape of the caravan the Quraysh army were about to return to Mecca, following the advice of ‘Utbah, since they now had no pressing reason to fight the Muslims. Abū Jahl accused ‘Utbah of cowardice, and ‘Utbah replied: “Tomorrow he will know who the coward is.” See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 171 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 398.

³⁸ He was the uncle of the Prophet, and his brother, through what is called *min al-Raḍā‘ah* (through breast-feeding). He became a Muslim in the sixth year of the first revelation. He was one of the great fighters of Islam and was called *Asad Allah* (the lion of Allah). He was killed on the seventh day of the tenth month of the third year of AH at the battle of Uḥud. See al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Bāb: Manāqib Ḥamzah b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib*, No. 4874, v.3, p. 211).

³⁹ ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib [c. AD 598-40/661] was the cousin of the Prophet. He was the first boy to become a Muslim. After the assassination of ‘Uthmān he became the fourth Caliph. He was known for his of knowledge jurisprudence. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Manāqib ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*, No. 3498, v.3, p. 1357) and al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Bāb: Manāqib ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*, No. 4572, v.3, p. 116).

⁴⁰ See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, p. 272 and Henderson, *The Science of War*, p. 40.

⁴¹ This view, however, is open to question since Muslims believe that at Badr the angels participated in the fighting; and although the study does not doubt the importance of the Prophet’s plan or wish to argue that the victory of the small Muslim army was not deserved, nevertheless, it is a fact according to the Qur’ān that the angels’ participation, along with other divine assistance, was very effective both materially and spiritually. The Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 12, states: “Remember thy Lord inspired the Angels (with the message): “I am with you: give firmness to the Believers: I will instil terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers.” Also see the Qur’ān, 54: 45 & 46.

⁴² Nadawī, *Muḥammad*, p. 205.

a sand storm.”⁴³ The Prophet then stepped forward and recited the verse: “Their multitude will be put to flight, and they will show their backs.”⁴⁴ Following the request of Gabriel, the Prophet took a handful of pebbles, flung it at the enemy and ordered his field commanders to sweep the enemy positions. Within a short time the Quraysh army panicked and fled. It should be noted that according to the various historical biographies of the Prophet, he did not take part physically in the battle.⁴⁵ The Muslims had won the day; prisoners of war were captured and a considerable booty was collected. Among the seventy Meccans killed in the field were some of their most influential leaders. They were all thrown into a well, except Umayyah b. Khalaf, who was buried where he had fallen. Other well-known chiefs of the Quraysh were killed after being made prisoner.⁴⁶ In three days, the Muslim army returned to Medina. The battle of Badr did not last long. In fact, it was one of the shortest of the battles under discussion.⁴⁷

From the Muslim point of view this battle has specific features, some of which did not occur in the other battles. First, it is considered by all Muslims, on the authority of Allāh, to be the most important battle in Muslim history; the Qur’ān praises it and calls it *Yawm al-Furqān*.⁴⁸ The main reason for the confrontation was religious. However, it can be argued that, contrary to what can be found in most biography of the Prophet, he had to go into the fight not only to take revenge on the Quraysh for the loss of the caravan, but also because the Quraysh had threatened the non-Muslims of Medina with invasion and death if they refused to expel the Prophet and his Companions.⁴⁹ Badr was the first

⁴³ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Shuhūd al-Malā’ikah Badr*, No. 3773, v.4, p.1468), al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr (No. 11952, v.11, p. 342), al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb Ma’rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 4431, v.3, p. 72), and Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 172. Translated by al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 221.

⁴⁴ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 54: 45. Also see Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 36.

⁴⁵ Further see al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 344 and 412.

⁴⁶ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 180 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 440.

⁴⁷ The extraordinary ease of the victory can be understood from the remark of Salamah b. Waqsh, who scornfully observed that the Muslims had only been slaughtering bald old people as if they were sacrificed camels. See al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Dhikr Manāqib Salamah b. Waqsh*, No. 5765, v.3, p. 472), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 193, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 305, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 443.

⁴⁸ This word is used in different places in the Qur’ān in different forms; however, it generally means a distinction between two things. It is used in the Qur’ān to indicate the difference between right and wrong. The Qur’ān is described as *al-Furqān*, which means that its revelation is a distinction between the right and the wrong, as in *surah al-Furqān*. This phrase has several meanings such as The Day of Discrimination, Testing, Criterion between right and wrong, and Decision between right and wrong. In *The Holy Qur’ān ETMC*, p. 503, it is stated that the battle of Badr is called *Furqān* in Muslim theology, because it was the first trial of strength by battle, in Islam, between the powers of good and evil. Evil was defeated, and those who had real faith were tested and separated out from those who had not faith enough to follow the banner of faith. Also see the Qur’ān, 9: 37 and 41.

⁴⁹ See Sunan Abū Dā’ūd (*Kitāb al-Kharāj wa al-Imārah wa al-Fay’*, No. 3004, v.3, p. 156) and al-Ghaḍbān, *al-Manhaj*, v.1, p. 219.

confrontation between the new Muslim community and the Quraysh, and it was a necessary one because the Prophet had to make sure of the loyalty of his new allies, the Helpers.⁵⁰ Second, non-human actors participated in this battle, i.e. the Angels and Satan. According to al-Bukhārī and Muslim the Angels actually took part in the fighting.⁵¹ Third, it was the first time the new Islamic community was involved in a major confrontation with their main enemy, the Quraysh. Fourth, the battle occurred at a well-known gathering place (an annual fair) and was witnessed by the people who were waiting for the caravan. As a result, the news of the Muslims' victory spread quickly throughout the Arabian Peninsula. Fifth, the casualty report of the Quraysh stated that many of their leaders were killed or captured: 70 were killed and the Muslim army captured almost one quarter of their total numbers.⁵² Sixth, there was, on the part of the Muslims, a huge change in the usual Arab attitude to kinship ties: relatives were killed not for leadership, wealth, or any other mundane motive, but according to the new criteria of Islam. Also the Prophet helped to assuage the psychological effects of slaying a kinsman. Seventh, the men who took part were praised and named after the battle: each one of them was called *Badrī* by subsequent historians, especially when discussing those who took part in the ensuing battles.⁵³ In addition, it was reported that the best among the Emigrants and the Helpers of Medina were those who fought at the battle of Badr.⁵⁴ Eighth, the Muslim troops went into the confrontation without sufficient preparation. In addition they were distant from their main supply area, i.e. Medina. Their main objective had been to capture the caravan, but this was changed in accordance with the new prevailing circumstances. Ninth, it was the first time the Muslim army processed prisoners of war. Tenth, it is

⁵⁰ This judgement is supported by the nature of the consultation meeting he held with the Helpers; he asked the Helpers to verify their position. See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Ghazwat Badr*, No. 1779, v.3, p. 1404), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Manāqib*, No. 8348, v.5, p. 92), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 162, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 26, Ibn Kāthīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.1, p. 279, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 386.

⁵¹ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Shuhūd al-Malā'ikah Badr*, v.4, p. 1467). Also see the section "The Role of Divine Assistance" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁵² See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat Badr*, No. 3764, v.4, p. 1464) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: al-Imdād fī al-Malā'ikah fī Ghazwat Badr*, v.3, p. 1385).

⁵³ Ibn Kathīr wrote that 100 *Badrī* (the Companions who attended the battle of Badr) also fought at the battle of al-Yarmūk. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 9. Similarly see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat Badr*, No. 3762, v.4, p. 1463) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Faḍā'il Ahlu Badr*, No. 2494, v.4, p. 1491).

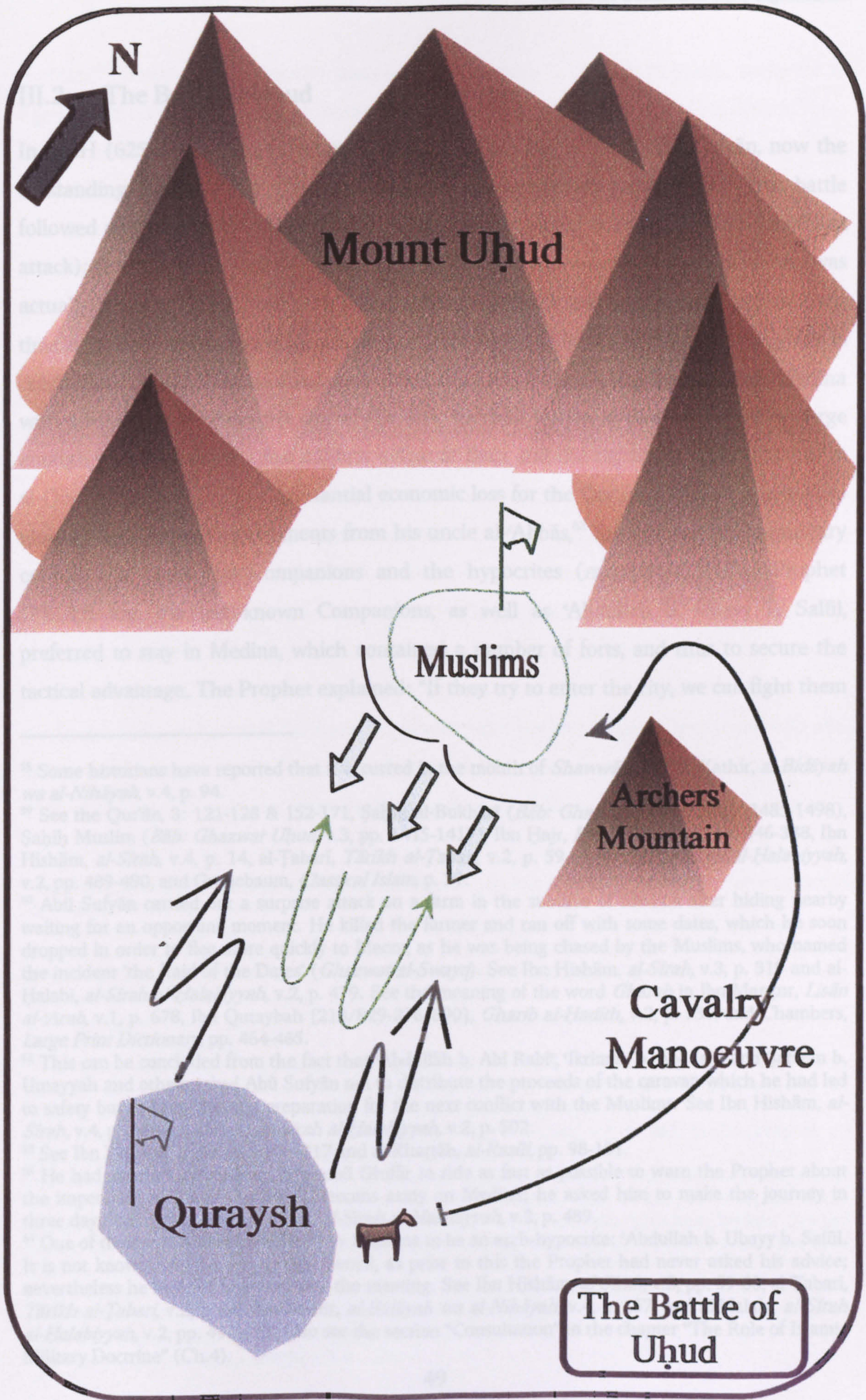
⁵⁴ Al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 467 and Williams, *Themes of Islamic Civilization*, pp. 30-31.

discussed in several verses in the Qur'ān and in the *ḥadīth*.⁵⁵ Eleventh, it was the direct cause of the following battle, i.e. Uḥud, since the Quraysh were honour-bound to take revenge for their defeat. Twelfth, it had been a spiritual torch for Muslims throughout history. It had been noted that despite the prevailing circumstances, i.e. a deficiency of men and equipment, the Muslim army accomplished a resounding victory over a seemingly invincible army and also succeeded in striking a powerful blow at the Quraysh economy.⁵⁶ Muslims believe that the battle of Badr is a great landmark in the culture of Islam and contains many lessons in the military field.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ For example see the Qur'ān, *surah al-Anffāl*, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat Badr*, v.4, p. 1454), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Ghazwat Badr*, v.3, p. 1403), al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Siyar* No.4307, v.3, p. 25), and Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2828, v.2, p. 944).

⁵⁶ See Ismā'īl, *al-Ta'bi'ah al-Askariyyah*, pp. 52-55.

⁵⁷ See al-Jubbūrī, *Tadābir al-Amn*, p. 31.



III.2: The Battle of Uḥud

In 3 AH (625 AD),⁵⁸ the year after the disgraceful defeat at Badr, Abū Sufyān, now the outstanding leader of the Quraysh, launched another attack on Medina.⁵⁹ This battle followed an earlier raid (*ghārah*), which many Islamic works mistakenly call *hajimah* (an attack); this might mislead the reader into thinking that it was more significant than was actually the case.⁶⁰ Such small revenge was hardly enough, and the Quraysh utilised their time after Badr in preparing for another conflict with the Muslims, this time designed to crush them utterly.⁶¹ In the third year of the Hijra the Quraysh marched towards Medina with an army three times the size of the one that had fought at Badr. It had to be large enough to ensure success; the military defeat at Badr and the capture of their caravans in al-Qirdah had resulted in a substantial economic loss for the Quraysh.⁶² Upon hearing the news of the Quraysh's movements from his uncle al-'Abbās,⁶³ the Prophet held a military council with both the Companions and the hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*).⁶⁴ The Prophet (PBUH) and the well-known Companions, as well as 'Abdullah b. Ubayy b. Salūl, preferred to stay in Medina, which contained a number of forts, and thus to secure the tactical advantage. The Prophet explained: "If they try to enter the city, we can fight them

⁵⁸ Some historians have reported that it occurred in the month of *Shawwāl*. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 94.

⁵⁹ See the Qur'ān, 3: 121-128 & 152-171, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat Badr*, v.4, pp. 1485-1498), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Ghazwat Uḥud*, v.3, pp. 1415-1417), Ibn Ḥajr, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.7, pp. 346-348, Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 14, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 59, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 489-490, and Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 39.

⁶⁰ Abū Sufyān carried out a surprise attack on a farm in the suburbs of Medina after hiding nearby waiting for an opportune moment. He killed the farmer and ran off with some dates, which he soon dropped in order to flee more quickly to Mecca, as he was being chased by the Muslims, who named the incident 'the Raid of the Dates' (*Ghazwat al-Swayq*). See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 310 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 479. See the meaning of the word *Ghārah* in Ibn Manẓur, *Lisān al-'Arab*, v.1, p. 678, Ibn Qutaybah [213/829-276/890], *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, v.2, p. 530, and Chambers, *Large Print Dictionary*, pp. 464-465.

⁶¹ This can be concluded from the fact that 'Abdullāh b. Abī Rabī'c, 'Ikrimah b. Abī Jahl and Ṣafwān b. Umayyah and others asked Abū Sufyān not to distribute the proceeds of the caravan which he had led to safety but to keep them in preparation for the next conflict with the Muslims. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 5 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 502.

⁶² See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 317 and al-Khaṭṭāb, *al-Rasūl*, pp. 98-101.

⁶³ He had ordered a man from the Banū Ghifār to ride as fast as possible to warn the Prophet about the impending attack of the huge Meccans army on Medina; he asked him to make the journey in three days and nights. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 489.

⁶⁴ One of them was a man considered by Muslims to be an arch-hypocrite: 'Abdullah b. Ubayy b. Salūl. It is not known why he was at the council, as prior to this the Prophet had never asked his advice; nevertheless he sent for him to attend the meeting. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, pp. 59-60, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 60, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 157, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 492-493. Also see the section "Consultation" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

therein.”⁶⁵ However, the majority, among them Ḥamzah b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, preferred to fight outside Medina despite the wishes of the Prophet and in defiance of his dream.⁶⁶

When the Prophet finished the Friday prayer, he put on his war-gear to demonstrate his final decision to step outside Medina for the inevitable confrontation. Thus attired, he marched out with a thousand of his Companions; but when they reached al-Shauṭ, between Medina and Uḥud, at this most critical juncture, ‘Abdullah b. Ubayy withdrew with a third of the army, saying: “He (the Prophet) has obeyed them (i.e. those Companions that chose to fight outside Medina, whereas ‘Abdullah b. Ubayy wanted to fight in Medina) and disobeyed me. We do not know why we should lose our lives here, O men.”⁶⁷ Nevertheless, that was not the reason according to the Qur’ān: “They were that day nearer to Unbelief than to Faith, saying with their lips what was not in their hearts. But Allāh hath full knowledge of all they conceal.”⁶⁸ So he returned to Medina accompanied by about three hundred men. In the assembly area, some untested youngsters, less than fifteen years old, were ordered to return to Medina; only two were allowed to stay.⁶⁹ In addition, on the way to the battlefield the Prophet refused the offer of a well-armed company from the Banū Qurayzah.⁷⁰ Despite these setbacks, the Muslim forces proceeded to meet their enemy. The Quraysh took up their position first; however, the Prophet slipped around their army and secured a position superior both tactically and in terms of terrain, facing Medina and commanding the slopes of Mount Uḥud.⁷¹ He divided the army into centre, right flank, and left flank.⁷² He stationed some archers above

⁶⁵ See Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muḥammad; the English Version*, p. 371. Also see the original source in Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 9.

⁶⁶ The Prophet had dreamed that he thrust his hand into a strong coat of mail. See the rest of the dream in the following sources: al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.23, p. 78, Qurtubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurtubī*, v.15, p. 102, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.4, p. 16, al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.15, p. 32, and Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muḥammad; the English Version*, p. 371.

⁶⁷ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 10 and Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, v.3, p. 194.

⁶⁸ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 167.

⁶⁹ These two were Samurah b. Jundub al-Fizārī and Rāfi‘ b. Khadij. They were allowed to remain with the army since one of them was a brilliant archer and the other was able to knock him down. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 12 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 493.

⁷⁰ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.9, p. 99, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 383, al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq; the English Version*, p. 249, and Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 39.

Further, according to Faraj, *al-Madrasah*, p. 250, one of the reasons the Prophet did not accept their offer was because if he had accepted it this would have broken the unity of the goal. Also, one of the tenets of the Islamic military doctrine, discussed in this study, would also have been broken. See the sections on “The Well-Defined Goal” and “The Assistance of Non-Muslims” in the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4).

⁷¹ The Quraysh were initially at a tactical disadvantage because of the Prophet’s mobilised defensive plan (see footnote 101, p. 55). Since Uḥud was close to Medina the Muslims were able to make good use of their superior knowledge of the terrain.

⁷² See Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, v.3, p. 194.

the flanks on the strongpoint, a small hill, to keep the Quraysh cavalry at bay.⁷³ The Prophet strongly commanded the archers not to leave their position, no matter what direction the battle took, until he sent for them. The Quraysh numbered about three thousand men with two hundred horses,⁷⁴ whereas the Muslim army had at most two horses. Once again the balance of power was to the advantage of the Quraysh by three to one or more.⁷⁵ At the beginning of the battle a duel took place between Ṭalḥah b. Abī Ṭalḥah and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and ‘Alī managed to kill the Quraysh champion. The Prophet once again conducted a defensive plan and ordered his soldiers not to march forward unless he so commanded. The Quraysh cavalry tried to join the combat but al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām and his group pushed them back. Therefore, Khālid b. al-Walīd,⁷⁶ the leader of the Quraysh cavalry (who later became a Muslim), tried three times to make a tactical manoeuvre in order to attack the Muslim army from the rear, but was prevented by the Muslim archers from reaching his goal. In the Arabs’ tribal battles the most important targets were the armies’ standards. Consequently, the most intense fighting occurred around the standards, specially the standard of the Quraysh, which was the priority of engagement for the Muslim army. As a result, twelve standard bearers of the Banū ‘Abd al-Dār of Quraysh were killed one after another, and the last, an Abyssinian slave named Ṣu‘āb, held on to it, even after his hands had been cut off, until he was killed.⁷⁷ After that, the Quraysh army was “obliged to take to their heels,”⁷⁸ according to the Qur’ān.⁷⁹ Al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām reported that he saw the Quraysh women running away and if he had wanted to capture them he could have. It appeared that the Muslim troops had the upper hand. Yet at this point a vital military rule was broken, leading to a massive and

⁷³ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat Badr*, No. 3817, v.4, p. 1486) and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 496. Also see Naseef, *Military Organization*, p. 104.

⁷⁴ However some historical works state without certainty that the Quraysh army numbered about five thousand. See Mansoorpuri, *Mercy of Mankind*, p.121.

⁷⁵ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, pp. 10-13, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 60-62, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 14-16, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 496.

⁷⁶ Khālid b. al-Walīd [d. 21-641] belonged to the clan of Quraysh, and was the cousin of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. He had fought as commander against Islamic forces on several occasions before he became a Muslim in the seventh year of the Hijra. The Prophet honoured him with the title ‘Sword of God’ (*Sayfu Allāh*).

⁷⁷ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 84. Also see Mansoorpuri, *Mercy of Mankind*, p. 121.

⁷⁸ Naumani, *Sīrat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 58.

⁷⁹ In the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 152, we find: “Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to you when we with His permission were about to annihilate your enemy.”

destructive turning point in the battle. The archers vacated their defensive position without the permission of their leader.⁸⁰

Khālīd b. al-Walīd, an experienced and cunning warrior, took advantage of this window of opportunity; he drove through the Muslims' left flanks, killing the remaining archers and then attacking the Muslim army from the rear. The fleeing Quraysh army started to come back on to the field as their standard was raised again by a woman called al-Ḥārithiyyah.⁸¹ At that moment, the Muslim army was trapped; confusion took hold among them and they started to strike out in all directions. This, and the difficulty of distinguishing between friend and foe, led to the death of one of the Muslim soldiers, Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān's father.⁸² At this critical moment, someone shouted: "Muḥammad has been killed." Some of the Muslim army, among them 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb,⁸³ believed this rumour and sat down.⁸⁴ The Prophet and some of the remaining Companions, with difficulty and sacrifice, cleaved their way back to the slopes of Uḥud. The Quraysh pressed the attack, and fell upon others of the Companions who were seeking the shelter of Mount Uḥud. Some Companions were put to flight and many were slain. Quraysh warriors managed to reach the Prophet and injured him in several places, though not seriously. However, the Quraysh army could not sustain the attack on the Prophet, as many of them were being picked off by Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, a skilful archer who rarely missed his target. During these moments of chaos, the Prophet himself killed one of the Quraysh leaders, Ubayy b. Khalaf, with a javelin.⁸⁵ When the Quraysh army was about to retreat, Abū Sufyān called out, enquiring if the Prophet, Abū Bakr, and 'Umar were still alive.⁸⁶ When 'Umar replied in the affirmative, Abū Sufyān proclaimed that next year the confrontation would be at Badr, and the Prophet agreed. The Prophet then ordered 'Alī b.

⁸⁰ The archers' disobedience was a serious sin according to the Islamic military doctrine; however, Muslims believe that since it was a first offence Allah forgave them. See the Qur'ān, 3: 152. Also see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat Uḥud*, No. 3817, v.4, p. 14486).

⁸¹ Her name was 'Amrah d. (daughter) 'Alqamah. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 503 and Naumani, *Sīrat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 58.

⁸² Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 36 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 529. In addition, it seems that Ḥudhayfah's father did not know the password for this battle. For such passwords see Ibn Hishām v.4, p. 15, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, v.3, p. 99, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 426.

⁸³ 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb [c. AD 591-23/644] was the second Caliph to rule the Muslim community, taking over the office after the death of Abū Bakr. He fought at the battle of Badr. He continued Abū Bakr's plan of conquest and expanded it. Further see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Manāqib 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb*, v.3, pp. 1346-1350) and Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Bāb: Manāqib 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb*, v.5, pp. 617).

⁸⁴ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 496.

⁸⁵ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2874, v.3, p. 1105), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 2609, v.1, p. 287), al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 387, and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 253.

⁸⁶ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 38.

Abī Tālib to follow the Quraysh and find out whether they were heading to Medina or not.⁸⁷ He promised that if they were going to attack Medina he would follow them and fight them, but the Quraysh had decided to return to Mecca. On the way back, the Quraysh discussed the result of the battle and discovered that they had not accomplished any of their goals, i.e. to kill Muḥammad, to destroy Islam, or to take booty or prisoners.⁸⁸ According to the Qur'ān, the Muslim army did not lose the battle of Uḥud even though many of its soldiers were killed.⁸⁹ Some historians, including Endress,⁹⁰ have called it a defeat, while others have described it as a victory for the Muslim army.⁹¹ Al-Sha'rāwī draws a suitable conclusion, in the light of the Qur'ān, in his discussion of Uḥud.⁹² He explains that the Islamic army was not defeated in most of the important military aspects, supporting his argument with the following points: 1) the Muslim army killed many noted leaders of the Quraysh, 2) they remained on the battlefield whilst their enemy left, 3) none of the Muslim army were captured, 4) the Quraysh did not gain any booty, 5) the Muslim headquarters was not attacked. Also, it can be added that from an Islamic perspective many of the Muslim army were martyrs. In addition, the Prophet took advantage of the prevailing circumstances as he regrouped the following day, chased the Quraysh army, and camped for three nights, waiting for them in Ḥamrā' al-Asad.⁹³ Rodinson's opinion of the later stages of the battle is representative of the views of most historians. He writes that the critical point arrived when the Muslims allowed themselves to be drawn away from the slopes, encouraged by their early success, which historical tradition has probably exaggerated. Some of the archers, believing the battle already won, moved on to the plain and the fighting became confused. Khālid was the main cause of

⁸⁷ He asked him to discover what mounts the Quraysh were using. If they were riding camels they would be returning to Mecca; but if horses, they would definitely be riding to attack Medina. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 43.

⁸⁸ Militarily speaking, prior to any battle every army command will lay down a series of objectives that it wishes to achieve e.g. to kill the enemy commander, occupy territory, or gain valuable spoils. The Quraysh did not achieve any one of these. See al-Sha'rāwī, *Ghazawāt al-Rasūl*, pp. 155-156. Further see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Alladhīna Istajābū Lilāh wa al-Rasūl*, No. 4287, v.4, p. 1662), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, pp. 52-53, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 49, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 12.

⁸⁹ See the Qur'ān, 3: 139.

⁹⁰ See Endress, *An Introduction to Islam*, p. 30 and al-Zuḥaylī, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.3, p. 102.

⁹¹ See al-Khalfāt and As'ad, *al-Askariyyah*, p. 150.

⁹² See al-Sha'rāwī, *Ghazawāt al-Rasūl*, pp. 155-156.

⁹³ The Prophet insisted on being accompanied by the same men who had fought with him at Uḥud with the exception of Jabir b. 'Abdullah. About 700 had taken part, of whom about 100 had been killed; so there would have been about 600 pursuers. See the Qur'ān, 3: 172-175, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Alladhīna Istajābū Lilāh wa al-Rasūl*, No. 4287, v.4, p. 1662), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, pp. 52-53, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 49, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 12, and al-Sha'rāwī, *Ghazawāt al-Rasūl*, pp. 156-159.

the reversal. Rodinson calls the outcome “a triumph” for the Quraysh and writes “they had won a great victory.”⁹⁴ Some scholars have dissented from this opinion, however. Kennedy, for example, considers the outcome “indecisive”.⁹⁵ Moreover, although Peters notes that the Muslim forces suffered a “severe setback”,⁹⁶ and Watt remarks that “the defeat of the Muslims at Uḥud was a severe blow to the confidence of the Muslims”,⁹⁷ it should be remembered that the Quraysh did not consolidate their victory by killing or capturing the Prophet, nor did they feel themselves capable of taking Medina. Islam lived to fight another day. It should also be emphasised that the Muslims’ pursuit of the Quraysh was no mere afterthought. This strategic manoeuvre ‘turned the tables’ to the advantage of the Muslim community. The surrounding tribes of the Arabian Peninsula heard that Muḥammad had pursued the fleeing Quraysh army. Thus the Muslims strengthened their position within the region.⁹⁸

Again, this battle had significant features, which differentiate it from the other battles. First, it occurred in the homeland of Medina, which the Quraysh invaded with the objective of seeking revenge for their defeat at Badr. Second, the mosque had an important role, particularly since it was used as a military headquarters, where the Muslim army regularly held their consultation meetings. Third, both armies were well prepared. Fourth, the common goal of the Muslim army was to exalt the word of Allāh despite the action of the hypocrites, which did not affect the Muslim army’s willingness to fight. Fifth, the course of operations changed fundamentally according to the course of events. Sixth, the archers did not understand the importance of obeying the commander’s strict orders, and so enthusiasm detached from obedience proved destructive. Seventh, the result of fleeing from the battlefield and the importance of steadfastness in the confrontation were revealed in the Qur’ān. Eighth, despite the difficulties of the battle the Prophet did not hesitate to respond to the challenge to fight the following year. Ninth, unlike at the battle of Badr, it seems that divine assistance did not come in the form of angelic support. Nonetheless, Muslims believe that prior to the battle divine assistance put the Muslim

⁹⁴ Rodinson, *Muḥammad*, pp. 177-181.

⁹⁵ Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, p. 38.

⁹⁶ Peters, *Mecca*, p. 72.

⁹⁷ Watt, *Bell’s Introduction to the Qur’ān*, p. 100.

⁹⁸ There has been a debate regarding the *Ghazwa* of *Ḥamrā’ al-Asad*; whether it was a separate *Ghazwa* from Uḥud or was connected with it. Further see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, pp. 52-53, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 49, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 12, and Al-Shaʿrāwī, *Ghazawāt al-Rasūl*, pp. 156-159.

soldiers to sleep.⁹⁹ Tenth, it revealed the ability of the Muslim army's leadership in regrouping the army and chasing the Quraysh. Eleventh, it can be argued that many historical works have not been based on a military perspective, since most of them agree that Uhud was a defeat for the Muslim army, while we contend that although the Muslim forces suffered a tactical defeat, operationally the outcome was indecisive, and the Quraysh's decision not to sacrifice more lives in order to make sure the Prophet was killed or captured was a strategic error, obvious in hindsight. Moreover, according to the Qur'an the money the Quraysh spent was no help to them as they had not been able to accomplish their goals.¹⁰⁰ Twelfth, in this battle the Prophet carried out what is called a "mobilised defensive plan".¹⁰¹ Thirteenth, this battle demonstrated beyond doubt that the Prophet was a human being, as he was injured. Fourteenth, this battle also resulted in the revelation of new elements of the *shari'ah*. Part of *Surah al-Nisā'* (The Women) was revealed to clarify the way in which to deal with social problems related to widows, orphans, inheritance, remarriage and family rights.¹⁰² It also clarifies dealing with the "recalcitrant in the larger family, the community at Medina, viz., the Hypocrites and their accomplices."¹⁰³ It also resulted in a strategic advantage for the Muslim army, in that they were now aware that there were many hypocrites among them who could not be trusted.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ See al-Halabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 544 & 505.

¹⁰⁰ The Qur'an (ETMC), 3: 167, states: "And the Hypocrites also. These were told: "Come, fight in the way of Allah, or (at least) drive (the foe from your city)." They said: "Had we known there would be a fight, we should certainly have followed you." They were that day nearer to Unbelief than to Faith, saying with their lips what was not in their hearts. But Allah hath full knowledge of all they conceal." Also see Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.7, p. 347.

¹⁰¹ A mobilised defence: defence of an area or position in which manoeuvre is used with organisation of fire and utilisation of terrain to seize the initiative from the enemy. See US Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military Terms*, p. 213.

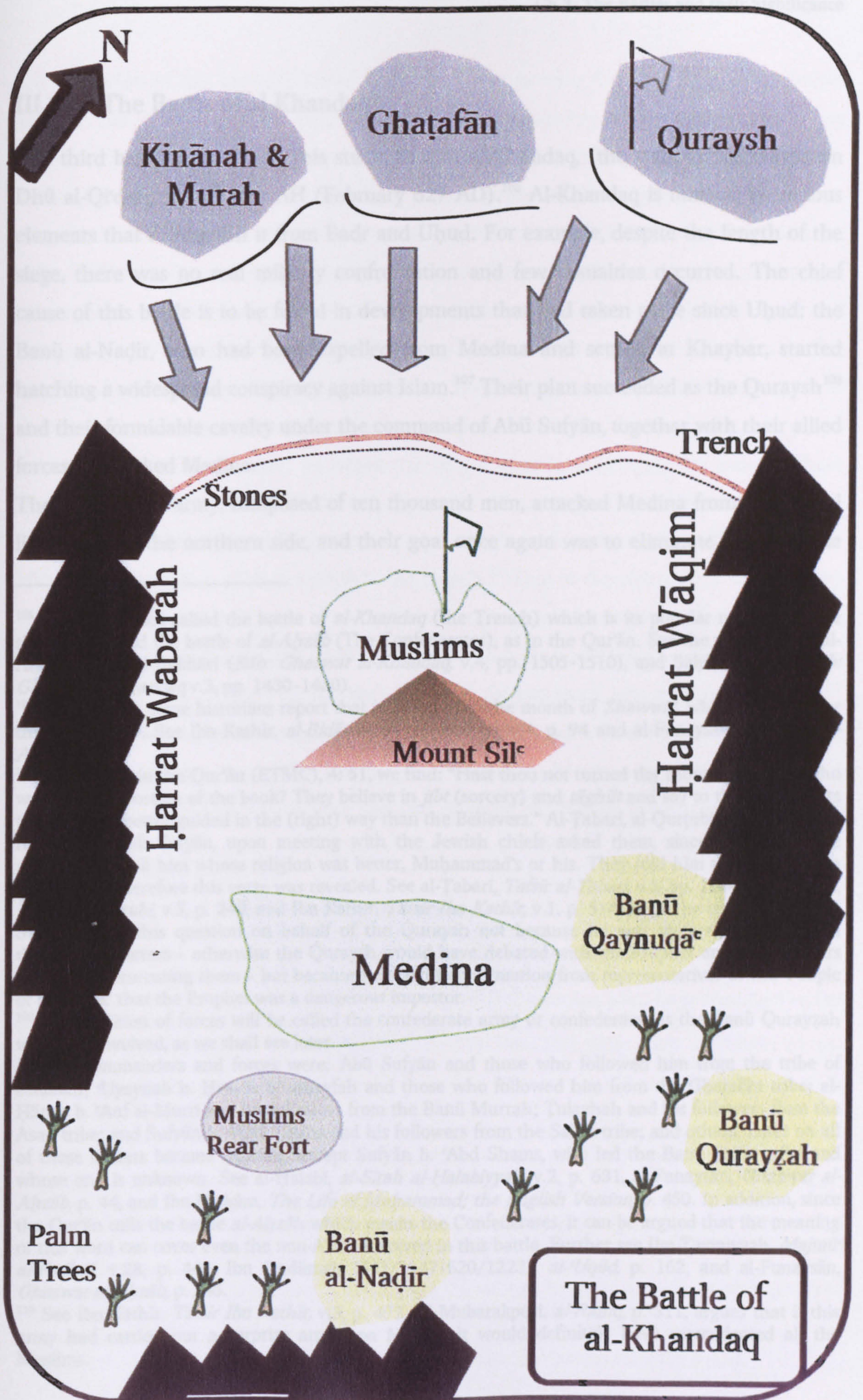
Operationally, a mobile defence is "a defensive operational method in which no serious attempt is made to hold territory, to leave mobile forces free to attack the flanks of the enemy advance." Lutwak and Koehl, *The Dictionary of Modern War*, p. 404.

Wright notes that an offensive manoeuvre combines four elements with regard to weaponry: mobility, protection, striking power and holding power. Thus a mobilised as opposed to a static defence includes all four elements rather than just the last three. When the defence of a small area is impracticable for whatever reason, the fight is taken to the enemy by a force small enough to be easily moved; supply lines may be easily maintained; the stronghold is close enough to be used as a refuge in ease of defeat; and the chosen terrain is well known to the defending force, bringing an initial tactical advantage. See Wright, *A Study of War*, pp. 150-152.

¹⁰² See al-Zuhaylī, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.4, p. 220. For the outline of this *sūrah* see Abdul-Raof, *The Qur'an Outlined*, pp. 15-19.

¹⁰³ *The Holy Qur'an ETMC*, p. 204.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*



III.3: The Battle of al-Khandaq

The third battle discussed in this study, that of al-Khandaq, (the trench)¹⁰⁵ occurred on Dhū al-Qiḍah, the 5th year AH (February 627 AD).¹⁰⁶ Al-Khandaq is marked by various elements that distinguish it from Badr and Uḥud. For example, despite the length of the siege, there was no real military confrontation and few casualties occurred. The chief cause of this battle is to be found in developments that had taken place since Uḥud: the Banū al-Naḍīr, who had been expelled from Medina and settled at Khaybar, started hatching a widespread conspiracy against Islam.¹⁰⁷ Their plan succeeded as the Quraysh¹⁰⁸ and their formidable cavalry under the command of Abū Sufyān, together with their allied forces,¹⁰⁹ attacked Medina.

The confederate army, composed of ten thousand men, attacked Medina from the frontal line, i.e. from the northern side, and their goal once again was to eliminate Islam.¹¹⁰ The

¹⁰⁵ It is sometimes called the battle of *al-Khandaq* (the Trench) which is its popular name; at other times it is called the battle of *al-Aḥzāb* (The Confederates), as in the Qurʾān. See the whole *surah* al-Aḥzāb, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat al-Khandaq*, v.4, pp. 1505-1510), and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Ghazwat al-Khandaq* v.3, pp. 1430-1430).

¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, some historians report that it occurred in the month of *Shawwāl*, while others prefer the date 4/636. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 94 and al-Funaysān, *Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁷ In addition, in the Qurʾān (ETMC), 4: 51, we find: "Hast thou not turned thy thought to those who were given a portion of the book? They believe in *jibt* (sorcery) and *tāghūt* and say to the Unbelievers that they are better guided in the (right) way than the Believers." Al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr relate that Abū Sufyān, upon meeting with the Jewish chiefs asked them, since they knew the scriptures, to tell him whose religion was better, Muḥammad's or his. They told him that his religion was better. Therefore this verse was revealed. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.5, pp. 133-134, Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.5, p. 249, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.1, p. 514. It can be argued that Abū Sufyān asked this question on behalf of the Quraysh not because he was sincerely interested in theological matters - otherwise the Quraysh would have debated with the Prophet and his followers instead of persecuting them - but because he sought confirmation from representatives of the 'People of the Book' that the Prophet was a dangerous impostor.

¹⁰⁸ The coalition of forces will be called the confederate army or confederacy, as the Banū Qurayzah were also involved, as we shall see later.

¹⁰⁹ The commanders and forces were: Abū Sufyān and those who followed him from the tribe of Kinānah; 'Uyaynah b. Ḥiṣn b. Ḥudhayfah and those who followed him from the Ḡhaṭafān tribe; al-Ḥārith b. 'Auf al-Murrī and his followers from the Banū Murrāh; Ṭulayḥah and his followers from the Asad tribe; and Sufyān b. 'Abd Shams and his followers from the Salīm tribe; and others. Later on all of these leaders became Muslims except Sufyān b. 'Abd Shams, who led the Banū Salīm tribe and whose end is unknown. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 631, al-Funaysān, *Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, p. 44, and Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muḥammad; the English Version*, p. 450. In addition, since the Qurʾān calls the battle *al-Aḥzāb*, which means the Confederates, it can be argued that the meaning of this word can cover even the non-Arabs involved in this battle. Further see Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, v.28, p. 444, Ibn Qudāmah [541/1147-620/1223], *al-'Uqūd*, p. 162, and al-Funaysān, *Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, p. 245.

¹¹⁰ See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.3, p. 477. Al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 311, argues that if this army had carried out a surprise attack on Medina it would definitely have exterminated all the Muslims.

Qur'ān speaks of this battle in *surah* al-Aḥzāb. Upon hearing the news of this dangerous alliance, the Prophet straight away consulted his Companions, asking them whether they should fight their enemy inside or outside Medina. After analyzing the terrain, Salmān al-Fārisī¹¹¹ suggested that they should dig a trench in the northern frontal line of Medina, since the oasis was well protected by both natural and man-made obstacles on three sides.¹¹² These obstacles consisted of a continuous line of buildings and palm groves, and to the south, west and east the volcanic stone (*Ḥarrat Wāqim* and *Ḥarrat Wabarah*) and hills served well as a defensive line. This plan was received with general approval. The Prophet divided the trench into forty sections. To each section he (PBUH) allotted ten of the Companions and allowed anyone, even those less than fifteen years of age, to participate in the work. Later on, when the battle was about to begin, he ordered those under fifteen to go back to Medina.¹¹³ Since the Muslims had a treaty with the Banū Qurayzah, the Muslim army borrowed some digging tools from them.¹¹⁴ It took the Muslims about fifteen days to complete the trench.¹¹⁵ Due to the continuous work, during these fifteen days the Muslim army suffered from extreme hunger and tiredness. The Prophet joined in the work with such vigour that his body was covered with dust.¹¹⁶ Rocks were put next to the trench so that they could be used to stone any attempt to cross it.¹¹⁷ During the building of the trench, the confederate army killed two Muslim soldiers who were on a scouting mission.¹¹⁸ When the army arrived at Medina, they were surprised to be faced with such a defensive plan, and one of them exclaimed: "This is a device which

¹¹¹ Salmān al-Fārisī was originally a Persian who had been raised in the city of al-Madā'in in Persia. As a young man he determined to search for the truth. At first he converted to Christianity, but on hearing the Prophet converted to Islam. He was a leading figure among the Muslims and narrated more than sixty *ḥadīths*, four of them are narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and three in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. His greatest effect on Islam and the Muslims was at the battle of al-Khandaq, when he advised the Prophet to dig the trench around Medina's vulnerable northern boundary, a method of warfare which the Arabs were not familiar with. See al-Dhahabī [673/1275-748/1348], *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, v.1, pp. 506-507.

¹¹² See the map al-Khandaq.

¹¹³ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 636.

¹¹⁴ See al-Funaysān, *Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, p. 49. For a similar case see al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Kitāb Taḍmīn al-Āriyah*, No. 5776, v.3, p. 409) and Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: al-Āriyah Mu'dāh*, No. 11255, v.6, p. 88).

¹¹⁵ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 636.

The trench was about 5 yards (c. 4.75 meters) in depth and ten yards (c. 9.5 meters) wide, and in length thirty times the space taken up by ten men standing side by side. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 99 and Naumani, *Sirat un-Nabi*, v.2, p. 97.

¹¹⁶ Regarding this subject, in the Qur'ān (ETMC), 33: 21, we find: "Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example."

¹¹⁷ See Naumani, *Sirat un-Nabi*, v.2, p. 97.

¹¹⁸ See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.3, p. 477 and al-Funaysān, *Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, p. 242.

the Arabs have never employed.”¹¹⁹ The Muslim army, numbering three thousand men, camped facing the trench, with Mount Sal‘ at their back; the trench, as was intended, provided an effective line of defence. The women and children were sent to a well-guarded fort in Medina. As an attack was feared from the Banū Qurayzah, Salama b. Aslam and a detachment of 200 men was stationed outside the fort to protect the women and children.¹²⁰ The confederate army was now in a difficult situation since they had come prepared to fight for a few days at most, win an easy victory, and then return home. Facing a well-conceived and executed defensive plan they had no choice but to camp on the other side of the trench and wait for any sign of inattentiveness on the part of the Muslim army. The Muslim troops had to be spread along the trench in order to protect every section; they could not be drawn up into a fighting formation. The two armies were in stalemate and, as we have mentioned, no real combat took place. This can be understood from the Qur’ān: “And Allāh turned back the non-believers for (all) their fury: no advantage did they gain; and enough is Allāh for the believers in their fight.”¹²¹ Almost a month went by without any actual fighting except for a few individual duels and the firing of arrows.¹²² As a result there were remarkably few casualties, but Sa‘d b. Mu‘āth, who is considered in Islam as one of the great Companions, was badly injured by an arrow. The forces on the other side of the trench, however, were not the only danger. Shortly after the beginning of the siege, the Banū Qurayzah broke their treaty with the Prophet and were in a position to threaten the Muslim army from behind, thus - in theory at least - increasing the number of fighters available to the confederacy. In addition to “extreme weather, lack of supplies, continuous starvation, sleepless nights and a swarm of armies arrayed against them”,¹²³ within Medina the hypocrites started to spread propaganda with the objective of reducing the spirit of the Muslim army. The difficult conditions at the trench coupled with the ongoing propaganda gave the hypocrites the excuse they needed to go back to their homes, although their desertion deprived the Prophet of essential manpower, as he needed all his men to be in position.¹²⁴ In danger of attack from the Banū Qurayzah, facing a huge - albeit fairly inactive - confederate army,

¹¹⁹ Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muḥammad; the English Version*, p. 454. Also see al-Sha‘rāwī, *Ghazawāt al-Rasūl*, p. 217.

¹²⁰ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 636 and Naumani, *Sīrat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 98. However, al-Ḥalabī reports that another group, led by Zayd b. Ḥārithah, became involved when the Banū Qurayzah broke their treaty with the Prophet.

¹²¹ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 25. Also see Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.3, pp. 477-478.

¹²² See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 181 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 104.

¹²³ Naumani, *Sīrat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 99.

¹²⁴ The Qur’ān discusses their shameful behaviour and intentions in detail. See Qur’ān, 33: 12-19.

and with its women and children insufficiently protected, the Muslim army found itself in a very critical situation.¹²⁵ At this point the Prophet devised a plan to break the alliance. He made a verbal agreement with ‘Uyaynah b. Ḥiṣn and al-Ḥārith b. ‘Auf al-Murri, the leaders of the Gḥaṭafān, offering them a third of the dates of Medina on condition that they agreed to retreat with their followers, leaving behind the rest of the confederate army. While the matter was still undecided, he sought the advice of the two Sa‘ds, who inquired whether this was a divine order and when they were told it was not, they advised against the plan.¹²⁶ The siege continued, but day by day the Muslim defensive plan weakened the confederate forces, who were growing tired of waiting. They had been facing the Muslims for almost a month, and according to al-Sha‘rāwī, it went against the nature of the Arabs to stay in one place for long.¹²⁷ Also it was the cold season and the huge army required a great many supplies, and those sent from Khaybar must have been insufficient. As a result of the lack of preparation for a long siege and far from their main supply lines, the confederate army suffered shortages of direct support.¹²⁸ In addition, the Muslim army captured a caravan composed of twenty camels loaded with food on its way to the confederate army at the front line, which had been sent by the Banū Qurayzah.¹²⁹ It was clear that the confederate army had to attack or retreat, and so they sought a quick end to the siege. They attempted to tighten their grip on the Muslim army. They tried by day and night to find a critical weak point through which a successful attack could be made, but the Muslim army stood firm and struggled with grim determination to protect their position. They succeeded in limiting the freedom of action of the confederate army. Nothing the confederates attempted brought any result, and although some horsemen broke through the trench they were quickly defeated in single combat by Muslim warriors, among whom was ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who killed one of the greatest warriors of the Quraysh named ‘Amr b. ‘Abdu Wudd; the survivors fled.¹³⁰ Of all the days of the battle, this was

¹²⁵ In the Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 10 & 11, it is found: “Behold! They came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes swerved and the hearts gaped up to the throats, and ye imagined various (Vain) thoughts about Allah! In that situation were the Believers tried: They were shaken as by a tremendous shaking.” Also see Ibn Hisham, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 170, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 91, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 93, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 508.

¹²⁶ They were Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh, Sa‘d b. ‘Ubādah, ‘Abdullah b. Rawāḥah, and Khawāt b. Jubair. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 178, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 104, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 640

¹²⁷ Al-Sha‘rāwī, *Ghazwat al-Rasūl*, p. 216.

¹²⁸ Except the Banū Qurayzah, since they were in their fort and had sufficient resources.

¹²⁹ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 647.

¹³⁰ Al-Sha‘rāwī described ‘Amr b. ‘Abdu Wudd as the cavalryman of the Quraysh. See al-Sha‘rāwī, *Ghazwat al-Rasūl*, p. 218. Further see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 181, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2,

the severest, as the attacks were launched continuously, accompanied by showers of arrows. As a result, it is reported that some of the Muslim army, including the Prophet himself, were not able to perform any of their prayers.¹³¹ Additionally, one scout of the adversary was able to from the rear and approach the fort which sheltered the women and children. He was killed. At this critical moment, described in the Qur'ān: "They came from above and below"¹³², one of the confederate notables, Na'im b. Mas'ūd, embraced Islam. He proved to be of great help to the Muslims by making an important contribution to lifting the siege.¹³³ The long siege was nearly over; the besiegers, having made little impression on the Muslims, became more and more disheartened. Maintaining supplies for a huge army was not an easy task. In addition, the cold winter season of Medina, and its strong winds, which turned their tents and cooking pots over, "did more than a whole army could do."¹³⁴ The Qur'ān reports it as divine assistance: "But We sent against them a hurricane and forces that you saw not: But Allāh sees clearly all that ye do."¹³⁵ At last the surrounding circumstances of the inclemency of the weather, the prolongation of the siege, the severity of the storm, the lack of supplies and the desertion by the Banū Qurayzah combined to force Abū Sufyān, the leader of the Quraysh, to abandon the siege.¹³⁶ As his forces left that night they were followed by the rest of the confederate army. This decision was witnessed by Hudhayfah b. al-Yamān, a Muslim scout.¹³⁷ Thus the battle ended.

Comparing al-Khandaq with the battles previously discussed, it is possible to make the following points. First, the Muslim army used a new style of fighting, which was adopted from the Persians. This defensive plan - to dig a defensive trench - dragged the

pp. 94-95, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 105-106, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 643-644.

¹³¹ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Mawāqit al-Ṣalāh*, No. 571, v.1, p. 214), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Masājid wa Mawāqit al-Ṣalāh*, No. 631, v.1, p. 438), and Sunan al-Nasā'ī (*Kitāb al-Sahū*, No. 1366, v.3, p. 84). In addition, in some of the *Sīrah* works it is reported that the Muslim army missed several prayers. This point is elaborated in detail in Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 110-111. Also see Naumani, *Sīrat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 103.

¹³² See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 33: 10.

¹³³ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, pp. 188-191, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 96-97, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 111-112, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 645-651. Also see the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

¹³⁴ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 206, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 114, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 648, and Naumani, *Sīrat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 105.

¹³⁵ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 33: 9.

¹³⁶ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 205, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 115, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 649.

¹³⁷ For the rest of the story see the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

confederate army into a long-drawn-out confrontation,¹³⁸ which they were quite unused to. This was the main factor leading to the lifting of the siege. Second, for the first time the Muslim army used the earth brought out of the trench to form an embankment which was used for cover and protection.¹³⁹ Also, stones were brought and lined up at the edge of the trench to hurl at those who attempted to cross.¹⁴⁰ The whole Muslim army worked together to build the trench and fortify the buildings. Third, the Muslim army fought not only the Quraysh but also allies of the Quraysh who lived on the outskirts of Medina. Furthermore, the Muslims had to deal with an internal threat¹⁴¹ posed by a 'fifth column' in the form of the Banū Qurayzah and the hypocrites. Fourth, according to the Qur'ān, divine involvement played an important role in ending this battle.¹⁴² Fifth, for the first time, the Muslims used continuous critical point observation along the trench, and passwords at night. Sixth, the defensive plan was not developed against the external threat of the confederate army, but against the constant internal threat, i.e. the Banū Qurayzah. Seventh, a unique military strategy was executed, as the trench was dug using tools borrowed from the Banū Qurayzah and hence, there was an unusual and decisive participation by non-Arabs on both sides, i.e. a Persian man and a Jewish tribe. Eighth, the Prophet set an example when he himself took part in digging the trench. Ninth, the

¹³⁸ This confrontation might be compared to a process of attrition on a psychological level. However, attrition can be looked at from different perspectives: it can be the process of weakening or exhausting by constant harassment, abuse, or attack. See www.britannica.com. In July 1969, Nasser defined a war of attrition as "a long battle to exhaust the enemy." See Korn, *Stalemate*, p. 109. Also see Avery, Arych, *The War of Attrition*. In addition, Waşil, *al-Şirā' al-'Arabī al-Isrā'īlī*, p. 411, argues that a war of attrition keeps the enemy busy without engaging in an armed confrontation by disrupting his various activities. A war of attrition usually attempts to accomplish three objectives: 1) maintaining the high morale of the friendly troops, 2) preventing the enemy from accomplishing his previous goal or set of goals, and 3) increasing the strength of the bond between the leadership and the civilian population. It should be noted that a war of attrition may last for years and may lead to the identification of a fifth column. See Dairī, *Ārā' fi al-Ḥarb*, p. 57. Further Manāşarah, *al-Istikhbārāt al-'Askariyyah*, p. 65, mentions that the outcome of any war of attrition conducted by any army relies mainly on the qualities of that army's intelligence. Also see the section "Psychological Warfare" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

¹³⁹ Militarily speaking, a *mound* can have two functions: firstly, to act as a cover from the view of the enemy and secondly as a protection against enemy fire.

¹⁴⁰ On one occasion, Naufal b. al-Mughīrah was stoned to death as he tried to jump the trench. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 95 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 637.

¹⁴¹ The threat took the form of a fifth column; that is, a clandestine group or faction of subversive agents who attempt to undermine a nation's solidarity. See www.britannica.com. It should be noted that "the concept of the 'fifth column' was invented in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War. The Nationalists argued that Madrid would fall to the 'fifth column', rather than surrender to the four armies encircling the city. It would be the stay-behind Catholic nationalists, trapped by Republican control of the capital, who would be instrumental in provoking internal disorder behind the lines, leading to the collapse of defences." Thurlow, "The evolution of the mythical British fifth column, 1939-1946", in *20th Century British History*, vol.10, No.4, pp. 477-478.

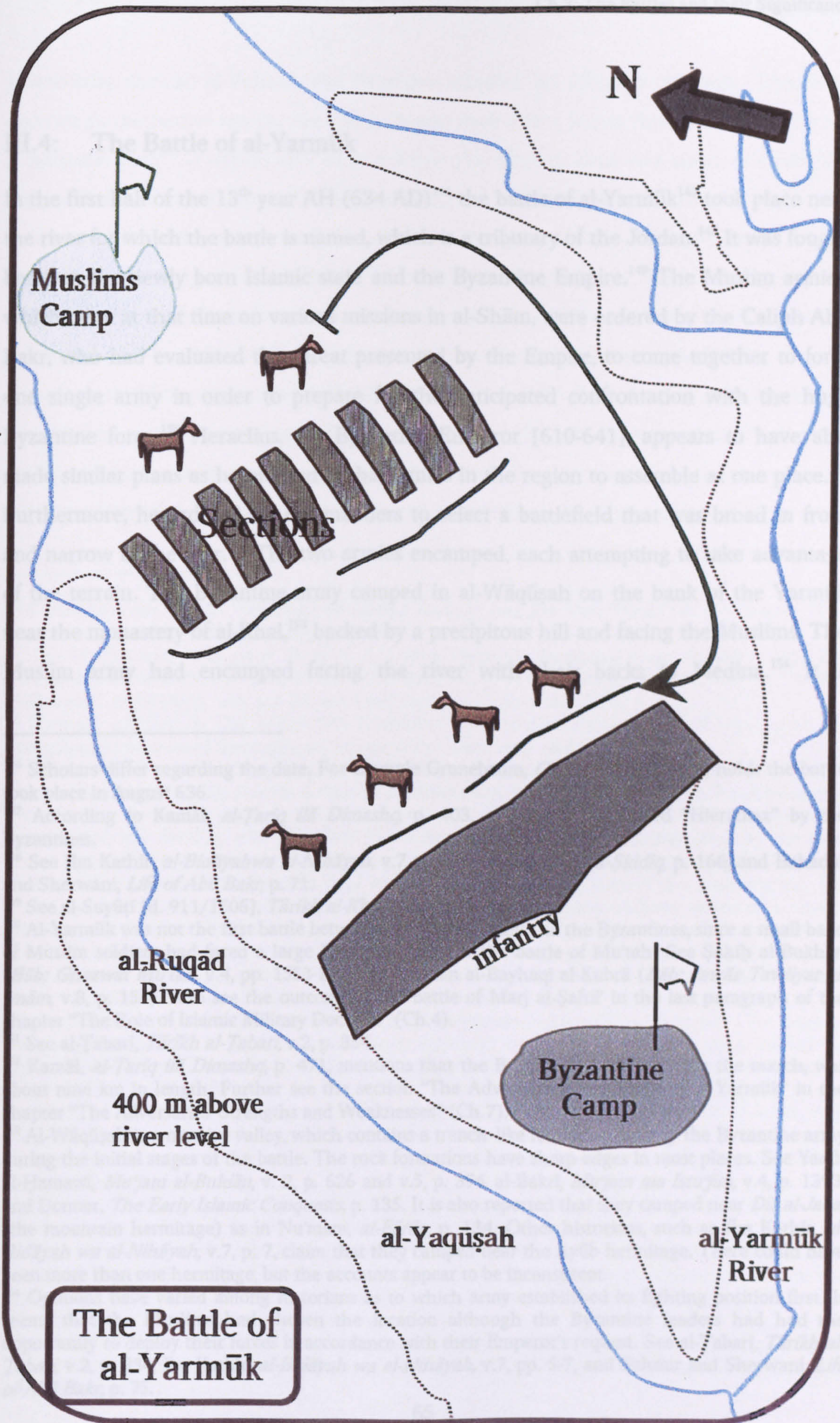
¹⁴² See the Qur'ān, 9: 26 and 33: 9. Also see al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.14, p. 144.

distribution and division of team work sections resulted in unity of responsibility among the Muslim soldiers. Tenth, it was the first time the Muslim army took into consideration the securing of resources and supplies over a long period of time. Eleventh, rather than a real confrontation this battle was more or less a psychological war; there was not even booty to be gained.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, the vulnerability of the Muslims remained extreme throughout the siege,¹⁴⁴ which means the damage was spiritual rather than material. Lastly, this was end of the Quraysh's (and their allies') dream of invading Medina and destroying Islam. It should also be noted that the battle exposed the machinations of the *Munafiqūn*.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ See the Qur'ān, 33: 25.

¹⁴⁴ See the Qur'ān, 33: 10-11.

¹⁴⁵ See the Qur'ān, 33: 12-20.



III.4: The Battle of al-Yarmūk

In the first half of the 13th year AH (634 AD)¹⁴⁶ the battle of al-Yarmūk¹⁴⁷ took place near the river for which the battle is named, which is a tributary of the Jordan.¹⁴⁸ It was fought between the newly born Islamic state and the Byzantine Empire.¹⁴⁹ The Muslim armies, which were at that time on various missions in al-Shām, were ordered by the Caliph Abū Bakr, who had evaluated the threat presented by the Empire, to come together to form one single army in order to prepare for the anticipated confrontation with the huge Byzantine force.¹⁵⁰ Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor [610-641], appears to have also made similar plans as he ordered all his armies in the region to assemble at one place.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, he ordered his commanders to select a battlefield that was broad in front and narrow in the rear.¹⁵² The two armies encamped, each attempting to take advantage of the terrain. The Byzantine army camped in al-Wāqūṣah on the bank of the Yarmūk near the monastery of al-Khal,¹⁵³ backed by a precipitous hill and facing the Muslims. The Muslim army had encamped facing the river with their backs to Medina.¹⁵⁴ It is

¹⁴⁶ Scholars differ regarding the date. For example Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 54, holds the battle took place in August 636.

¹⁴⁷ According to Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 403, al-Yarmūk was called “Hieromax” by the Byzantines.

¹⁴⁸ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 354, al-Sharqāwī, *al-Ṣiddiq*, p. 166, and Bahadur and Sherwani, *Life of Abū Bakr*, p. 71.

¹⁴⁹ See al-Suyūṭī [d. 911/1506], *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'*, p. 131.

¹⁵⁰ Al-Yarmūk was not the first battle between the Muslim army and the Byzantines, since a small band of Muslim soldiers had faced a large Byzantine army at the battle of Mu'tah. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat Mu'tah*, v.4, pp. 1553-1555) and Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Jawāz Tawliyat al-Imām*, v.8, p. 154). Also see the outcome of the battle of Marj al-Ṣafrā' in the last paragraph of the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4).

¹⁵¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334.

¹⁵² Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 471, mentions that the Byzantine army, while on the march, was about nine km in length. Further see the section “The Adversary at the Battle of al-Yarmūk” in the chapter “The Adversaries' Strengths and Weaknesses” (Ch.7).

¹⁵³ Al-Wāqūṣah is a massive valley, which contains a trench-like formation used by the Byzantine army during the initial stages of the battle. The rock formations have sharp edges in most places. See Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muḥjam al-Buldān*, v. 2, p. 626 and v.5, p. 354, al-Bakrī, *Muḥjam ma Istuḥjim*, v.4, p. 1393, and Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, p. 135. It is also reported that they camped near *Dir al-Jabal* (the mountain hermitage) as in Nu'mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 134. Other historians, such as Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 7, claim that they camped near the Ayūb hermitage. There could have been more than one hermitage, but the accounts appear to be inconsistent.

¹⁵⁴ Opinions have varied among historians as to which army established its fighting position first. It seems that the Muslims had chosen the location although the Byzantine leaders had had the opportunity to deploy their forces in accordance with their Emperor's request. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, pp. 5-7, and Bahdur and Sherwani, *Life of Abū Bakr*, p. 75.

noteworthy that at al-Yarmūk the Muslims adopted an offensive strategy. This is in contrast to the battles against the Quraysh and their allies, where their strategy had been a defensive one.¹⁵⁵ It should also be noted that the Muslim army was about one fifth the size of the Byzantine forces.¹⁵⁶ The gathering of such enormous forces on both sides indicates that both armies had the intention to permanently eliminate each other's presence in the region of al-Shām.¹⁵⁷ Unlike in the previously discussed battles, the Muslim leader at al-Yarmūk was not the head of the Islamic Umma, but a brilliant military leader, Khālid b. al-Walīd.¹⁵⁸ The leader of the Byzantine army was Bāhān, also an experienced military commander.¹⁵⁹ After a lapse of more than a month, during which several messages were exchanged between the two parties, the Byzantines came out of the valley and both armies assembled.¹⁶⁰ Khālid, seeing what his troops had to contend with, quickly reformed the Muslim army into 36 to 40 mobilised *Kirdūs* (sections).¹⁶¹ This was a

¹⁵⁵ Further see the section "Definition of Islamic Strategy and the Two 'Pillars'" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

¹⁵⁶ The Muslim army was about 30 to 40 thousand, while the Byzantine forces numbered over 200 thousand. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 7, Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.2, pp. 258-259, al-Sharqāwī, *al-Ṣiddīq*, p. 166, and Bahadur and Sherwani, *Life of Abū Bakr*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁷ Nu'mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 130, writes: "He (Heraclius) formed the definite resolve of bringing all the strength and resources of his empire to bear upon the Arabs once and for all."

¹⁵⁸ Debate has raged for a long time among historians concerning who was the commander of the Muslim army at al-Yarmūk. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, pp. 10-12. It can be argued from the way Ibn Kathīr illustrated his narration that Khālid was not in fact the senior commander; that position was filled by Abū 'Ubaydah. If we consider the different speeches given by the well-known Companions we notice that the speech of Abū 'Ubaydah is different. Moreover Abū 'Ubaydah's final speech is reported on the same page as the description of the start of the confrontation. His speech appears to be more than a motivational address; it also contains military orders of a tactical nature, and concludes: "Until I order you." This evidence could indicate that he was the commander, not Khālid. However, it could be argued that 'Amrū b. al-ʿĀṣ gave an address similar to Abū 'Ubaydah's, but he was not senior enough in the chain of command. So the choice remains between Khālid and Abū 'Ubaydah. Evidence that the commander was in fact Khālid can be found in Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 8, where the phrase *Yaṣḍir al-Nās 'an Ra'yah* (The soldiers would "go along with or take" his commands) indicates as much. Perhaps the most convincing explanation has been provided by a research study (degree in *al-Siyāsah al-Shariyyah, al-Ma'had al-ʿĀlī li al-Qaḍā'*, al-Riyadh, 1981) on this subject, which argues that Khālid was the leader at the beginning of the battle but as it came to an end, i.e. at the time of the distribution of booty, Abū 'Ubaydah took over the leadership. See al-Qurashī, *Awwaliyāt al-Farūq al-Siyāsīyah*, p. 89. See also Faraj, *al-Madrasah*, p. 268, Ghazāl, *al-Ghazawāt*, pp. 419-420, al-Shantūt, *al-Muslimūn*, p. 70, and al-Khaṭṭāb, *Khālid*, p. 146.

¹⁵⁹ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 5 and al-Wāqidī, *Futūh al-Shām*, v.1, p. 190. Bāhān bore the title *Biṭrīq*, "patricius". He is considered to have been a righteous man since he several times punished those of his men who committed crimes on their way to the battlefield. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 335. However in other historical works he is called Mahan not Bāhān. For example see Bahdur and Sherwani, *Life of Abū Bakr*, p. 75. Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 436, is not sure whether he was a Roman or an Armenian.

¹⁶⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 336-337 and Bahdur and Sherwani, *Life of Abū Bakr*, p. 76.

¹⁶¹ For the original meaning of the word *Kurdūs* see al-Khaṭṭāb, *Khālid*, p. 30. Also see Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 226.

new type of formation, which allowed him to move different sections freely and rapidly into different positions as the battle situation required.¹⁶² Bāhān stationed himself on a vantage point from which he could see both armies, while Khālid positioned himself in the rear of the front line of the cavalry of his section.¹⁶³ When the two armies approached sufficiently close to each other, one great fighter of the Byzantines stepped out of the ranks and called for a duel. This was a favourite style of engagement of the Arabs. When Maysarah b. Masrūq moved forward, Khālid stopped him since the Byzantine fighter was a “giant and with a superb physique and Herculean strength.”¹⁶⁴ As Khālid was talking to Maysarah he glanced at Qays b. Habīrah, who advanced and killed him.¹⁶⁵ The Byzantine army then started to move forward, firing volleys of arrows.¹⁶⁶ The Muslims stood firm for a long time facing a furious frontal attack; however, their right wing was driven back in great disorder, reaching the female camp, but the women pushed them back into the heat of the battle.¹⁶⁷ Along the whole front line each Muslim section had to fight fiercely and stand firm in the face of this huge first wave. ‘Ikrimah b. Abī Jahl said then: “Who takes the vow of fealty unto death?” Four hundred soldiers, of whom Ḍirār b. al-Azwar was one, took this “grim vow” and nearly all of them were slain on the spot.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, Ibn Qantair, the Byzantine commander of the right wing, attacked the left wing of the Muslim army, driving back the Lakhm and Ghassān tribes; some commanders and soldiers, among them Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān, Qubāth b. Hāshim, and Shuraḥbīl b. Hassnah, stood their ground, performing prodigies of valour. Sa‘īd b. Zayd knelt upon the ground, and when the Byzantine officer commanding the front line forces approached, Sa‘īd jumped to his feet and killed him. At this point the Uzd tribe was pushed back by the assault, but were

According to Ibn Kathīr, Khālid realised, being a commander of great military experience that the Byzantines would launch a massive assault which would smash through any conventionally deployed force. It was mainly for this reason that he made the tactical innovation of dividing the Muslim army into *Kurdūs*. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 11 and Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.2, p. 259.

¹⁶² See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 8.

¹⁶³ Al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, v.1, p. 203. In addition, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 428, mentioned that when they saw the power of the Byzantines the men from northern Arabia, newly recruited into the Muslim army, fled, leaving the Muslims behind and seeking refuge in a nearby village.

¹⁶⁴ Nu‘mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 134.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, v.1, pp. 194-195, reported that the victor was not Qays b. Habīrah, but a youth from the Asad tribe.

¹⁶⁶ On that day, many of the Muslim army lost their eyes to the adversary’s arrows. See al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, v.1, p. 141.

¹⁶⁷ Ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk [206/822-287/900], *al-Āḥād wa al-Mathānī*, v.6, p. 128.

¹⁶⁸ Nu‘mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 142.

rallied by their leader, Mu'adh b. Jabal.¹⁶⁹ The battle so far had been equally balanced, with the Byzantines having slightly the better of it. At this stage, Qays b. Habirah and Sa'id b. Zayd, whom Khālid had posted at the rear of the left wing and the rear of the centre respectively, rushed from behind and made a simultaneous onslaught. As a result, the Byzantine defensive plan collapsed. Khālid had posted the cavalry in the rear, from where he made a sudden outbreak, leading a tremendous charge.¹⁷⁰ With a steady pressure, Khālid pushed the Byzantine army back, until he reached the Commander and killed him.¹⁷¹ The death of their commander and the overwhelming Muslim assault caused confusion among the ranks of the Byzantine army, and they gave way. Caught between the ensuing assault from the front and the valley and the chained infantry in the rear the Byzantine cavalry were trapped. This situation was a direct result of the Emperor's battle plan. Now Khālid gave the Byzantine cavalry the opportunity to flee, leaving the infantry unprotected.¹⁷² The Muslims pressed home the attack, driving the Byzantine infantry back from the main area of combat until they came to the brink of the river. Panic-stricken, most of them jumped into the waters; the others were reported missing in action. The battle was over; the Muslim army had won the victory.¹⁷³ The numbers of their wounded and slain were negligible in comparison to those of the adversary.¹⁷⁴

Al-Yarmūk marks a departure from the battles previously discussed for several reasons. First, it was fought against a people of the Book, not against pagans. Second, the battle did not take place on the Arabian Peninsula, but across the border in al-Shām. Third, the Islamic state adopted an offensive rather than a defensive strategy as in the battles of

¹⁶⁹ Ḥajjaj was the chieftain of the Zubayd clan. See Nu'mani, *al-Fārūq*, pp. 140-142. Ghazāl, *al-Ghazwāt*, p. 456, discussed that it was 'Ikrimah b. Abī Jahl and his son. Also see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 12.

¹⁷⁰ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 338 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, pp. 12-13. Also see the map of al-Yarmūk.

¹⁷¹ Nu'mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 141.

¹⁷² See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 338 and Nu'mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 142.

¹⁷³ Most historians refer to the battle of Yarmūk as *yawm al-Yarmūk*, thus indicating to the reader that the battle was won in a single day, that of al-Waqidi. For example see Ibn Sa'd [168/785-230/845], *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, v.6, p. 20, al-Zamakhsharī [467/1075-538/1144], *al-Fā'iq*, v.3, p. 252, Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, v.1, p. 461, Ibn Abī Jarādah, *Bughyat al-Ṭalab*, v.4, p. 1893, and Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, v.2, p. 536.

¹⁷⁴ The disparities in the numbers reported by various authors indicate that some have been greatly exaggerated. However, according to the references in use the casualties of the Muslim army were about three thousand. By contrast, the Byzantine casualties numbered about 100 thousand including those soldiers who jumped in the river. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 338, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 13, and al-Balādhuri, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, v.1, p. 141.

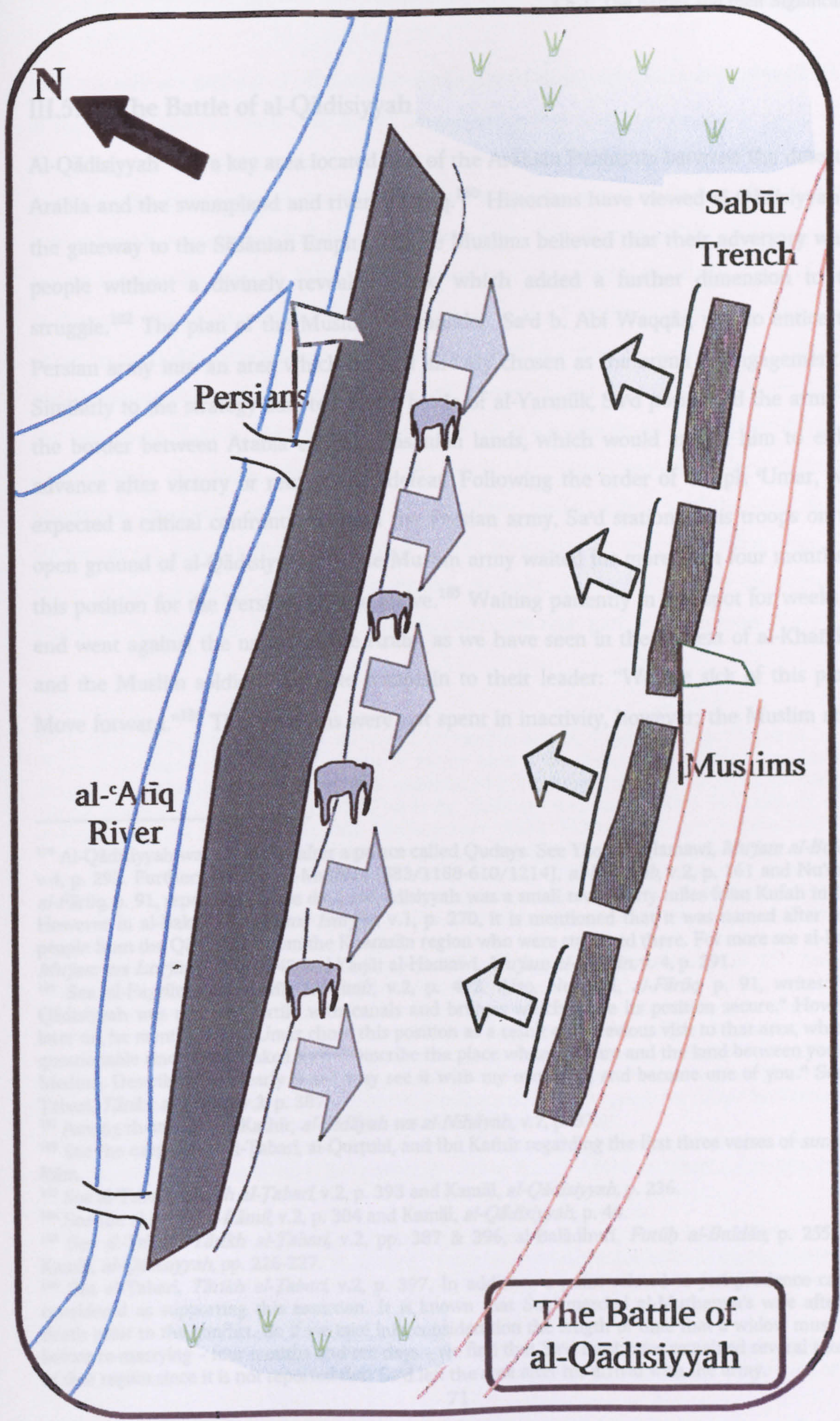
Badr, Uhud, and al-Khandaq.¹⁷⁵ Fourth, the battle is considered to be the key to the Muslim army's subsequent conquest of the Byzantine Empire, which was one of the two empires bordering the Arabian Peninsula. It was known that the battle would be decisive, and so the Muslim leadership's preparations were extremely thorough. Fifth, although the supreme leader of the Islamic community did not take part in the battle, the Muslim leadership in the field generally succeeded in maintaining the Arab warriors' morale, despite being faced with the might of the Byzantine army.¹⁷⁶ Sixth, Khālid was able to read the Byzantines' battle plan and to quickly formulate and execute an effective counter plan: to divide the Muslim army into small sections and to allow the adversary's cavalry to escape between the Muslim ranks. It should be pointed out that he could count on the thorough training of the Muslim army, which was able to adapt to the new plan without hesitation.¹⁷⁷ Seventh, the Muslim women were ordered to remain in the rear of the army to give encouragement and supply logistics as required. Eighth, among the battles under study, this was the first where the Muslim army captured a massive booty.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Wright notes that an offensive strategy is conducted in "an effort to occupy hostile territory, to acquire resources from the enemy, to destroy hostile forces ... or to accomplish other military objectives." A defensive strategy is designed to prevent the success of such an effort. See Wright, *A Study of War*, pp. 9-10. Also see the various discussions on defending and spreading Islam in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

¹⁷⁶ 'Arab warriors' is used here instead of the more usual *Muslim army* since the Arabs were not anxious to meet the Byzantine army, especially the force brought by Khālid from Iraq.

¹⁷⁷ This was possible because for two decades the Muslim army had been continually involved in various confrontations. In addition, as we have noted, the culture of the Arab warrior made his sword his inseparable companion; the military virtues were second nature to him. See the section "The Reasons for Conflict and the Mounds of the Arabs" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

¹⁷⁸ See al-Ba'li [645/1248-709/1310], *al-Muṭli'*, p. 436.



The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah

III.5: The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah

Al-Qādisiyyah¹⁷⁹ is a key area located east of the Arabian Peninsula between the desert of Arabia and the swampland and rivers of Iraq.¹⁸⁰ Historians have viewed al-Qādisiyyah as the gateway to the Sāsānian Empire.¹⁸¹ The Muslims believed that their adversary was a people without a divinely revealed Book, which added a further dimension to the struggle.¹⁸² The plan of the Muslim commander, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, was to entice the Persian army into an area which he had already chosen as the arena of engagement.¹⁸³ Similarly to the strategy adopted at the battle of al-Yarmūk, Sa'd positioned the army on the border between Arabia and the Sāsānian lands, which would enable him to either advance after victory or retreat after defeat. Following the order of Caliph 'Umar, who expected a critical confrontation with the Persian army, Sa'd stationed his troops on the open ground of al-Qādisiyyah.¹⁸⁴ The Muslim army waited for more than four months in this position for the Persian army to arrive.¹⁸⁵ Waiting patiently in one spot for weeks on end went against the nature of the Arabs, as we have seen in the context of al-Khandaq, and the Muslim soldiers began to complain to their leader: "We are sick of this place. Move forward."¹⁸⁶ These months were not spent in inactivity, however; the Muslim army

¹⁷⁹ Al-Qādisiyyah was so named after a palace called Qudays. See Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, v.4, p. 293. Furthermore, Ibn al-Muṭaraz [583/1188-610/1214], *al-Maghrib*, v.2, p. 161 and Nu'mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 91, report that those days al-Qādisiyyah was a small town thirty miles from Kufah in Iraq. However in al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam ma Istuʿjim*, v.1, p. 270, it is mentioned that it was named after some people from the Qādis tribe from the Kharasān region who were stationed there. For more see al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam ma Istuʿjim*, v.3, p. 1042 and Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, v. 4, p. 291.

¹⁸⁰ See al-Fayyūmī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr*, v.2, p. 492. Also, Nu'mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 91, writes: "Al-Qādisiyyah was rich and fertile with canals and bridges which made its position secure." However, later on, he mentions that 'Umar chose this position as a result of a previous visit to that area, which is questionable since 'Umar asked Sa'd: "Describe the place where you are and the land between you and Medina. Describe it so clearly that I may see it with my own eyes, and become one of you." See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 387.

¹⁸¹ Among them was Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 37.

¹⁸² See the exegeses of al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr regarding the first three verses of *surah* al-Rūm.

¹⁸³ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 393 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 236.

¹⁸⁴ See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.2, p. 304 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 44.

¹⁸⁵ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 387 & 396, al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 255, and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 226-227.

¹⁸⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 397. In addition, a point related to jurisprudence can be considered as supporting this assertion. It is known that Sa'd married al-Muthanna's wife after his death prior to the conflict. So if we take into consideration the length of time that a widow must wait before re-marrying - four months and ten days - we find that Sa'd must have remained several months in that region since it is not reported that Sa'd left the area after his arrival with the army.

used the military method of offensive operations such as sending various patrols either to re-supply to ensure survival or to collect data by either peaceful or forceful means.¹⁸⁷

These operational movements forced the Persian army to come face to face with the Muslims. The Persians were massively superior in both men and equipment.¹⁸⁸ Before the confrontation numerous Muslim ambassadors had been dispatched at different times calling the Persian army to Islam.¹⁸⁹ When the Persians rejected these requests the clash of the two armies became inevitable.¹⁹⁰ Rustam,¹⁹¹ the Persian commander, asked Sa'd either to cross the 'Atiq river to them or let the Persians cross to the Muslims' side. Sa'd gave his assurance to Rustam, and the Persian troops crossed the river and advanced on to the battlefield.¹⁹² As the two armies occupied their respective positions, Rustam displayed great skill in organising his army for the battle. He placed troops thirteen deep and reinforced the centre with elephants¹⁹³ on whose backs armed soldiers were seated, leaving at the rear the river of al-'Atiq.¹⁹⁴ While retaining the system of tribal units, Sa'd drew up his troops into close ranks leaving no gaps. At their rear was the trench of Sābūr.¹⁹⁵ On that day, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ could not take part in the combat due to his

¹⁸⁷ See *ibid.* v.2, p. 387. It was a sort of "War of Attrition" as Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 58, calls it.

¹⁸⁸ As in the case of al-Yarmūk, a variety of figures have been given, some of which are doubtless exaggerated while others are too low. For example, Abū Yūsuf [d. 183/800], wrote in his book, *al-Kharāj*, that the Muslims were about 8000 while the Sāsānians were about 60000. Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 256, mentioned that the Muslims were about 10000 while the Persians numbered 120000. It is impossible to make a reliable judgement regarding the exact numbers of both armies. If, however, we take into consideration the total area of the battlefield, it is possible that the Persian army was about 200,000 strong, while the Muslim army numbered about 30,000. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 394. For further discussion of the numbers see Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 97, 120 and 121.

¹⁸⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 390-393, al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 257, Faraj, *al-Madrasah*, pp. 182-183, and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 55-60.

¹⁹⁰ It is worth mentioning that Rustam was connected to the Sāsānian Emperor by a unique chain of communications. Men were posted at certain intervals between the scene of the engagement and the capital. The man posted at the battlefield called out to the next man the particulars of the incidents as they happened and thus the relay of intermediary cries communicated the news to Mada'in with marvellous rapidity. By contrast, Sa'd relied on sending a daily written report to 'Umar in Medina. See Nu'mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 99 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 57, 124, and 125.

¹⁹¹ Rustam b. Farrukhẓād al-Armanī was an Armenian from al-Rayy although some have said he was from Hamadhān. He placed his faith in astrology. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 394, and al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 256.

¹⁹² See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.2, p. 315 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 118.

¹⁹³ It is worth mentioning that the elephant could not be introduced to the Arabian Peninsula as it required substantial supplies of food and water, which were not easily available. More importantly, the animal could not withstand the extreme heat of the Peninsula. See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, p. 273.

¹⁹⁴ See Nu'mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 99.

¹⁹⁵ This trench was believed to have been dug at the time of Nebuchadnezzar. It was used by the king of the Sāsānians, Dhū al-Aktāf [309-376 AD], to protect Iraq from the attacks of the Bedouin of

illness (boils), so he assigned Khālid b. ‘Arfaṭah¹⁹⁶ to be the field leader. Sa‘d watched the progress of the battle from the upper storey of the old Qudays palace.

III.5.1: The Day of Armāth¹⁹⁷

On Thursday, 13th of Sha‘bān, 15 AH (19th of September, 636 AD), the troops took up their fighting positions and the reciters of the Qur‘ān came forward and recited the *surah* al-Anfāl.¹⁹⁸ At the same time the words of poets and the forceful statements of the field commanders stirred the hearts of the Muslim soldiers and raised their spirits to the utmost enthusiasm. Sa‘d ordered them not to make full contact until they heard the fourth signal: “Allāhu Akbar”. Some single combats took place. After full contact occurred, the Persians’ most awe-inspiring weapon, the elephants, proved very effective against the Muslim army, terrifying their horses and camels.¹⁹⁹ One Muslim soldier defected from Islam and aligned himself with the Persians.²⁰⁰ He was thus able to advise the Persian army to concentrate their attack on the tribe of the Bujaylah, which was the smallest of the Muslim tribes and could be considered a weak point in the Muslim ranks. The Persian leadership took advantage of his treachery and directed about fifteen elephants and great numbers of men against the Bujaylah, who suffered heavy and disproportionate losses. Sa‘d rectified the situation by ordering the Asad to assist the Bujaylah. The combined effort of the two tribes eventually succeeded in repelling the onslaught. At the end of the day, the Muslims managed to disable the Persians’ most effective weapon, moving behind the elephants and cutting their girths and tails, maddening the great beasts and throwing down their riders.²⁰¹ Nevertheless the first day ended with the Persian army having a slight advantage. The night was quiet and was therefore called the Night of *al-Had’ah*

Arabia. It was later remade by the Muslims, filled with water and named *Karā Sa‘dah* after Sa‘d b. Ḥarām. Its length was about 900 km. See Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 218-220.

¹⁹⁶ He was one of the Companions, and despite the fact that he acted as the field-commander for several days historians have not explained his direct effect on the battle’s progress, unlike that of al-Qa‘qā‘. He died in the year 64/684. See al-Baghdādī [393/1003-463/1071], *Tārīkh Baghdād*, v.1, p. 200, al-Dhahabī [673/1275-748/1348], *al-Kāshif*, v.1, p. 366, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, v.1, p. 189.

¹⁹⁷ Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī in his *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*, v.1, p. 154 reports that the Day of *Armāth* was named after the small plant called *Armāth* (sing. *Rimth*). Taking a different view, Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 145, mentions that it was named *Armāth* since it means linguistically, “mixing together”, indicating that it was difficult to tell who was winning the battle.

¹⁹⁸ See Naseef, *Military Organisation*, p. 104 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 133.

¹⁹⁹ The Arabs, in general, had had no experience of fighting elephants. See Munāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 25.

²⁰⁰ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 431, Abū Yūsuf, *al-Kharāj*, p. 31, and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 135.

²⁰¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 412 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 143. Similarly see al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 258.

(tranquility);²⁰² this calm allowed the Muslim medical evacuation force to carry out their responsibilities.²⁰³ Women and children provided medical and mortuary services.²⁰⁴

III.5.2: The Day of Aghwāth²⁰⁵

On the second day of the battle, as both armies were preparing for combat, a contingent of six thousand men, reinforcements for the Muslim army, arrived from al-Shām. When al-Qa‘qā‘ b. ‘Amrū, the head of the contingent, rode on to the field, he called out for a duel. Bahman Jādhawayhi, the centre field commander of the Persian army, rode out to meet the challenge and al-Qa‘qā‘ killed him, taking revenge for the Muslim army which Bahman had defeated in the battle of al-Jisr (the Bridge). Bayruzān, the rear leader, Shahrbarāz Sijistān, the prince of Sistan, Bazurch-Mehr of Hamdan, al-Binduwan, and others were also slain.²⁰⁶ These defeats greatly affected the Persian troops as they saw their notable champions cut down one after another. The Persians’ morale was further shaken by a crafty plan devised by al-Qa‘qā‘: he divided the relieving forces into small bands, and as each band reached the battlefield the Muslim army cried out: “Allāhu Akbar”, and so it appeared that troops continued pouring in all day long. Also, al-Qa‘qā‘ showed his inventiveness in another plan: he created a number of frightening monstrosities by covering the camels’ bodies with clothes and their heads with flowing vestments, which scared the horses of the Persians, driving them out of control.²⁰⁷ At noon, full contact occurred and just when the battle was raging furiously, gifts arrived from the overall commander in Medina, comprising four of the “choicest Arab steeds of rare value” and priceless swords of exquisite workmanship.²⁰⁸ ‘Umar had sent these with the intention of further motivating the troops, and had requested that they should be given to the bravest fighters. The fighting continued until midnight. That night was called *Laylat al-Sawād* (the Night of Blackness).²⁰⁹ As the two armies separated, the evacuation and treatment of casualties was undertaken.²¹⁰

²⁰² See al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī; the English Version*, v.12, p. 103.

²⁰³ Ḥajib b. Zayd al-Anṣārī, who had fought at Uḥud, was in charge of health and mortuary services. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 418.

²⁰⁴ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 413 and Nu‘mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 102.

²⁰⁵ “Aghwāth” is derived from the word “Ghawth” which means to relieve, since the Persians’ most destructive weapon had been (temporarily) eliminated and the battle turned to the advantage of the Muslim army. See Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, 163.

²⁰⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, v.12, pp. 97-98 and Nu‘mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 102.

²⁰⁷ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 414 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 156.

²⁰⁸ Nu‘mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 103. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 414.

²⁰⁹ It is worth mentioning that during the night Sa‘d’s wife released Abū Miḥjan, a great warrior, from the jail where he had been placed by Sa‘d. He took Sa‘d’s horse and rode it bravely against the Persians, showing great fighting skills. Then he returned secretly to the jail and placed his feet in the

III.5.3: The Day of ‘Amās²¹¹

On the morning of the third day, the two armies were in position and the ground between them was stained red. The elephants were now back in action after being withdrawn from the previous day's combat. They were now well protected from behind by soldiers. Reinforcements for the Persian army arrived.²¹² Al-Qa‘qā‘ and ‘Amrū b. ‘Aṣim tricked the Persians as they had the previous day, by removing some of their horsemen from the field and instructing them to continuously return to and leave the battlefield, giving the Persian army the impression of the continuous arrival of reinforcements. Luckily for the Muslims, the rest of the Syrian reinforcements appeared as the last group of these horsemen re-entered the field.²¹³ Upon his arrival, Hāshim b. ‘Utbah, the commander of the whole Syrian army, executed the ‘reinforcements’ plan with his own men.²¹⁴ As on the first two days, duels continued to take place between the horsemen. Nonetheless the elephants once again attacked the horsemen and almost pulled them apart. Then, Sa‘d consulted the Persians who had embraced Islam on how to deal with the elephants.²¹⁵ They told him that the Muslims should cut their trunks and pierce their eyes with arrows. They should concentrate especially on the white elephant and the ‘scabby one’ since all the other elephants followed them.²¹⁶ The Muslims followed this advice and put the elephants out of action once and for all, to the great relief of the Muslim army. In the afternoon, full contact occurred. The two armies emerged from it equally.²¹⁷ Sometime during the first half of the night, Ṭulayḥah b. Khuaylid al-Uṣdī,²¹⁸ who was on a mission, moved behind

fetters. The next day, when Sa‘d learned of his exploit, he released him. See al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 258 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 45.

²¹⁰ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 417 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 165.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² See Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 176.

²¹³ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 412.

²¹⁴ Nu‘mani, *al-Fārūq*, p. 103.

²¹⁵ The universality of Islam, according to the Qur‘ān, 34: 28, allowed this important measure to be taken, to the advantage of the Muslim army. Further see the section “Leaders and Intelligence” in the chapter “The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence” (Ch.6).

²¹⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.12, p. 113.

²¹⁷ See *ibid.*, v.12, p. 117 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 175-176.

²¹⁸ Ṭulayḥah b. Khuaylid was the chief of the Banū Asad. He was a poet and a soothsayer, and commanded respect in Arabia during the days of ignorance. When the Holy Prophet declared his mission, Ṭulayḥah became a cruel enemy of Islam. In the battle of al-Khandaq, he sided with the Quraysh. In the battle of Khyber he sided with the Jews. In 631 AD when all other Arabian tribes accepted Islam, he also became a convert. However, in 633 AD he declared himself to be a prophet. He introduced a new way of prayer in which there were no prostrations. Many clans of Central Arabia joined him, and soon he once again became a powerful enemy of Islam. When Khālid defeated him at the battle of Buzakha, he fled to al-Shām; when al-Shām was conquered by the Muslims, he yet again converted to Islam. Later he returned to Arabia and joined the war against the Persians. See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nublā’*, v.1, pp. 316-317 and Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, v.3, p. 542.

the Persian army and proclaimed three times: “Allāhu Akbar”. This brought the fighting to a temporary halt as the Persian army thought they were being attacked from the rear.²¹⁹ Then both armies repositioned themselves and some Muslim horsemen rode forward to call the Persians to single combat, but the Persians did not respond. They stood together and were willing to move only in ordered formation, since Rustam had seen over the last three days that the Arabs had the mastery in duelling. Rustam then rearranged his forces into ranks thirteen deep. Sa‘d ordered his army not to move until they heard his fourth signal, i.e. “Allāhu Akbar.” Some enthusiastic tribes could not wait for the fourth or even the third signal, but rushed forward, and Sa‘d said: “O Allāh, forgive them and grant them victory! O for so-and-so (naming each tribe).”²²⁰ The fighting carried on all through *Laylat al-Harīr* (the Night of Gasping) until sunrise.

III.5.4: The Day of al-Qādisiyyah

On the fourth day of the battle the fighting continued relentlessly and both armies became exhausted. At this moment, al-Qa‘qā‘ realised that whoever could patiently endure for the next few hours would surely be victorious. He convinced his men of this, raising their morale.²²¹ He and the other commanders then gathered and targeted Rustam as their main objective of attack. When the nearest tribes saw what was happening, they joined al-Qa‘qā‘ and the others. Even the horsemen threw their bows and arrows aside, sprang from their mounts and, wielding their swords, pressed hard on the centre. Al-Hurmuzān and al-Bayruzān started to retreat. At noon, the Muslims were able to make a breakthrough. “A violent western wind” tore away the sunshade from Rustam’s seat and blew dust in the faces of the Persian army.²²² At this critical moment, one trooper named Hilal b. ‘Ullafah al-Tamīmī chased Rustam and killed him, then sprang on to his throne and proclaimed: “I have killed Rustam.” This exclamation made the Persian army turn towards the throne, and when they saw their leader was not there confusion took hold of their ranks.²²³ Consequently, after about thirty hours of continuous fighting, a complete rout took place. Every Persian soldier fled for his life. The Persian army tried to cross the

²¹⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.12, p. 117 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 175-176.

²²⁰ See al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, v.12, pp. 120-121. Also see Nu‘mani, *al-Fārūq*, pp. 106-107.

²²¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 424.

²²² Nu‘mani, *al-Fārūq*, pp. 108-109. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.12, p. 123 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 44.

²²³ See Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 175-176.

bridge, but few were able to do so. The casualties on both sides were very high: the Muslims lost one fifth of their men, the Persians almost one third.²²⁴

Certain specific features of the battle of al-Qādisiyyah made it unique. First, it was the first decisive battle of conquest against an enemy whom the Muslims believed to be the people of un-revealed Book.²²⁵ The Muslim community concentrated its forces and attacked the second largest known empire. They were led by one of the noble Companions of the Prophet and one of the six candidates to be nominated Caliph after ‘Umar and the army included seventy of the Companions who had fought at Badr (Badrī).²²⁶ Second, the newly formed Muslim army fought against the professional army of the Sāsānian Empire under the command of one of its most skilful leaders, Rustam. Third, the Sāsānian Empire used a variety of military means against the Muslim army. Notably, elephants were used, which most of the Muslim infantry and cavalry had never previously fought against. Fourth, the Muslim forces managed to establish the battlefield in a key area, which they had chosen in advance. However, they had to endure the experience of a long delay, which was against the nature of most of the Muslim soldiers. Fifth, this battle, in comparison with those previously discussed, was by far the longest, lasting for four consecutive days, and calling for extreme patience, and endurance and courage. Sixth, both armies were aware that the battle was likely to be decisive. This can be understood from the speech given by the Emperor addressing his field commander, Rustam.²²⁷ Seventh, unlike in the other discussed battles, the supreme commanders at al-Qādisiyyah did not participate in the fighting. Eighth, the battle is thought to be the key to the Muslim army’s subsequent conquest of the Sāsānian Empire.²²⁸ Ninth, it secured the Arabian Peninsula from future Persian attacks. Tenth, unlike al-Yarmūk, al-Qādisiyyah was fought to attain a number of clearly defined targets, all of which were accomplished, such as the returning of the people of that area once more under the Islamic *sharī‘a* and subjugating the army of the Sāsānian Empire.²²⁹ Eleventh, a daily report was sent between the main battle area and the Headquarters of the Islamic state in Medina. Twelfth, the Prophet’s assurance of the fall of the Sāsānian Empire, spoken at al-Khandaq, was fulfilled as a result of this battle.

²²⁴ The Muslim army lost more than 6000 men; the Persian army lost more than 60,000. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 393 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 44.

²²⁵ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 434.

²²⁶ See al-Maqdisī [d. 507/1114], *al-Bad’ wa al-Tārīkh*, v.5, p. 188.

²²⁷ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 393 and Faraj, *al-Madrasah*, p. 273.

²²⁸ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 47 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 10.

²²⁹ See Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 10.

III.6: Conclusion

While this chapter's intention has been to give an overall view of the five battles of interest, it has also furnished the reader with details of the conditions and circumstances the Prophet and his Companions faced. It has briefly described the course of each battle and pointed out its significance. This chapter will be used as the main reference for the following chapters as needed.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine

It is a key assumption of this study that the expenditure of great effort and the willingness, or even desire, to sacrifice one's life for a cause is most likely to be motivated by belief in and obedience to a set of beliefs transcending the natural inclinations of the individual. For the religious person, and therefore for the committed Muslim, doctrine fulfils this motivating function, as it is the expression or embodiment in language of inner conviction or faith.

The effect of Islamic military doctrine on the performance of the Muslim soldiers will be investigated in this chapter. First of all, a general definition of Islamic doctrine will be discussed, after which the essence of the doctrine will be explained. The implications of Islamic doctrine for Islamic military doctrine will be explored and the significance and principles of the military doctrine will be defined and discussed. In this context, the five battles will be examined to see how Islamic military doctrine affected and shaped the performance of the Muslim soldiers.

IV.1: The Definition of Islamic Doctrine

The term *doctrine* can be defined in both English and Arabic.¹ The word *doctrine* means tenet, faith, dogma, creed, *credo*, belief and article of faith.² It is originally derived from the Latin word '*doctrina*'.³ The concept is rendered in Arabic by such words as '*aqīda*, *mu'taqadāt*, *dastūr*, and *mabādi' dīniyyah* or *siyāsiyyah*'.⁴ In this study, Islamic 'doctrine' will be equated with '*aqīda*'.

Linguistically, '*aqīda* (Islamic doctrine) is derived from the word *al-'aqd*. The term means the opposite of *ḥall* (discharging). According to al-Ghadīrī, it means the connection of one thing with another,⁵ while Ibn Manẓūr and al-Rāzī indicate that it means to knot

¹ This study makes reference to Arabic etymology in this and other chapters because most researchers think it is important, when investigating the history of the Arabs, to consider the root and thus the original meaning of key words. Also, since the Qur'ān is involved in most parts of this study its own words are considered as they were originally revealed in the Arabic language.

² Oxford, *Advanced English Dictionary*.

³ Oxford, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, v.IV, pp. 915-916 and Başbūş *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitāliyah*, p. 21.

⁴ Karmī, *al-Mughnī al-Kabīr* and al-Ba'labakī, *al-Mawrid; English-Arabic Dictionary*.

⁵ Al-Ghadīrī, *al-Qāmūs al-Jāmi'*.

something.⁶ It is noteworthy, however, that all three are agreed that *‘aqīda* (Islamic doctrine) is the faith that a person has in his heart and conscience.⁷

Terminologically, Islamic doctrine can be identified as follows.

Al-Fayyūmī identified Islamic doctrine simply as the religion which a man believes in.⁸

Abū Ḥanīfah stated that Islamic doctrine is the heart’s recognition of its Lord, His Godhood, His divinity, His names, His attributes, and His actions, and consists in loving Him more than anything else. As a result a person’s effort in whatsoever matter would bring him closer to His satisfaction. Abū Ḥanīfah also emphasised that the heart’s recognition could be expressed in two ways: 1) recognition of the correct path defined by the *sharī‘a* leading to Him, and 2) recognition of what He has prepared, in terms of reward, for people who follow such a path.⁹ Abū Ḥanīfah’s formulation is very close to the one adopted by the study in defining Islamic military doctrine, as we shall see.

The Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) explained the meaning of Islamic doctrine in some *ḥadīths*, given according to the nature of the inquirer and the prevailing circumstances. These *ḥadīths* address the wider area that the word *īmān* (*faith*) covers in Islam. He illustrated clearly the meaning of *īmān* when the people of Banū ‘Abd al-Qays¹⁰ asked his advice. He replied: “Do you know what is meant by believing in Allāh alone?” They replied: “Allāh and His Messenger know better.” Thereupon the Prophet said: “To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, to perform the prayers (*al-Ṣalah*), to pay the alms tax (*al-Zakāh*), to observe Ramadān, and to pay *al-Khums* (one fifth of the booty to be given in Allāh’s Cause)...”¹¹ In

⁶ Al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāh*, p. 189 and Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, v.12, p. 417.

⁷ Al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāh*, p. 189, Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, v.12, p. 417, al-Manāwī [952/1545-1031/1622], *al-Ta‘ārīf*, p. 75, and al-Farāhidī [100/719-175/894], *Kitāb al-‘Ain*, v.1, p. 140.

⁸ Al-Fayyūmī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munir*, v.2, p. 421.

⁹ Abī al-‘Iz [d. 780/1379], *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭaḥāwīyah*, p. 65. Also see Ibn Bāz [1330/1312-1420/2000], *Fatāwā Muḥimmah*, p. 17, and al-Ghazzālī [450/1059-505/1112], *Qawā‘id al-‘Aqā‘id*, p. 118.

¹⁰ Banu ‘Abd al-Qays was a tribe belonging to ‘Abd al-Qays b. Afṣā b. Du‘mī, whose lineage ends with Rabī‘ah b. Nizār. They originally lived in Tihāmah in Saudi Arabia and later moved to Bahrain. See Ibn Ḥazm [383/994-456/1064], *Jamharat Ansāb al-‘Arab*, p. 295.

¹¹ For the rest of the *ḥadīth* see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-‘Imān*, No. 53, v.1, p. 29), Sunan al-Nasā‘ī (*Kitāb al-Ashribah*, No. 5031, v.8, p. 120), Sunan Abū Dā‘ūd (*Kitāb al-Ashribah*, No. 3692, v.3, p. 330), and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 2020, v.1, p. 228). In another long *ḥadīth* narrated by ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar, we find: “One day we were sitting in the company of Allāh’s Apostle (PBUH) when there appeared before us a man dressed in pure white clothes, his hair extraordinarily black. There were no signs of travel on him. None amongst us recognised him...He (the inquirer) said: Inform me about *Imān* (faith). He (the Prophet) replied: “That you affirm your faith in Allāh, in His angels, in His Books, in

addition, in another *ḥadīth* the Prophet said: “Whoever possesses the following three qualities will have the sweetness of faith: the one to whom Allāh and His Messenger become dearer than anything else, who loves a person and loves him only for Allāh’s sake, and who hates to revert to disbelief as he hates to be thrown into the fire.”¹² The above makes clear that a Muslim’s relationship with the doctrine of his faith is an internal matter, a matter of the heart and not of intellectual conviction.

It seems useful to mention here what Sayyid Quṭb wrote when commenting on the preceding *ḥadīth*: that complete faith is believing in Allāh and His Messenger in a way that leaves no room for doubt or hesitation; also, one should feel certain and peaceful in one’s heart about one’s faith in Allāh. Thus one’s outward actions will reflect one’s inner belief.¹³

Each of these definitions seems to give a different view. Nevertheless, from the above statements it is possible to conclude that doctrine from the Islamic perspective entails believing in the six pillars of faith,¹⁴ and the obedience of the heart to the commands of its Lord without requesting proof of these tenets of faith, and fulfilling these commands practically, whether their purposes are understood or not, in order to gain His rewards.¹⁵

His Apostles, in the Day of Judgement, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil.” He (the inquirer) said: “You have told the truth...” He (the narrator, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb) said: “Then he (the inquirer) went on his way but I stayed with him (the Holy Prophet) for a long while.” He then said to me: “Umar, do you know who this inquirer was?” I replied: “Allāh and His Apostle knows best.” He (the Holy Prophet) remarked: “He was Gabriel (the angel). He came to you in order to instruct you in matters of religion.” See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 37, v.1, pp. 80-82), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 8, v.1, p. 47), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 2610, v.5, p. 6), Sunan al-Nasā’ī (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 4989, v.97, p. 8), Sunan Abū Dā’ūd (*Kitāb al-Sunnah*, No. 4695, v.4, p. 223), and Sunan Ibn Mājah (*al-Muqadimah*, No. 63, v.1, p. 24).

¹² Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 16, v.1, p. 14), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 43, v.1, p. 66), Sunan al-Nasā’ī (*Bāb: Ṭa’im al-Īmān*, No. 4987, v.8, pp. 94-95), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, No. 4033, v.2, p. 1338), and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 12021, v.3, p. 103).

¹³ Sayyid Quṭb [1324/1906-1386/1966], *Fi Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, v.1, p. 26.

¹⁴ When the Prophet was asked about faith (*Īmān*), he replied: “That you affirm your faith in Allāh, in His angels, in His Books, in His Apostles, in the Day of Judgment, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil.” See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 16, v.1, p. 14), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 43, v.1, p. 66), Sunan al-Nasā’ī (*Bāb: Ṭa’im al-Īmān*, No. 4987, v.8, pp. 94-95), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, No. 4033, v.2, p. 1338), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 12021, v.3, p. 103), and Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān [d. 354/965], (*Bāb: Waṣf al-Islam wa al-Īmān*, v.1, p. 390).

¹⁵ Also see al-Ghazzālī, *Qawā'id al-Aqā'id*, p. 118 and Ibn Bāz, *Fatāwā Muhimmah*, p. 17.

IV.2: The Primary Sources of Islamic Doctrine

Generally, the main sources of Islamic doctrine are believed to be the Qur'ān, the *sunna*, and *al-ijmā'*.¹⁶

The *Qur'ān* is believed by Muslims to be literally the word of Allāh, divinely revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), which therefore all Muslims revere and obey as a holy scripture. Its reading is an act of worship, and it is considered to be the main source for the Muslim community regarding the conduct of daily affairs. It contains a great deal of material specifically concerning military affairs, including their rules and procedures, whether before, during, or after any war. It enjoins the faithful to fight for the Cause of Allāh.¹⁷ The Qur'ān says: "We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and glad tidings to the Muslims."¹⁸

The *ḥadīth* literature consists of the narrations of the life of the Prophet and the acts approved by him.¹⁹ During the time of the Prophet, his Companions eagerly learnt *ḥadīth* from him in order to apply them in their life in peace or wartime. There are some *ḥadīth* concerning Islamic doctrine formulated in order to enlighten and increase the performance of the Muslim soldiers in battle.²⁰

It is believed that *ijmā'*, which means the Consensus of jurists, is the third source of the *sharī'a*.²¹ It is identified as the collective judgement of Islamic scholars made in the light

¹⁶ These are the main Sources of Islamic doctrine according to Baṣbūṣ, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, p. 41 and Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, pp. 32-40. It should be noted here that both writers fail to make a distinction which is essential regarding this concept, since the element of *qiyās* (analogous deduction: passing a judgement upon a certain issue by analogy with another on the basis of features common to them both) is not relevant here because the elements of *'aqīda* are not subject to change or estimation, as is the case with jurisprudence. Further see Ibn Ḥanbal [164/781-241/856], *al-'Aqīdah*, p. 82 and Ibn Taymiyyah, *Kutub wa Fatāwā*, v.2, p. 8. Further details of interest see al-Āmidī, *al-Iḥkām*, Ibn Ḥazm, *Marātib al-Ijmā'*; al-Juwaynī [740/1340-816/1414], *al-Burhān*, v.2, pp. 485-513, and al-Jurjānī [740/1340-816/1414], *al-Ta'rīfāt*, pp. 24 and 232-233.

¹⁷ In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 61: 10-11, it is found: "O ye who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Chastisement? That ye believe in Allāh and his Messenger, and that you strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allāh, with your wealth and your persons: That will be best for you, If ye but knew!" Also see the Qur'ān, 9: 38-39.

¹⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 16: 89.

¹⁹ See the definition of the *ḥadīth* Chapter One.

²⁰ In one occasion the Prophet said: "Rise to enter Paradise which is equal in width to the Heavens and the Earth." See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Thubūt al-Jannah li al-Shahīd*, No. 1901, v.3, p. 1510) and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 12421, v.3, p. 136).

²¹ For the meaning of the word *ijmā'* see Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, p. 117.

of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* at any time after the death of the Prophet.²² It is acknowledged that different types of *ijmā'* may exist within Islam.²³

It should be noted, however, that these sources are similar to those used in *fiqh* (jurisprudence) with the exception of *qiyās* (analogous deduction).²⁴ These primary Islamic legal sources, with the exception of the Qur'ān, are known to have varied at the outset and went through different developmental stages. In the early years of Islam, during the life of the Prophet, the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* were the only main sources. The Companions would constantly refer to him to resolve difficult cases.²⁵ Generally, after his death they used *ijmā'* but without indicating it as is done in official sources these days.²⁶ Questions pertaining to military affairs, as an aspect of Islamic society, are referred to these primary sources as the only legislative authorities, despite the existence of a variety of different military doctrinal schools.

It is now necessary to consider the importance of the essence of Islamic doctrine from the point of view of the *sharī'a*.

IV.3: The Essence of Islamic Doctrine

Ḥusayn and Ghaybah observe that the essence of Islamic doctrine is a strong faith in Allāh and that He is the source of victory.²⁷ Muslim scholars consider sincerity to be the highest degree of faith²⁸ and the opposite of *al-Shirk* (associating partners with Allāh.)²⁹ Consequently, sincerity is understood to be the core of Islamic doctrine.³⁰ In general it is considered to be a combination of pure intention with knowledge, both of which are closely related to faith.³¹ The rewards of the hereafter depend on the truth of sincerity.³²

²² Al-Āmidī, *al-Iḥkām*, v.3, p. 175, Ibn Ḥazm, *Marātib al-Ijmā'*; v.1, p. 8, al-Ghāmīdī, "Jarīdat al-Muslimūn; Alfāz al-'Aqīdah wa Muṣṭalahātihā", and Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, p. 39.

²³ See al-Shāfi'i [150/768-204/820], *al-Risālah*, pp. 39-40 and Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Nubdhah al-Kāfiyyah*, pp. 21-26.

²⁴ Islamic doctrine is not based on analogy as it is considered *thābitah* (to be firmly established) by virtue of *waḥī* (revelation). See Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-'Aqīdah*, p. 82 and Baṣbūṣ, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, p. 32.

²⁵ For example see Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 4354, v.10, p. 169).

²⁶ See al-Shāfi'i, *al-Risālah*, p. 598.

²⁷ Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, p. 22, Ghaybah, *Muqawwimāt al-Shakṣiyyah*, p. 57.

²⁸ See Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Īmān*, p. 301-315 and al-Sadlān, *al-Niyyah*, v.1, p. 145.

²⁹ Al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, v. 4, p. 379. For the meaning of the word *shirk* see Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, p. 231.

³⁰ Here, faith is the core of Islamic doctrine as sincerity is the core of faith.

³¹ It will be useful to the reader to indicate briefly these connections, which will be examined in more detail later in the chapter, for example in the section "The Principles of Islamic Military Doctrine".

The Qur'an promises that good deeds will be rewarded according to the certainty of a person's sincerity and his acting in accordance with the *sharī'a*.³³

Terminologically, sincerity means to believe in the oneness of Allāh.³⁴ Al-Ghazzālī discusses the definition of sincerity in detail when explaining the different approaches of some Islamic scholars.³⁵ The most accurate definition of sincerity, according to al-Ghazzālī, was given by the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) himself: when he was asked about it, he replied that sincerity is to say "Allāh is my Lord," and then to be firm.³⁶ This must be considered the most accurate as well as succinct definition, which in a military

First, the connection between faith and knowledge: in his *Athar al-Īmān*, p. 53, al-Jarbū' explains the relationship between sincerity and knowledge. He writes: "The true faith that purifies and fortifies the worshipper is the one that is built upon knowledge, which is brought by the Prophet Muḥammad and which is supported by revelation." Al-Jarbū' also points out that none of the fundamentals of faith in the Qur'an and *sunna* can be fulfilled unless they are understood through the knowledge of their meanings. Therefore a Muslim's faith is not blind. In fact, later (p. 430) in the same work he states that knowledge is one of the fundamentals of faith. It may be understood that he meant to show the great effect of knowledge on sincerity, especially in making use of the argument of Ibn Jarīr, who explained that {فَأَحْيَا} "to whom We gave life" (as in the Qur'an (ETMC), 6: 122), means that We guided him to Islam and revived him. Second, we need to consider the connection between faith and intention indicated in the following verse (ETMC), 49: 7: "But Allāh has endeared the Faith to you, and Has made it beautiful in your hearts, and He Has made hateful to you unbelief, wrongdoing, and rebellion: such indeed are those who walk in righteousness." Also see the Qur'an, 24: 47-51. In the explanation of the word faith, Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Īmān*, pp. 49-50, states that this word covers all the fields of adoration, since any type of love and hate should be judged and understood according to one's intention. Ibn Taymiyyah later in the same book, pp. 172-173, quotes Sahl b. 'Abdullah al-Tustarī, who, when he was asked about faith, said: "Faith is speaking, action, intention, and *sunna* (working according to the Prophet's teachings)." Also see Ibn Qudāmah, *Lam'at al-Istiḳād*, p. 21.

It should be noted that due to the richness of meaning of the Arabic words in the Qur'an they should ideally given in their original form to give the meaning its true strength and emphasis. Care must be taken with the translation also, since the Arabic word may indicate meanings and therefore concepts other than those generally provided in the books of exegesis. See al-Fughom, *Untranslatability of the Holy Qur'an*, pp. 5-12.

³² See the Qur'an, 26: 9, 37: 84 and 50: 33. Also see the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Waḥī*, No. 1, v.1, p. 3), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imārah*, No. 1907, v.3, p. 1515), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb Manāqib al-Jihād*, No. 1647, v.4, p. 179), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 300, v.1, p. 43), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: al-Niyyah*, No. 181, v.1, p. 41), al-Sunan al-Kubra (*Bāb: al-Waḍū'*, No. 78, v.1, p. 79), and Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Ṭalāq wa 'Aqd al-Niyyah*, No. 2201, v.2, p. 262).

³³ The Qur'an (ETMC), 26: 89, states: "But only he (will prosper) that brings to Allāh a sound heart". Further see Abū al-A'lā al-Mawdūdī, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an; the English Version of Tafhīm al-Qur'an*, v.1, pp. 103, 213, 258, 299, and 211.

³⁴ This means to worship Allāh alone (the first pillar of Faith). See Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Istiḳāmah*, v.2, pp. 302-303, Ibn al-Jazarī [544/1150-606/1210], *al-Nihāyah*, v.2, p. 11, al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, p. 77, and al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Niyyah wa al-Ikhlāṣ*, p. 11.

³⁵ See al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, v.4, p. 379.

³⁶ See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Jāmi' Auṣāf al-Islām*, No. 38, v.1, p. 65), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Zuhd*, No. 2140, v.4, p. 607), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, No. 3972, v.2, p. 1314), and Sunan al-Dārimī (*Kitāb al-Riqāq*, No. 2710, v. 2, p. 386).

context has a great effect on Muslim soldiers due to their knowledge of the source.³⁷ However, it should be emphasised that the phrase “be firm” refers to both internal and external steadfastness, since the question concerned the internal response of the Muslim soldier to the demands of his faith.

Faith is not constant, however; it varies in the Muslim heart according to its degree of certainty and level of belief. It may increase or decrease, depending mainly on how intention and knowledge combine in the Muslim’s actions.³⁸

Al-Nawawī in his *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* explains that faith’s gauge rises and falls in the Muslim’s heart. He then points out that linguistically the word ‘*īmān*’ is not subject to changes of meaning. Then he discusses faith terminologically, stating that it means: “the belief in the heart and the performance of the body.”³⁹ Both he and Ibn Baṭṭāl⁴⁰ argued that faith’s susceptibility to change is indicated by the Qur’ān in the following verse: “Those to whom men said: “A great army is gathering against you, so fear them”: but it (only) increased their Faith: they said: “For us Allāh Sufficient, and He is the best Guardians.”⁴¹

Such verses provide strong evidence that faith does indeed increase and decrease according to intention and knowledge, and that this has an important effect on the Muslim’s heart, attitude and internal conviction which is definitely reflected in his external behaviour. This judgement is supported by most of the contemporary and classical Islamic scholars such as al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Taymiyyah, and al-Shawkānī.⁴² Therefore, although it can be said that faith cannot be divided into parts or quantified as far as the linguistic meaning is concerned, from the terminological perspective faith is susceptible to change.

³⁷ For example, see the conduct of Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān at the battle of al-Khandaq. See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, No. 1788, v.3, p. 1414) and Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān (*Dhikr Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān*, No. 7125, v.16, p. 67).

³⁸ Al-‘Abbād, *Causes*, p. 12.

³⁹ Al-‘Abbād, *Causes*, p. 12 and al-‘Azzāz, *al-Īmān*, p. 14.

⁴⁰ His full name was Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Khalaf b. Baṭṭāl al-Bakrī al-Qurṭubī. He wrote a commentary on Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. He was a judge in Lurgah and died in 449/1058. See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, v.18, p. 47.

⁴¹ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 173. Also see Qur’ān, 9: 124. Also see al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.1, p. 146 and al-Shawkānī [1173/1760-1250/1835], *Faṭḥ al-Qadīr*, v.1, pp. 37 and 46.

⁴² See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.4, pp. 289-290, Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Īmān*, p. 34, and al-Shawkānī, *Faṭḥ al-Qadīr*, v.1, p. 503.

Many scholars have discussed these causes either briefly or in detail.⁴³ One such scholar was al-‘Abbād, the author of the most accurate and detailed discussion of the increasing and decreasing of faith.⁴⁴ Thus it will be useful to follow his schema of the main related factors affecting faith’s stability. Practising the following behaviours is considered to bring about an increase in faith, and neglecting or avoiding them will have the effect of decreasing it:

1. Learning beneficial knowledge derived from the book of Allāh and the *sunna* of His Messenger.
 - a. Reciting the Qur’ān and contemplating it.⁴⁵
 - b. Knowledge of Allāh’s most beautiful Names and most Exalted Attributes.⁴⁶
 - c. Pondering the merits and qualities of the religion of Islam.⁴⁷
2. Exerting efforts towards accomplishing sincere righteous actions.
 - a. Actions of the heart, tongue and limbs.⁴⁸

These are considered to be the main factors causing an increase in faith.

By way of conclusion, we can say that the response of a Muslim to Islamic doctrine depends on the increasing and decreasing of faith. This in turn has an effect on the implementation of Islamic doctrine as Islamic military doctrine, as will be discussed in the next section.

IV.4: Islamic Military Doctrine

After considering the definitions of Islamic doctrine and discussing its essence and sources, we will discuss its implementation in the military field as Islamic military doctrine. The

⁴³ Also see Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Īmān*, al-Ahdal, *al-Īmān*, al-Jarbū‘, *Athar al-Īmān*, al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Īmān*, and al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, v.11, p. 85.

⁴⁴ Al-‘Abbād, *Causes*, pp. 8-10.

⁴⁵ This can be seen to be practically applied immediately before the battles began. Also see Sirāj al-Dīn, *Hadī al-Qur’ān al-Karīm ilā Ma‘rifat al-‘Awālim wa Ma‘rifat al-Kawn*.

⁴⁶ This was also practised, at least in part, before the battles when the Muslims implored Allāh’s help or proclaimed “Allāhu Akbar” as a signal to attack and as a sign of faithful submission to Him. Also see Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Asmā’ wa al-Ṣifāt*) and al-Halāwī Muḥammad, *wa Lillāh al-Asmā’ al-Ḥusnā*.

⁴⁷ This was seen clearly in the case of the ambassadors’ mission to the adversaries’ camps. Also see Sayyid Sābiq, *Khaṣā’iṣ al-Tashrī‘ al-Islāmī*.

⁴⁸ Also see in this connection the Qur’ān, 23: 1-11, Ibn Taymiyyah, *A‘māl al-Qulūb*, and Muḥammad Kelkel, *Ṣyānat al-Īmān min ‘Atharāt al-Lisān*.

study's construction of the definition of Islamic military doctrine relies on the views of some modern Islamic scholars, since it was not defined in classical Islam. Consequently, this definition is a modern formulation; however, it is possible to argue that the concept was practised during the period under study. The views of some of the Islamic military commanders are illustrated here with a view to examining the definition of Islamic military doctrine in depth.

Al-Khaṭṭāb states from a general military perspective that: "Doctrine is an elevated goal, which a man believes in; therefore, he sacrifices his wealth and his life for its sake, since it is more valuable than both of them."⁴⁹ His definition is general, however, and he does not consider doctrine from a specifically Islamic viewpoint.

In contrast, Baṣbūṣ explains that: "It is making Jihād for the Cause of Allāh with everything a human being owns, with a firm doctrine, spiritual reaction and including a clear goal which cannot be abandoned and full preparation to protect this goal."⁵⁰ Nevertheless, he does not mention what type of Jihād he is discussing, although his definition seems to apply mainly to combat.

Ḥusayn on the other hand indicates that to adhere to Islamic military doctrine is to believe in the high values that spring from the Islamic doctrine, which does not accept any hesitation on the part of the believer. He explains that these values are considered to be the stimuli of a fighting spirit which causes the believer to sacrifice his wealth, his time, and his life for the fulfilment of the goal. They are also essential in preparing the whole nation for Jihād in time of war or of peace. Later, he concludes that this Islamic military doctrine consists of certain rules necessary to direct the political and military procedures governing warfare so that the ultimate aim might be fulfilled.⁵¹ Ḥusayn adds that the function and purpose of Islamic doctrine in this context are to instruct and correct Islamic military behaviour and to direct it in order to perfect both manners and moral attitudes.⁵² Nonetheless, although this seems to be the closest to an ideal definition for the purposes of this study, it is too general and does not refer to the promises made in the Qur'ān and *sunna* for the benefit of the Muslim soldiers.

⁴⁹ Al-Khaṭṭāb, *Bayna al-'Aqīdah*, p. 41 and Firestone, *Jihād*, p. 132.

⁵⁰ Baṣbūṣ, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, p. 32. Further see Ibn al-Mubārak [118/736-181/798], *al-Jihād*.

⁵¹ Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, p. 11.

⁵² Ibid, p. 18 and al-Sayyid Sābiq, *al-'Aqā'id al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 8.

The above statements show that Islamic military doctrine is grounded in the high values that spring from Islamic doctrine, and governs the implementation of that doctrine in the field of military affairs. Firm belief in and commitment to the Islamic military doctrine stimulates the *fighting spirit* of Muslim soldiers, who are already aware of the divine promises of victory or martyrdom. These promises were made conditional upon the willingness to sacrifice wealth and life and are fulfilled by submitting to certain rules and regulations derived from the *sharī'a*, and through the use of military strategy, in order to attain above all the ultimate goal, i.e. to serve Allāh by submitting without reservation to His command to exalt his word above all. Hence, it can be regarded as a part of a divine doctrine.

The phrase 'fighting spirit' leads us to discuss one of the most important acts of piety in the Islamic military doctrine: Jihād.⁵³ This word needs to be understood and defined in the Islamic context. Khan identifies Jihād as: "Holy fighting in the Cause of Allāh or any other kind of effort to make Allāh's Word (i.e. Islam) supreme. Jihād is thus to be regarded as one of the fundamentals of Islam."⁵⁴

⁵³ Firestone, *Jihād*, p. 132. For more see Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 243-248.

Al-Ba'labakī, *al-Mawrid; Arabic-English Dictionary*, illustrates that Jihād means effort, struggle, strife, fight, and holy war. The Oxford, *Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, defines *Jihād* as: "A holy war fought by Muslims against those who reject Islam." Rudolph, *Islamic Colonialism*, p. 118, objects that the previous definition does not cover the exact meaning of the word *Jihād*. In addition, it should be made clear that those who reject Islam are not to be fought due to their rejection of Islam only, as according to the Qur'ān, 2: 256: "There is no compulsion in religion."

⁵⁴ Khan, *Summarised Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, p. 1049. It should be pointed out that there are different types of Jihād. Among these, fighting in the Cause of Allāh, well performed Ḥajj and going to and returning from the Mosque as well as others are all called Jihād. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2632, v.3, p. 1026) & (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2842, v.3, p. 1094), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, No. 2174, v.4, p. 471), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Siyar*, v.9, p. 25), al-Mundhirī [581/1156-656/1258], *al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb*, v.1, p. 133, and al-Mizzī [654/1256-742/1342], *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, v.2, p. 144. In addition, it is possible to recognise that not fighting back while the Muslims were undergoing torture in Mecca was a form of Jihād whereby the believer's patience and endurance were put to the test. The Muslims implored the Prophet that they should be allowed to resist persecution, but he told them that the time was not yet ripe. See Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Siyar*, v.9, p. 5) and al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr (No. 3640, v.4, p. 63).

It is worth mentioning in this context that there is a famous weak *ḥadīth* which states: "We came back from the lesser Jihād to the greater Jihād" which is used in several Medieval and contemporary Islamic works. Al-Ghazzālī, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī and other modern and classical scholars regarded this *ḥadīth* as *ḍa'if* (weak). Al-Ghazzālī, *Ma'ārij al-Quds*, p. 99, stated: "They (scholars and wisemen) indicated that we came back from the lesser Jihād to the greater Jihād." But in the *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, v.2, p. 244, he referred this *ḥadīth* to the Prophet, mentioning it in a slightly different form and illustrating its weakness of narration. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī [d. 895/1490], *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam*, p. 196, discussed this *ḥadīth* but did not refer it to the Prophet. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Furqān*, p. 197, stated that this *ḥadīth* has no basis. However, al-Albānī [d. 1422/2002], *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, v.3, pp. 478-479, regards the following *ḥadīth*, with a similar wording, as strong: "The best

In the Qur'ān, the meaning of Jihād is stated clearly in many verses. In fact the call to Jihād occurs seventy-four times,⁵⁵ while in the *ḥadīth* it occurs many more times.⁵⁶ This repetitive use of the word Jihād is considered by Muslims to show the important role Jihād plays in Muslim society and particularly in the military context. However, its essence consists of (1) a true and sincere faith, which fixes its gaze on Allāh, so that all selfish or worldly motives seem paltry and fade away, and (2) an earnest and ceaseless activity, involving the sacrifice (if need be) of life, person, or property, in the service of Allāh.⁵⁷ Therefore, it can be understood that there are several ways to fulfil Jihād according to this concept.

Thus, according to Islamic military doctrine the Muslim army fights to accomplish two important goals: either victory in battle or martyrdom.⁵⁸ The Qur'ān says: "Say: can you expect for us (any fate) other than one of two glorious things- (Martyrdom or victory)?"⁵⁹ It is possible to assert that Muslims believe that Islamic military doctrine differs from the doctrine of all other nations in that main goal is fighting in the Cause of Allāh, whatever the outcome.⁶⁰

Jihād is the Jihād of *al-nafs* (desires) in the Cause of Allāh" which in turn may strengthen the idea that there is a Jihād more difficult than the normal Jihād, i.e. the Jihād of the battlefield. It can be stated that the Jihād of the battlefield ends when the combat is over; on the other hand, the Jihād between right and wrong never ends. In other words it is an internal continuous struggle between the soul's evil desires and the Islamic teachings.

Thus rejecting a detestable action is considered to be a part of Jihād. However, this rejection relies on one's degree of sincerity, as the *ḥadīth* states: "He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue; and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart and that is the least of faith." See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 49, v.1, p. 69), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, No. 2172, v.4, p. 469), Sunan al-Nasā'ī (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 5008, v.8, p. 111), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, No. 1140, v.1, p. 296), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, No. 4013, v.2, p. 1330), and Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 306, v.1, p. 540). Also see al-Ṭayyār, *al-Ikhlāṣ*, p. 26.

⁵⁵ See Qur'ān, 2: 190-195, 216-218, 244, 246-252, & 261, 3: 139, 142, 146, 154-158, & 200, 4: 71-77, 84, 93, & 102, 5: 35 & 54, 8: 15, 16, 20-26, 39, 40, 46-48, & 57-66, 9: 7-16, 20-22, 24, 29, 38-41, 73, 111, & 120-123, 16: 110, 22: 39, 40, 58, & 78, 29: 67, 33: 16, 17, 21, 22, & 25, 47: 4-7, 20-24, 31, & 35, 48: 4, 7, & 18-27, 57: 10 & 25, 59: 2-5 & 11-14, 60: 1, and 61: 4 & 10-13.

⁵⁶ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jihād*), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Jihād*), and the rest of the *ḥadīth* Books.

⁵⁷ *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. 503.

⁵⁸ These alternatives may be subject to application of strategy considered from an Islamic viewpoint. See the section "The Definition of Islamic Strategy and the Two 'Pillars'" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁵⁹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 9: 52.

⁶⁰ The Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 76 says: "Those who believe fight in the Cause of Allāh, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of Evil (Tāgūt): so fight ye against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan."

It should be noted that Ibn Kathīr did not show any preference between martyrdom and victory and preserved the order of the above verse.⁶¹ On the other hand, al-Ṭabarī in his discussion of this verse, made the order of the events more logical.⁶² He talked firstly about victory and then mentioned martyrdom as a natural end if victory is not accomplished. Taking the opposite view, al-Qurṭubī suggested that the highest goal of Muslim soldiers, as their doctrine dictates, is martyrdom;⁶³ victory is not the primary goal. Al-Qurṭubī's view is supported by the actions of those Companions of the Prophet who sought martyrdom rather than victory.⁶⁴ These views appear to be irreconcilable, but the contradiction may be resolved by considering their relationship to the demands of Islamic military strategy, which will be discussed in Chapter Eight.⁶⁵

IV.5: The Perceived Importance of Islamic Military Doctrine

Soldiers have a strong need for a doctrine which can motivate them, particularly at moments of crisis, to be willing to go against their own desires, and even to overcome their natural instinct to survive, sacrificing themselves for a greater cause.⁶⁶ Indeed, this farsighted conviction is generally impossible to achieve and act upon unless there is a cause or goal of ultimate value. It can be argued that a motivational power transcending the merely human, such as Islamic doctrine, is needed to properly organise the soldier's relationship with his God, his superiors, and his comrades in arms.⁶⁷ Therefore, Ḥusayn claims that humans need a divine doctrine, which makes the best use of their abilities and provides what will be necessary to attain this goal.⁶⁸ The Qur'ān says: "On earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time. Then learnt Adam from his Lord certain words and his Lord turned towards him; for He is Oft-Returning, Most

⁶¹ See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 363.

⁶² See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.10, pp. 150-151.

⁶³ See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.8, p. 160.

⁶⁴ Further see the Qur'ān, 3: 152, al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.9, p. 189, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.7, p. 370, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 192, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 15, v.2, p. 106, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.5, p. 319, Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, v.2, p. 7, v.11, p. 352, & v.16, p. 273, and Başbūş, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, p 77.

⁶⁵ See the section "Islamic Strategy Definition and the Two 'Pillars'" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁶⁶ See al-Khaṭṭāb, *Bayna al-'Aqīdah*, p. 42 and Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, p. 15.

⁶⁷ Further see the coming section "A Divinely Stable Doctrine".

⁶⁸ See Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, p. 15. Also see the section "The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader: Bravery and *Taqwā*" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

Merciful.”⁶⁹ It can be argued that the ‘certain words’ learnt from the Lord were a kind of doctrinal teachings.

After illustrating the perceived importance of Islamic military doctrine, we will now consider the reasons for combat prescribed by Islam.

IV.6: The Reasons for Islamic Combat

We have seen above that Muslims believe that fighting in a way true to Islam is not to be undertaken for the sake of booty, sovereignty, authority, property, expansion, better living, or any other rewards; a Muslim soldier fights with sincerity for the sake of Allāh alone. Thus Islam transformed the Arabs into fighters for purposes different from those which had hitherto motivated them.⁷⁰ However, it may be asked: “What is the Cause of Allāh?” Naturally, many explanations have been offered in answer to this question, and there are several modern works which have attempted to provide an overall view of the Cause of Allāh.⁷¹ Thus, the Cause of Allāh as mentioned in the Qur’ān and *sunna*⁷² can be summarised in the following points:

1. Monotheism (*tawhīd*) in the field of creed, as in the Qur’ān: “Not a messenger did we send before thee without this inspiration sent by us to him: that there is no God but I; therefore worship and serve Me.”⁷³
2. Mercy in the field of morality, as in the Qur’ān: “We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures.”⁷⁴
3. Justice in the field of legislation, as in the Qur’ān: “Allāh commands justice, the doing of good, and giving to kith and kin, and He forbids all indecent deeds, and evil and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.”⁷⁵

⁶⁹ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 2: 36-37. Also see the Qur’ān, 2: 2, 38, 120, 143, 185, & 285, 3: 4 & 73, 6: 71 & 88, 16: 36, 18: 13, 20: 123, 39: 23 and 42: 13.

⁷⁰ See the section “Reasons for fighting” in the chapter “Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam” (Ch.2).

⁷¹ See al-Sayyid Sābiq, *Fiqh al-Sunah*, v.3, pp. 40-41, Ḥusayn, *al-‘Aqīdah al-‘Askariyyah*, pp. 47-48, Ghaybah, *Muqawwimāt al-Shakhsīyyah*, pp. 10-11, and Rudolph, *Islam and Colonialism*, p. 121.

⁷² See Ḥusayn, *al-‘Aqīdah al-‘Askariyyah*, pp. 47-48.

⁷³ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 21: 25. This leads to unity in the worship of the Creator.

⁷⁴ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 21: 107. This verse directs the practice of Islamic military activities.

⁷⁵ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 16: 90. This provides a solid basis for social affairs even in military society.

In addition, the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) said: “Verily, I was sent to perfect moral character.”⁷⁶ Thus he encapsulated the whole aim of Islam in a simple phrase and verified that the doctrine of conquest is justifiable only in the Cause of Allāh.

It is noteworthy that Islamic scholars have used these aspects to limit the meaning of the Cause of Allāh to specific points. Firstly and above all they have used the term ‘monotheism’ as a connection between the Islamic military and Allāh, i.e. between Muslim soldiers and their Lord, in daily activities, since Islam is a way of life. This relation is obviously the cornerstone of the fulfilment of the subsequent points.⁷⁷ The second point concerns the moral innovations wrought by Islamic doctrine on the Muslim troops.⁷⁸ The Arabs’ brutal method of fighting prior to Islam was changed by Islamic teachings to the practice of mercy and morality in warfare, and the reasons for conflict were also changed, since they had used to slay each other for foolish reasons such as in the war of *Dāḥis wa al-Ghabrā’*.⁷⁹ The third point deals with the justice of legislation, to prove that Jihād is not only the way of the sword. So it is possible to say that the spirit of Jihād is found not only in fighting, as “the sincere scholar’s pen or the preacher’s voice or a wealthy man’s contributions could be the most valuable forms of Jihād.”⁸⁰ For example on one occasion the Prophet asked for a donation to prepare the Muslim army. ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān donated a substantial sum of money, whereupon the Prophet remarked: “There is no harm upon ‘Uthmān whatever he does after this.”⁸¹

Within Islamic belief, there are about fourteen conditions under which Islamic troops are permitted to go into action, but as most of these lie outside the scope of this study, only a few will be mentioned here.⁸²

⁷⁶ Musnad Aḥmad (No. 8595, v.2, p. 381), al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb Tawārīkh al-Mutaqadimīn min al-Anbyā’ wa al-Mursalīn*, No. 4221, v.2, p. 670), and al-Muwaṭṭa’ [93/712-179/796], (*Kitāb Ḥusn al-Khuluq*, No. 1609, v.2, p. 904).

⁷⁷ See the Qur’ān, 26: 98, 37: 84, and 50: 33.

⁷⁸ See Firestone, *Jihād*, p. 127.

⁷⁹ This war lasted for more than forty years and was initially ignited by a race between two horses. Further see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 155 and Yaḳūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muḥjam al-Buldān*, v.1, p. 113.

⁸⁰ *The Holy Qur’ān ETMC*, p. 503. Also see Ibn ‘Isā, *Sharḥ Qaṣīdat Ibn al-Qayyim*, v.1, p. 27 and al-Sanāfi, *al-Istrātijīyah al-‘Askariyyah*, p. 122. Also the Prophet said: “Use your property, your persons and your tongues in striving against the polytheists.” See Sunan Abū Dā’ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2504, v.3, p. 10) and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 12268, v.3, p. 124).

⁸¹ Al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyah*, v.3, p. 100. Also see al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Faḍā’l ‘Uṭhmān b. ‘Affān*, No. 4553, v.3, p. 110) and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.5, p. 4.

⁸² Among them are fighting the apostate, fighting rebels, fighting against the oppression of despotic rulers, and so on. See Ḥusayn, *al-‘Aqīdah al-‘Askariyyah*, pp. 47-57, Ghaybah, *Muqawwimāt al-*

Muslim scholars have argued that in order that these forms of warfare be undertaken in the proper manner a supreme reward is necessary to stir the soldier's spirit, so that he will go into combat with an unquenchable desire for victory. It could be said that here the pre-eminence of Islamic military doctrine appears distinctively. Allāh made a uniquely valuable bargain with the Muslim troops so that Islamic military doctrine should be realised. The Qur'ān says: "Allāh hath purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise): they fight in His Cause and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in truth, through the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'ān: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allāh? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme."⁸³ In the normal human bargain there is an equivalence in the value of the offers and there are advantages for both sides. However, in the divine bargain, the deal is for the advantage of one party; it is martyrdom. Allāh takes his ephemeral life, and the wealth and goods which he has accumulated, and He takes his soul; but in return He gives him everlasting felicities.⁸⁴

This concept of the divine bargain leads us to discuss briefly some of the virtues of Islamic military doctrine and the rewards for the Muslim soldiers who fight in the Cause of Allāh.

IV.7: The Virtues of Islamic Military Doctrine and the Promised Rewards for the Muslim Soldiers

Many verses in the Qur'ān, as well as many *ḥadīths*, discuss the virtue of fighting in the Cause of Allāh in this life, and life after death.⁸⁵ Moreover, the *sharī'a* makes a distinction between Muslims who fight for the Cause of Allāh and those who do not. In the Qur'ān, we find: "Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) except those who are disabled. And those who strive and fight in the Cause of Allāh with their goods and their persons. Allāh hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight."⁸⁶

Shakhṣiyah, pp. 10-11, al-Sayyid Sābiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, v.3, pp. 40-41, Kurdi, *The Islamic State*, p. 182, and al-Khalfāt and As'ad, *al-Askariyyah*, pp. 27-30. Further see the discussion of the two 'pillars' in the section "Islamic Strategy Definition and the Two 'Pillars'" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁸³ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 9: 111.

⁸⁴ See *The Holy Qur'ān*, ETMC, p. 536, al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.11, pp. 35-36, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.8, p. 267, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 392.

⁸⁵ See the Qur'ān, 3: 169-174, 9: 14, 41, 52, & 88, 29: 69, and 33: 24. Also, see the *Kitāb al-Jihād* in the *ḥadīth* books. Also see the coming section "The Element of Strong Motivation".

⁸⁶ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 95.

Also, the Prophet's Companions asked him what the work most beloved of Allāh is. Thus *surah* al-Şaff was revealed, which contains among other verses: "O ye who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Chastisement?"⁸⁷ Muslim soldiers consider this a supreme bargain, whereby they give comparatively little and earn much in return; in addition they are saved from a severe punishment. Next, this bargain is laid out for the beneficiaries: "That ye believe in Allāh and his Messenger, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allāh, with your wealth and your persons: that will be best for you, If ye but knew!" This verse shows that what men are required to do is to believe in Allāh without hesitation, doubt, or any inclination to polytheism. Sacrifices of wealth and person are secondary. Here, it can be noticed that the beneficiaries are called upon to consider faith and devotion a type of merchandise, which they exchange for their inferior desires. In exchange for embracing monotheism and avoiding polytheism and offering their valuable goods (wealth and persons): "He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to the Garden, beneath which rivers flow, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the supreme Triumph."⁸⁸ Allāh has promised Muslims that if they keep to this bargain they will be offered things beyond price and beyond imagination.⁸⁹

IV.8: The Significance of Islamic Military Doctrine

Muslims believe that there are some specific features which make Islamic military doctrine different from other military doctrines. These features are regarded by most Muslim soldiers as having great significance. They can be found throughout the Qur'ān and the books of *ḥadīth*, exegesis, jurisprudence, history, and others.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 61: 10.

⁸⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 61: 12.

⁸⁹ The Qur'ān (ETMC), 32: 17, states: "Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them as a reward for their good deeds." Also, in the *ḥadīth* it is found: "Allāh said: "I have prepared for My pious worshippers such things as no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and nobody has ever even imagined, all that is reserved, besides which all that you have seen is nothing." See Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Waşf al-Jannah*, No. 3072, v.3, p. 1185), Şaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jannah wa Na'imuha*, No. 2824, v.4, p. 2174), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 8128, v.2, p. 313), and Sunan al-Dāramī [181/798-255/769], (*Kitāb al-Riqāq*, No. 2819, v.2, p. 428).

⁹⁰ See the Qur'ān, 3: 152, al-Ṭabarī, *Tāriḫ al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 15 & 106, and Ibn 'Asākir, *Tāriḫ Dimashq*, v.2, p. 7, v.11, p. 352, and v.16, p. 273.

IV.8.1: The Well-Defined Goal

Islamic military doctrine has a well-defined goal, whose attainment requires the exercise of many humane, and honourable values; as the Qur'ān says: "And strive hard in Allāh's Cause as you ought to strive (with sincerity and with all your efforts that His Name should be superior). He has chosen you (to convey His Message of Islamic Monotheism to mankind by inviting them to His Religion of Islam)."⁹¹ This clear goal of striving hard in Allāh's Cause makes Islamic military doctrine different from many others since it does not call on Muslims to protect or to support any individual, or to belong to a specific group; on the contrary, it only calls on the faithful to fight in the Cause of Allāh. Başbūş, in support of this argument, cites the *ḥadīth* which narrates that the Prophet had been ordered (by Allāh) to fight against unbelievers until they testified that none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh and that Muḥammad is Allāh's apostle, and offered the prayers perfectly and gave the obligatory *zakāh*. If they did so, they would save their lives and property except for what is rightfully due under the *sharī'a*. Başbūş finally remarks that their reckoning (accounts) would be made by Allāh.⁹² This *ḥadīth* explains in some detail the clear goal of the Islamic military doctrine.

This goal seems to have been made clear to every soldier in the Muslim army in all five battles.⁹³ Muslims believe that their daily activities must be dedicated to the satisfaction of Allāh within the scope of Islam, and if we examine the recitations and speeches delivered prior to the battles, it can be understood that the doctrine was well defined due to its continuous connection with the *sharī'a*. For example, Rustam, the leader of the Persian army at the battle of al-Qādisiyyah, after having engaged in several debates with a number of representatives of the Islamic army, who had made clear that their aim was to ask the adversary to choose between the three Islamic options (accept Islam, pay the *jizyah*, or fight), said to his commanders: "Haven't you seen that this man and those before him did not differ in expressing their united goal?"⁹⁴

⁹¹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 21: 78.

⁹² Başbūş, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, p. 75. Also see Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 25, v.1, p. 17), Şaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: al-Amr bi Qitāl al-Nās*, No. 21, v.1, p. 52), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Bāb: Min Surah al-Ghāshiyah*, No. 3341, v.5, p. 439), and Sunan al-Nasā'ī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 3093, v.6, p. 6).

⁹³ Further see the section "Definition of Islamic Strategy and the Two 'Pillars'" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁹⁴ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 403.

IV.8.2: A Divinely Stable Doctrine

From a Muslim's perspective Islamic military doctrine, being derived from Islamic doctrine, is judged to be divine. Başbūş states that Islamic doctrine does not have human features.⁹⁵ Consequently, it cannot in any way be changed, added to, or subtracted from due to its divine nature; otherwise it might be misused in conformity with humans' evil desires.⁹⁶ All in all, it does not change in accordance with the changes undergone by humans. The Qur'ān states: "Verily, this is My way leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about From His path."⁹⁷ If we carefully examine this verse we are led to conclude that the Muslim, whether a soldier or not, believes that the Creator constructed the path prescribed by Islamic doctrine according to the needs and qualities of the creation, and that the Muslim is obliged to follow it and it alone, otherwise he will be led astray by evil desires.

Thus while it is entirely permissible and even desirable for a Muslim army to invade territory to gain what the adversary has, the Muslim soldier, whether rich or poor, is requested to fight in the Cause of Allāh; all other purposes, including the taking of booty, are complementary to the essential task.⁹⁸ As the Qur'ān states: "And know that out of all the booty that ye may acquire (in war) a fifth share is assigned to Allāh,- and to the Messenger, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer."⁹⁹

Thus it can be argued that the five battles under study were fought due to the adherence of the believers to the divinely stable doctrine mentioned previously, in the sense that each was fought for Allāh's sake. This was so because the warriors received their teachings from the same divine sources in every battle. Some of these specific teachings were revealed after the battle of Badr, such as that governing the treatment of prisoners of war, when the Prophet asked his Companions to advise him.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ See Başbūş, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, p. 76.

⁹⁶ See Maḥfūz, "Usus al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah", p.27 and Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Siyāsah al-Shariyyah*, p. 29. Further see the foregoing section "The Primary Sources of Islamic Doctrine".

⁹⁷ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 6: 153. Also the Qur'ān (ETMC), 76: 3, states: "We showed him the way: Whether he be grateful or ungrateful." Also see the Qur'ān, 32: 7.

⁹⁸ See Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, pp. 47-57, Ghaybah, *Muqawwimāt al-Shakḥiyyah*, pp. 10-11, al-Sayyid Sābq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, v.3, pp. 40-41, Kurdi, *The Islamic State*, p. 182, and al-Khalfāt and As'ad, *al-'Askariyyah*, pp. 27-30.

⁹⁹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 41.

¹⁰⁰ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sirah*, v.3, p. 272, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 46, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 297, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sirah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 448. Also see the coming section "The Division of Booty and the Treatment of Prisoners of War".

Since a divine doctrine may be supported by divine assistance, the next section will discuss this matter in detail.

IV.8.3: The Role of Divine Assistance

Since the aim of Islamic military doctrine is to serve Allāh by exalting His word above all, Muslims believe that Allāh has aided His servants who fight for His cause in different ways.¹⁰¹ For example, sometimes He reinforces them with angelic troops, who fight side by side with them. This is mentioned in the Qur'ān: "Remember ye implored the assistance of your Lord. And He answered you: "I will assist you with a thousand of the angels, ranks on ranks."¹⁰² From an Islamic perspective, it is undeniable that this verse assures Allāh's support of His servants when they seek His help in battle.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, since al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Ṭabarī were not writing military exegeses of the Qur'ān, they did not mention, in their discussions of this verse, that it could be held to mean that Allāh has promised to help Islamic military forces in a similar way to that in which He helped the Prophet and the Companions during their struggles against the non-believers. The verse, however, can be taken to be a good illustration of the promise of divine assistance to a Muslim army, since these exegetes were discussing the help given by Allāh in military matters.

Additionally, it appears that there are forms of support other than the provision of warrior angels according to the verse: "Remember He covered you with drowsiness, to give you calm as from Himself and He caused rain to descend on you from heaven, to clean you therewith, to remove from you the stain of Satan, to strengthen your hearts, and to plant your feet firmly therewith."¹⁰⁴ Another example of divine assistance can be seen in the psychological support granted to the Muslims at Badr: "Remember in thy dream Allāh showed them to thee as few: if He had shown them to thee as many, ye would surely have been discouraged."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Further see the section "The Significant Effect of Assistance through Divine Information" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

¹⁰² See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 9.

¹⁰³ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.9, p. 189, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.7, p. 370, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 192, and Başbūş, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, p 77.

¹⁰⁴ See the Qur'ān, 8: 11. It appears that the exegeses chosen for discussion report different forms of divine assistance. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.4, p. 140 and v.9, pp. 193-197, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.2, p. 242, and v.7, p. 371, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.1, p. 419 and v.2, pp. 292-293.

¹⁰⁵ See the Qur'ān, 8: 43.

One of the main concepts of Islamic military doctrine is the trust that Allāh will help His servants after they themselves have taken the necessary actions.¹⁰⁶ The Qur'ān states: "O ye who believe! If ye will help (the cause of) Allāh, He will help you, and plant your feet firmly."¹⁰⁷ Muslims believe that in these circumstances divine assistance is possible, and indeed it is discussed in detail in the Qur'ān, the *ḥadīth* and many different Islamic books.¹⁰⁸

At Badr it seems that there was a tangible divine intervention by means of the angelic host. Islamic and non-Islamic historians have, of course, taken different views on this subject; however, the Islamic writers and historians have concluded that the angels did intervene in the fight.¹⁰⁹ Yamānī, who may be taken as representing the modern scholars, after a long discussion states that the angels did indeed take part.¹¹⁰ In addition it is reported that the Prophet told the Companions that if they wanted to distinguish between those they had killed and those the angels had killed they should look for burns on the polytheists' bodies.¹¹¹ Thus, from the Islamic perspective at least, it is possible to say that the angels fought and killed the adversary at Badr, but in the other battles they provided a different kind of assistance.¹¹² The matter of divine assistance, therefore, has a powerful connection with the subject of the next section.

IV.8.4: The Element of Strong Motivation

Islamic military doctrine, being as Muslims believe divinely inspired, unlike secular political theory for example, is less vulnerable in its implementation in the field to the influence of human greed and other vices, and of completing interests, since it aims at the

¹⁰⁶ See al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Manāqib 'Amrū b. Umayyah al-Dumrī*, No. 6616, v.3, p. 722), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb Ṣifāt al-Qyāmah wa al-Raqā'iq wa al-Wara'*, No. 2517, v.4, p. 668), and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 81.

¹⁰⁷ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 47: 7.

¹⁰⁸ Further see the section "The Significant Effect of Assistance through Divine Information" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

¹⁰⁹ See the Qur'ān, 8: 12, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: al-Imdād bi al-Malā'ikah fi Ghazwat Badr*, No. 1763, v.3, p. 1384), al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.9, pp. 193-200, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.7, pp. 367 & 378-380, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, pp. 293-294.

¹¹⁰ See Yamānī, *Badr al-Kubrā*, pp. 173-180.

¹¹¹ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 282.

¹¹² See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Shuhūd al-Malā'ikah Badr*, v.4, p. 1467) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: al-Imdād fi al-Malā'ikah fi Ghazwat Badr*, v.3, p. 1383). Also see the Qur'ān, 8: 9 & 12. Also see the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

satisfaction of Allāh and not of human beings.¹¹³ Indeed its invulnerability can be said to be absolute, and that all the mundane considerations of human desire have no weight when balanced against it. For the Muslim this quality of invulnerability provides a powerful motivation. Among the many verses found in the Qur'ān encouraging those who would serve Allāh, the study wishes to emphasise three aspects of motivation. First, it promises divine assistance: "O ye who believe! If ye will help (the cause of) Allāh, He will help you, and plant your feet firmly." However, as the verse states, and as the Muslim army taking part in the battles under study knew, divine support was not unconditional. Second, it promises a reward: "Let those fight in the Cause of Allāh who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter, to him who fighteth in the Cause of Allāh whether he is slain or gets victory, We give him a reward of great (value)." Third, it exhorts the Muslims to fight against the unbelievers who have taken up arms against Islam: "Those who believe, fight in the Cause of Allāh, and those who disbelieve, fight in the cause of *Ṭaghūt* (Satan, etc.). So fight you against the friends of *Shayṭān* (Satan); ever feeble indeed is the plot of Shayṭān (Satan)."¹¹⁴

The Muslims' commanders in the five battles in question gave great importance to the practice of encouraging their troops by making powerfully motivating speeches before the fight began, as their rousing words would embolden the troops as they went into action and as a result, the men would be inspired to give of their utmost.¹¹⁵ Just before the battle of Badr, one of the last exhortations they heard from their spiritual and military leader was: "Rise to enter Paradise, which is equal in width to the Heavens and the Earth."¹¹⁶ It is possible to claim that this *ḥadīth* would have fixed the Muslim soldiers' hearts and minds on their ultimate goal.

On another occasion, also at Badr, the Prophet again emphasised the reasons underlying Islamic combat. He grasped a sharp sword, to encourage his Companions, and called out: "Who is ready to take this sword and give it its proper due?" Many Companions asked to

¹¹³ See al-Ghaḍbān, *al-Manhaj*, v.2, p. 416.

¹¹⁴ Respectively see the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 7, 74, & 76. Also see Başbūş, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, p. 81. The translation of 4: 76, shows the difficulty of conveying the meaning of the original Arabic into English. Two distinct Arabic words, *Ṭaghūt* and *shayṭān* are given the same translation, i.e. Satan. We have already referred to this problem, and remind the reader that Arabic words may be presented either in transliteration or in Arabic orthography with the closest possible English translation.

¹¹⁵ Further see the coming section "Steadfastness in the Face of the Enemy".

¹¹⁶ See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Thubūt al-Jannah li al-Shahīd*, No. 1901, v.3, p. 1510) and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 12421, v.3, p. 136).

be given it. Al-Ḥalabī records that among them were ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Ḥamzah b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, al-Zubayr b al-‘Awwām, and other great fighters. However, it was not given to any of them. Then Sammak b. Kharshah inquired: “O Messenger of Allāh, what is its price?” The Prophet said: “It is to strike the enemy’s faces with it until it is bent.” Then Sammak said: “I will take it for that price.” After he was given the sword, he tied a red band around his head with as a sign of his willingness to die for his faith.¹¹⁷ It seems that those who responded to the call were driven and shaped by Islamic military doctrine, as it is likely that only someone with a deep faith would be prepared to sacrifice his life so readily and with such enthusiasm.

In the foregoing sections, we have discussed the significance of Islamic military doctrine with regard to its status as a divine doctrine. Its various aspects have been examined, including its importance as a motivational factor. The question arises, however: What are its principles? The next section seeks to examine this point.

IV.9: The Principles of Islamic Military Doctrine

Every doctrine has specific principles which distinguish it from others and the principles of the Islamic military doctrine differ from those of others for a variety of reasons.¹¹⁸ These principles are not, however, collected in any one place in the Qur’ān or *ḥadīth*; but some modern Islamic military scholars such as Baṣbūṣ and al-Khaṭṭāb have arranged them in points.¹¹⁹ Each point will be briefly illustrated by the researcher due to limitations of space and will be supported by the main sources, i.e. the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*, as needed. The overall construction of these principles will be demonstrated in the following sections.

IV.9.1: The Concept of the Just War

The concept of the just war is one of the aspects of Islamic military doctrine, the benefit of which is to allow others to hear and comprehend the word of Allāh.¹²⁰ For this reason,

¹¹⁷ This story is narrated differently in other historical works. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*, v.4, p. 13 and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq; the English Version*, p. 255.

¹¹⁸ See Khaṭṭāb, *Bayna al-‘Aqīdah*, pp. 104-110 and Baṣbūṣ, *al-‘Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, pp. 87-108.

¹¹⁹ However, repetitive points will be omitted.

¹²⁰ Al-Ṭabarī mentioned that when the Islamic representatives met Rustam, the leader of the Persian army at the battle of al-Qādisiyyah, they told him that Islam was more valuable than booty. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 406.

It is well understood that, as Johnson observes, the concept of the Just War did not begin with the revelation of Islam but already had deep historical roots, both religious and cultural. See Johnson, “Historical Roots and Sources of the Just War Tradition in Western Culture”, in Johnson and Kelsay

before the beginning of any fight the Islamic army is supposed to present the opposing forces with three options: accept Islam, pay the *jizyah*, or fight.¹²¹ The Qur'ān states: "Fight those who believe not in Allāh nor the Last Day" and adds the condition: "until they pay the *jizyah*".¹²² However, protection of religious freedom is considered to be one of the principles of Islamic military doctrine.¹²³ In spite of being constructed on the basis of doctrinal unity and opposition to other doctrines, Islamic military doctrine nonetheless, to a certain extent, guarantees the freedom of other doctrines under certain conditions and within certain limits.¹²⁴ The Qur'ān states: "Allāh forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, for dealing kindly and justly with them: For Allāh loveth those who are just."¹²⁵ Also, it is known that one of the most important orders issued by the Prophet, or the Islamic Caliphs when they bade farewell to their commanders, was not to harm another religion's devotees or force them to become Muslims.¹²⁶ Muslims believe that this was also put into practice later; Christianity was generously tolerated for 800 years under Islamic rule in Spain.¹²⁷

It can be claimed, however, that the Muslim army on occasion broke some important rules of combat prescribed by Islamic military doctrine, specifically in the first three battles. However, it should be remembered that in Mecca the Prophet spent approximately thirteen years calling the citizens to Islam. Therefore as the battles of Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq were fought against the Quraysh army, there was no need to call them to Islam immediately before the battles. Moreover, the first battle was fought to break the Quraysh's arrogance and in the second and third the Muslim army was defending itself. With the exception of the battle of Badr,¹²⁸ the overall aim of Islamic military doctrine was to pass on the message of Islam rather than to kill the enemy's soldiers; this was

(eds), *Cross Crescent, and Sword*, p. 3. However, it should be noted that this does not mean that Muslims derived this idea from others; as the following discussion shows, they derived it from the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*.

¹²¹ See the Qur'ān, 9: 29, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 1731, v.3, p. 1357), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2612, v.3, p. 37), and Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2858, v.2, p. 953). For further discussion see al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah al-Askariyyah*, p. 92.

¹²² See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 9: 29.

¹²³ Baṣbūṣ, *al-Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, p. 87 and Abū al-A'lā al-Mawdūdī, *Shari'at al-Islām*, pp. 26-27.

¹²⁴ See the Qur'ān, 2: 256. Also see Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Siyar*, v.9, p. 85) and al-Khaṭṭāb, *Bayna al-Aqīdah*, pp. 15 & 105.

¹²⁵ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 60: 8.

¹²⁶ See the coming section "The Twenty 'Don'ts'".

¹²⁷ For more see Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, *al-'Alaqāt Bayna al-Andalūs al-Islāmiyyah wa Isbaniyā al-Naṣrāniyyah* and Buṭrus al-Bustāmī, *Ma'ārik al-'Arab fi al-Andalūs*.

¹²⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 67.

particularly true of the battles of conquest, al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah, where ambassadors were sent to persuade the opposing forces to accept Islam.¹²⁹ Moreover, the Islamic forces did not attack those who were found in places of worship; they aimed for soldiers only.¹³⁰

IV.9.2: Respecting Treaties and Conventions

The solemn promise of a Muslim is considered to be a promise made to Allāh, as the Qur'ān states: "Fulfil the Covenant of Allāh when ye have entered into it, and break not your oaths after ye have confirmed them; Indeed ye have made Allāh your surety; for Allāh knoweth all that ye do."¹³¹ Therefore, Islamic military doctrine places great emphasis on fulfilling any treaties. Also Allāh praises the *Mu'minūn* (Believers) as the ones who "those who fulfil the Covenant of Allāh and fail not in their plighted word."¹³²

Since Islamic military doctrine insists on respecting treaties and conventions, Hudhayfah b. al-Yamān was prevented from taking part in the battle of Badr. He was ready to join the Prophet, but since he had promised the Quraysh not to fight against them when they released him, the Prophet did not allow it.¹³³ This incident reveals that even though the Prophet was in need of every available soldier to capture the caravan, solemn agreements still had to be respected. Moreover, at the level of military tactics, the Muslims at al-Qādisiyyah, despite being outnumbered and having inferior arms, allowed the enemy to cross the river, fulfilling a promise they had made to Rustam. These two examples show that the Muslims fought fairly both as individuals and collectively, as they maintained their firm belief in and practice of the *sharī'a* throughout.

¹²⁹ This communication was at first conducted by letter.

¹³⁰ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 337. See the coming section "The Twenty Don'ts".

¹³¹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 16: 91.

¹³² See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 13: 20.

¹³³ It is narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Al-Wafā' bi al-'Ahd*, No. 1787, v.3, p. 1414) as follows: Hudhayfah b. al-Yamān said: "Nothing prevented me from being present at the battle of Badr except this incident. I came out with my father Ḥasīl (to participate in the battle), but we were caught by the disbelievers of the Quraysh. They said: "(Do) you intend to go to Muḥammad?" We said: "We do not intend to go to him, but we wish to go (back) to Medina." So they took from us a covenant in the name of God that we would turn back to Medina and would not fight on the side of Muḥammad. So, we came to the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) and related the incident to him. He said: "Both of you proceed (to Medina); we will fulfil the covenant made with them and seek God's help against them." Baṣbūṣ, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, p. 92, mentions that the second man was a colleague. However, Baṣbūṣ does not give his reference, therefore it is more likely that the man accompanying Hudhayfah was his father. See Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, v.2, p. 364.

IV.9.3: The Twenty 'Don'ts'

Many prohibitions regulate the behaviour of the Muslim soldier. An important *ḥadīth* enumerates about twenty of these, which might be called the twenty 'don'ts'. These explicitly forbid specific types of behaviour, since the Islamic military doctrine recognises that in war soldiers may be tempted to perform actions which have to be controlled according to the *sharī'a*. Among these prohibitions are: "Don't kill children, don't kill the elderly, don't cut down trees unless for use, don't kill worshippers who remain in their holy places" and so on.¹³⁴ These are important because they set clear limits beyond which the Muslim cannot go without violating his faith.

Among the more important of these prohibitions are those forbidding the dismembering of the dead and pillaging. As to the first of these, Muṣṭafā and Ḥusayn explain that Islamic military doctrine preserves the dignity as well as the privacy of the dead fighters.¹³⁵ They base their opinions on the following verse: "And if ye punish, let your punishment be proportionate to the wrong that has been done to you: But if ye show patience that is indeed the best (course) for those who are patient."¹³⁶ The origin of this verse is interesting, and shows the importance of the continuing revelation of the Qur'ān. Ḥamzah b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and other Muslims were badly mutilated after the battle of Uḥud. When the Prophet saw what had happened, he and his Companions vowed to mutilate the non-believers in the next battle in return.¹³⁷ However, Allāh prevented their vengeance through the revelation of the verse quoted above.¹³⁸ As a consequence we do not have any record of Muslims carrying out mutilation in the five battles under discussion in this thesis.

¹³⁴ For the rest of the prohibitions contained in the *ḥadīth* see Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Siyar*, No. 1731, v.3, p. 1357), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Wa Ṣiyyat al-Imām*, No. 2858, v.2, p. 953), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 23028, v.5, p. 352), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Taḥrīm Qatla mālahū Rūḥ*, v.9, p. 90), Muṣanaf Ibn Abī Shaybah [159/776-235/850], (*Bāb: Fi Du'ā' al-Mushrikīn Qabla an Yuqāṭalū*, No. 33054, v.6, p. 475), and al-Khaṭṭīb, *Khuṭab al-Rasūl*, p. 30.

¹³⁵ Kamāl, *al-Siyāsah*, p. 97 and Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, p. 125.

¹³⁶ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 16: 126. Also see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 54. For further explanation see the following paragraph.

¹³⁷ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.14, p. 196, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.10, p. 65, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 593. Also see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 272, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 46, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 297, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 448.

¹³⁸ See the Qur'ān, 16: 126. Also see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 54.

Secondly, pillaging is also not allowed by Islamic military doctrine under any circumstances even on the battlefield or at a time of great need:¹³⁹ “No Prophet could (ever) act dishonestly if any person acts dishonestly he shall, on the Day of Judgment, restore what he misappropriated; then shall every soul receive its due whatever it earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly.”¹⁴⁰

IV.9.4: The Division of Booty and the Treatment of Prisoners of War

Even though it is possible to argue that these aspects are closely connected with the twenty ‘don’ts’ and should not be separated from them, the Qur’ān seems to particularly emphasise them, and this emphasis on booty and prisoners of war indicates that these matters have a special place in Islamic military doctrine. Unlike in the later battles, in the aftermath of the battle of Badr the doctrinal position on these two matters was not clear. Later on, the Qur’ān was to explain the way that they should be dealt with. The treatment of prisoners of war according to Islamic military doctrine falls under three options: they are either to be killed, released on payment of a ransom, or released unransomed.¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that killing prisoners of war happens under very restricted conditions, as is illustrated by the following verse: “Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in fight) smite at their necks; at length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind (the captives) firmly: therefore (is the time) either, generosity or ransom until the war lays down its burdens.”¹⁴² The division of booty was also explained according to Islamic military doctrine.¹⁴³ In the Qur’ān, we find: “And know that out of all the booty that ye may acquire (in war), a fifth share is assigned to Allāh, and to the Messenger, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer.”¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Kamāl, *al-Siyāsah*, p. 98 and Husayn, *al-‘Aqīdah al-‘Askariyyah*, p. 125.

¹⁴⁰ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 161.

¹⁴¹ See the Qur’ān, the whole *surah* al-Anfāl, 16: 126, 48: 19-21, 59: 6-10, & 60: 11, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: al-Imdād bi al-Malā’ikah*, No. 1763, v.3, p. 1385), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb Qismat al-Fay’ wa al-Ghanā’im*, No. 12622, v.6, p. 320), and Musnad Aḥmād (No. 208, v.1, p. 30).

¹⁴² See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 47: 4. Also the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 67, states: “It is not fitting for a Prophet that he should have prisoners of war until he hath thoroughly subdued the land. Ye look for the temporal goods of this world; but Allāh looketh to the Hereafter.” Further see al-Jaṣṣāṣ [305/918-370/981], *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, v.5, p. 269, Ibn al-Jawzī [508/1115-597/1201], *Zād al-Masīr*, v.3, p. 399, and Ibn Qudāmah, *al-Kāfi*, v.4, p. 270.

Regarding prisoners of war see the Qur’ān, 2: 177, 4: 35, 35, & 91 & 92, 5: 89, 8: 67-48 & 70-71, 9: 60, 24: 33, 47: 4, 58: 3, and 90: 12 & 13.

¹⁴³ See Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Siyāsah al-Shariyyah*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁴ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 41. For further detail see Abū Yūsuf [d. 183/800], *al-Kharāj*, pp. 3-23.

At Badr, when the ranks of the Quraysh began to give way, the Muslims followed their steps eagerly, slaying them or taking them captive. It was not a long fight; this battle was significant since it was the first battle between Islamic forces and unbelievers. It must be conceded that at this stage Islamic military doctrine was not clear on the matters of booty and prisoners of war.¹⁴⁵ The habit of the pagans, well known to the Muslim forces, was to pursue the defeated adversary and to dismember and pillage without restraint. However, no such extreme behaviour on the part of the Muslims has been recorded in connection with the five battles under study.

At Badr, the Muslim army collected the prisoners and booty in one place, thus demonstrating their loyalty and obedience to the Prophet, even though it was the first significant experience of combat they had had as Muslims. While holding the Unbelievers in captivity, the Prophet looked into the face of Sa'd b. Mu'āth and understood that it was hateful to him to merely take the enemy prisoner: "It was the first victory for the Muslims over the forces of polytheism, and he had more liking for killing them than sparing their lives."¹⁴⁶ This shows the strong commitment of the Muslim soldiers to their new religion, in spite of there being no revealed judgement on the matter. Thereupon the Prophet asked his Companions' advice regarding the prisoners. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's view coincided with that of Sa'd. However, the Prophet preferred the opinion of Abū Bakr, which was to demand ransom for these captives. On this point, however, a misjudgement seems to have occurred, as Allāh later revealed that the Quraysh prisoners of war should have been killed.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, it is possible to claim that the judgment regarding whether to slay prisoners of war or spare their lives depends on the circumstances. It is a question of "what benefits Islam". This has become part of the Islamic military doctrine.

Because there was as yet no revealed judgment about the collective booty, it was divided later on according to the *surah* al-Anfāl, which was revealed afterwards.¹⁴⁸ In addition, unlike the other battles, Uḥud and al-Khandaq are thought not to have involved either booty or prisoners of war.¹⁴⁹ It should, however, be acknowledged that among the Muslim

¹⁴⁵ This concept was later developed in the *fiqh*.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn Hisham, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 176 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 413.

¹⁴⁷ See the Qur'ān, 8: 67.

¹⁴⁸ For al-Anfāl see al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, v.4, pp. 222-223.

¹⁴⁹ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, pp. 42-47 & v.4, pp. 190-193, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 407-412 & v.2, pp. 97-100, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 39-44 & v.4, pp. 111-115, al-

armies at al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah, and even at the battles against the Quraysh, some soldiers may well have fought at least partly for the sake of their share of the booty. It can be argued that the Qur'ān seems to recognise and deplore this, as in the verse: "Among you are some that hanker after this world and some that desire the Hereafter."¹⁵⁰ So even when the Prophet and the notable Companions were forming the Muslim army there were some warriors in its ranks whose minds were not on the Hereafter.¹⁵¹

IV.9.5: Victory or Martyrdom

This element was discussed in detail in section IV.7 'The Virtues of Islamic Military Doctrine and the Promised Rewards for the Muslim Soldiers'; however, some examples will be given in order to clarify the matter. We have seen that from the beginning of the first Islamic battle, the Prophet emphasised strongly that the Companions needed to fix their minds and hearts on the supreme goal - to serve Allāh - and to accept victory or martyrdom, being certain of their reward. The Muslim soldiers were surely inspired by the verse: "Think not of those who are slain in Allāh's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance from their Lord. They rejoiced in the Bounty provided by Allāh."¹⁵² As a result, 'Umayr b. al-Ḥumām, a youth of only sixteen, threw away some dates he was eating and said: "These (the dates) are holding me back from Paradise." He then plunged into the thick of the battle and died fighting bravely.¹⁵³ In addition, at the consultation meeting just before the battle of al-Yarmūk, Qays b. Habīrah said, addressing his commander: "Do not leave al-Shām, since if we do not make any progress towards victory, then we will be rewarded with Paradise."¹⁵⁴ Earlier in this chapter the principles of Islamic military doctrine were discussed and illustrated in relation to their effect on the Islamic soldiers in general. These factors will also be considered later in the chapter in order to get a clear picture of the roles they played in the five battles. Having discussed the significance and

Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 528-533 & v.2, pp. 651-654, al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, v.4, p. 255, and al-Amadi [551/1156-631/1234], *al-Iḥkām*, v.4, p. 175.

¹⁵⁰ See the Qur'ān, 3: 152. Also see the direct relation of this section with the coming section "Obedience".

¹⁵¹ Also see a similar case in the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁵² See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 169-170.

¹⁵³ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 175, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 570, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 411.

¹⁵⁴ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, v.1, p. 154.

principles of Islamic military doctrine, it will serve the purposes of the study to consider at this point certain other elements controlling the conduct of the Muslim army.

IV.10: Warfare Management Guidelines of Islamic Military Doctrine

It is generally believed by Muslims that the management of Islamic military activities is a special case, since it is connected to the sources of the *shari'a*. The proper management of military affairs is considered in most of the works of the modern commanders of Muslim forces.¹⁵⁵ Ḥusayn and Başbūş mention several doctrinal points regarding the management of Islamic military activities,¹⁵⁶ but fail to consider two of the most important: obedience and comradeship and sense of mission. This will be seen clearly in the following discussion.

IV.10.1: Awareness and Readiness Levels

Islam places great stress on the importance of security measures implemented in order to prevent the adversary from using the element of surprise. Thorough precautions should be undertaken otherwise defeat is to be expected. Throughout history, this factor has been believed to have a great effect on the outcome of any battle and the Qur'ān specifically warns the Muslim army against being taken by surprise.¹⁵⁷ The most significant evidence of constant vigilance is that prayers are permitted to be postponed in time of war.¹⁵⁸ In addition, in the *ḥadīth*, security precautions and awareness of the adversary's movements are praised. The Prophet emphasised that the Islamic soldier should be alert at all times. He said that the best man is he who holds his horse's *ṣinān* (halter) in the Cause of Allāh and whenever he hears a shout (warning of) the enemy's approach flies straight into action.¹⁵⁹ Both the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* emphasise the importance of caution and vigilance for military personnel at all times, but particularly in time of war.

We have seen that in several places, the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* emphasise that Islamic warriors should take all necessary measures before depending on Allāh as the true source

¹⁵⁵ See Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, pp. 47-104 and Başbūş, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitaliyyah*, pp. 75-108.

¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, they view this matter rather differently: although Ḥusayn lists and discusses eleven major points, and Başbūş deals with ten, they only agree on seven of them. See Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, pp. 47-104 and Başbūş, *al-'Aqīdah al-Qitaliyyah*, pp. 75-108.

¹⁵⁷ Further see this section's close relation with the section "Surprise" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

¹⁵⁸ See the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁵⁹ Şaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Manāqib al-Jihād*, No. 1889, v.3, p. 1503) and Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: al-'Uzlah*, No. 3977, v.2, 1316).

of victory.¹⁶⁰ In other words they should be as thoroughly prepared as possible. In the Qur'ān we find: "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the heart of) the enemies, of Allāh and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allāh doth know. Whatever ye shall spend in the Cause of Allāh, shall be repaid into you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly."¹⁶¹ Accordingly, Islamic troops are bound by the duty to equip themselves with military arms and to prepare themselves in all other ways for battle. In another verse Allāh addresses the believers in the Qur'ān and says that if they help (in the Cause of Allāh), He will help them, and make their foothold firm.¹⁶² In the main books of exegesis such as those of al-Qurṭubī, al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn Kathīr, it is rare to find 'power of doctrine' given as one of the meanings of the word 'power'. However, it can be argued that in the military context, the word 'power' in the above verse also covers the power of doctrine.¹⁶³

Additionally, the phrase 'utmost of your power' may indicate that each Muslim soldier will vary in his response according to the amount of Islamic knowledge he has. It is possible to say that this verse encourages Muslim soldiers to seek knowledge in all its types, including that derived from the exercise of reason in making thorough preparations.¹⁶⁴

The Muslims' awareness and state of readiness were evident in all the battles except before Badr and during the late stages of Uḥud.¹⁶⁵ This element may be considered to be one of the main factors affecting the Muslim soldiers' battlefield performance. At Badr, the Prophet knew he was going to engage the Quraysh after he left Medina even though his army was neither well prepared nor fully equipped. This must have discouraged the Muslim troops; nevertheless they did not hesitate to respond to the wishes of the Prophet

¹⁶⁰ See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.15: p. 13.

¹⁶¹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 60.

¹⁶² See the Qur'ān, 47: 7.

¹⁶³ Maḥfūz: "Usus al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah" p. 36, Kamāl, *al-Siyāsah*, pp. 15-16, and Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, pp. 143-144 & 157.

¹⁶⁴ See the previous section "The Essence of Islamic Doctrine".

¹⁶⁵ Although the Muslims were not thoroughly prepared for the battle of Badr, an important military factor not discussed in most of the relevant Islamic studies may be mentioned here: it can be concluded from map of the battle of Badr that the Prophet had chosen the location partly for the reason that the morning sun would be behind the Islamic army and facing the non-believers, who were dazzled by its brightness. See the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8). Also see for a similar tactical action in al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 406.

when he asked their advice regarding the grave new developments.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, they took care to fulfil most military requirements such as consultation, intelligence, camping, terrain, reconnaissance, surveillance, and the like.¹⁶⁷

It is also important to remember that after the Muslim army had won the first stage of the battle of Uḥud, the archers misinterpreted the situation and left their posts due to lack of awareness of the overall circumstances. The Qur'ān deplores their lack of discipline: “Ye flinched and fell to disputing about the order and disobeyed it.”¹⁶⁸

These two examples show that lack of readiness and awareness can have a decisive effect on the ebb and flow of a battle. Moreover it is possible to affirm that it is unreasonable to rely on divine support without acting oneself to achieve the desired result.¹⁶⁹ It is worth quoting again the verse which confirms the conditionality of divine assistance: “O ye who believe! If ye will help (the Cause of) Allāh, He will help you.”¹⁷⁰

IV.10.2: Steadfastness in the Face of the Enemy

Islamic military doctrine insists on steadfastness when confronting the enemy. It follows several methods in order to accomplish this aim. Among these is that it is forbidden to turn one's back on the enemy and flee from the field during a battle. The Qur'ān states: “O ye who believe! When ye meet the unbelievers in the hostile array, never turn your backs to them. If any do turn his back to them on such a day - unless it be in a stratagem of war, or retreat to a troop (of his own)- he draws on himself the wrath of Allāh, and his abode is hell,- an evil refuge (indeed)!”¹⁷¹ Additionally, the doctrine holds such an act to be a grave sin, which is counted as one of the seven major sins mentioned in the *ḥadīth*; that whoever runs away will be punished severely on the Day of Judgment.¹⁷² So it can be argued that the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* condemn this failure in particular, because the fleeing of one soldier may lead to the failure of the platoon, which in turn may bring

¹⁶⁶ Ibn Hisham, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 261, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 26, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.1, p. 279, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyyah*, v.2, p. 385.

¹⁶⁷ For consultation see the coming section on “Consultation”. Regarding Intelligence activities see the chapter “The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence” (Ch.6).

¹⁶⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 152. Also see the direct relation of this section with the coming section “Obedience”.

¹⁶⁹ See the coming section “Remembrance of Allāh, Supplication, and *al-Tawakkul* when Fighting”.

¹⁷⁰ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 47: 7.

¹⁷¹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 15-16.

¹⁷² See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Waṣāyā*, No. 2615, v.3, p. 1017), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Ṣiḍq*, No. 89, v.1, p. 92), Sunan al-Nasā'ī (*Kitāb al-Waṣāyā*, No. 3671, v.6, p. 257), and Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Waṣāyā*, No. 2874, v.3, p. 115).

about the defeat of the whole army and even, perhaps, the invasion of the Islamic territories. Flight is not the same as a tactical withdrawal, however; and we have seen that retreat and the avoidance of martyrdom is permissible in certain circumstances, as when the Prophet's life was in danger at Uḥud. Thus the above verse illustrates some conditions governing the permissibility of turning one's back during the fighting. In detail, the three levels of military activities can be used to illustrate this point: at a tactical level, with the intention of manoeuvring; at an operational level, with the intention of reorganising the fighting unit, and at the strategic level, according to the Islamic strategy in use.¹⁷³ Moreover, from an Islamic point of view, another verse widens the discussion: "Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met,- it was Satan who caused them to fail, because of some (evil) they had done."¹⁷⁴ The exegeses in use indicate that cowardice or lack of discipline may not be the only cause of a lack of steadfastness. It is also necessary for the individual soldier to avoid sin, as Satan will take advantage of any evil he may have done. This verse refers to the battle of Uḥud.¹⁷⁵

At Badr, the testimony of an enemy eyewitness can be cited to show the steadfastness of the Muslim troops. 'Umayr b. Wahab al-Jumḥi was sent to assess the power of the Muslim army. He reported that the Muslim soldiers were too brave to surrender and too intent on carrying out their military duties to withdraw without slaying the largest possible number of the polytheists.¹⁷⁶ This quality came to full fruition at the battle of al-Khandaq. The Islamic troops were under great pressure for approximately forty days, being vulnerable to be attacked from the front and the rear, while their women and children were also under threat. But despite the critical situation, which caused the Prophet and some of the Companions to refrain from observing prayers at their correct times, the Muslim soldiers held to their positions.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ See the section "The Definition of Islamic Strategy and the Two 'Pillars'" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8). Rudolph, *Islam and Colonialism*, p. 24, claims that there are two levels, but he divides the second into two parts.

¹⁷⁴ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 155.

¹⁷⁵ The matter of this verse is relevant to certain other aspects such as the ones discussed in the section "The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader: Bravery and *Taqwā'*" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

¹⁷⁶ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 169, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 269, and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq; the English Version*, pp. 216-217.

¹⁷⁷ Also see the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

The quality of steadfastness should not be considered in isolation, and the next section deals with matters closely connected to the foregoing discussion.

IV.10.3: Remembrance of Allāh, Supplication, and *al-Tawakkul* when Fighting

The remembrance of Allāh on meeting the enemy and supplication when fighting are greatly encouraged since they constitute a fundamental element of Islamic military doctrine. The Muslim army was advised to pray to Allāh whenever they met the enemy, as the Qur'ān states: "O ye who believe! When ye meet a force, be firm, and call Allāh in remembrance much (and often); that ye may prosper."¹⁷⁸ The exegetes of the Qur'ān are inconsistent regarding the type of remembrance to be made. However, al-Qurṭubī's reason is sound and logical, since it appears to be in accordance with the verse. He makes it clear that the remembrance of Allāh means remembering Him by the tongue, which is in accordance with the heart.¹⁷⁹ Consequently, it can be said that the supplication and remembrance of Allāh is supposed to be uttered loudly when advancing and before full contact.¹⁸⁰ When the armies clash, however, it is recommended that the warriors remember and pray to Allāh 'in a murmuring voice'.¹⁸¹ We see therefore that in the first stage the tongue takes the leading role in supplication and remembrance, whereas the heart continues the mission of supplication and remembrance upon full contact with the adversary.

In addition, supplication is considered to be a direct contact between the servants of Allāh and their Lord. It is one of the most effective aspects of Islamic doctrine and it is encouraged not only in formal prayer but also at any other time one is moved to perform it.¹⁸² In Jihād, warriors are requested to seek Allāh's help in order to have trust in Him, which is engendered through remembering Him by the tongue and the heart. Trust in the remembrance of Allāh, His promise and threat, His guardianship and assistance, are considered by Muslims to be good signs of the military person's faith.¹⁸³ The Qur'ān and

¹⁷⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 45.

¹⁷⁹ See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.8, pp. 23-24. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.10, pp. 14-16 and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, pp. 317-318.

¹⁸⁰ Also al-Ḥalabī mentioned that the Prophet asked his men in Medina to repeat loudly the *Takbīr*, i.e. saying: "Allāhu Akbar", in order to frighten their enemy. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyyah*, v.2, p. 636.

¹⁸¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 402 and al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.8, p. 24. Also see Faraj, *Fann Idārat al-Ma'rakah*, p. 24.

¹⁸² See the Qur'ān, 18: 46 and Umm Muḥammad, *Realities of Faith*, pp. 57-59.

¹⁸³ See Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, pp. 93-94.

ḥadīth address this matter extensively and in detail. The Qur'ān says: “(Remember) when you sought help of your Lord and He answered you (saying): I will help you with a thousand of the angels each behind the other (following one another) in succession.”¹⁸⁴

The Prophet said: “Two supplications Allāh does not return back: supplication in *adhān* (the call to prayer) and Supplication at the heat of the fight.”¹⁸⁵ Also, the Prophet mentioned that supplication is the weapon of the *Mu'min*.¹⁸⁶ Ibn al-Qayyim commented regarding these two *ḥadīth* that supplication is the most effective weapon.¹⁸⁷ These *ḥadīth* and similar verses emphasise the Muslim soldiers' spiritual connection to their Lord.

Although it could be argued that this element is likely to have enhanced their performance, we should not forget that one of the main elements of the *sharī'a* under the concept of *al-tawakkul*, “trust in Allāh”, is first to act in such a way as to achieve the desired goals, and only after that is *al-tawakkul* to be considered.¹⁸⁸

Another aspect which most modern works fail to consider is the temptation to despair of Allāh's help, especially at critical moments. This temptation may be resisted and conquered by the power of faith. The Qur'ān states that no one should despair of the assistance of Allāh: “He said: “And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, but such as go astray?”¹⁸⁹ Although this verse refers to Abraham (PBUH), its meaning can be extended to indicate that the mercy of Allāh is capable of being bestowed on anyone who asks sincerely for His help. Hence despair is an indication of lack of faith. This argument can be applied to the military field and is developed and sharpened in another verse: “Or do ye think that ye shall enter the Garden (of Bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried: “When (will come) the help of Allāh?” Ah! Verily, the help of Allāh is (always) near!”¹⁹⁰

At Badr the form of assistance was the participation of the angels in the fight. However, it appears that divine support also came in other forms in the same battle as in: “He caused

¹⁸⁴ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 9.

¹⁸⁵ Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2540, v.3, p. 21).

¹⁸⁶ See al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb Al-Du'ā'*, No. 1812, v.1, p. 669). It should be noted that the word *Mu'min* means ‘the faithful’.

¹⁸⁷ See Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Jawāb al-Kāfi*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁸⁸ See Ibn Baṭṭah [d. 387/997], *al-Ibānah*, v.2, p. 311 and 'Abd al-Wahhāb [1115/1704-1206/1792], *'Aqīdat al-Firqah al-Nājiyah*, p. 13.

¹⁸⁹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 15: 56.

¹⁹⁰ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 2: 214.

rain to descend on you from heaven, to clean you therewith, to remove from you the stain of Satan, to strengthen your hearts, and to plant your feet firmly".¹⁹¹ Similarly, divine assistance appears to have taken place at the battles of Uḥud and al-Khandaq.¹⁹² It seems very likely that the divine promises and divine assistance in these three battles positively affected the performance of the Muslim army. By contrast, at al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah, divine assistance was not perceived directly. Nonetheless, a few occasions were reported.¹⁹³

The remembrance and supplication of Allāh can be seen in all five battles. At Badr the Prophet himself performed this duty sincerely, asking Allāh to fulfil His promises,¹⁹⁴ and divine assistance was rendered. The Prophet prayed: "O God, if this group perish today, you will be worshipped no more till the Day of Judgement."¹⁹⁵ This brings the discussion to an important point: that according to the consensus among Islamic scholars the remembrance and supplication of Allāh by the Muslim army in time of war would sometimes be rewarded by perceptible divine assistance, as in the battles of Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq. Moreover the Prophet was able to communicate the divine assistance in these battles to the Companions since he was still receiving revelation. Nevertheless at al-Qādisiyyah and al-Yarmūk, since apparently nothing unusual took place, it has been argued that divine assistance was absent. It should be noted, however, that the Muslim armies were outnumbered by the Byzantine and Persian troops by four to one; therefore from an Islamic viewpoint the stability, patience, and strength of the Muslims and the fear in the heart of the enemy may be seen as an instance of divine assistance. As the Qur'ān states: "O ye who believe! If ye will help (the Cause of) Allāh, He will help you, and plant your feet firmly."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 11.

¹⁹² al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.4, p. 123, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.11, p. 166, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.1, p. 412. Also see the sections on the battles of Uḥud and al-Khandaq in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁹³ Respectively see al-Wāqidī, *Futuḥ al-Shām*, v.1, p. 169- 170 and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 424.

¹⁹⁴ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 174, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 32, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, pp. 272-276, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 406.

¹⁹⁵ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, No. 4594, v.4, p. 1845) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 1743, v.3, p. 1363).

¹⁹⁶ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 47: 7.

IV.10.4: Obedience

Obedience is one of the most crucial elements of warfare. Its military importance is very clear and soldiers are praised or reprimanded according to the quality of their response to orders. Unlike the Islamic doctrine, some military doctrines, such as those of dictatorships, insist on blind obedience on pain of death.¹⁹⁷ In the Qur'ān, we find: "O ye who believe! Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you."¹⁹⁸ This verse illustrates the mandatory obedience required of the Muslim to the commands of Allāh and His Messenger. It is also demanded that the designated authority is obeyed, as through it order and discipline are accomplished. However, such obedience is limited to the teachings of the *sharī'a*.¹⁹⁹ The Prophet stated that a Muslim has to obey (the order of his Muslim ruler) whether he likes it or not, as long as the order does not involve disobedience to Allāh; but if it does, one should not listen to it or obey it.²⁰⁰

Since obedience to the commander is enjoined extensively in the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*,²⁰¹ it is believed that there were no serious instances of wilful disobedience, let alone mutinies, in all the five battles, as the soldiers knew that to obey the commander was to obey Allāh. Nevertheless one should not forget the archers' failure to stand fast at Uḥud, which had very grave consequences. They disobeyed the direct orders of their military leader, who had said: "If you see us snatched into pieces by birds, do not leave this position of yours until I send for you. And if you see that we have defeated the enemy and trodden on them do not desert your position until I send for you."²⁰² Consequently, due to the heedlessness of the archers the tide of battle turned in favour of the Quraysh army.

¹⁹⁷ See Baṣbūṣ, *al-ʿAqīdah al-Qitāliyyah*, pp. 53-54.

¹⁹⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 59.

¹⁹⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.5, p. 150, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.5, p. 261, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.1, p. 519.

²⁰⁰ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Aḥkām*, No. 6725, v.6, p. 2612), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imārah*, No. 1839, v.3, p. 1469), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 1707, v.4, p. 209), Sunan al-Nasā'ī (*Kitāb al-Bay'ah*, No. 4205, v.7, p. 159), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2626, v.3, p. 40), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2863, v.2, p. 955), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 4668, v.2, p. 17), and al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.12, p. 230.

²⁰¹ See the Qur'ān, 4: 59, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Aḥkām*, No. 6725, v.6, p. 2612), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imārah*, No. 1839, v.3, p. 1469), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 1707, v.4, p. 209), Sunan al-Nasā'ī (*Kitāb al-Bay'ah*, No. 4205, v.7, p. 159), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2626, v.3, p. 40), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2863, v.2, p. 955), and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 4668, v.2, p. 17).

²⁰² See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2874, v.3, p. 1105), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2662, v.3, p. 51), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 2609, v.1, p. 287), and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq; the English Version*, p. 253.

Considering another dimension of the nature of the Arabs, it should be noted that the Prophet and the two Caliphs, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, were careful to take into consideration the Arabs’ sensitivity on the matter of obeying the commanders of other tribes.²⁰³ It is especially noteworthy that at the battles of al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah most of the tribes were led by their own commanders.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless this consideration did not amount to a rule of engagement, and on occasion tribal loyalties were overridden for the sake of the performance of the army as a whole.

IV.10.5: Comradeship and the Soldiers’ Sense of Mission

These elements, which can be said to be intimately connected, are aspects of Islamic military doctrine which are of great importance to every individual participating in the fight,²⁰⁵ although the sense of mission has been passed over in some of the modern works on Islamic doctrine. The Qur’ān refers in a general way to these elements in: “Help ye one another in righteousness and piety.”²⁰⁶ With regard to comradeship, the Prophet mentioned that the believers are one body and that if a part of it complain the rest must share its suffering.²⁰⁷

In the five battles under study the soldiers’ sense of mission is extremely difficult to judge accurately. Nonetheless, the commitment and enthusiasm shown by soldiers in accomplishing their designated assignments, especially in the time of war, may reflect their sense of mission. The sense of mission may also vary according to its context; for instance, the sense of mission towards oneself, one’s Lord, one’s comrades, and so on.

In the five battles under study the soldier’s sense of mission demanded that they took on the responsibility of completing their assigned duties and, if necessary, that they took the initiative. This was evident when the Muslim commanders and soldiers were moved to express their views regarding battle manoeuvres or other military activities. At Badr, after a short discussion with the Prophet, al-Ḥabāb b. al-Mundhir, who was an ordinary Muslim soldier, felt that he ought to advise the Prophet that the best course of action would be to deprive the Quraysh of water by filling in the wells after ensuring the

²⁰³ See Faraj, *al-Madrasah*, pp. 270-271. Also see the coming section “Loyalty and Self-denial”.

²⁰⁴ See al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, v.1, pp. 195 & 201 and Watr, *al-Idārah*, p. 50.

²⁰⁵ See al-‘Asalī, *al-Madhab*, pp. 138, 220, and 347.

²⁰⁶ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 5: 2. Also see the Qur’ān, 8: 74 and 9: 71.

²⁰⁷ See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Tarāḥim al-Mu’minīn*, No. 2586, v.4, p. 999) and Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Khusūf*, No. 6223, v.3, p. 353). Also see the section “Cooperation and Coordination” in the chapter “The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy” (Ch.8).

Muslims' own supply.²⁰⁸ At Uḥud, Ḥamzah b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, 'Aṣim b. Thābit, the Prophet's field-leader, advised that the best way to defeat the enemy and save the Muslim army was to attack the Quraysh standard. Hence some historians have called Uḥud the 'Battle of the Standards', as the standard of the Quraysh fell more than nine times.²⁰⁹ Another example can be seen at the battle of al-Qādisiyyah, where Ṭulayḥah b. Khuwaylid al-Uṣdī, seeking to gain information on a reconnaissance mission, disagreed with his group and refused to return until he had penetrated the lines of the Persian army and could return with a full report. He passed alone through the enemy lines, emboldened by his sense of mission, and brought back a report that reflected the enemy's real strength. He knew that this information would help the commander greatly in drawing up his tactical and strategic plans.²¹⁰

Considering these three examples, it is possible to argue that most of the Muslim soldiers in all five battles, acted responsibly in following their sense of mission, according to the concepts of Islamic military doctrine.²¹¹

IV.10.6: Loyalty and Self-denial

Family connections and other human relationships are of secondary importance in Islamic military doctrine. In Arab society, ties of kinship²¹² were held to entail a permanent loyalty, which was not to be broken though circumstances might change. For the Muslim, however, a higher loyalty took precedence.²¹³ In the Qur'ān we find: "Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allāh, His Messenger, and the believers, those who establish the regular prayers and pay *al-Zakāh* and bow down humbly (in worship)."²¹⁴ Thus the criteria set by Islam superseded those held by Arab society at that time, and kept the Muslim soldiers' loyalty within strict boundaries.²¹⁵

²⁰⁸ See Ibn Hisham, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 162, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 26, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-Ḥalabīyyah*, v.2, p. 393, and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq; the English Version*, p. 215.

²⁰⁹ Al-Suwaydān: "the Sīrah of the Prophet", Series Cassette No 8. Also see Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.1, p. 413.

²¹⁰ Further see the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

²¹¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 398 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 39.

²¹² For a discussion of tribal loyalties see the section "Tribal Life and Feuding" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

²¹³ See Firestone, *Jihād*, p. 131.

²¹⁴ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 5: 55.

²¹⁵ Also the Qur'ān (ETMC), 24: 62, says: "Only those are Believers, who believe in Allāh and His Messenger: when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they do not depart until they have asked for his leave." Also see the Qur'ān, 5: 55.

Moreover, certain other types of loyalty are forbidden in Islam according to the Qur'ān: "Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers: if any do that, they shall have no relation left with Allāh except by way of precaution, that ye may guard yourselves from them. But Allāh cautions you (to fear) Himself; for the final goal is to Allāh."²¹⁶ This does not mean, however, that Muslim soldiers are permitted to behave like the enemy in their dealings with them, since Islamic doctrine limits their actions.²¹⁷

The battle of Badr, however, had a special character because the Prophet and the Companions knew that they were going to engage with the Quraysh after they left Medina; specifically, they were going to fight their own relatives. Although the army was undermanned, lacking support services and without cavalry, the Companions did not hesitate to respond to the wishes of their commander when he asked their advice regarding the grave new developments, although the intention had been to capture the caravan and not to confront the Quraysh and they responded eagerly to the new circumstances.²¹⁸ At the group level, self-denial as an element of Islamic military doctrine was evident at Badr, since it was the first battle with the Quraysh, whom some of the Muslims did not want to fight due to the custom prohibiting making war on one's relatives. Other reasons included: (1) they were not well prepared for the fight; (2) the Quraysh troops were extremely well equipped in terms of arms, mounts, and rations (except for water).²¹⁹

Badr, viewed in purely human terms, might be considered merely a fight between feuding relatives. However, in terms of Islamic military doctrine it can be conceived as a fight between "dark" and "light." Indeed the Qur'ān uses the word *furqān*, which means *discrimination* connoting the separation between two opposing forces as in: "On the Day

²¹⁶ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 28.

²¹⁷ See the section "The Twenty 'Don'ts'".

²¹⁸ The Companions knew that sincerity is the main element judged on the Day of Judgement; thus, they obeyed the Prophet and marched to confront the enemy. The Prophet had declared that to obey the commander is to obey Allāh. Therefore, it can be said that the faith of the Companions was increased at the time of need. This is believed to be one of the main roles of doctrine. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Aḥkām*, No. 6718, v.6, p. 2611), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imārah*, No. 1835, v.3, p. 1466), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Itibā' al-Sunnah*, No. 3, v.1, p. 4), and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 5679, v.2, p. 93).

²¹⁹ See the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

of *Furqān* (Discrimination)- the day of the meeting of the two forces".²²⁰ Thus for the Muslims Islamic doctrine took precedence over kinship ties from the first. At Badr, for instance, Abū ‘Ubaydah, a Muslim soldier, killed his father, who was fighting with the Quraysh.²²¹ By contrast, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr of the Quraysh avoided his father, who was in the Muslim army during the battle.²²² For an example of loyalty and self-denial at the individual level one needs to look no further than the behaviour of Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān at the battle of al-Khandaq. He was dispatched, despite being very hungry, to scout among the enemy forces on a very dark, cold, and windy night.²²³ In addition this element is also seen in the Muslim troops' acceptance of the changes of commanders at al-Yarmūk and the appointment of the new commander at al-Qādisiyyah. The foregoing discussion has clearly shown that loyalty and self-denial are important elements of Islamic military doctrine.

IV.10.7: Consultation

One of the main principles of Islamic military doctrine, not mentioned by Ḥusayn or Baṣbūṣ, is consultation.²²⁴ In the Qur’ān, we find the believers described as those “who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation.”²²⁵ In addition, it can be seen that the Qur’ān explains to the Prophet and the Companions the method of consultation in a number of verses, as in: “And consult them in affairs (of the moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allāh. For Allāh loves those who put their trust (in Him).”²²⁶ Here, the action called for by Islamic military doctrine was that the Prophet should seek the Companions' advice and then make his decision.²²⁷ In this connection al-Bukhārī explains that the decision-maker is supposed to examine carefully the advice

²²⁰ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 41.

²²¹ In this connection the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 23, says: “O ye who believe! take not for protectors your fathers and your brothers if they love infidelity above Faith: if any of you do so, they do wrong.”

²²² See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 187, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 414, and Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr*, v.8, p. 198.

²²³ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 191 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 651.

²²⁴ Shafaat maintains that: “Muslims should decide all matters by consultation.” See www.geocities.com/alummah2000/DetailedLookAtConsultation.html by Shafaat, p. 3. See also al-Harawī, *al-Tadhkirah al-Harawiyyah*, p. 13.

²²⁵ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 42: 38.

²²⁶ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 159.

²²⁷ See the previous section “Remembrance of Allāh, Supplication, and *al-Tawakkul* when Fighting”.

which is put forward. He should then choose the option he judges to be best and that is also in accordance with the *sharī'a*.²²⁸

Thus Islamic military doctrine recommends that consultation should be carried out, and it can be seen that this occurred in all five battles. Moreover, with the exception of the battle of Uḥud, all the Muslims' plans based on such consultations were successfully carried out. At Uḥud, the Prophet sought the advice not only of his Companions but also of the hypocrites, whether to fight from inside Medina or step outside the city to meet their enemy; the outcome of the battle ran counter to the plan of the Muslim army.²²⁹ However, the element of consultation as part of Islamic military doctrine was by no means eliminated and Allāh specifically recommended it strongly immediately after the battle: "It is part of the Mercy of Allāh that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allāh's) forgiveness for them: and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allāh. For Allāh loves those who put their trust (in Him)."²³⁰ Despite the conclusion of al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Ṭabarī that the Prophet, already assured of victory, asked his Companions' advice simply for the sake of harmony, to endear himself to their hearts and to set an example for the coming Islamic generations regarding the importance of consultation, the study argues that the views of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and al-Ḍaḥḥāk are to be preferred.²³¹ They agree that he did not know what would happen in this battle despite his dream;²³² he knew only what Allāh had told him. This conclusion is confirmed when two events are considered: (1) the advice of al-Ḥabbab b. al-Mundhir and (2) the advice of the Prophet regarding the time

²²⁸ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-I'tiṣām bi al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah*). Also see al-Mu'jam al-Awwsaṭ, v.6, p. 365.

²²⁹ See Ibn Hisham, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 10 and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 60.

²³⁰ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 159.

²³¹ See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.4, p. 250.

²³² This dream is narrated in similar ways in the various books of *ḥadīth*. In Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Manāqib*, No. 3425, v.3, p. 1326), the Prophet (PBUH) said: "In a dream I saw myself migrating from Mecca to a place with many date palms. I thought that it was al-Yamamah or Hajar, but it turned out to be Medina, that is, Yathrib. In the same dream I saw myself brandishing a sword whose blade got broken. It came to symbolise the defeat which the Muslims suffered on the Day of Uḥud. I moved the sword again, and it became normal as before, and that was the symbol of the victory Allāh bestowed upon the Muslims and their gathering together. I saw cows in my dream, and (heard) "Allāh is *Khayr*". They symbolised the believers on the Day of Uḥud. And the *Khayr* was the good Allāh bestowed upon us and the reward of true belief which Allāh gave us after the day of Badr." Consequently, he knew that something would go astray, but what it was he did not know. Also see Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb Ta'bīr al-Ru'yā*, No. 3921, v.2, p. 1292) and Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.7, p. 307.

of an annual planting when he said: “You know better than I about your mundane activities.”²³³

At Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq, the consultation meetings were held with the attendance of the overall commander and the Prophet himself participated in all three battles. By contrast, in the battles of al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah, the consultation took place between the field commanders and their staff but in the absence of the supreme leader, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who was in Medina. In this connection, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb addressed Sa’d b. Abī Waqqāṣ, the commander at al-Qādisiyyah, as follows: “Write to me about your situation and the location of al-Qādisiyyah as if I am looking at it. Lack of information about your status did not allow me to advise you well.”²³⁴ This element of Islamic military doctrine was considered so important that they used a daily mail delivery to keep each other updated.²³⁵

IV.10.8: The Assistance of Non-Muslims

In this section another significant element is discussed, which is believed to be critical in time of war. This element could be discussed at length due to the extensive nature of the topic but here, for reasons of space, it will be considered in brief. Generally, the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth* insist on the impermissibility of accepting the assistance of non-believers. In the Qur’ān, we find: “O ye who believe! Take not for friends and protectors those who take your religion for a mockery or sport whether among those who received the scripture before you, or among those who reject faith: but fear Allāh, if ye have faith (indeed).”²³⁶ Also the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) said: “We do not seek the assistance of non-

²³³ The Prophet’s, knowing the future is not the issue here. In the Qur’ān it is clear that no one knows the future except Allāh. See the Qur’ān, 72: 26. Also see the section “The Significant Effect of Assistance through Divine Information” in the chapter “The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence” (Ch.6).

²³⁴ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 387.

²³⁵ Further see “Message of Islam to Mankind”, www.geocities.com/alummah2000/.

²³⁶ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 5: 57. In this context, but without going into detail, we should consider the subject of the abrogating (*mansūkh*) and abrogated (*nāsikh*) verses. An abrogated verse is one whose content, or the judgement it conveys, has been abrogated by the content or judgement of a later verse. By contrast, the abrogating verse is a verse whose content, or the judgement it conveys, abrogates the content and judgement of an earlier verse. See Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, pp. 6-12, Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh al-Qur’ān*, pp. 19-35, Firestone, *Jihād*, p. 173, and Netton, *A Public Dictionary of Islam*, p. 191. For example, see the stages of prohibiting alcohol in the verses, 2: 219, 4: 43, and then the final stages in the verses, 5: 90 & 91. Also see al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.2, pp. 348-352 and al-Zuhayli, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.2, p. 184. For further examples see Qatādah [60/683-117/735], *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, pp. 33-35.

believers against non-believers.”²³⁷ This seems clear enough, yet al-Ṭurayqī, in his book *al-Isti‘ānah bi Ghayr al-Muslimīn*, discussing this subject in detail, explains that there are three different fields where Muslims may need to ask for the assistance of non-believers, either for material aid or manpower, or through consultation. The first of these may take the form of a loan, rent, or a gift. Al-Ṭurayqī concluded that renting or borrowing is permitted, but the question of loans is controversial and is seen as a special case.²³⁸ In the matter of Jihād, non-believers are not permitted to join the Islamic forces in other than exceptional circumstances. Consultation is permissible but with caution.²³⁹

On one occasion, the Prophet made clear that the assistance of the non-believers was not permitted by Islamic military doctrine. It will be useful to address this issue at both an individual and a group level, to get a clear picture of the judgements involved. At Badr the Prophet was followed by one strong and brave man known to the Muslim army, who were glad to see him. He asked the Prophet’s permission to join him, but the Prophet asked: “Have you embraced Islam?” He replied: “No, but I will help you and share the booty with you.” Then the Prophet said: “We don’t ask for the assistance of non-believers against non-believers.” After he had made three unsuccessful attempts to join the Muslim troops he was later allowed to do so by the Prophet, but only after he had embraced Islam.²⁴⁰

At the group level, another occasion during the battle of Uḥud revealed the position of Islamic military doctrine on seeking the assistance of non-believers in war. Although one third of the Muslim army had returned to Medina just before the battle, for reasons such as hypocrisy, the overwhelming majority of the Islamic troops did not hesitate to confront the enemy even though they were greatly outnumbered and materially disadvantaged. The Muslim army at this stage was in need of any possible assistance. Nevertheless, according to the following account, it seems that the Islamic forces believed that they would not be fighting on their own, but trusted that Allāh would assist them since they had done all that was humanly possible to deserve His help. In a narration not mentioned by Ibn Kathīr but briefly mentioned by al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Hishām, the Prophet on his way to the battlefield saw a well-armed company. When he asked: “Who are they?” he was

²³⁷ Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2832, v.2, p. 945), Sunan Abū Dā’ūd (*Bāb: Fi al-Mushrik Youshamu lah*, No. 2732, v.3, p. 75), and Musnad al-Dāramī (*Kitāb al-Siyar*, No. 2496, v.2, p. 305).

²³⁸ See al-Ṭurayqī, *al-Isti‘ānah*, p. 257.

²³⁹ See al-Ṭurayqī, *al-Isti‘ānah*, pp. 257-273.

²⁴⁰ See Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2832, v.2, p. 945), Sunan Abū Dā’ūd (*Bāb: Fi al-Mushrik Youshamu lah*, No. 2732, v.3, p. 75), and Musnad al-Dāramī (*Kitāb al-Siyar*, No. 2496, v.2, p. 305).

told that they were Jews and allies of al-Khazraj. He asked: "Have they embraced Islam?" and was told: "No." So he refused to admit them and said that he would not seek the assistance of disbelievers against idolaters.²⁴¹ On the other hand, although he knew that 'Abdullah b. Ubayy b. Salūl was a hypocrite, the Prophet asked his advice about whether to fight in Medina or to venture outside to face the enemy. To give another example, the Prophet asked the Banū Qurayzah if he could to borrow some military equipment to be used in the battle of Uḥud.²⁴²

In conclusion, it is possible to say that these different examples illustrate that Islamic military doctrine limits but does not absolutely prohibit the assistance of non-believers.

IV.10.9: Psychological Warfare

This element is considered a factor in modern warfare; it was, however, a concept which was understood in the period covered by the study.²⁴³ It can be shown that on different occasions the Islamic leaders in the five battles in question sought to prevent a psychological attack on the Muslim army. This was accomplished by various means. The Prophet himself was present and in command at Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq and was assisted by revelation. However, revelation and Prophetic leadership were not available at al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah. Despite this, the most notable Muslim warriors would show their skills and courage before the armies engaged in battle, when their champions met in single combat in front of both forces. Victory would give a tactical advantage and increase the fighting spirit of the Muslim soldiers; this occurred in all five battles.

At Uḥud and al-Khandaq, however, single combat occurred rarely. By contrast at al-Qādisiyyah and al-Yarmūk there were many duels, but at al-Yarmūk Khālīd b. al-Walīd, with the eye of an expert, prevented some of the Companions from engaging in single combat. Thus it is possible to argue that one of the main tenets of Islamic military doctrine was violated, since these Companions were not allowed to seek martyrdom or victory. Taking the circumstances into account, one might suggest that the commander

²⁴¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 383, Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.9, p. 99, and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq; the English Version*, p. 249.

²⁴² See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.3, p. 383, Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.2, p. 99, and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq; the English Version*, p.233.

²⁴³ The American Manual, *Soldiers Team Development*, Book, p. 2, emphasises this point, arguing that psychological strength is "the most critical element of a combat-ready team." Also see the section the battles of al-Khandaq and al-Qādisiyyah in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

had the right to err on the side of caution in order to prevent a death that might have had a negative psychological effect on the Muslim army.

It can be argued that in all five battles the Islamic forces were in need of an effective psychological counterattack, since they were outnumbered by three to one or more. After investigation it seems that al-Khandaq was the most psychologically difficult battle the Islamic troops ever experienced. As the Qur'ān states: "Behold! They came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes swerved and the hearts gaped up to the throats, and ye imagined various (vain) thoughts about Allāh; in that situation were the believers tried: they were shaken as by a tremendous shaking."²⁴⁴ Natural fear, hunger, exhaustion, anxieties, and insecurity were the main challenges faced by the Muslim army, according to *surah* al-Aḥzāb. Nevertheless the Prophet prophesied the Muslim army's defeat of the Byzantine and Sāsānian Empires at those very critical moments, although it was reported that one of the hypocrites named Mu'tib b. Qushayr²⁴⁵ said: "Muḥammad is promising us the treasures of the Kings of Byzantium and Persia while not one of us can feel safe even when relieving himself."²⁴⁶ Another measure was taken by the Prophet to counter the adversary's psychological tactics. When he heard the rumours that the Banū Qurayzah had broken their treaties, he ordered four prominent Muslim leaders to investigate and, if the rumour was false, to declare it publicly, but if it was true they should not declare it but report it indirectly.²⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the Islamic troops soon discovered that what they had suspected was indeed true.²⁴⁸

IV.11: Conclusion

The chapter has examined the five battles in depth from a number of different angles in accordance with the scope of Islamic military doctrine, and always from a strictly Islamic perspective.

²⁴⁴ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 33: 10 and 11.

²⁴⁵ It should be noted that according to Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 180, Mu'tib was not a hypocrite, but had been among those who fought at Badr.

²⁴⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 100, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 104, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 640.

²⁴⁷ See the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

²⁴⁸ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 179, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 93, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 104, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 640.

First of all, the term *Islamic doctrine* and the importance of Sincerity to the doctrine were discussed. Then the meaning of Islamic military doctrine was explored and the reasons for engaging in the five battles from an Islamic perspective were examined. The result of sacrificing life and wealth for those reasons was then considered. The Islamic military doctrine's significance, principles, and warfare management were investigated as thoroughly as possible within the limitations of the study. Each of these points was examined and examples were given.

The significance of Islamic military doctrine was illustrated first and its divine elements analysed. The principles on which the doctrine was based were then examined. At this point, the doctrine as it applied to Islamic warfare management was explored since it directed the procedures and processes of combat according to certain rules.

From the discussion, it can be argued that Islamic military doctrine was gradually evolving during the five battles. Most if not all the elements considered in this chapter were built upon the Qur'ān and then the *sunna*. At Badr, the emphasis was on the treatment of prisoners of war and on divine assistance. At Uḥud, military stability in the face of the enemy was a key factor, highlighting one of the important elements of Islamic military doctrine. At al-Khandaq, psychological warfare was at its most effective. In the following two battles, al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah, the spreading of Islam, as one of the goals of doctrine, was carried out through conquest. In addition, considering the evidence regarding the farewell of the commanders, it can be concluded that the main purpose of Islamic military activity was to exalt the word of Allāh above all.²⁴⁹

Although some might claim that the effect of doctrine alone is enough to win a battle, it was not able to guarantee victory for the Muslim army of Khālid b. Sa'īd²⁵⁰ at the battle of Marj al-Ṣafrā' in al-Shām.²⁵¹ The remnants of his army (c. three thousand) took part in the battle of al-Yarmūk, and the combined Muslim forces triumphed over greatly superior numbers. This victory was accomplished not by any change in commitment to Islamic

²⁴⁹ For further discussion of this point see the effect of the second 'pillar' in the section "Islamic Strategy Definition and the Two 'Pillars'" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

²⁵⁰ Kālid b. Sa'īd b. al-ʿĀṣ was one of the earliest Companions to become a Muslim. He migrated to Abyssinia, remaining there for more than ten years and then returning to join the Prophet in Khaybar, accompanying Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib. He was assigned the first army to conquer land in al-Shām prior to the battle of al-Yarmūk. He died during the battle of Ajnādīn. See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubalā'*, v.1, pp. 259-260.

²⁵¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 333.

doctrine but by a change of leadership. Therefore it is necessary to discuss the importance of the impact of Islamic military leadership in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership

In the view of Ibn Taymiyyah men are created with the desire to be leaders or to hold authority in general.¹ Leaders and followers are encouraged to work cooperatively by both the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. The Qur'ān states: "Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour."² Also, the *ḥadīth* states that every Muslim is a "shepherd" of a flock and occupies a position of leadership.³ It follows from this that every man in the chain of command from the highest to the ordinary person in society has responsibility over others, and therefore any leader can be considered as being under the command of a still more senior leader.⁴ Since humans, according to the Qur'ān may be ranked in accordance with their ability and quality, those with great abilities and qualities will lead those who lack them.⁵ As will be seen later, Islam demands that leaders must possess certain specific qualities;⁶ nevertheless, from an Islamic perspective this does not mean that their leadership over others is unconditional.⁷ We should remember, however, that leadership is inseparable from hierarchy.⁸ In addition, it should be kept in mind that leadership has been discussed in many works.⁹ Nonetheless, from the author's point of view, a specific and detailed study of the cooperative teamwork of leaders at most levels, a comparison of their qualities, and their subsequent effect on the performance of soldiers has not yet appeared. Hence, this chapter will concentrate on a comparison of the Muslim leaders' qualities and will also investigate briefly the effect of the teamwork of Islamic military leaders at all levels on the performance of the Muslim soldiers.¹⁰ These

¹ See the two books of Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, v.14, p. 324 and *Qā'idah fi al-Maḥbbah*, p. 99.

² See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 5: 2.

³ This *ḥadīth* discusses leadership in depth. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jum'ah*, No. 853, v.1, p. 304), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imārah*, No. 1829, v.3, p. 1459), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 1705, v.4, p. 208), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 4495, v.2, p. 5), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Wadī'ah*, No. 12477, v.6, p. 287), and Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Imārah*, No. 2928, v.3, p. 130).

⁴ See the coming section "Bravery and Taqwā". Further see Department of the Army, *AFOB*, p. 26.

⁵ In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 6: 165, we find: "He hath raised you in ranks, some above others that He may try you in the gifts He hath given you." Also see the Qur'ān, 43: 32.

⁶ See the two books of Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, v.14, p. 324 and *Qā'idah fi al-Maḥbbah*, p. 138.

⁷ In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 58, it is found: "And when ye judge between people that ye judge with justice." It is worth mentioning that al-'Abbāsī [d. 710/1310], *Athār al-Uwal*, p.16, called this verse: "The verse of the Princess."

⁸ See the Qur'ān, 2: 247 and the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁹ For example see al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah al-'Askariyyah fi 'Ahd al-Rasūl*.

¹⁰ Although both Caliphs, namely Abū Bakr and 'Umar were strongly committed to the centralisation of all decision making, 'Umar took this policy much further than Abū Bakr. Thus the study considers them according to their degree of involvement in the battles under discussion. See Muṣṭafā, *Aqālīm al-Dawlah*, pp. 95-125.

elements will be discussed in the light of the five battles of interest. The structure of the chapter is as follows. First, the definition of Islamic leadership is discussed, after which the importance of leadership, unity of command, and types of leadership will be considered. Then, the qualities and characteristics of the Islamic leaders are investigated and their significance weighed by reference to the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. Next, after proving the existence of these qualities, the leadership displayed in each battle is examined in order to discover to what extent these qualities were applied. In addition, the leaders' effect on the soldiers is discussed, with particular regard to the Muslim soldiers' performance in the five battles. Further, taking into consideration all the available evidence, a comparison between these leaderships is conducted. Lastly, a conclusion will follow.

V.1: The Definition of Islamic Military Leadership

This section will provide the necessary definitions to permit an understanding of the concept of Islamic military leadership. First of all, the term 'leadership' can be defined both in English and Arabic; in English, *to lead* means "to show somebody the way, especially by going in front", *leadership* means "being a leader, the ability to be a leader, and a group of leaders,"¹¹ and *leader* means head, chief, chieftain, master.¹² *Leadership* is translated in Arabic by such words as *ṭalī'ah*, *markaz amāmi*, *mubādarah*, *ḥadhū*, *ghirār*, *ri'āsah*, *qiyādah*, and *imārah*.¹³ From an Islamic military viewpoint, among these synonyms three, i.e. *ri'āsah*, *imārah* and *qiyādah*, are particularly close in meaning to the concept indicated by the English word *leadership*. Nonetheless, these three apparent synonyms have both similarities and differences, which need to be clarified. Firstly, the two words *ri'āsah* and *qiyādah* are used at the same level of the chain of command,¹⁴ but they differ in their respective contexts, since *ri'āsah* is used in a civilian rather than a military context whereas *qiyādah* is essentially a military term.¹⁵ Secondly, *imārah* and *qiyādah* differ in respect of the chain of command, *imārah* being higher in rank than *qiyādah*.¹⁶ Although

¹¹ Oxford, *Advanced English Dictionary*. In the Department of the Army, *Military Leadership*, p. 1, leadership is defined as follows: "Leadership is the process of influencing others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation."

¹² Webster, *Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms*.

¹³ Al-Ba'labakī, *al-Mawrid; English-Arabic Dictionary*.

¹⁴ Al-Ba'li, *al-Mutli*; p. 378 and al-'Asiri, *Mahām al-Qiyādah*, p. 10.

¹⁵ For example, see Ibn al-Nadīm [d. 385/995], *al-Fihrist*, p. 454, al-Mālikī [d. c. 799/1397], *al-Dībāj al-Mudhhab*, p. 266, al-Qurashī [696/1297-775/1374], *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafīyyah*, p. 246, and Ibn Abī Ya'lā [d. 521/1127], *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah*, v.2, p. 50.

¹⁶ See Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, v.35, p. 30.

the word *amīr*¹⁷ was widely used in the era that the study covers, in this study 'leadership' will be equated with *qiyādah*.¹⁸

Etymologically, *qiyādah* is derived from *qawd*.¹⁹ This term means the opposite of *sawq*. *qawd* is "leading from the front" while *sawq* is "leading from the rear".²⁰

Terminologically, al-Ḥalabī identifies *al-qiyādah* as *imārat al-rakb*, "travelers' leadership."²¹ However, al-Ḥalabī's definition is restrictive in that it does not cover the generality of the meaning of leadership. His definition seems to be a synonym rather than a definition. Al-Rashīd identifies leadership with military leadership; that is, the military administration which exercises authority over the soldiers and directs them to a designated goal in a way that assures their loyalty, trust, respect, obedience, and cooperation.²² In addition, al-ʿĀrif defines leadership by stating that military leadership is the military administration which controls and works toward organising the army and preparing it for war. It is also responsible for leading and directing its efforts to accomplish the assigned missions.²³ Even though those works are considered to have been written from an Islamic viewpoint, nevertheless, their definitions may be deemed insufficient since they lack any specific reference to Islam. Islam is not only a matter of personal worship; it is a way of life that encompasses all aspects, including leadership.²⁴ Consequently, it can be understood that Islamic military leadership can be considered as a military administration which employs the Muslim soldiers' abilities according to Islamic principles in order to attain certain goals. It is important to mention here that our concept of Islamic leadership will be broadly defined to encompass not only political leadership but also the military command at all levels of operation.

As the reader is now familiar with the concept of Islamic military leadership, the next section will show the importance of leadership from an Islamic perspective.

¹⁷ *Amīr* means a leader. This word is rooted in *imārah*.

¹⁸ Ibn Manẓūr in *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.3, p. 371, explains: "Leadership is the source of a Leader."

¹⁹ The English word *leadership* does not have the exact meaning of the Arabic word *qiyādah*. Therefore it is preferable to illustrate the meaning of the word *leadership* by referring to the Arabic concept.

²⁰ Ibn al-Muṭarrāz [583/1188-610/1214], *al-Maghrib*, v.2, p. 198, Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.3, p. 371, and al-Fayyūmī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr*, v.2, p. 518.

²¹ Al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.1, p. 24.

²² Al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah*, p. 11.

²³ Al-ʿĀrif, *al-Jaysh*, p. 73.

²⁴ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jumʿah*, No. 853, v.1, p. 304), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imārah*, No. 1829, v.3, p. 1459), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 1705, v.4, p. 208), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 4495, v.2, p. 5), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Wadīʿah*, No. 12477, v.6, p. 287), and Sunan Abū Dāʿūd (*Kitāb al-Imārah*, No. 2928, v.3, p. 130).

V.2: Importance of Leadership

A leader's position is demanding, as it has to be occupied constantly.²⁵ Ibn Khaldūn noted that leadership is essential for every group, adding that one person from the group has to be chosen and given the authority to organise and control the group.²⁶ Also Maḥfuẓ states that the nature of life and society demands specific leaders for specific objectives. It is inescapable that from an Islamic perspective every group of people has to have a leader to fulfill the demands of Islam.²⁷ Furthermore, in explaining the meaning of leadership, the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) considered the matter more profoundly than the above understandings. The Prophet stated the minimum number that could be said to form a group and thus should assign themselves a leader from among them. He said that if three went on a journey, they would have to designate one of them to be their leader.²⁸ In addition, the Prophet illustrated the importance of leadership by himself appointing a leader for every group he sent out on a mission. He also sometimes indicated the chain of command.²⁹ Moreover, the following verse emphasise the importance of leadership: "O ye who believe! Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you."³⁰ Taking the above evidence into account, it is clear that Islam endorses the importance of leadership.³¹

In the next section, it will be useful to provide the reader with a brief idea of the cooperative working atmosphere among the Muslim leaders at different levels in order to clarify the power those leaders had over each other and to specify the different types of connections between them.

²⁵ From a jurisprudential viewpoint, it can be argued that the way Muslims perform their prayers five times a day for their whole life is another manifestation of the importance of leadership.

²⁶ See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqdimat Ibn Khaldūn*, p. 43 and Muḥammad, *Madā Tawāfiq al-Simāt*, p. 28.

²⁷ Maḥfuẓ, *al-Madkhal*, 274. Also see al-Rashīd, *Siyāsat al-Islām*, p. 100.

²⁸ See Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2608, v.3, p. 36), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: al-Qawm You'mirūn Aḥadahum idha Sāfarū*, No. 10131, v.5, p. 257), and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 6647, v.2, p. 177).

²⁹ See the battle of Mu'tah in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 3547, v.3, p. 1372), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 241, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 786-787.

³⁰ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 59. In addition, the Qur'ān mentions most leadership ranks, considering them in different ways in different verses. Some of them are, *sulṭān*, the Qur'ān, 16: 99, *malik* 59: 23, *caliph* 38: 26, *imāmah* 25: 74.

³¹ For examples see the Qur'ān, 2: 143, 4: 80, 83, 24: 56, 59: 7, & 64: 12, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Aḥkām*, No. 6725, v.6, p. 2612), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imārah*, No. 1839, v.3, p. 1469), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 1707, v.4, p. 209), Sunan al-Nasā'ī (*Kitāb al-Bay'ah*, No. 4205, v.7, p. 159), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2626, v.3, p. 40), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2863, v.2, p. 955), and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 4668, v.2, p. 17).

V.3: Leadership and Unity of Command

Warfare is considered to be a team activity.³² Therefore, unity of command at all levels plays an important role in fulfilling the objectives of leadership. Rahman and al-ʿAsalī differ in their approaches to the idea of leadership and unity of command. Rahman views unity of command as being achieved through the collaboration of the various levels of the chain of command in executing the leadership’s objectives, whereas al-ʿAsalī’s neglects unity of command and emphasises the power of a single leader.³³ It can be argued that while both opinions have merits, to view leadership and unity of command comprehensively these two views should if possible be combined. This will give a better understanding of the link between leadership and unity of command. The Qurʾān can be said to support this judgment by its statement that unification of command and cooperation between chains of command are both important.³⁴ It may be that during the Prophet’s time his example in this regard may not be clear, since he (PBUH) occupied more than one leadership position. However, the link can be seen in the cooperation of ʿUmar as the overall leader and Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, the leader at the battle of al-Qādisiyyah. ʿUmar asked Saʿd to describe to him, clearly and in detail, the land of al-Qādisiyyah so that ʿUmar would be able to choose the most advantageous site for the expected confrontation with the Persian army.³⁵ This shows both the singularity of command and the cooperation of these commanders.³⁶

It should now be asked whether these unified commands exercised the same form of leadership in the five battles under consideration. Therefore the next section will briefly examine the types of leadership implemented by the Muslim commanders.

³² See Department of the Army, *Military Leadership*, p. 7.

³³ See Rahman, *Muḥammad*, p. 59 and al-ʿAsalī, *al-Madhhab*, p. 101.

³⁴ See the Qurʾān, 2: 247 and 5: 2. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 606-609 and al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.1, p. 271 and v.2, p. 245.

³⁵ It should be mentioned that the early stage of Islam has been described as a period of the strong centralisation of rule not only in the time of Abū Bakr, but also during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. It seems that this method was followed for several reasons. First, they were greatly concerned to keep Islam on the right path, especially during the *Riddah* wars (caused by the defection of various Arab tribes after the death of the Prophet (PBUH)). Second, they knew that they were facing the two biggest empires in the region and that the men of the Muslim army were outnumbered and ill-equipped. Third, the Muslim state was still in the process of formation. Fourth, last but not least, ʿUmar was particularly conscious of his responsibilities as leader.

³⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 387. Further see the section “The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah” in the chapter “The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence” (Ch.6).

V.4: Types of Leadership

It is essential for men to be convinced that their commanders are well qualified to lead them in combat.³⁷ Thus it is necessary to make the reader familiar with the types of leadership practised in the five battles in question. As there can be said to be three types of leadership; leadership by conviction, leadership by force, and unplanned (unorganised) leadership, the question of the type of leadership to be applied is significant for any leader, whose choice will be dictated by the current reality.³⁸ As far as the Muslim leaderships are concerned, al-Bāb's categories are of limited usefulness since unplanned leadership played no part in any of the five battles considered by this study.³⁹ The first two types are considered to be the accepted forms, which are generally adopted to achieve the goals of the leadership. However, the third type, that is, unplanned (unorganised) leadership, cannot generally achieve any objective, however applied.⁴⁰ As a result, ruling parties that adopt this type of leadership may destroy the interest of the nation.⁴¹ To return to the other two types, the first is known as leadership by conviction, since the soldiers obey the commands of their leaders out of conviction.⁴² In the second type, leadership by force, the leader relies solely on his authority and personality.⁴³ Hence it can be seen, with reference to the first type of leadership, that missions which are conducted to the satisfaction of both leaders and soldiers demonstrate the teamwork and willing participation of both. This type of leadership brings to the fore the individual soldier's abilities and qualities.⁴⁴

³⁷ See al-Bāb, *Muqawwimāt al-Qiyādah*, p. 147 and Ghaybah, *Muqawwimāt al-Shakhsiyyah*, p. 30.

³⁸ See al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah*, p. 25.

³⁹ However, to a limited degree the leadership of the Qurasyh army can be seen as unplanned. See the section "The Adversary at the Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Adversaries' Strengths and Weaknesses" (Ch.7).

⁴⁰ This type of leadership can amount to an absence of leadership, so that the soldiers are not controlled and directed properly. It is, however, rarely found, especially in the military field where soldiers need guidance and directions. Also, they require someone to take care of their affairs in peace as well as war. See al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah*, p. 11.

⁴¹ See al-Baqarī, *al-Qiyādah*, pp. 38-41.

⁴² Al-Rashīd considered that leadership by force is of primary importance, but it could be argued that in the early period of Islam it was more important to convince than to exert force, otherwise the Muslim soldiers would not have so promptly carried out their leaders' plans. It could also be argued that since al-Rashīd's book is about Islamic leadership he ought to have presented the strongest point first, i.e. leadership by conviction. In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 159, it is found: "It is part of the Mercy of Allāh that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allāh's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allāh. Allāh loves those who put their trust (in him)." Thus leniency on the part of the commander is advocated by the Qur'ān. Whereas the Arabs prior to Islam tended to rely on leadership by force. See the section "The Special Characteristics of the Arabs" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

⁴³ Al-Rashīd, however, should have differentiated further that leadership by force does not have to be a dictatorial leadership.

⁴⁴ Maḥfūz, *al-Madkhal*, pp. 290-291.

This is a great advantage which is very likely to affect the troops' performance positively.⁴⁵ The second type of leadership attempts to reach its objectives without considering the satisfaction of the soldiers. This may lead to resentment and disaffection in the ranks.⁴⁶ However, viewing this matter from an Islamic perspective, it is found that Islam understands and considers the instinctive nature of the human being. Taking this into account, Islamic military leadership deals with the problem of dissatisfaction by applying the concept of obedience to the leader.⁴⁷ Therefore it can be seen that leadership by conviction is the most suitable style of leadership in executing plans and successfully attempting goals. If, however, for any reason leadership by conviction cannot be applied, the second style may then be adopted.⁴⁸

Thus, it is possible to say that the leadership of the Prophet was mostly by conviction; sometimes, however, to a certain extent and at times of crisis he adopted the second type.⁴⁹ According to the Qur'ān, the Muslims believed that the Prophet was assigned by Allāh as a leader to be followed, therefore his designation was by the power of the highest authority.⁵⁰

Therefore at the battles of Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq the Prophet took the leadership upon himself without any objection being raised by the army, who consented to be led by the highest human authority of the Muslim community since the opposing forces were threatening the very existence of Islam. According to 'Urwah b. Mas'ūd al-Thaqafī, who was one of the Quraysh leaders at that time, the Prophet was also practising leadership by conviction.⁵¹ Regarding the appointment of leaders, Abū Bakr and Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ

⁴⁵ Al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah*, p. 25.

⁴⁶ In this regard we can explore the Prophet's behaviour in the two following cases. In the first he used leadership by conviction during the battle of Badr. In contrast, he used the exercise of force at the *Ṣulḥ al-Ḥudaiyyiyah* (treaty of al-Ḥudaiyyiyah) despite strong opposition. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, No. 4563, v.4, p. 1832), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 1785, v.3, p. 1411), and Sunan al-Dāramī (*Kitāb al-Siyar*, No. 2507, v.2, p. 310). Also see al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah*, p. 26.

⁴⁷ See the section "Obedience" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁴⁸ For example, at the battle of al-Qādisiyyah Sa'd had elected Khālid b. 'Arfaṭah but when some of the Muslims objected to this decision Sa'd had to enforce it, thus moving from the first to the second type of leadership. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 407 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 126-127.

⁴⁹ Further see 'Armūsh, *Qiyādat al-Rasūl*, p. 207.

⁵⁰ See the Qur'ān, 4: 59. Also see the section "Obedience" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁵¹ He addressed the Quraysh after returning from his meeting with the Prophet prior to the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyyah. He said: "I have attended the courts of Heraclius, the Chosroes and the Negus, but could nowhere see such devotion and ecstasy of love: pin-drop silence reigns when Muḥammad talks, none can dare to gaze at him; when he performs ablution, numbers rush up to take the water dropping down; when he spits his sputum is received on palms of hands and rubbed on faces." See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Shurūṭ*, No. 2581, v.2, p. 976), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2765, v.3, p. 85), Musnad Aḥmad (v.4, p. 324), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 280, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 167, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 699. For this translation see Naumani, *Sirat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 123.

were both assigned by the Companions;⁵² while ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and Khālīd b. al-Walīd were assigned by the order of Abū Bakr.⁵³ However, the nomination of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to the Caliphate was objected to by some Companions, among them Ṭalḥah b. ‘Ubaydullāh.⁵⁴ Thus, it is clear that the leaders of these battles were differently assigned in accordance with the first two forms of leadership, in ways which apparently satisfied most of the Muslim troops. In other words, the Muslim soldiers in these battles offered no resistance to these types of leadership; on the contrary, they showed full obedience, and this acceptance is likely to have affected their performance in these battles.⁵⁵

In the next section the most important qualities of the Muslim leader will be discussed from the Islamic point of view.

V.5: The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader

Many specific qualities of the ideal military leader are known today,⁵⁶ and a selection of the most important qualities of the ideal Muslim military leader is discussed below in accordance with the objectives of the study. The criteria of selection rely solely on their relational effect on leadership from an Islamic viewpoint. In other words, these specific features will be discussed in the light of the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth*. Furthermore, this section will investigate whether these qualities were demonstrated by the Muslim leaders in question. The section will try to illustrate these features separately and discuss them in detail. There may, however, be some degree of integration between these points as they

⁵² The Emigrants and the Helpers elected Abū Bakr as Caliph in the Saqīfat Banū Sā’idah. They also elected Sa’d b. Abī Waqqāṣ to be the leader of the battle of al-Qādisiyyah. For the election of Abū Bakr see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 3467, v.3, p. 1341), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Wafāt al-Nabī*, No. 1627, v.1, p. 520), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.6, pp. 75-76, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 233, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.3, p. 475. For the election of Sa’d see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 381.

⁵³ Khālīd was a celebrated combat leader and the Muslim soldiers at that time loved to fight under his command. He had the reputation of being a great leader both before and during the early period of Islam. See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, v.1, p. 383 and Khaṭṭāb, *Khālīd*, p. 165.

⁵⁴ Abū Bakr had forced his decision to elect ‘Umar upon some Companions, as the following Caliph chosen from among them was Ṭalḥa, who objected to the election of ‘Umar due to his previous harsh and uncompromising behaviour, which he refused to soften even in the presence of the Prophet or Abū Bakr. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 352 & 355 and al-Maqqdisī, Muṭṭhar, *al-Badd’ wa al-Tārīkh*, v.5, p. 167.

In addition, Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubaydullāh al-Taymī [d. 36/656] was one of the Prophet’s ten Companions who were brought the glad tidings of Paradise by the Prophet. His actions at the battle of Uḥud were praised more highly than any of his other exploits. See the accounts of the battle of Uḥud in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 248, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 522, and Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, p. 224.

⁵⁵ See the section “Obedience” in the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4).

⁵⁶ See Rahman, *Muḥammad*, pp. 60-97, al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah*, pp. 29-36, and al-‘Asalī, *al-Madhhab*, pp. 99-161.

are discussed.⁵⁷ After considering each point, this section will attempt to obtain convincing evidence pertaining to the leaders of the five battles by analysing the leadership of each battle separately. It is important to state at this point that the Muslim leaders could not match the qualities of the Prophet. Firstly, they would view his words and actions as revelation, and secondly, he held more than one position. For example, he was the overall leader, field leader, and a source of the *shari'a*.

The quality of being among the *sābiqūn* (those having precedence in Islam) was generally considered to be one of the most significant characteristics of the Muslim leader.⁵⁸ Al-Rashīd states that during the early period of Islam this characteristic was considered of great importance and had priority in the assigning of Muslim leaders.⁵⁹ The Qur'ān praises the Companions who embraced Islam earlier than others and their supremacy is recognised in several verses.⁶⁰ Also the *ḥadīth* states that the best people were the people of the Prophet's generation, then those coming after them, and then those coming after the latter.⁶¹ Nonetheless, it should be noted that this *ḥadīth* does not reject the idea that if the chosen leader has greater military experience then it is not essential for him to be from the first generation of Muslims, the *sābiqūn*.⁶²

Experience of warfare (al-khibrah al-ḥarbiyyah) is an essential quality of a leader.⁶³ Ibn Qudāmah writes that the overall leader is supposed to have a field leader who has wisdom in warfare and knows how to use it well.⁶⁴ Ibn Qudāmah's statement appears to be supported by the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet stated that in practice a leader need not be the most religious man as long as he is the most capable and experienced in dealing

⁵⁷ See Department of the Army, *Military Leadership*, p. 5.

⁵⁸ The term *sābiqūn* (sing. *sābiq*) occurs in the Qur'ān in several places. See the Qur'ān, 9: 100 and 56: 10.

⁵⁹ See al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah*, p. 29 and al-Sharqāwī, *al-Ṣiddiq*, p. 167. Al-Ṭabarī reports that 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb refused to place al-Muthanna b. Ḥārithah, who was not a Companion, in command over Jarīr b. 'Abdullah al-Bujalī, who was one of the Companions praised by the Prophet. See Musnad Aḥmad (v.4, p. 357). Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 376. Nonetheless, this cannot be applied in all cases since the Prophet put 'Amrū b. al-'Aāṣ in command the battle at *Thāt al-Salāsīl* despite the attendance of the *al-Muhājirūn al-Uwalūn* (the first Companions among those who have precedence), among whom were Abū Bakr and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 146, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 274, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.3, p. 200.

⁶⁰ See the Qur'ān, 9: 100.

⁶¹ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Shahādāt*, No. 2508, v.2, p. 938), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Manāqib al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 2533, v.4, p. 1962), Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān (*Kitāb al-Imān*, No. 4328, v.10, p. 171), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Shahādāt*, No. 2303, v.4, p. 549), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 114, v.1, p. 18), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb Qasim al-Ṣadaqāt*, No. 13299, v.7, p. 91), and Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Bāb: Manāqib al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 4657, v.3, p. 214).

⁶² Al-Sharqāwī, *al-Ṣiddiq*, p. 170, mentions that the letter sent by Abū Bakr to Abū 'Ubaydah to inform him that Khālīd was the overall leader of the Muslim army in al-Shām also explained to him that he had only chosen Khālīd due to his experience of warfare.

⁶³ See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.1, p. 73.

⁶⁴ See Ibn Qudāmah, *al-Mughnī*, v.9, p. 166.

with military activities.⁶⁵ One may argue that this point contradicts the previous one (*sābiqūn*), but it is clear that it is preferable and to be recommended that the assigned leader should be both from among the *sābiqūn* and more experienced in warfare. Also many of the *sābiqūn* were not chosen to be in command, probably because they did not have the necessary experience of warfare. It is an obvious point that qualities of leadership are not given in equal measure to all human beings.

Bravery (al-shajā'ah) and taqwā are another qualities of the Muslim leader. Thus, the Muslim leader is expected to be both physically brave and a *taqī*.⁶⁶ Al-Rashīd commented that if fear arose in a Muslim leader's heart in accordance with natural human behaviour, the love and fear that he felt for Allāh, which is *taqwā*, would make him overcome this fear and react bravely to the situation.⁶⁷ *Taqwā* will also restrain a Muslim leader from behaving unjustly.

Although al-Rashīd made an important point here he failed to point out another vital and essential element of a Muslim's belief system, which will also affect the bravery of the Muslim leader; this is one of the six pillars of Muslim belief, a pairing known as *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar*.⁶⁸ In the book of *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, the author wrote that if sometimes our

⁶⁵ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 3462, v.3, p. 1339), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 2384, v.4, p. 1856), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Faḍā'il Abū Bakr*, No. 101, v.1, p. 38), and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.5, p. 219.

⁶⁶ A *taqī* is one who has *taqwā*, meaning the love and fear that a Muslim feels for Allāh. A person with *taqwā* desires to seek the good pleasures of Allāh and to stay away from those things that would displease Him. He is careful not to go beyond the bounds and limits set by Allāh. See Bewley, *Glossary of Islamic Terms*, p. 69.

⁶⁷ See al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah al-Askariyah*, pp. 33-34 and Mubarak, *An Islamic Theory of Motivation*, v.2, p. 170.

In addition, *taqwā* would also encourage the Muslim leader to be decisive at the moment of confrontation. See the Qur'ān, 3: 155, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Waṣāyā*, No. 2615, v.3, p. 1017), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Ṣidq*, No. 89, v.1, p. 92), Sunan al-Nasā'ī (*Kitāb al-Waṣāyā*, No. 3671, v.6, p. 257), and Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Waṣāyā*, No. 2874, v.3, p. 115). Also see the section "Steadfastness in the Face of the Enemy", in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁶⁸ In this section the researcher is aware that he is dealing with one of the most sensitive subjects of the Muslim debate, but it must be remembered that this study is examining the matter of *qaḍā'* and *qadar* from the Sunni perspective. Thus the terms need to be clarified first using al-Ṣāliḥ's method: he says that the linguistic and terminological meanings of *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar* are inter-related. The linguistic meaning of *al-qaḍā'* refers to "perfect commanding, decreeing, ruling, accomplishing and perfect precision in execution", while *al-qadar* refers to "setting, commanding, executing, and encompassing in due and precise proportions". Terminologically, *al-qadar* "is the ability of Allāh": whereby He knew, wrote, willed, and created all things in due proportion and according to a precise measure. Allāh knew all things that would happen before bringing them into existence and according to predestined proportions and measures which Allāh had written in a Book called *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz* (The Preserved Tablet). *Al-qaḍā'* is the perfectly precise execution and accomplishment of all things predestined to occur exactly in accordance with Allāh's previous knowledge, Writing, and Will. The meaning of *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz* is the Preserved Tablet wherein Allāh recorded everything: in the Qur'ān (ETMC), 34: 3, it is found: "From Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the heavens or in earth: nor is there anything less than that, or greater, but is in the record perspicuous." Al-Ṣāliḥ, *Fate in Islam*, pp. 9-10. For further information see Ibn Qudāmah, *Lam'at al-I'tiqād*, v.1, p. 21, Ibn 'Isā,

wishes are denied despite our best efforts, the element of *qadar* will ease the sadness caused by the problems that we regularly face.⁶⁹ This important factor is illustrated by the case of ‘Abdullah b. Rawāḥah when he was in command of the Muslim army during the battle of Mu’tah. It is clear that he believed in *qadar*. When he took over the leadership after the deaths of the first two leaders, he was for a while reluctant to march forward into the heat of the battle. Therefore, to increase his courage, he recited some poems to remind himself that if he was not killed during the battle he would certainly die at some later date. This recitation had the desired effect and he was then able to advance towards the adversary.⁷⁰ Last but not least, the Qur’ān mentions this subject once again by saying that the Prophet was going to “if he died or were slain”.⁷¹ It is from such an assurance that the Muslim leader draws his valour and *taqwā*. It should be added here that if these two elements were not effective in instilling bravery into the Muslim leader, a third solution is suggested by the Qur’ān. Allāh has threatened those who retreat due to fear with a severe punishment as their reward on the Day of Judgment.⁷²

Sharḥ Qaṣīdat Ibn al-Qayyim, v.1, pp. 72-73, Ibn Abī al-‘Iz al-Ḥanafī [d. 780/1379], *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, p. 277, al-Nāṣir and Derwish *al-Ḥayāt al-Dīniyyah*, p. 257, al-Khadhrāwī, *Qāmūs al-Alfāz*, p. 348, Bewley, *Glossary*, p. 191, and Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, p. 151.

In addition, the following verses and *ḥadīth* can be used to support Ṣāliḥ al-Ṣāliḥ’s statement: in the Qur’ān (ETMC), 54: 49, it is found: “Verily, all things have We created in proportion and measure.” Also see Qur’ān, 3: 145 & 154, 6: 2, 35, 57, 96, & 125, 25: 2, 33: 36, 54:49, 57: 22, 77: 21-23, and 85: 22. In the *ḥadīth*, the Prophet said: “No slave of Allāh will (truly) believe until he believes in *al-qadar*, it is good and bad, from Allāh and until he knows that what has befallen him was not going to pass him by, and that what has passed him by was not going to befall him.” See Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Kulla Shay’in bi Qadar*, No. 77, v.1, p. 29), Sunan Abū Dā’ūd (*Bāb: Kulla Shay’in bi Qadar*, No. 4699, v.4, p. 225), and al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Mentioning ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbās*, No. 6304, v.3, p. 624). In addition see Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Kulla Shay’in bi Qadar*, No. 2655 & 2656, v.4, pp. 2045 & 2046), al-Muwatta’ (*Kitāb al-Qadar*, No. 1595, v.2, p. 899), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Kulla Shay’in bi Qadar*, No. 83, v.1, p. 32), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Qadar*, No. 2157, v.4, p. 459), Sunan Abū Dā’ūd (*Kitāb al-Dīyyāt*, No. 4695, v.4, p. 223), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-‘Imān*, No. 5883, v.3, p. 446), and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 21629, v.5, p. 182).

⁶⁹ See al-Zuḥayli *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.27, pp. 328-329.

⁷⁰ See Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: al-Rukḥṣah fī al-Rajz*, v.9, p. 154), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.5, p. 29, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 151, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 245, and Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, v.1, p. 239. Also, the famous statement made by Khālīd b. al-Walīd at his death is relevant here. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 114.

For further interest see the following for examples of *al-Qaḍā’* and *al-Qadar*:

1) Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-‘Aqīdah al-Wāsiṭiyyah*, 2) Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā’ al-‘Alīl*, and 3) Ibn Abī al-‘Iz al-Ḥanafī, *al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*.

⁷¹ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 144.

⁷² See the section “Steadfastness in the Face of the Enemy” in the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4). Also see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Waṣāyā*, No. 2615, v.3, p. 1017), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Ṣidq*, No. 89, v.1, p. 92), Sunan al-Nasā’ī (*Kitāb al-Waṣāyā*, No. 3671, v.6, p. 257), and Sunan Abī Dā’ūd (*Kitāb al-Waṣāyā*, No. 2874, v.3, p. 115).

The good reward is not mentioned here because in this section the study is considering the natural fear of the human being and how it was overcome at that time.

Taking into account all the foregoing arguments, it is possible to say that the *sharī'a* had provided three steps that the Muslim leaders had to consider when applying the qualities of courage and *taqwā* in their leadership of the Muslim army.⁷³

In connection with the element of *taqwa*, another point which the Muslim leader should at all times consider is that there is always a leader who is above him. This means that he does not have ultimate power over others. This element is called *al-raqīb*.⁷⁴ The word *raqīb* (Watcher) appears in the Qur'ān in several places, and thus serves to remind the Muslim leader of the higher authority.⁷⁵ This element, however, can be adapted to apply to leadership from an Islamic viewpoint.

Thus from the Islamic viewpoint and according to the Qur'ān every leader in Islam is supposed to acknowledge that there is a higher authority above him; this applied even to the Prophet himself. In the Qur'ān, it is found: "Is then He Who standeth over every soul (and knoweth) all that it doth?"⁷⁶

Patience (al-ṣabr) and endurance (quwat al-taḥammul) are closely connected qualities needed by the Muslim leader. Leaders at all levels may have courage, but do they have the necessary patience and endurance? This factor is essential if Muslim leaders and their soldiers are to accomplish victory.⁷⁷ The Qur'ān clarifies the matter and assures us that warring parties sustain casualties as a natural result of any fighting activity; this assurance has the effect of encouraging any Muslim army to cultivate patience. It makes clear to them that if a wound were to touch them, they should be sure a similar wound would have touched others.⁷⁸ Even though one of the exegeses of this verse is considered by many historians as indicating the battle of Badr, it still can be used to refer to any similar circumstances.⁷⁹

From an Islamic perspective, *determination (al-ḥazm)* is considered to be an essential element in the personality of the Muslim leader. In the Qur'ān, it is found: "And consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in

⁷³ It should be emphasised that these three steps applied not only to the leadership, but to every soldier in the Muslim army. Further see the section "Steadfastness in the Face of the Enemy" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.5).

⁷⁴ It should be noted that *al-Raqīb* is one of the ninety-nine names of or attributes of Allāh. See Qur'ān, 4: 1, 5: 117, & 33: 52, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Riqāq*, No. 6109, v.5, p. 2376) al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.2, p. 19, and al-Khudrāwī, *Qāmūs al-Alfāz*, p. 164.

⁷⁵ For the word *raqīb* see the Qur'ān, 4: 1, 5: 117, 11: 93, 33: 52, and 50: 18.

⁷⁶ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 13: 33. Also see Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.3, p. 236.

⁷⁷ See Rahman, *Muḥammad*, p. 65.

⁷⁸ See the Qur'ān, 3: 140. In addition the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 200, states: "O ye who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy."

⁷⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.4, p. 103.

Allāh.”⁸⁰ In this verse Allāh told the Prophet to exercise a prompt determination in making decisions.⁸¹ Further, al-Qadhāfi explains that hesitation in making decisions at the right time is a destructive act against a person or nation.⁸² However, al-Qadhāfi should perhaps have reconsidered his statement and added that making the correct decision at the right time is also essential.⁸³ It can be seen that any delay or avoidance in making a sound decision may lead to unnecessary consequences. Thus, determination coupled with sound timing is believed to be a desirable characteristic of the Muslim leader’s personality.⁸⁴

Three major areas of a *leader’s knowledge* (*ma’rifat al-qā’id*), which military leaders at all levels should consider are as follows. First, a leader has to know *himself*, in the sense that he must know fully his capabilities, prejudices, weaknesses and strengths. This knowledge would clarify for him the consequent advantages or disadvantages he has in relation to his opponents.⁸⁵ In this regard, Hudayb argues that it is essential for a leader to know the strong points of his character and use them successfully, and to know his weak points in order to improve them.⁸⁶ It can be added that if a leader does not know his own abilities, he is unlikely to know the abilities of his soldiers.⁸⁷ Therefore he will not be able to assign the right man to the right mission.⁸⁸ However, two methods can be followed to solve such problems. The leader should choose a good and sincere friend whom he trusts and allow him to remind and advise him concerning any mistakes he might make. He should also seek self-improvement by continually developing his strengths and working on overcoming his weaknesses.⁸⁹ Further, in the *ḥadīth*, it is found that the mature man is he who blames himself for his shortcomings in the performance of good deeds.⁹⁰

⁸⁰ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 159.

⁸¹ See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.4, p. 252.

⁸² Mu‘amar al-Qadhāfi, *Ārā’ fi al-Qiyādah al-‘Askariyyah*, p. 13.

⁸³ See Department of the Army, *Military Leadership*, p. 6. In addition, al-Rashīd argues that a leader has to be determined for two reasons: a lack of determination on his part would 1) cause him to lose confidence in himself and 2) cause his men to lose confidence in him. See al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah*, pp. 543-544.

⁸⁴ This statement is considered under “Leaders and Intelligence” in the chapter “The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence” (Ch.6).

⁸⁵ See al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah*, p. 16.

⁸⁶ Hudayb and Zakī, *al-Qiyādah*, p. 113. Also see Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān*, v.1, pp. 77-80.

⁸⁷ Further, such a leader is not likely to be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of his adversaries. This ability is often of great importance for the conduct and outcome of a battle, and is considered in the chapter “The Adversaries’ Strengths and Weaknesses” (Ch.7).

⁸⁸ See al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah*, p. 17.

⁸⁹ See Sunan al-Dāramī (*Bāb: al-Rajul Yuftī bi Shay’in fa Yablaghahū ‘an al-Nabī thumma Ya’ūd*, No. 649, v.1, p. 169) and Department of the Army, *Military Leadership*, p. 6.

⁹⁰ Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah wa al-Raqā’iq wa al-Wara’*, No. 2459, v.4, p. 368) and Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Zuhd*, No. 4260, v.2, p. 1423).

Secondly, in order to accomplish its demands, a leader is supposed to know *his job* thoroughly. In this connection, Hudayb mentions that the leader should understand most aspects of his work, whether theoretical or practical.⁹¹ On this point, it may be argued that today, in the age of advanced weaponry, it might be possible for the majority of leaders, especially those holding the highest rank, to know the theoretical side of their work but not the details of its practicalities. However, although the leader should know the strengths and weaknesses of the weapons available to him, it is not necessary for him to know how to operate them personally in the mission he is about to conduct. The Prophet encouraged this aspect of the leader's knowledge when he said that Allāh loves the one who makes his work excellent.⁹²

Thirdly, the leader is supposed to know *his men*. This will help him to choose the right men for the right mission.⁹³ It can be argued that this knowledge is gained in practice mainly through the element of teamwork and close working relationship. When the leader shows genuine concern for his men, they trust and respect him. In addition, since the leader sometimes lives and works directly with and among his men, such a circumstance will allow him to identify and use the best of their abilities as the situation requires.⁹⁴ Also he should be a good judge of men and be able to act upon that judgement at short notice. The Prophet's method of choosing the right man for the right mission was either to call him by name or to ask his Companions who had the ability to carry out a particular task.⁹⁵ This does not indicate that the Prophet did not know his men, but it could be interpreted as clarifying a legislative point: that the Prophet was not superhuman and did not know all the abilities of each one of his men. He might also have been encouraging his men to participate and challenging them to action, since he asked for volunteers.⁹⁶

It is a fact that panic and fear are likely to happen in the battlefield environment. Therefore, *self-control* (*ḍabṭ al-nafs*) is an important aspect of military leadership.

⁹¹ Hudayb and Zakī, *al-Qiyādah*, p. 113.

⁹² See al-Mu'jam al-Awwsaṭ [260/874-360/971], (No. 897, v.1, p. 275), Musnad Abī Ya'lā [210/826-307/920] (No. 4386, v.7, p. 349), and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 622.

⁹³ See al-ʿArif, *al-Jaysh*, pp. 73-74.

⁹⁴ See the American Manual, *The Army Non-Commissioned Officer Guide*, p. 11.

⁹⁵ Despite his ability as a chosen Prophet, he sometimes showed himself to have no more than ordinary human abilities, which could be learnt from and imitated.

To cite one example of knowing his Companions: upon hearing the rumours of the breaking of the treaties by the Banū Qurayzah, he ordered four prominent Muslim leaders to assure the veracity of the news. These messengers would have had a great effect on the morale of their soldiers if they confirmed the news, so they would have had to work to increase the men's fighting spirit if the news were true, or to be a reliable and effective source of denial. Also see the Qur'ān, 33: 21.

⁹⁶ See Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, v.3, p. 275.

Specifically, for the leaders, it is essential to show coolness under pressure since soldiers may lose heart and panic under the severe strain of battle and hence give up.⁹⁷ Consequently, it is possible to say that the Prophet tried to alleviate his men's fear by saying that the martyr would not be tempted in his grave.⁹⁸ Thus, the Muslim leader is supposed to consider this element seriously and apply it in his own behaviour.

Justice (*al-'adl*) and equality (*al-musāwāh*) are two qualities which should be considered and examined together. However, a leader may have difficulties in applying them either in the relationship between himself and his soldiers or in that between the soldiers themselves.⁹⁹ Naturally, leaders have different needs according to their different ways of thinking. As a result of this, justice and equality may be ignored in some cases, as leaders may form special relationships with some of their soldiers, for example because of tribal loyalties. Thus, the Qur'ān requests all Muslim leaders to be just and to treat their soldiers equally.¹⁰⁰ In addition, the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) insisted on the fair treatment of all soldiers without making distinction between them.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the Muslim leader is required to take the Prophet as an example of justice and equality, as the Qur'ān has stated about him: "Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allāh and the Final Day and who remembers Allāh much."¹⁰² It is possible to say that the unlimited justice and commitment to equality shown by the leaders in battle would leave the soldiers no excuse for diminishing their performance but would rather encourage them to maximise their efforts.

Appearance (al-maẓhar) and personality (al-shakhṣiyyah) may also be considered from an Islamic viewpoint. Although the personality factor and its impact upon leadership has

⁹⁷ See Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 161.

⁹⁸ The Prophet was asked why most of the *Mu'minūn* (believers) would be tempted in their grave except the martyr. The Prophet remarked that there is enough temptation in the flourishing of swords. See al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Janā'iz*, No. 2180, v.1, p. 660) and Sunan al-Nasā'i (*Bāb: al-Shahīd*, No. 2053, v.4, p. 99).

⁹⁹ See Beekun and Badawī, "The Leadership Process in Islām", p. 9. It is noticed that Beekun and Badawī referred to the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, but they did not mention which *ḥadīth* they were discussing.

¹⁰⁰ In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 5: 8, it is mentioned that a Muslim has to do justice and to act righteously in a favourable or neutral atmosphere as well as to do justice to people who hate him or to whom he has an aversion. See *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. 283.

¹⁰¹ See Musnad Aḥmad (No. 23536, v.5, p. 411).

¹⁰² See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 21: 21.

In this case the Prophet praised the Muslim fighter, whatever his position in the battle; as he said: "Ṭubā (all kinds of happiness or a tree in Paradise) is for him who holds the reins of his horse to strive in Allāh's Cause, with his hair unkempt and feet covered with dust: if he is appointed in the vanguard, he is perfectly satisfied with his post of guard, and if he is appointed in the rear guard, he accepts his post with satisfaction." Looking at this *ḥadīth* from the soldier's angle, it could be argued that it would prepare them to readily accept their leader's posting. This in turn would help the leader to treat his soldiers justly and equally. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2874, v.3, p. 1105) and Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Manāqib al-Jihād*, v.9, p. 159).

been the subject of many studies, it is clear that in the context of Islamic military leadership, the concepts which the leader derives from Islam shape his view of life and hence influence his actions. They have a major impact upon his leadership and thus affect his soldiers' performance. Rahman observes that the brilliant leader is one "gifted with an appearance that appealed to everyone and everyone honoured him and respected him."¹⁰³ However, the Prophet said: "Listen and obey (your chief) even if an Ethiopian whose head is like a raisin were made your chief."¹⁰⁴ Consequently, an impressive physical appearance, though important, remains as a secondary factor to the importance of the concepts he carries. Furthermore, if the leader has an attractive or commanding personality regardless of his appearance, it would influence his enemy as well as his own soldiers.¹⁰⁵ Having said that, it is preferable that the Muslim leader should be gifted with a good appearance.

Leaders at all levels should attempt to convince their soldiers of the *nobility of the cause* (*nublu al-sabab*). The Muslim leaders believed that they were providing their soldiers with the most convincing argument possible: that they were fighting in the Cause of Allāh.¹⁰⁶ As this noble cause was derived from many verses, Rahman argues that these verses were the main factor in convincing the soldiers.¹⁰⁷ However, if we examine the exegeses of verse 3: 157, it seems that al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr, as well as al-Ṭabarī, verified that this verse is addressing any Muslim who calls others to Islam and who first applies the teachings of Islam to himself.¹⁰⁸ But, considering in depth al-Qurṭubī's explanation, it is possible to conclude that the *reason* for fighting (in order to call to Islam) is judged to be a noble cause.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the Muslim leader should carry out the duties of leadership bearing in mind the meaning of this verse.

¹⁰³ Rahman, *Muḥammad*, p. 66.

¹⁰⁴ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jamā'ah*, No. 664, v.1, p. 247), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 12147, v.3, p. 114), and Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Imāmat al-'Abid*, No. 4897, v.3, p. 88).

¹⁰⁵ This judgment can be understood from the meeting of Abū Sufyān and the Byzantine Emperor. When Abū Sufyān stood before the Byzantine Emperor and gave his testimony, both had to admire the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Waḥī*, No. 7, v.1, p. 8), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Siyar*, No. 1773, v.3, p. 1395), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 263-264, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.3, p. 286.

¹⁰⁶ See Rahman, *Muḥammad*, p. 72.

¹⁰⁷ See Rahman, *Muḥammad*, p. 72. Also see the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 125: "Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to Allāh, does good, and follows the way of Abraham the truth in faith." And also the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 157: "And if you are slain, or die, in the Way of Allāh, forgiveness and mercy from Allāh are far better than all they could amass."

¹⁰⁸ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.24, pp. 117-118 and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.4, p. 101.

¹⁰⁹ See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.15, p. 360.

Psychological strength (al-quwwah al-nafsiyyah) is held to be the cause of action.¹¹⁰ Similarly, the Qur'ān is much concerned with the mentality of the Muslims, as it addresses and praises them: "Those to whom men said: "A great army is gathering against you, so fear them": But it (only) increased their faith: they said: "For us Allāh sufficeth, and He is the best Guardian."¹¹¹ It can be seen here that the Qur'ān strengthened the mentality of the Muslim leaders and their soldiers and increased their resolve and courage by directing them to rely on the power of Allāh.¹¹² It is significant that the Qur'ān does not say that the Muslims derived confidence from the superiority of their arms and equipment, but emphasises the importance of psychological strength gained by seeking refuge in Allāh.¹¹³ Moreover, in this regard Rahman states very appositely that man is more psychical than physical and his actions are governed more by psychical factors than physical ones.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, he notes that to control someone's actions depends on the ability to influence his mentality. This is one of the most important aspects of leadership.¹¹⁵ In the following section the study will evaluate the leadership of the Muslim army in each battle by reference to the qualities mentioned above. Finally a comparison of the leaderships will be made by examining all five battles.

V.6: Analysis of the Battles

V.6.1: The Battle of Badr

In this battle the leadership of the Muslim army faced a testing challenge to prove its worth as a combat leadership which could lead the Muslims in both peace and war. Badr was the first fight between the Muslim community and their long-standing enemy. The Muslims' leaders in this battle were among the *sābiqūn*, and this gave them a special status in the eyes of the Muslim army. Thus the leadership at Badr held the highest position of all the *sābiqūn* leaderships of the Muslim community, since the Prophet was at its apex. However, direct experience of fighting a particular enemy seems not to be applicable here, since Badr was the first armed confrontation with their own tribe. Having

¹¹⁰ See Department of the Army, *Military Leadership*, p. 49 and Mubarak, *An Islamic Theory*, v.2, p. 192.

¹¹¹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 173. In the American Manual, *Soldiers Team Development*, p. 2, it is mentioned that the effort required by a difficult situation should be regarded as a means to victory rather than a curse on the cause.

¹¹² See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.4, pp. 178-179, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.4, p. 280, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.1, pp. 130-132.

¹¹³ American Manual, *Soldiers Team Development*, p. 2, emphasises this point, arguing that psychological strength is "the most critical element of a combat-ready team."

¹¹⁴ He also describes the psyche as "the powerhouse of the entire human system." Rahman, *Muḥammad*, p. 81.

¹¹⁵ See Rahman, *Muḥammad*, p. 73.

said that, the leadership was widely experienced in warfare in general, either from battles fought before the founding of Islam, for instance Ḥarb al-Fujār, or through the battles or expeditions conducted after the establishment of the Islamic army.¹¹⁶ In addition, we should not forget that the Quraysh were in a state of undeclared war with the Muslims during the first thirteen years of Islam. These experiences resulted in the new formation in which the Muslims fought in this battle.¹¹⁷ Moreover, at Badr the leadership relied on their experience of warfare by calling the Emigrants and Helpers to fight under their standards.

The Prophet, when participating in the first battle, showed his bravery by not shrinking from dangerous missions; he made the final decision to meet the Quraysh at Badr despite his army's deficiencies in arms and equipment against a much more powerful adversary.¹¹⁸ Patience and endurance were shown mostly in the speech the Prophet made to enthuse his men immediately before Badr; one of the last rallying cries they heard from their spiritual and tactical leader before the battle began was: "Rise to enter Paradise which is equal in width to the Heavens and the Earth."¹¹⁹ Such words would certainly have enhanced the soldiers' patience and endurance, especially when the Muslim army saw the Prophet share a mount with two other men for the whole journey, thus walking two thirds of the distance.¹²⁰ He also showed endurance and determination when he refused to be accompanied by the rest of the Companions, whose camels were not in Medina. Also he did not wait for the return of the scouts.

In addition the Prophet set an example for his men in the application of the first element of a leader's of knowledge, when he chose Abū Bakr and 'Umar as his closest advisors, despite the fact that there were other Companions older than Abū Bakr and 'Umar, and who were from the *sābiqūn*. The advantage of such knowledge was apparent when on one occasion 'Umar went against the merciful inclination of the Prophet when he sought 'Umar's advice regarding the prisoners taken at Badr. To the amazement of all, 'Umar

¹¹⁶ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.1, p. 324, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.2, p. 289, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.1, p. 207, Firestone, *Jihād*, p. 131, and Zakaria, *The Makkah Crucible*, pp. 63-65. Further see the section "The Special Characteristics of the Arabs" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

¹¹⁷ Please see the chapter on "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹¹⁸ For the *taqwā* of the Prophet see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Itisām bi al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah*, No. 6933, v.6, p. 2681), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, No. 1216, v.2, p. 883), and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.3, p. 445.

¹¹⁹ See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Thubūt al-Jannah li al-Shahīd*, No. 1901, v.3, p. 1510), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 12421, v.3, p. 136), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 175, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 33, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 278, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.3, p. 286.

¹²⁰ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 159.

remarked that all the prisoners should be slain.¹²¹ ‘Umar’s unexpectedly harsh reply shows clearly that he was unaffected by any surrounding influences which might cloud his judgment. With regard to knowing his job, the Prophet himself personally directed the conduct of this battle, since it was likely to prove the first turning point in the struggle against the Quraysh and the key to the survival of the new Muslim community. Its outcome would either positively or negatively affect the continued existence of the Muslim headquarters. The Prophet knew that he had to stay close to his men in order to accomplish his mission successfully. On the matter of knowing his men, the Prophet asked three warriors to fight duels with the enemy which he expected them to win. This had a great effect on the outcome.¹²² At Badr the quality of self-control might not have been as clearly displayed as at the battle of Uḥud. However, his sense of justice and equality was conspicuous, especially when he allowed one of his men to retaliate after he claimed that the Prophet had harmed him.¹²³ The Prophet’s appearance and personality seem to have been crucial in controlling his men in this battle, when he managed to transform their usual method of fighting by forming them into organised ranks.¹²⁴ He succeeded in persuading his men to wait for his signal to attack until the enemy was almost upon them. On more than one occasion during this battle the Prophet reminded his men of the nobility of the cause: as he was approaching Badr, at the appearance of the Quraysh army, and just before the battle itself.¹²⁵ Lastly, the Prophet raised the morale of the Muslim army and weakened that of the adversary.¹²⁶ Nonetheless, it could be argued that the real and most effective use of psychological strength occurred during the battle itself,

¹²¹ See Musnad Aḥmad (No. 3632, v.1, p. 383), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 176, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 413.

¹²² Despite his ability as a chosen Prophet, he was still considered a normal human being who could not read the future, as one of the three men died as a result of the duel. Also it should be mentioned that the Prophet was sending his closest relatives since the adversary asked for combatants from among the Emigrants. Thus, he wanted to show that he was willing to sacrifice even his nearest kin. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 174, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 32, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 271, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 402.

¹²³ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 174, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 32, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 271, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 402, and al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, v.2, Sec.2, p. 808.

¹²⁴ See Faraj, *al-‘Abqariyyah al-‘Askariyyah*, p. 175.

¹²⁵ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Thubūt al-Jannah li al-Shahīd*, No. 1901, v.3, p. 1510) and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 12421, v.3, p. 136), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 175, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 33, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 277, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.3, p. 286.

¹²⁶ For the part played by divine psychological strength, see the *surah* al-Anfāl, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Thubūt al-Jannah li al-Shahīd*, No. 1901, v.3, p. 1510), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 12421, v.3, p. 136), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 175, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 33, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 277, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.3, p. 286.

when the soldiers were told that the angels were fighting with them.¹²⁷ It can be clearly seen that the Prophet managed to build a very strong morale and an unbreakable spirit among his men by applying these qualities, which had the characteristics of the Islamic teaching, something that they were not used to applying to warfare. These qualities encouraged his men to do their utmost in opposing the terrifying army of the Quraysh.

V.6.2: The Battle of Uḥud

In this battle the Muslim leadership was essentially the same as that in the previous battle, i.e. Badr. So the elements of *sābiqūn* and of personality¹²⁸ remained, and may have been enhanced, since the Muslim army now had greater trust in the Prophet's leadership. Furthermore, after Badr the army was more experienced and the men had gained confidence from their defeat of the Quraysh army. However, at Uḥud they had to undergo a different experience, as they were in a defensive position. Since the Muslim community was being attacked in its own headquarters, bravery and *taqwā* were of the first importance when the army strode out of Medina to withstand the assault. During the battle of Uḥud the Prophet displayed great courage, but the battle was indecisive, because the archers disobeyed the Prophet's orders. However, the Qur'ān deals with the failure of the Muslim army and the events of the battle, referring to its outcome as being a matter of *qaḍā'* and *qadar*.¹²⁹ On the following day, the Prophet gathered the same soldiers who had fought in this battle and followed the Quraysh army.¹³⁰ Thus the aftermath of the battle turned to the advantage of the Muslim army.

Also in the Qur'ān it is mentioned that if the Prophet were to die or be killed it would be another sign of the sure end of all human beings, signifying that even if a man is not killed

¹²⁷ See the Qur'ān, 54: 45, Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 172, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 33, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 406.

¹²⁸ However, the question may be raised whether the Prophet's personality did indeed help in accomplishing their limited success at in the battle of Uḥud, since not all his men kept to their positions until the end of the battle. It could be answered that the archers left their places only after the fight appeared to be over. A more acceptable interpretation, however, is that the Muslim army was not always guaranteed victory, and that success depended on their taking the right measures in accordance with their doctrine. This interpretation could be said to be supported by Heraclius's statement when he met Abū Sufyān in Syria: "Even the Prophets lose sometimes and win at other times." See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 264 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.3, p. 286. In addition the following verse (ETMC), 3: 140 should be considered in this matter: "And that He may take to himself from your ranks Martyr-witnesses (to truth)."

¹²⁹ Here it is possible to see that despite the cause of the Muslims' failure being attributed by the Qur'ān, 3: 155, to the sins they had commit, it resolved the matter later by referring to the element of *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar*. See the Qur'ān, 3: 166, al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.4, p. 166, and al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.4, p. 265.

¹³⁰ See the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3). Also see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 52, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 75, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 49, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 550.

in battle he will surely die according to Allāh's will. The Qur'ān is addressing the Muslims in general, and perhaps particularly the Companions, regarding their ceasing to fight upon hearing the rumour that the Prophet had been killed in this battle. It clarifies the question of their *taqwā*; either it was for the sake of the Prophet or for the sake of Allāh.¹³¹ Hence, standing firm against their enemy increased the Companions' patience and endurance. This quality was even more clearly exemplified by the Prophet himself: despite having been wounded several times during the battle, he (PBUH) insisted on facing Ubayy b. Khalaf and killed him with a javelin.¹³² It can be observed that determination was generally an effective element in the Muslim army's performance in the period covered by the study; for example, in the Prophet's refusal to accept the help of a non-Muslim company, which enlightened the Muslim army concerning the importance of their mission.¹³³ Furthermore, the advantage of determination protected the Muslim army from entering into the treacherous ebb and flow of negotiations.¹³⁴ Soon after these events, when the fighting turned to the advantage of the Quraysh, the Prophet determined to act quickly, gathering around him his scattered army and heading towards Mount Uḥud. His determination inspired 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib to lift up the Muslim standard and rally the Muslim soldiers.¹³⁵ The degree of involvement of the Prophet, as well as that of 'Alī, prevented the Muslim soldiers from losing confidence, resolved their confusion and brought them back to the thick of the battle.¹³⁶ The Prophet himself joined in the battle despite the fact that he was not expendable. The Muslim leadership therefore faced a real test militarily; upon its success depended the success and even the survival of the new

¹³¹ However, this judgment in no way diminishes the shock they felt as they heard that the Prophet had been killed. In other words some Companions might have ceased to fight because of the great love they bore the Prophet. In this connection it is particularly important that we take into consideration what 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb did at the death of the Prophet. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 3467, v.3, p. 1341), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Wafāt al-Nabī*, No. 1627, v.1, p. 520), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.6, pp. 75-76, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 233, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.3, p. 475.

¹³² The Prophet was so physically weakened that he could hardly climb the mountain of Uḥud and one of his Companions had to assist him. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib remarks that the Prophet trembled as he shook the javelin and threw it towards Ubayy b. Khalaf, fatally injuring him. His trembling made the surrounding Companions flee from his side. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2874, v.3, p. 1105), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 2609, v.1, p. 287), and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 253.

¹³³ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.9, p. 99, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 383, and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 249.

¹³⁴ It is worth mentioning that the Qur'ān, 4: 88, reports that the Muslim army had had a moment of discussion among themselves on whether or not to fight 'Abdullah b. Ubayy and the forces he had withdrawn before the battle of Uḥud. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 494. In addition, we should note that the Prophet showed great determination in rejecting the manoeuvre suggested by the tribe of Gḥaṭafān at the battle of al-Khandaq. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 104 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 640.

¹³⁵ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 21 and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 65.

¹³⁶ Hesitancy is considered to be a fatal weapon against one's own army. See Department of the Army, *Military Leadership*, p. 6.

Muslim community. However, the Prophet knew that he had to fight alongside his men in order to accomplish his mission successfully. Also, at Uḥud he allowed a fifteen-year-old Companion to join in the combat since he was an exceptional archer, which suggests that he may have already decided on a plan which required the skills of brilliant archers.¹³⁷ With quickness of thought accompanied by self-control, he managed to determine clearly and correctly how to save the Muslim army from being decisively defeated or even being slain on the spot. In addition, he insisted on the fair treatment of all his soldiers, making no distinction between them.¹³⁸ The nobility of the cause was clearly re-emphasised on the day of the battle as the Prophet addressed his men and raised their sights above worldly wealth.¹³⁹ Additionally, it can be clearly seen that the Prophet managed to build a very strong morale and fighting spirit among his men: after the day of the battle, he was able to gather in his wounded, rebuild the army's spirit, and chase the Quraysh forces, camping for three days in Ḥamrā' al-Asad.¹⁴⁰

V.6.3: The Battle of al-Khandaq

This battle can be said to be different in character from the two previously discussed, since most of the activity took a psychological rather than a physical form. The leadership, however, remained the same as in the previous battles, and it had gained in experience, which resulted in the execution of a new and different plan. Nonetheless, the leadership had to stand firm in the face of the mighty alliance of the confederate army. The Muslims showed their trust in their leadership when it was tested, as it had to make the unusual and bold decision to dig a trench around Medina. To complete digging the trench would take more than two weeks, time they could have used to formulate and carry out another plan.¹⁴¹ The whole enterprise demonstrated close and determined teamwork of the Muslim army.¹⁴² Regarding the element of *taqwā*, its effectiveness was demonstrated when Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān went on a scouting mission to the Quraysh camp. Remembering that the Prophet had forbidden him to participate in the battle of Badr because he had made an argument with the Quraysh not to fight them, and that he was bound by

¹³⁷ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 12 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 493.

Also we should bear in mind that only a few hours elapsed between his deciding to accept this archer and being in position on the battlefield.

¹³⁸ See Musnad Aḥmad (No. 23536, v.5, p. 411).

¹³⁹ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 496.

¹⁴⁰ See al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Surah al-ʿImrān*, No.11083, v.6, p. 317), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, pp. 52-53, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 49, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 12, and al-Shaʿrāwī, *Ghazawāt al-Rasūl*, pp. 156-159.

¹⁴¹ The number of the confederate army was more than the number of the people in Medina including the women and children. See al-Ghaḍbān, *al-Manhaj*, v.1, p. 333.

¹⁴² See the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

doctrine and *taqwā* to keep to his agreement, although he had the opportunity to assassinate their leader he did not attempt to do so because he knew that the Prophet was the one who had the most *taqwā*; hence, to obey him was to obey Allāh. This shows clearly the nature and effect of *taqwā* with respect to both the leader and his subordinate.¹⁴³ The qualities of patience and endurance were also put to the test, and it could be argued the Prophet and his Companions were tested even more severely than in the previous battles, as the adversary's siege lasted several weeks.¹⁴⁴ The leadership was in the same boat as their army, and all held out against the allied forces with patience and endurance. Despite the treachery of the Banū Qurayzah, the Muslims' leadership determined not to falter, even at the last moment, when the Prophet attempted a tactical manoeuvre.¹⁴⁵ This determination had its effect, and some of the hypocrites showed their true colours.¹⁴⁶ The Prophet also knew his men well as he chose the two Sa'ds and others to go and verify the rumour about the Banū Qurayzah since they had relations with them. Perceiving the current situation, the Prophet joined in the battle himself and carried out his duty among his men, defending the trench to the extent that sometimes he could not perform his prayers at the appointed time, which had not happened in the previous battles.¹⁴⁷ During the most critical phase of the siege the Prophet was calm and confident, as can be seen in the way he received the news of the defection of the Banū Qurayzah.¹⁴⁸ Justice and equality were manifested from the first moment of the battle, when the Prophet and the other leaders joined their men in the demanding work of digging the trench, and carrying baskets of earth on their own shoulders. They also sometimes shared the same meal.¹⁴⁹ The Qur'ān praises the Prophet's personality and behaviour as setting

¹⁴³ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Aḥkām*, No. 6718, v.6, p. 2611), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imārah*, No. 1835, v.3, p. 1466), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Itibā' al-Sunnah*, No. 3, v.1, p. 4), and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 5679, v.2, p. 93). Also see the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

¹⁴⁴ The section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁴⁵ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 104 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 640.

¹⁴⁶ See the *surah* al-Munāfiqūn.

¹⁴⁷ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Mawāqit al-Ṣalāh*, No. 571, v.1, p. 214), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Masājid wa Mawāḍi' al-Ṣalāh*, No. 631, v.1, p. 438), and Sunan al-Nasā'ī (*Kitāb al-Sahū*, No. 1366, v.3, p. 84). In addition, in some of the works of biography it is reported that the Muslim army missed several prayers, as elaborated in detail in Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 110-111. Also see Naumani, *Sīrat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 103.

¹⁴⁸ For details of this incident see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Marḡi' al-Nabī min Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb wa Khurūjahū ilā Banū Qurayzah*, No. 3891, v.4, p. 1510), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 187, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 639.

¹⁴⁹ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat al-Khandaq*, No. 3875, v.4, p. 1505), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 157, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 97, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 655.

the example for his men.¹⁵⁰ The nobility of the cause was again emphasised when the Prophet was breaking up the different types of rock the Muslims encountered while they were digging. He declared that Allāh had opened for him the Yemen, Syria, and the East.¹⁵¹ In addition, the Prophet refused to take up the offer of the Quraysh to purchase the dead body of Nawfal despite the straitened economic conditions of the Muslims.¹⁵² It is possible to say that of the five battles this was an example of psychological warfare. At al-Khandaq the Muslim leaders exercised a new dimension of war. The Qur'ān describes the battle as a psychological battle rather than a combat, and the glad tidings of the Prophet, the capture of the twenty-camel caravan and the continuous participation of the leaders in the hardships of their men managed to keep the army's spirit steady and under control.

V.6.4: The Battle of al-Yarmūk

The leadership in the three battles discussed above had been under the command of the Prophet (PBUH), who was assisted by the *sābiqūn*: men such as Abū Bakr, Ḥamzah b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. However, Khālid b. al-Walīd, who was late in embracing Islam and who had in fact fought against the Muslim army in several battles was not considered to be from the first *sābiqūn*, in contrast to the Prophet, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and Saʿd.¹⁵³ The last three were among the first forty men to embrace Islam. Nevertheless, the soldiers who fought in the battle of al-Yarmūk considered Khālid as being from the first generation.¹⁵⁴ Khālid possessed what some of the *sābiqūn* lacked: brilliant military leadership capabilities.¹⁵⁵ His ability gave Khālid the right of preeminence to lead men, among whom were some recipients of the Prophet's glad tidings to the Companions regarding their entering Paradise (*al-ʿAsharah al-Mubashsharūn bi al-Jannah*) such as Abū ʿUbaydah ʿAmr b. al-Jarrāḥ and al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām.¹⁵⁶ Having said that we should not forget that Abū Bakr and ʿUmar were the highest leaders of the

¹⁵⁰ See the previous section "The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader: Justice and Equality".

¹⁵¹ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 175, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 92, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 100, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 634.

¹⁵² See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 95, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 106, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 637. It should be noted that some historians have identified the body in question as that of ʿAmrū b. ʿAbd Wid al-ʿĀmirī. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 107.

¹⁵³ Khālid b. al-Walīd was not from the first generation of the five Muslim leaders since he did not become a Muslim during the Mecca period. He fought against the Prophet in several battles and migrated to Medina in the eighth year of the Hijra (about 629 AD). See al-Khaṭṭāb, *Khālid*, pp. 68-69, 173-199, & 206.

¹⁵⁴ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 12.

¹⁵⁵ Khālid said that the Prophet did not consider anyone else to have an equal ability. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 240 & 325.

¹⁵⁶ This took place at the battle of al-Yarmūk. See al-Qurashī, *Awwaliyāt al-Farūq*, p. 89.

Muslim army and were also from among the *sābiqūn*. Thus, since they had experience of warfare and they held a competence derived from the authority of Islam, assigning them as *sābiqūn* leaders increased the performance of the soldiers to its highest level.¹⁵⁷ Nonetheless, with the exception of the battle of Mu'tah, none of them had prior experience of fighting against the Byzantine Empire.¹⁵⁸ However, it seems that Khālid b. al-Walīd was more experienced in mounted combat than most of the others, since he had been practising this type of fighting since his youth, and by virtue of the responsibilities his kin held in the Quraysh tribes.¹⁵⁹ It is recorded that bravery and *taqwā* were displayed by the leaders in the battle of al-Yarmūk, i.e. Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and Khālid b. al-Walīd. However, it could be argued that the bravery of Abū Bakr and 'Umar is not strictly relevant here since they were not in positions of leadership in the battle itself; nevertheless, their knowledge of their men may have influenced the outcome. Regarding the quality of *taqwā*: despite having led the Muslims to victory, Khālid b. al-Walīd was discharged by 'Umar, a decision which can be seen as both brave and wise; Khālid did not object but obeyed the order of the Caliph, having in mind the element of *taqwā* even at the joyful moment of victory.¹⁶⁰

Taqwā can also be recognised in the effect of the farewell addresses of the overall leaders of the army to their field commanders; these motivated the soldiers to increase the fear of Allāh in their hearts and thus to fight for His sake and not for worldly wealth.¹⁶¹ Also, Abū Bakr's letter to Khālid ordering him to go to Syria was full of *taqwā*.¹⁶²

Abū Bakr as the Caliph and thus the supreme leader of the Muslim army at the battle of al-Yarmūk was known for his patience and endurance, but it is not possible, even by reading between the lines, to evaluate his direct effect on the course of the battle.¹⁶³ It

¹⁵⁷ Also see the *ḥadīth*: "You must then follow my *sunna* and that of the rightly-guided Caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it." See Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Itibā' Sunnat al-Khulafā'*, No. 42, v.1, p. 15), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 17172, v.4, p. 126), al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb al-'Ilm*, No. 329, v.1, p. 174), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Bāb: Itibā' al-Sunnah*, No. 4607, v.4, p. 200), and Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān (*Bāb: Waṣf al-Firqah al-Nājiyah* v.1, p. 179).

¹⁵⁸ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 3547, v.3, p. 1372), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 241, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 786-787.

¹⁵⁹ Khālid b. al-Walīd's kin were in command of the horsemen fighting for the Quraysh both prior to and after the revelation of Islam. See Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, v.2, p. 251 and Kaṭṭāb, *Khālid*, p. 55.

¹⁶⁰ See Khaṭṭāb, *Khālid*, pp. 161 & 234.

¹⁶¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 335. Also see the section "The Reasons for Islamic Combat" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

¹⁶² See Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁶³ Abū Bakr showed great patience and endurance in the battles of the *Riddah* wars. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 255 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.6, p. 311.

seems very likely, however, that Khālid's patience and endurance did have a direct effect, as he led the final attack in the battle.¹⁶⁴

Additionally, what is known of Abū Bakr's position does not clearly indicate that his determination had a direct effect on the performance of the soldiers at al-Yarmūk; but everybody knew the extent of his determination, which was made clear when he decided to attack the tribes of ʿAbs and Dhubyān despite the objections of the closer Companions, among whom was ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who had fought in the *Riddah* wars.¹⁶⁵ ʿUmar was also known for his determination, especially when he relieved Khālid of the command of the Muslim army at the battle of al-Yarmūk. Many another leader would have thought twice before removing a very successful commander at the peak of his powers. ʿUmar's intention, according to al-Qurashy, was to make the soldiers clearly understand the real power behind their victories and place their trust in Allāh.¹⁶⁶ Further, Khālid's determination to entirely change the plan regarding the Muslim cavalry at al-Yarmūk was very risky, especially when we bear in mind that he was facing the overwhelming power of the Byzantine army.¹⁶⁷ However, the Muslim soldiers had great trust in his capabilities as a military leader.¹⁶⁸

At the battle of al-Yarmūk Abū Bakr and ʿUmar knew what had to be done. They also understood, after reading the letters they had received from the leader of the army, how important it was for the Muslims to win this battle.¹⁶⁹ Although Abū Bakr was not directly involved in locating the battlefield, after he had gathered most of the available men, whom he knew well, and sent them to the battle of al-Yarmūk he also ordered Khālid b. al-Walīd to leave Iraq and take over the command of the Muslim army in al-Shām, thus demonstrating the principle that the successful leader is the one who knows the

¹⁶⁴ The patience and endurance of the Muslim's leaders is vividly revealed in an anecdote narrated in al-Mustadrak ʿala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn concerning this battle. Three mortally wounded leaders under the command of Khālid b. al-Walīd were at the last moments of their lives when they were offered water to drink. When the first one was given the water and was about to drink, he saw that one of his comrades was looking at the water so he asked for it to be passed to him and did not drink. When the second leader was offered the water he saw the third looking at it; so it was passed to him. The third man, when about to drink it, saw the first one looking at it again. Then it was offered again to the first, but he died before even sipping any of it; the second and third also died before they could drink. See al-Mustadrak ʿala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Bāb: Manāqib ʿIkrimah b. Abī Jahl*, No. 5058, p. 3, p. 270).

¹⁶⁵ Abū Bakr was determined not to accept that one could be a Muslim while rejecting the *zakāh*, one of the five Pillars of Islam, as some powerful tribes argued. He was the most unbending of all the Companions in this matter. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 255 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.6, p. 311.

¹⁶⁶ See al-Qurashy, *Awwaliyyāt al-Fārūq*, pp. 89-94.

¹⁶⁷ See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, pp. 474-475.

¹⁶⁸ It was reported that his arrival at the battlefield from Iraq brought the Muslim army great joy. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334 and al-Khaṭṭāb, *Khālid*, p. 143.

¹⁶⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334.

capabilities of his men. Abū Bakr's decision to choose Khālid from among the available commanders can be seen as illustrating the notion that if the leader knows himself he therefore knows the person best qualified to accomplish a mission. In addition, Khālid himself knew his own great ability as a warrior and so realised that he had to actively participate in the fight.¹⁷⁰ Hence, when negotiations were being conducted before the battle of al-Yarmūk, Khālid b. al-Walīd sent 'Ubādah b. al-Ṣāmit, who was from the same tribe as the opposing negotiator, to represent the Muslim army with a view to influencing the negotiations.¹⁷¹ Nonetheless, it is impossible that Khālid could have known all his men's abilities thoroughly, due to the huge numbers of the Muslim army and also to the continuous arrival of new Muslim soldiers.¹⁷²

At al-Yarmūk, the self-control of the leaders directly resulted in bringing the situation under control. The often-repeated phrase in *Military Leadership*, that everyone is afraid in combat¹⁷³ is not in accord with Khālid b. al-Walīd's remark, when he heard one of his soldiers referring to the great size of the Byzantine army, that he wished his horse's hoofs were a little harder and his enemy doubled. Thus he strengthened the spiritual power of his fighting men.¹⁷⁴ Therefore the Muslim leader is supposed to consider the quality of self-control and apply it in his behaviour. During the critical point of the battle of al-Yarmūk, some Muslim soldiers panicked and retreated under the first wave of the attack; but generally their leaders kept full control of themselves and did not panic, nor did they retreat from the battlefield.¹⁷⁵ For instance, the Uzd tribe had to bear the brunt of the assault as Khālid expected.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Mu'ādh b. Jabal and his son, together with some other soldiers, showed extreme valour by standing firm, and called their tribe to return. Khālid then ordered Ḥajjāj, with five hundred warriors, to assist the Uzd tribe and push the Byzantine army back.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁰ In addition, Khālid knew that he had to be there as soon as possible, so he chose the shortest route to Syria even though it was fraught with danger. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 346.

¹⁷¹ 'Ubādah b. al-Ṣāmit was sent to meet Jabalah b. al-Aytham. They were both from the tribe of Wald 'Amr b. 'Amr. See al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, v.1, p. 156.

¹⁷² At the battle of Nahawand, when 'Umar was informed that some of the leaders known to him had been killed, he wept; then when he was told that some other Muslims had also died he wept again. The messenger reported that these, however, were not among the people that 'Umar knew. Then 'Umar, still grieving for them, replied: "What harm can they come to? Even if 'Umar did not know them, Allāh knows them". This indicates that the Muslim leader did not have to know all his men personally in order to know their capabilities and regret their loss. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 520.

¹⁷³ See Department of the Army, *Military Leadership*, pp. 55-56.

¹⁷⁴ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 337 and Nu'mani, *al-Farūq*, p. 139.

¹⁷⁵ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 338 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 11.

¹⁷⁶ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 13. For further detail see al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, v.1, p. 195 and Nu'mani, *al-Farūq*, p. 141.

¹⁷⁷ Ḥajjaj was the chieftain of the Zubayd clan. See Nu'mani, *al-Farūq*, p. 140.

Abū Bakr's justice and even-handedness may not have had a direct effect, but it was made known to everyone through the first speech he delivered.¹⁷⁸ 'Umar's display of justice and insistence on equality, however, was very effective as he removed a celebrated leader, Khālid, acting in consideration of the long-term advantage to the cause of Islam.

The personalities of the leaders at al-Yarmūk differed widely. Abū Bakr's personality had less effect on the conduct of al-Yarmūk than that of 'Umar, his successor as Caliph. Perhaps most importantly, Khālid succeeded in changing the plan of the Muslim army in short order, a feat that could not have been achieved unless the leader's personality had been able to exert a strong influence.¹⁷⁹ Apart from questions of personality, the leaders at al-Yarmūk made the cause of fighting clear and emphasised its nobility from the beginning. The farewell and letters of Abū Bakr and 'Umar at the departure of the army from Medina show that they were fully aware of the goal of the struggle.¹⁸⁰ In addition Khālid's speeches both before and during the combat also made clear that the fight was for an honourable reason.¹⁸¹

Lastly, it appears that Abū Bakr chose Khālid to be in command at the battle of al-Yarmūk partly because some of the Muslim soldiers in al-Shām had either heard of him or had fought under his command in previous battles. Also, Khālid was loved as a military commander by many if not all of the Muslim army. Khālid continued to strengthen the psychological spirit of his army by assigning some leaders to new positions. He placed Abū 'Ubaydah in the rear of the Muslim army because he intended to make the *Amīn al-Ummah*¹⁸² highly visible, so that whoever ran away would feel shame and return to the battle.

V.6.5: The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah

In this battle another leadership took over, although 'Umar was still Caliph. He believed this battle was so important that he at first intended to go to lead the Muslim army himself, but was prevailed upon to send one of the *sābiqūn* Companions to take command. He believed that he had to choose one who would carry out this mission promptly, but he took several days to decide whom to choose. After consulting most of the Companions in

¹⁷⁸ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.6, p. 82 and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 238.

¹⁷⁹ For the new formation see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 8.

¹⁸⁰ For example see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 335.

¹⁸¹ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 12.

¹⁸² He was called the *Amīn hādhihī al-Ummah*, "the Trustworthy Man of the Umma", when he was sent to Najrān. For the rest of the story see Ṣāhīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, No. 3535, v.3, p. 1369), Ṣāhīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Faḍā'il Abū 'Ubaydah*, No. 2420, v.4, p. 1882), al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 233, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 53, and al-Dahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, v.1, p. 12.

the region, he chose Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ to be in command even though he was not in the region. Sa'd was the sixth or seventh man to embrace Islam.¹⁸³ When he took over, he also assigned *sābiqūn* Muslims to be in charge of the standards.¹⁸⁴ This provides a clear indication of how important the Muslim leaders considered the quality of the *sābiqūn* in this battle.

Unlike the Prophet, Sa'd did not have the advantage of having gained experience in warfare fought in battle before the revelation of Islam since he was fifteen years old when he embraced Islam. Nevertheless, he had enough experience through having taken part in battles or expeditions during the early period of Islam.¹⁸⁵ But he had no previous experience of fighting against the Sāsānian Empire.¹⁸⁶

ʿUmar, as Caliph, made a brave decision when he decided to send forces to conquer one of the greatest empires of that time.¹⁸⁷ Also ʿUmar's *taqwā* can be seen in the letters he sent to Sa'd, which made it clear that Sa'd should not be unduly proud of being the Prophet's uncle, implying that he should have more *taqwā*.¹⁸⁸ It can be argued that in the battles of conquest Sa'd matched Khālid's bravery as he remained in command on the battlefield despite his sickness, which made movement difficult and painful.¹⁸⁹ The bravery and *taqwā* shown by Sa'd in leading his men into the fiercest heat of the battle made it clear to them that their leader was with them, accepting that whatever happened to them would also be his fate.

ʿUmar's patience and endurance can be seen in his skilful planning of the battle. Although greatly concerned and determined¹⁹⁰ to rule the new Islamic State and preoccupied by his other duties as Caliph, he asked Sa'd to write to him almost daily, and recounted every detail of his actions. He also shared with Sa'd his decisions on operational and tactical

¹⁸³ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Zuhd wa al-Raqā'iq*, No. 2967, v.4, p. 2278), al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 439, and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 48.

¹⁸⁴ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 385, Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 39, and Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 141 & 155.

¹⁸⁵ After he embraced Islam, he either joined the Muslim army in combat or heard of its exploits. Consequently, it is possible to say that he had had over twenty-eight years' experience when assigned to be in command in this battle.

¹⁸⁶ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 3547, v.3, p. 1372), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 241, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 786-787.

¹⁸⁷ ʿUmar wanted to go himself at first but as he was chief among the Companions they objected and advised him to send someone else. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 407 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁸⁸ The Prophet once praised Sa'd by saying: "Sa'd is my uncle..." See al-Mustadrak ʿala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Bāb: Manāqib Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ*, No. 6113, v.3, p. 569). Moreover, ʿUmar's farewell to Sa'd was also full of *taqwā*. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 386 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁸⁹ He was suffering from boils. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 407 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁹⁰ ʿUmar was also known for his determination, shown especially in the story of his returning Zuhrah's booty. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 426 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 126-127.

movements.¹⁹¹ Moreover, al-Qa‘qā‘ b. ‘Amr and other Muslim leaders showed great patience by fighting continuously for thirty hours without rest; for if the Muslim leaders had rested their soldiers would have followed suit.

Sa‘d also showed great determination in disciplining his soldiers when some of them went against his field commander, Khālid b. ‘Arfa‘ah.¹⁹² He jailed some of them despite needing every soldier he could find.¹⁹³ His determination allayed the army’s fear and disorder. Furthermore, although al-Muthanna b. Ḥārithah¹⁹⁴ had led Muslim armies in other battles in the region, ‘Umar knew how important it was for the Muslim army to win this battle. Consequently, ‘Umar was involved directly in allocating the battlefield for the expected - and dreaded - engagement with the Persian army. Sa‘d also knew that he had to be close to the combat especially after the indiscipline of some men in the army, even though he would have been excused for remaining at a distance from the battlefield due to his sickness.¹⁹⁵ Sa‘d had also sent several plain-speaking messengers to express the Muslims’ demands regarding the current situation during the negotiations with the leader of the Persian army.¹⁹⁶ Even though Sa‘d ‘knew his men’, he, like the leader at al-Yarmūk, could not know every man in the army, since it contained soldiers from many tribes.¹⁹⁷ Despite this, it seems that the Muslim leaders had sufficient knowledge of their men to allow them to ease the task of the Muslim army at al-Qādisiyyah.

‘Umar and Sa‘d also showed great self-control as well as determination as they jointly adopted the tactic of making the Muslim army wait for a many months on the battlefield they had allocated in advance despite the frustration this caused in the ranks.¹⁹⁸ In addition, they were attempting to assuage the psychological damage to the Muslim army caused by the defeat at al-Jisr.

Long before al-Qādisiyyah the Muslim army had known ‘Umar’s commitment to justice and equality, which was evidenced after the battle when he reproached Sa‘d and ordered the return of the very valuable booty of al-Jālinūs - one of the Persian leaders- which

¹⁹¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 384.

¹⁹² On another occasion, Sa‘d’s determination was shown when he ordered his men not to ask about moving forward to face the Persian army. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 397.

¹⁹³ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 407 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁹⁴ He was the chieftain of the Banū Shaybān. He was not one of the Companions and became a Muslim after the death of the Prophet. He died before the arrival of Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāṣ.

¹⁹⁵ Sa‘d was so close to the action that he could not have run away in case of defeat. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 407 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁹⁶ Sa‘d knew that straightforward characters would present the goal of the Muslim army clearly and with spiritual strength. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 400 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 113.

¹⁹⁷ See Ibn Kāthīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, pp. 30-39.

¹⁹⁸ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 387 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 226-227.

Zuhrah¹⁹⁹ had seized after he killed him.²⁰⁰ Sa'd's sense of justice and equality, as well as his determination, was made apparent to the Muslim army as he preferred to stay with his men rather than in a safe place, although he would not have been blamed had he kept away from the battlefield, but he wanted to share the trials of his men as they faced the might of the adversary.²⁰¹

In contrast to the limited effectiveness of Abū Bakr at al-Yarmūk, 'Umar's strong personality proved very influential since at al-Qādisiyyah he had the power to motivate the army although he remained in Medina. Sa'd's strong personality was also in evidence when he quashed and punished the outbreak of indiscipline against his field commander and persuaded the other soldiers to obey his commands properly.²⁰² Moreover the strong personality of the leaders was devoted to stressing the noble cause of the battle.²⁰³

In addition, 'Umar had sent from Medina several swords and horses of great value to be given to those who showed extreme courage in order to increase the psychological strength of his army to its highest level.²⁰⁴ Sa'd and his field leaders also managed to increase their soldiers' fighting spirit by engaging in an ingenious deception to persuade the Persians that the Muslim army was being augmented by daily reinforcements.²⁰⁵ Thus, it is possible to say that the Muslim leaders at all levels had the necessary combination of psychological skills to increase the soldiers' psychical strength and enhance their performance in this battle.

Assessing the contributions of these leaders and considering the implications of their qualities, it is clear that they possessed different qualities, whose specific features were combined in particular ways. The first three battles were conducted by the same leadership, the other two by different leaders. The Prophet himself led the Muslim army at Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq; and he, from an Islamic perspective, could not be matched by any of the other leaders due to his being supported by divine assistance.

¹⁹⁹ His full name was Zuhrah b. 'Abdullah b. Qatādah b. al-Ḥawiyyah b. al-Ḥarīth al-A'raj. Prior to becoming a Muslim, he was assigned to a high position of leadership by the king of Hajr. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 385.

²⁰⁰ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 426. For a discussion of this issue see the section "The Division of Booty and the Treatment of Prisoners of War" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

²⁰¹ See the map of the battle of al-Qādisiyyah.

²⁰² Nonetheless, it cannot be said that the whole Muslim army followed his orders exactly because it was an immensely difficult task for a leader unable to move freely to control an alliance of various tribes facing a huge army. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.24, pp. 117-118 and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.4, p. 101.

²⁰³ The farewell of 'Umar at the departure of the Muslim armies from Medina and Sa'd's speeches prior to and during the confrontation made fully clear the honourable goal of the fighting. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 386 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 32-33.

²⁰⁴ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 414.

²⁰⁵ See *ibid*, p. 412.

However, the Prophet possessed many qualities which Muslims in general are required to imitate.²⁰⁶

V.7: Comparison of the Battles

The leaderships in the five battles will now be compared and their achievements assessed. In the first three battles the leadership remained unchanged. It possessed most of the standard qualities discussed in this study. However not all of these qualities were equally apparent in each battle. For example, the element of psychological strength was obvious and fully applied at the battle of al-Khandaq where the Prophet and his commanders were mainly from the *sābiqūn*. At al-Yarmūk, however, the leadership was not considered to be from the *sābiqūn* with the exception of the Caliph and other Companions under the command of Khālid b. al-Walīd. The quality of warfare experience was not the same in the five battles. In fact, even though the leadership remained unchanged in the first three battles it executed different battle plans and thus underwent different experiences.²⁰⁷ In fact, it is possible to say that the leaderships had five different experiences of warfare in these five battles, except that the leadership at al-Yarmūk had previously fought against the Byzantine Empire. Nevertheless, they all exhibited the qualities of bravery and *taqwā*²⁰⁸ and of patience and endurance.²⁰⁹ On examining the available evidence it is

²⁰⁶ The Qur'ān (ETMC), 33: 21, states: "Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent example for him who he hopes in Allāh and the Final Day, and who remembers Allāh much."

²⁰⁷ All the appointed leaders of the discussed battles were widely experienced in warfare either through battles fought before the foundation of Islam, for instance Ḥarb al-Fujār, or through the battles or expeditions conducted after the establishment of the Islamic army. Secondly, it should not be forgotten that the Quraysh were in a state of undeclared war with the Muslims during the first thirteen years of Islam. Lastly, it could be added that their nature as Arabs made them rely on fighting as a method of solving most of their problems. Nonetheless, except during the battle of Mu'tah, none of them had prior experience of fighting against the two great empires of that time, i.e. the Sāsānian and Byzantine Empires. See 1) Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.1, p. 324, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.2, p. 289, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.1, p. 207, Firestone, *Jihād*, p. 131, and Zakaria, *The Makkan Crucible*, pp. 63-65, 2) al-Rashīd, *al-Qiyādah al-ʿAskariyyah*, pp. 49-50 and Firestone, *Jihād*, p. 131, and 3) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 3547, v.3, p. 1372), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 241, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 786-787, and Nicolle, *The Military Technology*, v.1, p. 269.

²⁰⁸ The Prophet's bravery, however, was obvious in the first three battles since he was in command while Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, Khālid, and Saʿd were not. Indeed, it could be argued that the bravery of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar was not outstanding since they were not in the position of direct and noticeable leadership. In addition, in the battles of conquest Khālid's extensive involvement was the key to victory and Saʿd remained in command on the battlefield despite his sickness. Thus both showed their bravery. Respectively see 1) Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 162, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 26, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 262, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 385 and 2) al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 407 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 126-127.

²⁰⁹ It is indisputable that if the Muslim leaders had rested at al-Qādisiyyah their soldiers would also have rested. So, they kept themselves as well as their soldiers alert through raids and various other military activities. Thus it is possible to say, considering the examples given above, that all the leaders in these battles had patience and endurance to such an extent that they were able to transfer such

possible to say that all the leaders considered in this chapter satisfied the three elements of the leader's self-knowledge,²¹⁰ and that these were accompanied by the application of the element of determination.²¹¹ Furthermore, they also fully demonstrated the quality of self-control²¹² and of justice and equality. They differed, however, in appearance²¹³ and personality²¹⁴ since the Prophet possessed the most effective personality of them all. We may conclude that the leaderships at al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah were lesser in quality in this respect than the leadership in the first three battles; however, they were effective enough to win decisive victories.²¹⁵ At all five battles, however, the nobility of the cause was repeatedly emphasised.²¹⁶ Finally, the leaderships in all the battles in question demonstrated their mastery of what we call today psychological warfare, but their methods differed from one battle to another.²¹⁷

qualities to their soldiers either by setting an example or through encouragement, and hence to influence the Muslim soldiers to increase their performance to its highest level.

²¹⁰ In addition, in al-Rashīd's discussion of the element of self-knowledge, he emphasises that self-accounting was one of the important aspects of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's leadership. For example, 'Umar would advise both the leaders and followers by saying "Make an account of your mistakes before they are accounted for you." See Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Zuhd*, No. 4260, v.2, p. 1423). Also see Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah wa al-Raqā'iq wa al-Wara'*; No. 2459, v.4, p. 368).

Furthermore, the Muslim commanders themselves had to participate in the fighting, with the exception to certain extent of Badr and al-Qādisiyyah, where the battles were considered to hold the key to the survival of the new Muslim community and might end in the capture of the Muslim headquarters. Therefore, the leader had to join his men in order to accomplish his mission successfully. This in turn helped the soldiers to feel secure in their commitment to serve their common goals.

²¹¹ Considering the given examples, we find that the degree of involvement of the leaders prevented the soldiers from losing confidence or falling into confusion, and brought them back to the battle.

²¹² The examples also show that, as a result of the self-control demonstrated by the leaders, the soldiers willingly returned to the battle after the retreat.

²¹³ Although the leaders were different in appearance, this element still indirectly impacted upon the soldiers' performance in the five battles. For example, 'Umar and Khālīd b. al-Walīd were impressively tall. For 'Umar see al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr (No. 59, v.1, p. 65) and al-Qurashy, *Awwaliyyāt al-Fārūq*, pp. 24-25. For Khālīd see al-Khaṭṭāb, *Khālīd*, p. 224 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 458.

²¹⁴ In addition, it seems that most of the leaders' personalities were characterised by religious fervour, though it could be argued that Khālīd b. al-Walīd seems to have been pre-eminently a military man. It should be borne in mind, however, that Islam did not exist only as a religious and spiritual movement, for Islamic Sharī'a does not accept the separation of state and religion. Islam, therefore, involves every aspect of the Muslim's life. See Ismā'īl, *al-Dīn wa al-'Ilm*, p. 7 and Muḥammad Quṭb, *Dirāsāt fi al-Nafs*, pp. 311-317.

²¹⁵ It should not be forgotten that the strength of the Prophet's personality was supported by divine revelation.

²¹⁶ Thus, before all the battles in question, the Muslim leaders at all levels repeatedly made clear to their soldiers that they were fighting for the Cause of Allāh and that their aim was paradise not wealth. See al-Sayyid Sābiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, v.3, pp. 40-41, Ḥusayn, *al-'Aqīdah al-'Askariyyah*, pp. 47-48, Gḥaybah, *Muqawwimāt al-Shakhṣiyyah*, pp. 10-11, and Rudolph, *Islam and Colonialism*, p. 121.

²¹⁷ Thus it is possible to argue that Muslim leaders at all levels had the necessary psychological skills to increase the soldiers' psychical strength and enhance their performance in the five battles.

V.8: Conclusion

Generally speaking, any approach to any phenomenon has its own strong and weak points. This chapter has attempted to identify and discuss the relevant ideal qualities that the Muslim leader needs to possess and apply in order to reach his goals. In addition, the chapter has examined Islamic military leadership from a hitherto neglected viewpoint, as it has identified the various concepts of Islamic leadership. The chapter has also furnished the reader with an insight into how the Muslim leaders worked together and what types of relation existed between them and their men, so that the reader might understand the effect of this element on both the leadership and the soldiers. The chapter also discussed some important qualities of the Muslim leader using related examples from the five battles. Some of these different qualities were occasionally integrated and discussed in pairs since they could be said to have a close relationship when they are applied. It should be noted, however, that some leadership qualities have not been included since this is a study of Islamic history, and so the discussion has concentrated on those qualities mentioned in the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*.

In conclusion, the foregoing discussion has shown that Islam recognises and promotes certain important qualities, whose exercise permitted the Muslim leaders to have a positive influence on their soldiers' performance in the five battles in question.

However, at the battle of al-Jisr, the commander, although not deficient in his commitment to Islamic doctrine, failed in his duty to investigate the strength of his adversary and paid the price.²¹⁸ In the next chapter we will see that intelligence is of great importance to any military commander and that it was vital to the success of the Muslim leaders in the battles under discussion.

²¹⁸ The battle of al-Jisr occurred between the Muslim army and the Persian army. The Muslim army was led by Abū 'Abīd, from the Banū Thagīf. He broke one of the Islamic warfare guidelines - that of consultation - of the Islamic Military Doctrine when he refused to accept the advice of his men not to cross the bridge, because doing so would not allow them enough room for manoeuvre. The Muslim army was defeated, their leader perished and about 4000 men out of 6000 were killed. See the section "Consultation" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4). For the battle see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 366 and Ibn Khayyāṭ [160/777-240/857], *Tārīkh Khalīfah b. Khayyāṭ*, p. 125.

CHAPTER SIX

The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence

Throughout history, intelligence gathering has been considered as a major weapon used by most nations whether at war or in peace time.¹ Intelligence is believed to play an important role in determining the outcome of a war.² The effect of intelligence has been measured according to its application at either the individual level or the group level. Despite the fact that many nations agree on the importance of intelligence due to the wide area it covers, no clear and comprehensive definition exists, although there is a broad consensus on its various usages.³ Nonetheless, Islam generally does not permit Muslims to use the element of intelligence in the same way as other nations. The Qur'ān seems to forbid it: "Spy not on each other."⁴ Yet it also says: "O ye who believe! Take your precautions. And either go forth in parties or go forth all together."⁵ These exhortations commit the study to define intelligence from the Islamic military perspective.⁶ This means that the definitions of Islamic writers will be highlighted and criticised as necessary.⁷ However, it should be understood that Muslim intelligence activity was not recognised to be the task of a separate military organization.

VI.1: The Definition of Islamic Military Intelligence

To consider the matter in greater depth, the word *intelligence* is mentioned in the Qur'ān in the form of its various synonyms, such as *tajassasū*, *taḥassasū*, *al-nadhīr*, *dAllāhum*,

¹ Arthur Ferrill observes: "an organised military intelligence is as old as history itself." See Neilson and McKercher, *Go Spy the Land*, p. 1. Brogmann, *Holding on Reality*, p. 1, also emphasises the importance of information: "Without information about reality, without reports and records, the reach of experience quickly trails off into the shadows of ignorance and forgetfulness."

² Dairī, *Ārā' fi al-Ḥarb*, p.5, states that the enemy never remain static; they are subject to continuous change and development which may occur rapidly both before and during the battle. Thus, even at this late stage the strategy and tactics an army has adopted in advance on the basis of intelligence reports should be amenable to change according to the new circumstances.

³ Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, pp. 90-91.

⁴ Neilson and McKercher, *Go Spy the Land*, pp. 20-21, mention that some nations build their military intelligence systems by aiming primarily at the civilian population. On the contrary, the Muslim army conducted its intelligence activities according to the demands of the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 60. For the verse quoted see the Qur'ān, 49: 12.

⁵ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 71.

⁶ Even though "intelligence" is a modern term, in Arabic it was used and mentioned in the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. Therefore there is no reason not to use it here.

⁷ A specific definition will be attempted; however, Lawrence Freedman's words should not be forgotten: he argues that it is difficult to construct a universal theory of intelligence. See Freedman, "Powerful Intelligence" in Andrew and Handel (eds), *Intelligence and National Security*, No.2, v.12, p. 200.

khudhū hidhrakum, and *al-ʿayn*.⁸ However, the two words *taḥassasū* and *tajassasū* have almost the same meaning;⁹ *taḥassasū* is according to Ibn Kathīr slightly different from *tajassasū* since it is sometimes used in to indicate a good manner or the other is to indicate an evil manner.¹⁰ However, the opinions of al-Qurṭubī and al-Ḥalabī seem to be more convincing; they mention that *taḥassasū* means an intelligence mission that is conducted by the assigned person himself, i.e. not transferring the task to someone else, whereas *tajassasū* has the opposite meaning.¹¹

Among the modern writers on Islamic military intelligence discussing partly the period under study, Manāṣarah considers intelligence to be a well-organised plan which uses all available means, including apparatus and information in order to be aware of the enemy's political, economic, psychological, and military condition, and hence includes analysing and collating the information. This information is handed without delay to the leaders, allowing them to make the right decision and implement the necessary strategy. These activities would work against counterintelligence, thus guaranteeing the country's security.¹² Al-Dughmī identifies intelligence as the searching out of the enemy's hidden news and secret information through the use of intelligence apparatus, particularly at times of need, to prepare to counter the enemy's plan.¹³ It is noticeable that neither definition mentions specifically Islamic characteristics, which is important since the study is examining the subject from an Islamic viewpoint. Furthermore, they overlook the effect of the intelligence information on the soldiers' performance. It can be argued that such a relationship is essential, since a commander's decision based on intelligence will affect his troops' performance. Therefore, Islamic military intelligence can be recognised as an activity assigned to specially selected personnel, who use all the available means permitted

⁸ Respectively see the Qur'ān, 49: 12, 35: 37, 34: 14, and 12: 87. However, the word most commonly used at the time covered by the study was *al-ʿayn*.

It should be acknowledged here that some difficulties exist regarding the usage of the words 'scout' (*mustatli*) and 'spy' (*jasūs*), since at that time these were synonyms. Aḥmad differentiates between *spy* and *scout*, arguing that the spy collects information under cover and wearing civilian clothes, whereas the scout carries out the same task wearing military uniform. In other words the spy is stationed behind enemy lines whereas the scout operates between his own forces and those of the enemy, although he may cross into the enemy's camp to collect information from the spy. This seems a useful, if rough, distinction. See Aḥmad, *Naḥwā Qānūn Muwaḥḥad*, pp. 76-78.

⁹ For further usage of the two words see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Anbiyā'*, No. 3185, v.3, p. 1230 and *Kitāb al-Nikāḥ*, No. 4849, v.5, p. 1976), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Birr wa al-Ṣilah wa al-Ādāb*, No. 2563, v.4, p. 1985), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Bāb: al-Shak*, No. 4917, v.4, p. 280), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Wakālah*, No. 11235, v.6, p. 85), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Manāqib Hājir*, No. 8380, v.5, p. 101), Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.6, pp. 50-52, and al-Sha'rāwī, *Tafsīr al-Sha'rāwī*, p. 7053.

¹⁰ See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.4, p. 214.

¹¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.16, p. 333 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sirah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 381.

¹² See Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 97.

¹³ See al-Dughmī, *al-Tajassus*, p. 27.

by Islam to provide the leaders with the proper information in any field of interest, so that they can make an accurate assessment of the enemy's strengths and weaknesses and arrive at the right decisions, which will affect the soldiers' performance at the time or in the future.¹⁴ We will now consider whether intelligence gathering is held to be a legitimate activity according to the *sharī'a*.

VI.2: The Validity of Intelligence

Since Muslims rely on the *sharī'a* when considering the legitimacy of almost all of their activities, intelligence carried out by them cannot escape being weighed and examined from the Islamic perspective. Also, we should remember that intelligence has, for the most part, been denigrated as 'dirty work'.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the Qur'ān on many occasions urges the necessity of conducting intelligence work in different situations. It urges Muslims to be cautious when they are on a mission: "O ye who believe! When ye go out in the cause of Allāh' investigate carefully".¹⁶ Through the *sunna*, it is also known that on numerous occasions the Prophet (PBUH) sent his Companions to gather information.¹⁷ In fact, he himself went to collect information, thus proving the importance and validity of intelligence.¹⁸ Thus, from the early stages of Islam, it could be said that intelligence activity was permitted by the teachings of Islam.

VI.3: Types and Levels of Intelligence

The types and levels of intelligence have a close relationship, since the two types of intelligence can be applied at all three levels. Hence these two elements will be discussed in one section.

First, intelligence may be divided, according to its activities, into two types, i.e. offensive and defensive. An examination of the works of 'Abd al-Ghanī and Manāṣarah on Islamic intelligence shows that both authors adopted different approaches in discussing the types of intelligence activities: Manāṣarah did so briefly, to the extent that he failed to use the proper meaning of the words, while 'Abd al-Ghanī considered them in detail. This study

¹⁴ Freedman points out that intelligence agencies seek to find out what others wish to keep hidden. However, this study will judge this activity according to Islamic principles. See Freedman, "Powerful Intelligence", No. 2, v.12, p. 198.

¹⁵ For example see Grey, www.wsws.org/articles/2002/mar2002/cia-m20.shtml.

¹⁶ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 94. The Qur'ān also urges Muslims to be cautious in, 6: 55 and 49: 6.

¹⁷ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2880, v.3, p. 1108), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2660, v.3, p. 51), and al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb Ma'rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 4979, v.3, p. 245).

¹⁸ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 27 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 163.

will adopt an approach between these two extremes in elaborating on both types of intelligence.¹⁹

Firstly, on the one hand, offensive intelligence is that type of intelligence activity which aims to collect all the information that will then allow the army to discover the plan of the enemy and counter it by measures such as acts of sabotage, political activities, riots, psychological war, or necessary action in any other field.²⁰

On the other hand, defensive intelligence or counterintelligence deals with matters of security and is used mainly to oppose material threats. It may also be used to prevent insurrection, conspiracies, internal psychological warfare, and any other destructive activities of a country's own people. In addition, and from an Islamic perspective, it frustrates the enemy's spies' attempts to collect information about the Muslim army.²¹

Although during the period under study an independent unit formed to work against such elements did not exist, the enemy's activities, being themselves simple, were fought against in a simple way,²² and counterintelligence activity played a part in almost all the battles.

Second, intelligence activities, according to Manāṣarah, may also be divided into two levels, i.e. strategic intelligence and tactical intelligence.²³ Intelligence activity at the strategic level concerns itself with information relating to the intention of the adversary at that level, focusing particularly on his weak and strong points. This information is utilised by the leadership to construct effective plans of action in both peace and war.²⁴

Manāṣarah states that the main elements of intelligence at the strategic level tend to be centred on the following fields: military, economic, geographical, historical, and social. It can be argued that Manāṣarah should have added the religious dimension since the Muslims were calling others to Islam, and that he should have stated clearly that this type of activity was being conducted continuously at both levels. Prior to the battle of Badr, the Prophet Muhammad (PPBUH) used intelligence at the strategic level to gather information about the caravans of the Quraysh. This resulted indirectly in the battle of Badr and therefore also played an important part in bringing about the two subsequent

¹⁹ This way of categorising type intelligence, which were not distinguished by the Muslims during the period covered by the study, is adopted for the sake of comparison with the recent views considered in the present research.

²⁰ See Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 72.

²¹ See Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, pp. 72-73.

²² At the battle of Badr the Prophet continuously used different means to free the Muslim army from the psychological pressure they faced from the Quraysh army. See the section "Psychological Warfare" in the Chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

²³ This type of intelligence activity is not mentioned in 'Abd al-Ghanī's work. See 'Abd al-Ghanī, *Nuẓm al-Istikhbārāt*, pp. 74 & 92.

²⁴ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 4 and Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, pp. 74 & 94.

battles, since the Quraysh had to fight for their economic survival by acting to protect their caravans.²⁵ Also, prior to the incursion of the Muslim army into Persian territory, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb used intelligence at the strategic level to gather the information he needed for the expected confrontation with the Sāsānian Empire.²⁶ It is noteworthy that the highest level of leadership of the Muslim army took responsibility for conducting intelligence-gathering missions at the strategic level.

On the other hand, intelligence at the tactical level is that type of activity which is sometimes known as *fighting intelligence*²⁷ or *combat intelligence*.²⁸ This type of intelligence activity deals with the field level, that of the individual soldier.²⁹ It concerns itself with the smallest details of intelligence activity such as specific information regarding the adversary’s arms and equipment.³⁰ During the first two battles tactical intelligence was not required as much as it was to be in the other three due to the limited size of both armies.³¹ In contrast, unlike the previous battles, the battle of al-Khandaq required a greater and more sustained level of intelligence at the tactical level. This was due to the long duration of the siege and the different positions of the confederates. At the battles of al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah intelligence at the tactical level was used intensively for the following reasons: at al-Yarmūk the Muslims were confronting a huge army covering a wide area, whereas at al-Qādisiyyah they had to deal with both vastly superior forces and the long duration of the battle.³²

However, in breaking down intelligence activities to different levels, Glass and Manāṣarah omit to mention a possible third type, which fits between intelligence at the strategic level and intelligence at the tactical level; that is, *intelligence at the operational level*.³³ This

²⁵ The Muslim army were seeking to recapture their lost wealth by attacking the Quraysh’s caravans since they had been forced to leave their wealth behind in Mecca on their migration to Medina. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ikhā’ al-Nabī bayna al-Muhājirīn wa al-Anṣār*, Nos. 3569-3571, v.3, p. 1378), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Kitāb ‘Amal al-Yawm wa al-Laylah*, No. 10013, v.6, p. 54), and Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Birr*, No. 1933, v.4, p. 328). Also see the story of Ṣuhayb al-Rūmī’s migration in al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Bāb: Manāqib Ṣuhayb b. Sinān*, No. 5700, v.3, p. 450), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 174, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 186, and Zakaria, *Sunshine at Madinah*, pp. 66-71.

²⁶ See Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 29-31.

²⁷ Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 74.

²⁸ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 4.

²⁹ To make a further distinction between strategic intelligence and tactical intelligence, strategic intelligence is a continuous activity, whereas tactical intelligence is only conducted at the time of need and during the conflict.

³⁰ See Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 92.

³¹ See the chapter “The Battles and their Significance” (Ch.3).

³² See the map of the two battles in the chapter “The Battles and their Significance” (Ch.3).

³³ In Arabic, it can be called *al-Istikhbārāt al-‘Amaliyyātiyyah*, or *Istikhbārāt al-Ma‘rakah*. See al-Jabbūrī, *al-‘Amaliyyāt*, p. 39.

type of intelligence activity deals with the whole area of operations.³⁴ It differs from intelligence at the strategic level in that it deals with information regarding potential enemy manoeuvres. It also differs from intelligence at the tactical level, as operational intelligence takes into account all the surrounding potential threats. At the battle of al-Khandaq the Prophet took into account the potential internal threat against the women and children.³⁵ He assigned a small force to guard the fort where they were being kept, ordering that he should be constantly informed of developments in that area.³⁶

It is clear that the use of intelligence, both offensive and defensive, was adapted to the conditions and requirements of battle. Both were enhanced through integration, improving the performance of the Muslim army in the battles in question. It is hoped that

³⁴ A good example of this third type can be seen when the Prophet, while searching for the caravan of the Quraysh before the battle of Badr, sent several scouts to cover the expected routes of operation. For other examples see Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Thubūt al-Jannah li al-Shahīd*, No. 1901, v.3, p. 1510), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Bāb: Sending Scouts*, No. 2618, v.3, p. 38), and al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.13, p. 44.

³⁵ As an attack was feared from the Banū Qurayzah, Salama b. Aslam and a detachment of 200 men was stationed outside the fort to protect the women and children. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 448 and Naumani, *Sīrat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 98. See also the map of al-Khandaq.

³⁶ It is possible to say that falling within these types of intelligence activities and subject to the guidelines of Islamic doctrine, there are other types of intelligence gathering which concern the activities of individuals. More specifically, the collection of information during the period under study may be divided into four different categories: 1) the collection of information on the Muslims by the enemy, 2) the collection of information by the Muslims on other Muslims to find what they are hiding, 3) the collection of information by the Muslims on other Muslims to find what they need, or 4) the collection of information about the enemy for the Muslims' advantage. See Musnad Aḥmad (No. 23382, v.5, p. 392) and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 388. Regarding the first type, the Muslims were ordered to prevent and fight against it by all available means even if this mean eliminating the agent. In the *ḥadīth*, the Prophet permitted the killing of the spy of the Banū Hawāzin. See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 1754, v.3, p. 1374) and Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2654, v.3, p. 49). The second type was prohibited by the *sharī'a* according to the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. See the Qur'ān, 49: 12, Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Ashshribah*, v.8, p. 333), and Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān (*Bāb: al-Ghībah*, No. 5763, v.13, p. 75). The third type was considered advisable, since the Muslims' ruler was responsible for ensuring that their conditions were good and they did not need any help, especially the weak. 'Umar, as Caliph, used to question thoroughly almost every leader under his command. His usual question to his commanders (أنى لك هذا؟ -How did you get this?) has become famous. See al-Khuzā'i, *Takhrij al-Dalālat*, p. 303. Also, at the battle of al-Yarmūk, Khālīd b. al-Walīd toured the camp to make sure that the army had all possible comforts. See al-Wāqidī, *Furūḥ al-Shām*, v.1, p. 202. The fourth type, spying on the enemy, is required by the Qur'ān, 9: 120; it is essential to know the enemy's strengths and weaknesses in order to prepare for the confrontation and also to be able to use suitable forces. For such an interpretation of this verse see 'Abd al-Ghanī, *Nuẓm al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 9. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.11, p. 64 and al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.8, p. 291. Further, this factor is an essential element of the Principles of War. See the section "Islamic Principles of War" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8). Also see Faraj, *al-Madrasah*, pp. 604-624 and Ṭīlās, *al-Rasūl*, p. 281. It should be stressed that the second type of intelligence gathering is prohibited for Muslims under any circumstances, according to the Qur'ān (ETMC), 49: 12: "O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their back." This view is emphasised in Islamic *Fiqh* (jurisprudence). For the original meaning of the word 'spy' see Neilson and McKercher, *Go Spy the Land*, p. 35.

the foregoing comparison of the different examples has clarified the implementation of the various types of intelligence even at the individual level.

The discussion has made clear that those conducting Islamic intelligence were not free to follow their own inclinations, as its use was severely restricted. Apart from Islamic prohibitions, intelligence gathering could be materially affected by other factors, including manpower resources, which will be discussed in the next section.

VI.4: Manpower as a Resource of Intelligence

Information was collected by various means during the period under study. These means were determined by the conditions of the time and the specific circumstances of the battles. Thus, the collection of information depended solely on manpower.³⁷ Consequently, the intelligence gatherers were designated by different titles. These included *al-ʿayn*, *al-ʿamīl*, *al-mundhir*, *al-ṭalīʿah*, *dalīl*, *the prisoner of war*, *the enemy's spy*, and service provided by various people in general.³⁸ It can be seen that most of the resources relied heavily on the element of reconnaissance. Despite that, each one of them had a different mission to conduct, and they had to use their background knowledge to provide their superiors with the information they needed and may have requested, with the least possible delay.³⁹ However, before the selection of a person whose abilities suited the type of information to be collected, three questions had to be considered: what type of information was required? when should this information be placed in the hands of the leaders? and which person should collect it?⁴⁰ Since Islam has a universal appeal which

³⁷ Unlike much modern practice, it is worth mentioning that in Islam it is not permitted to make use of women's charms for spying purposes. See al-Hirfī, *Dawr al-Mar'ah*, p. 9. However, al-Hirfī, *Dawr al-Mar'ah*, pp. 10-16, explains that they can still be used in other ways according to the Islamic teachings.

³⁸ Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 27 and al-ʿAmīlī, *Mawsūʿat al-Istikhbārāt*, v.3, pp. 7-53.

These titles were usually derived from the act or the source of action of the persons concerned according to the normal usage of the Arabic language. Generally speaking, a spy is called *al-ʿayn* (the eye), (pl. *ʿuyūn*); *al-ʿamīl* (pl. *ʿumalāʾ*) is one who, although not a Muslim, helps the Muslims; *al-mundhir* (warner), (pl. *mundhirūn*) is one who alerts others to an impending danger which he has seen and reported without being assigned to do so by his group; and *al-dalīl* (guide), (pl. *adilāʾ*) is one that knows the area and its routes. He can be considered as being from the advance troops, known as *al-ṭalāʾiʿ*. However, neither Manāṣarah, ʿAbd al-Ghanī, nor al-ʿAmīlī mentioned the *mundhir* as a source of intelligence even though this title was mentioned and known to the Arabs, which the Qurʾān confirms in many verses. See Qurʾān, 2: 18, 3: 32, 5: 19, 6: 19, 29, 36, & 130, 7: 2, 63, & 184, 10: 2, 11: 2, 14: 44 & 52, 19: 97, 21: 45, 25: 1, 26: 28, 28: 46, 36: 70, 37: 177, 53: 56, 54: 36, 78: 40, 92: 14, and other forms of the word *mundhir*. Additionally, the word *dalīl* is used in the form *dAllāhum* in the Qurʾān, 34: 14, where it is possible to say that it can be understood as indicating the importance of choosing the right man for the right mission.

³⁹ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 63. The phrase "needed and may have requested" is used here since sometimes the information that the leader requests may not be the same as that brought by the intelligence gatherers; for example, they may come across additional intelligence which was not initially requested, but might be vitally necessary.

⁴⁰ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 14.

led to many people embracing the faith, the Muslim army had the opportunity to be served by a wide range of people with different skills.⁴¹ With these resources at hand, conducting missions became less difficult for the Muslim army, but whatever the situation, the leader would attempt to make the best use of the resources available to him. For example, at the battle of al-Khandaq, the intelligence resources were limited and had to be carefully used due to the suffocating siege of the confederate army,⁴² while the resources were both more available and, at the same time, utilised to the maximum during al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah.⁴³

VI.4.1: Reconnaissance

One of the important means of intelligence gathering used by the Muslims was reconnaissance.⁴⁴ The Qur'ān commanded the Muslims to be alert and to send patrols for that purpose, i.e. reconnaissance units: "O ye who believe! Take your precautions and either go forth in parties or go forth all together."⁴⁵ Thus, reconnaissance was considered to be the backbone of Islamic intelligence at the time of the Prophet and the following two Caliphs.⁴⁶ The small numbers of the Muslim army in Medina made reconnaissance simple and intuitive.⁴⁷ It was sometimes even conducted by only one or two men.⁴⁸ At al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah, however, it became more sophisticated and precise due to the expansion of the Muslim army and the wide area the battles covered.

The reconnaissance missions varied according to the objectives assigned to each patrol. For example, the purpose of the reconnaissance could be to locate the enemy, as when the

⁴¹ For example, at al-Khandaq Salmān al-Fārisī advised the Prophet to dig the trench around Medina. See Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: al-Shajā'ah*, v.9, p. 170), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 182, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 633.

⁴² The story of Na'im b. Mas'ūd provides an example of highly secret intelligence activity. See the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in this chapter.

⁴³ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, pp. 188-191, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 96-97, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 111-112, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 645-651. Further see Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muḥammad; the English Version*, p. 458.

⁴⁴ See al-Dughmī, *al-Tajassus*, p. 53. In addition al-ʿAmilī, *Mawsūʿat al-Istikhbārāt*, v.1, pp. 255-264, considered it one of the three important types of Islamic intelligence. It should be mentioned that reconnaissance is one of the essential tasks of any patrol.

⁴⁵ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 71. In *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. 232, it is stated that no fight should be undertaken without due preparations and precautions. When these are taken the Muslim must go boldly forward. "Go forth" is therefore repeated for emphasis, "as our leader determines". Thus it is possible to say that the element of reconnaissance should be considered under this aspect.

⁴⁶ Al-ʿAqqād, *ʿAbqariyyat Muḥammad*, p. 17, says that the Prophet knew well the advantages of reconnaissance and took them into great consideration. Also see al-Dughmī, *al-Tajassus*, p. 57.

⁴⁷ It is noteworthy that only the Emigrants conducted the first patrols because the Helpers had promised the Prophet to protect him only in Medina, not outside it. So he did not want to ask them to do what had not been agreed upon. Also the Emigrants were not familiar with the terrain surrounding Medina, so they were sent to get an idea of it. Further see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.8, p. 57, al-Dughmī, *al-Tajassus*, p. 55, and Faraj, *al-Madrasah*, p. 259.

⁴⁸ According to Manāṣarah, the Prophet asked his Companions to conduct the reconnaissance in small numbers. See ʿAbd al-Ghanī, *Nuẓm al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 49.

Prophet searched for the Quraysh army prior to the battle of Badr.⁴⁹ Also, reconnaissance could be used in the elimination of a dangerous enemy, as in the assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashshraf.⁵⁰ Lastly, it could be used to collect information in order to know the intentions of the enemy, as the Prophet did prior to the battle of Uḥud, when he sent two of his Companions to bring the latest news.⁵¹ In fact, even though the Muslim army grew and developed, the importance of purpose, time, and boundaries remained unchanged.

It should be noted here that the use of intelligence can be said to consist of two stages as far as the benefit to the soldiers is concerned; first with respect to the leaders and then to the soldiers themselves. Glass comments: "A commander who is served by inadequate intelligence is courting disaster."⁵² Thus it could be argued that the relation between the leader and his intelligence is very critical, although the leadership's goals can only be accomplished through the right process, which it is the soldiers' duty to bring to a satisfactory conclusion.⁵³ Therefore, it is essential that this study should describe and illustrate the types of relationships existing between the leader and the intelligence available to him.

VI.5: Leaders and Intelligence

It is reported that 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb stated that a lying spy was an eye for the enemy rather than an eye for the Muslim army.⁵⁴ Handel points out in this connection: "In the politico-military world of competition and conflict, uncertainty plagues decision-makers

⁴⁹ See the section "The Battle of Badr" in this chapter.

⁵⁰ Ka'b b. al-Ashshraf [d. 3/625] was a poet from the tribe of Ṭayy' whose mother was from the Jewish tribe of the Banū Qurayzah; he encouraged the non-Muslims to fight the Muslims after the defeat of Badr. He defamed the Muslim women after he came back to Medina. He was killed by Muḥammad b. Maslamah. See Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 39.

⁵¹ They were Sulayṭa and Sufyān b. 'Auf. They were buried together in one grave and were called *al-Qarīnān* (the Consorts). See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.3, p. 477 and al-Funaysān, *Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, p. 242.

⁵² See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. ix.

⁵³ The Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 59, addresses the ordinary soldiers: "Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you." In another context the Qur'ān (ETMC), 9: 128, elaborates on the quality of the relationship between the Prophet and his followers: "Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should suffer, ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful." Further see the section "Obedience" in the Chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁵⁴ See Faraj, *al-Madrasah*, p. 467.

This section has benefited from the discussion contained in a modern work, which it has used in the interests of the study. The work in question is Handel, "Leaders and Intelligence", in Andrew and Handel (eds), *Intelligence and National Security*, No. 3, v.3, pp. 3-4. It was thought that the adaptation would not only serve this chapter but also support a later chapter, "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8) and make a connection with the previous chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5). See Dairī, *Ārā' fi al-Ḥarb*, p. 25.

It is felt that detailed discussion of certain points connected with this part of the discussion need not be included in the text and therefore the relevant examples in the footnotes.

more than any other single element.”⁵⁵ It follows that decision makers are deeply concerned with the collection of advance knowledge of the enemy.⁵⁶ The proper use of accurate and timely intelligence can significantly reduce uncertainty, thereby enabling political and military leaders to improve the quality of their decisions, develop more effective strategies, and conduct more successful military operations.⁵⁷ However, the relationship between leaders and their intelligence is beset by so many difficulties that its problems can never be completely resolved.⁵⁸ Thus, the following points will focus upon that relationship.⁵⁹ The discussion will also be linked to Islamic concepts and dealt with according to the needs of the study.

The first point concerning the relationship between the leader and his intelligence gathering is that if the leader is dogmatic, he will be unlikely to be receptive to new information that contradicts his goals or earlier decisions.⁶⁰ On the other hand, if he is too flexible, his decisions might too easily be apt to change, leading to instability in the leadership.⁶¹

The second point concerns the closeness of the relationship between the leaders and their intelligence agents. The danger of a close relationship is that it might put at risk the intelligence gatherer's sense of objectivity if he knew the leader's plans in advance.⁶² On

⁵⁵ Handel, “Leaders and Intelligence”, No. 3, v.3, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Tzu said: “Know your enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.” Tzu, *The Art of War*, p. 84.

⁵⁷ See Handel, “Leaders and Intelligence”, No. 3, v.3, p. 3.

⁵⁸ See Handel, “Leaders and Intelligence”, No. 3, v.3, p. 3. However, in the battles in question, the agents' trustworthiness was measured more or less on the basis of their sincerity according to Islamic doctrine. See the chapter “The Role of Islamic Doctrine” (Ch.4). Also see Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 101, v.1, p. 99), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, No. 2225, v.2, p. 749), and Sunan al-Dāramī (*Kitāb al-Buyū*; No. 2541, v.2, p. 323). Nevertheless this is not a rule to be applied in all cases, since some of the intelligence agents were not Muslims, as at al-Khandaq when the Prophet was informed about the Banū Qurayzah breaking the treaty. See the section “The Battle of Badr” in this chapter. Also see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 103. Similarly see Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Ijārah*, No. 11423, v.6, p. 118).

⁵⁹ This section is concerned only with those points which influence the relationship between the leaders and their intelligence. See Handel, “Leaders and Intelligence”, No. 3, v.3, pp. 4-6. Nonetheless, some of these points will be adjusted to the needs and the demands of the study.

⁶⁰ For example, at Badr the Prophet was not inflexible since he changed his plan from pursuing the caravan and went ahead with an alternative plan, seeking the advice of his Companions; nor did the leaders at al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah reject new information about their enemies.

⁶¹ From an Islamic viewpoint, it is interesting to note that after the Prophet had decided to camp at Badr, accepting the advice of an ordinary soldier regarding the water wells, he rejected the opinion of one of the Companions, who asked him to change the location of the camp. See Yamānī, *Badr al-Kubrā*, p.148. Additionally, in the battle of Uḥud when he made his final decision to meet the Quraysh army outside Medina, had he been overly flexible he would have turned back when his Companions changed their minds and asked him to stay in the city. See the chapter “The Battles and their Significance” (Ch.3).

⁶² The Prophet's intentions, when there was need of secrecy, were kept from even his closest Companions. For instance, when he had the intention to conquer Mecca (8/630), he did not even tell his beloved wife ʿĀ'ishah. He took all possible measures to prevent the Quraysh from knowing his

the other hand, too distant a relationship would lead to some loss of contact between the two parties. The importance of this relationship makes it imperative that both should seek to maintain the crucial balance between closeness and detachment.⁶³ This balance can be better maintained if the intelligence gatherer is an effective member of the ruling elite. It can be argued that it was to the advantage of the Muslim army, especially in the first three battles, that some of the intelligence gatherers were holders of important positions in the elite.⁶⁴ However, this theory is not universally applicable, since at the period covered by the study most of the men who were sent on scouting missions before and during the battles under study were either decision makers, well-known fighters, or persons possessing special skills.⁶⁵ However it should be pointed out that even though most of the scouts were close to the leaders in all five battles, those leaders provided them with only such information as was necessary according to the demands of the current situation.⁶⁶

The third point, which is related to the comment above, is that if the leader is provided with intelligence by only one source or one advisor, the information is likely to be limited or biased. Also, the quality of the intelligence may be affected by the way the advisor or gatherer perceives the intelligence, because what he considers important may not be, and vice versa. On the other hand, if the leader has too many sources of intelligence, he may fall victim to his own biases or resort to military expediency; furthermore, too many sources of information may result in the leader's hesitation or failure to choose the right plan. Consequently, he might decide to follow an alternative plan that conforms to his

movements. See Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Naqḍ al-ʿAhd*, v.9, pp. 232-234), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.5, p. 52, and Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Maʿād*, v.3, p. 398.

⁶³ In the Qurʾān (ETMC), 4: 26, it is found: "Allāh doth wish to make clear to you and to guide you into the ways of those before you; and (He doth wish to) turn to you (in Mercy): and Allāh is All-knowing, All-wise."

⁶⁴ The Prophet as well as the other Companions such as Abū Bakr, ʿAlī, al-Zubayr, Khālīd b. al-Walīd, the two Saʿds, Zuhrah, al-Qaʿqāʿ, and others were effectively holding positions of leadership in these battles. See the later sections on the battles in this chapter.

⁶⁵ Ṭulayḥah b. Khawylid al-Usdī was a well-known fighter and was very effective at the battle of al-Qādisiyyah. The mission conducted by ʿAbdullah b. ʿUnays can be cited as another example of the work of a scout who possessed a special feature: he had never been afraid of any man. When the Prophet sent ʿAbdullah to kill Khālīd b. Sufyān al-Hudhalī, ʿAbdullah asked how he would identify Khālīd. The Prophet replied: "Upon seeing Khālīd fear will enter your heart." Now, since ʿAbdullah had never feared any man, it was easy for him to use this feature to identify and kill Khālīd. See Sunan Abū Dāʿūd (*Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, No. 1249, v.2, p. 18), Musnad Aḥmad (v.3, p. 495) and al-Aṣbahānī [d. 430/1039], *Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ*, v.2, pp. 5-6. Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, v.2, pp. 50-51, mentions that ʿAbdullah began to sweat upon seeing Khālīd.

⁶⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 387. Also the Prophet did not announce the results of the two Saʿds' mission to the Banū Qurayzah. Another example is Khālīd b. al-Walīd's withholding the news of Abū Bakr's death despite his relationship with closeness of the Companions. In addition, Saʿd and al-Qaʿqāʿ did not inform the Muslims of their plan to have the horsemen pour into the battlefield one after another to raise the fighting spirit of the Muslim army at al-Qādisiyyah.

preconceived ideas.⁶⁷ Also, the desire for large amounts of information and the use of large numbers of scouts increases the possibility of being discovered, of receiving false information, and of wasting time and resources, and may force the leader to compromise between contradictory reports, resulting in a less effective plan.⁶⁸

The fourth point is that although sometimes a leader needs direct access to raw information,⁶⁹ if he depends upon this continuously he is in danger of acting as his own intelligence officer. However, it is possible to say that this point was not applicable in the period of the study mainly because military activities at that time were not highly organised and the reported information was simple and capable of being clearly understood. Nonetheless, in the last two battles the leaders sometimes needed the services of translators to translate the new pieces of information flowing from the non-Arabic sources.⁷⁰

Lastly, the fifth point concerns the agent's honesty. If he is always honest and insists on expressing his honest opinion immediately he may lose access to the leader.⁷¹ On the other hand, if he waits for a time convenient to the leader, he may increase his influence but the delay may also decrease the value of the intelligence.⁷² Handel argues that: "One of the only solutions to these (and many other) dilemmas, is to be found in the quality of leadership."⁷³ Considering Handel's remark, it is possible to say that the degree of success of the Muslim leader depends largely on his personality, experience and ability to strike

⁶⁷ The leaders in these battles had more than one source of information and they used a similar method of making sure of its accuracy, as when the Prophet sent the two Sa'ds to confirm the veracity of the news he had received. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 104 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyyah*, v.2, p. 640.

⁶⁸ In the first three battles the sources of intelligence were limited and the leader did not have a variety of options to choose from. In contrast, at the battles of al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah the leaders had several sources and were delayed for a long time before beginning the actual fighting. It is likely that they conducted many intelligence activities at the request of the Caliphs, but it was not recorded that they were overburdened to the extent that they were unable to implement their plans effectively. See the discussion of the battles at the end of this chapter.

⁶⁹ By 'raw' information the study means 'unanalysed' information.

⁷⁰ Further see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 390, 398, & 304. Also see Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 23.

This was a matter of concern even before al-Yarmūk; on one occasion the Prophet ordered Zayd b. Thābit to learn other languages. See Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 32. Further see Ghirbāl, *al-Mowsū'ah al-'Arabiyyah*, p. 937.

⁷¹ Unlike Tzu, Clausewitz was dubious about the value of intelligence work; he asserted that: "Many intelligence reports in war are contradictory; even more are false, and most are uncertain." Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 117. Also see Tzu, *the Art of War*, p. 149. In addition, the Prophet repeatedly sent 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib on many different occasions, also Sa'd and Ṭulayḥah. See the section the battles in this chapter.

⁷² See Handel, "Leaders and Intelligence", No. 3, v.3, p. 5.

⁷³ Handel, "Leaders and Intelligence", No. 3, v.3, p. 6.

the proper balance between competing forces. Moreover, from an Islamic perspective his religious conviction should also be emphasised.⁷⁴

Consequently, the degree of the Muslim leaders' response to their intelligence reports is very important, considering that their response could affect their soldiers' performance.⁷⁵

VI.6: The Leaders' Degree of Response to the Intelligence Report

After examining the relationship between the Muslim leader and his intelligence agents, it is possible to argue that the type and quality of the relationship can affect his response to the reports he receives.⁷⁶ However, he is not free to respond without constraints, as his decision will inevitably affect his men. He should therefore respond according to the accuracy of the source. The Qur'ān states: "O ye who believe! If a sinner comes to you with any news ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done."⁷⁷ In addition, his degree of response will depend on his trust in the accuracy of the information.⁷⁸ Although Handel warns that agents might fabricate the information they report to the army, the Muslim agent is bound by legal orders and commands,⁷⁹ and is therefore not free to report the news he thinks will be most likely to please his leaders,⁸⁰ because the Qur'ān threatens the one who is not faithful in conducting his mission.⁸¹

⁷⁴ See the section "Qualities of the Muslim leader" in the Chapter "The Impact of the Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

⁷⁵ Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 57.

⁷⁶ During these battles it was evident that the leaders did not rely on one report for their intelligence, but analysed the reports of a number of sources of intelligence before making their final decisions. They even sometimes conducted scouting missions themselves. See al-Āmili, *Mawsū'at al-Istikhbārāt*, v.1, pp. 153-155.

⁷⁷ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 49: 6. In *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. 1589, it is found that: "All tittle-tattle or reports especially if emanating from persons you do not know are to be tested, and the truth ascertained. If they were believed and passed on, much harm may be done, of which you may have cause afterwards to repent heartily."

⁷⁸ For further clarification of the problems associated with responding to intelligence reports see Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, pp. 29 & 36 and Handel, "Intelligence and Military Operation", in Andrew and Handel (eds), *Intelligence and National Security*, No. 2, v.5, pp. 3 & 26.

⁷⁹ The Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 77, can be used to say that the *shari'a* works to purify the intentions and activities of both leader and agent: the Qur'ān (ETMC), 33: 70, states: "O ye believe! Fear Allāh, and Make your utterance straight forward." Also see Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Īmān*, No. 101, v.1, p. 99), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, No. 2225, v.2, p. 749), and Sunan al-Dāramī (*Kitāb al-Buyū'*, No. 2541, v.2, p. 323).

⁸⁰ At the battle of Badr the Prophet asked 'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd to take an oath that he had killed Abū Jahl. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 185, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 37, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 296, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 419. Also the Qur'ān (ETMC), 74: 31, states: "May arrive at certainty"; this could be used to approve the act assuring the truth of an advance report.

⁸¹ In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 27, it is found "O ye that believe! Betray not the trust Of Allāh and the Messenger, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you." Also see Musnad Abī Ya'la (*Musnad 'Ā'ishah*, No. 4385, v.7, p. 349) and al-Mu'jam al-Awwsaṭ (*Bāb: Man Ismahū Aḥmad*, No. 897, v.1, p. 275).

After having illustrated the varied relations between the Muslim leader and his intelligence agents, it is essential to look at possible effects on the soldiers' performance: a successful relationship is likely to have a beneficial, if indirect effect on performance.

VI.7: The Importance of Intelligence

An army may manage to make its way to victory even without the contribution of intelligence work. This statement is supported by Handel's remark that the information provided by intelligence is only a means to an end. In other words, an army may compensate for a lack of good intelligence by several means: superior leadership, concentrating superior forces at a decisive point, maintaining the initiative, considerable material or quantitative superiority over his enemy, or even by having superior training and better motivation than the enemy.⁸² However Handel goes on to point out that intelligence is, "an instrument essential for the achievement of a leader's goals in the most efficient way."⁸³ It is therefore possible to argue that intelligence work can smooth the path of an army and help to accomplish victory with minimum damage to men, weapons, and material.⁸⁴ Thus intelligence is important since it can make possible sound and timely decisions.⁸⁵ It can also prevent counterintelligence and internal harm and destruction. In addition, it is an essential element of *al-ribāṭ*, which is a very significant Islamic concept.⁸⁶ It would seem, then, that the more useful information the leaders have, the better the plan they can devise; although, as we have seen, too much information can be harmful.⁸⁷ Therefore the leader should have more than one intelligence report concerning the same goal so that he can make a comparison in order to confirm their accuracy.⁸⁸

At the battles under discussion, the Muslim leaders were sometimes not satisfied with the information they received from various sources. Hence, they would occasionally go on scouting missions themselves. The battle of Badr provides an example of that, since the

⁸² Handel, "Leaders and Intelligence", No. 3, v.3, p. 19. Also see by the same author, "Intelligence and Military Operation", No. 2, v.5, p. 13.

⁸³ Handel, "Leaders and Intelligence", No. 3, v.3, p. 3.

⁸⁴ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 40.

⁸⁵ See Department of the Army, *Military Leadership*, p. 6.

⁸⁶ *Ribāṭ* literally means *ribbon, band, knot*. By extension it can be also refer to the continuous practice of good deeds by one sent on a mission. Further see Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 213-214, and Penrice, *Dictionary and Glossary of the Qur'ān*, pp. 54-55. In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 200, it is found: "O ye who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allāh; that ye may prosper." The verse indicates that patience is one of the main elements of *al-ribāṭ*. Further see al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.4, pp. 325-326, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, No.251, v.1, p. 219), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Manāqib al-Ribāṭ*, No. 2766, v.2, p. 429), al-Ḥanbalī [816/1414-884/1479], *al-Mubddī*, v.3, p. 313, Ibn Qudāmah, *al-Kāfī*, v.4, p. 258, al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, v.2, p. 417, and Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 129.

⁸⁷ Tzu, *The Art of War*, p. 149, said: "An army without secret agents is exactly like a man without eyes or ears." Also see 'Abd al-Ghanī, *Nuẓm al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 125.

⁸⁸ See 'Abd al-Ghanī, *Nuẓm al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 125.

Prophet not only sent different patrols continuously prior to the battle but he himself went to gather additional information about the Meccan army.⁸⁹

VI.8: The Value of Intelligence to the Soldiers

The value of intelligence to the soldiers can hardly be overestimated. It should be noted that the Muslim army was requested, as one of the main elements of their religion, to use all available means to accomplish their goals.⁹⁰ The Qur'ān states: "Or gain any gain from an enemy: For Allāh suffereth not the reward to be lost of those who do good."⁹¹ This verse does not specifically refer to the practice of intelligence activities, but the comprehensive character of the Qur'ān allows for breath of interpretation, and so it is possible to argue that the verse indicates in general terms the importance and the rewards of conducting intelligence. So, when soldiers are provided with the right information, their actions and even intentions are likely to be positively affected. This has a bearing on the Qur'ān's encouragement of the Muslim soldier to fulfil his duties to the best of his ability: "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power."⁹² It is therefore necessary to consider those elements which can be used to measure the advantages of intelligence to the soldiers. Here Glass's statement seems to be applicable: he argues that military intelligence is of no value unless it serves the leaders' purposes.⁹³ The argument can be taken further: the concept of intelligence can be widened and adjusted to serve not only the leaders but the soldiers also, by creating a better fighting atmosphere for them, as the following points illustrate.

First, the soldiers can be helped by the information gathered on the elements of terrain and weather. Generally, such advance knowledge would alert the army to the qualities of the area of conflict and also would allow it to adopt a better holding position. Glass, however, cautions that the elements of terrain and weather are doubled-edged weapons,⁹⁴ helping the army who best uses them and yet hindering the one that does not. Therefore, looking at it from a different angle, these elements are also factors influencing an adversary's strengths and weaknesses.

⁸⁹ See the following battle analysis.

⁹⁰ See al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Bāb: Manāqib 'Amrū b. Umayyah al-Dumrī*, No. 6616, v.3, p. 722), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb Ṣifat al-Qyāmah wa al-Raqā'iq wa al-Wara'*; No.2517, v.4, p. 668), and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 81.

⁹¹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 9: 120.

⁹² It can be argued that among their duties was intelligence gathering. Further in the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 145, it is found: "And swiftly shall We reward those that (serve us with) gratitude." Hence, serving the purposes of the Muslim army is serving Allāh. Also see the Qur'ān, 3: 146, 8: 60, & 29: 69.

⁹³ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, pp. 63 & 68.

⁹⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 83.

Since the area of conflict may expand, it is essential to know the surrounding terrain. It is preferable that the army should know every operational detail of the battle.⁹⁵ Reconnaissance of the terrain is carried out to discover the appropriateness of the battlefield, i.e. to know the natural support and the nature of the ground, the routes leading in and out of the battlefield, and its control points and critical areas.⁹⁶ Thus reconnaissance allows an army to know where the enemy is positioned and what to expect. In addition, reliable information about climatic conditions as at Badr is a vital element because of its influence on both terrain and operation.⁹⁷

Secondly, intelligence is valuable for the army in that it permits the formulation of a more effective plan. Handel remarks that without a thoroughly considered plan based on intelligence, an army going into combat is likely to pay a high price and suffer a reduction of its effectiveness.⁹⁸ In addition, in using intelligence the leader should take into consideration the soldiers' abilities and qualities in order to provide them with a plan superior to that of the adversary.⁹⁹ In other words, information is presented to the leader in a form which will help him in the formulation of decisions and plans, and is then distributed to all lower level leaders and to the soldiers.¹⁰⁰ Thus, it is essential to use the different types of intelligence mentioned above to correctly assess the enemy and make preparations based on accurate perceptions. Good quality information enables the army to keep to its plan, change its current plan, or make a counter plan.¹⁰¹

Thirdly, effective information often makes it possible for the army to thoroughly prepare its arms and equipment. It also allows the leader to use the right men and material for the right mission.

⁹⁵ See al-ʿAmīlī, *Mawsūʿat al-Istikhbārāt*, v.1, pp. 242-244. Additionally, it is possible to argue that the Qurʾān, 3: 156, encourages Muslims to travel for either trade or military purposes. These journeys broadened the Muslims' experience and enabled them to improve their assessment of the various battlefield terrains. Also see the Qurʾān, 4: 97 & 100. Furthermore, to ease the burdens of the traveller, Islam permits some flexibility in the matter of religious observances. See the Qurʾān, 3: 101.

⁹⁶ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, pp. 86-87. Also, Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, pp. 29-30, mentions that the Arabs used the surrounding means to the best of their ability.

⁹⁷ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 87.

⁹⁸ This means that the leader should not take any action blindly. See Handel, "Intelligence and Military Operation", No. 2, v.5, p. 21.

⁹⁹ The leader's successful improvement of a plan eases his soldiers' task. In the Qurʾān (ETMC), 9: 128, it is found: "Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should suffer, ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful."

¹⁰⁰ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, pp. 40 & 63. Also the Umayyad Caliph, ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān, mentioned that delaying news for one hour might ruin the work of a whole year. See al-Hirfī, *al-Mukhābarāt*, p. 243. In addition see al-Qalqashandī [d. c. 300/913], *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, v.1, p. 148 and Handel, "Leaders and Intelligence", No. 3, v.3, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ See Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, pp. 57-74.

Fourthly, surprise is also a very valuable element, to which intelligence may contribute; indeed, gathering information in order to launch a surprise attack is an important intelligence activity. Of course the enemy is also likely to make successful surprise attacks, provided he has access to good intelligence.¹⁰² In the Qur'ān, it is found: "And lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war)." This verse commands the Muslims to ambush the idolaters, and an ambush depends on the element of surprise.¹⁰³ Further, Glass mentions that surprise may mean discovering that the enemy has launched an attack at a time and place least expected.¹⁰⁴ Surprise is not always offensive, however; it is also evident when a defensive plan is carried out where and when the enemy least expects it.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, the matter of the privacy of information can be included here since privacy can play an important role in the surprise factor. The *ḥadīth* states: "Seek help of privacy to reach your needs".¹⁰⁶ In fact what makes intelligence unique and beneficial is privacy.

Fifthly, obtaining information regarding the adversary's strengths and weaknesses is very critical. Intelligence should report the adversary's situation including his dispositions, composition, strength, status of supplies, morale, reinforcements, and other considerations.¹⁰⁷ What these points suggest is that intelligence work, if used judiciously, is considered to be a source of power for an army. It can prevent destruction and even elimination by raising the chances of survivability of both the army and, in the present case, the Muslim community.¹⁰⁸ Finally, intelligence may be considered still more valuable if provided by a divine source, as will be discussed in the next section.

¹⁰² Surprise can be an element of many military activities, whether strategic, tactical, or operational. See Hybel, "The Logic of Surprise in International Conflict", in Andrew and Hadnel (eds), *Intelligence and National Security*, No. 1, v.3, p. 214.

¹⁰³ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 9: 5. Also see *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. 497.

¹⁰⁴ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. ix.

¹⁰⁵ As in the battle of Uḥud; see the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁰⁶ See al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr (No. 183, v.20, p. 94), al-Tamhīd li Ibn 'Abd al-Barr [368/979-463/1071], (v.5, p. 215), and Musnad al-Shihāb [d. 454/1062], (No. 707, v.1, p. 411). However, it should be noted that the narrator of this *ḥadīth* is Sa'īd b. Sallām, who is accused of narrating weak *ḥadīth*. See al-Rāzī [d. 327/939], *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, No. 131, v.4, p. 31, al-Baghdādī, *Tārikh Baghdād*, v.9, p. 80, and al-Aṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, v.5, p. 215.

¹⁰⁷ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁸ The Prophet encouraged maintaining and increasing the numbers of the Muslims, as in the al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb al-Nikāḥ*, No. 2685, v.2, p. 176), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Kitāb al-Nikāḥ*, No. 1846, v.1, p. 592), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Nikāḥ*, No. 5342, v.3, p. 271), and Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Nikāḥ*, No.2050, v.2, p. 220).

VI.9: The Significant Effect of Assistance through Divine Information

According to the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*, it is possible to say that there have been different types of divine assistance wherein Allāh has revealed the unseen.¹⁰⁹ The first is information reported by an angel in the form of revelation, i.e. the Qur'ān,¹¹⁰ or in the form of a single occasion which gives assurance regarding a particular future event.¹¹¹ The second is that type of divine assistance which was revealed through the Prophet's traditions.¹¹² Allāh revealed to him unseen events, which are recorded in the *ḥadīth*,¹¹³ among them those that occurred at the battle of al-Khandaq.

The third type is the divine assistance which comes in the form of visions,¹¹⁴ mostly of the glad tidings of future events.¹¹⁵ Although these visions vary, we may say briefly that from an Islamic perspective, a vision is considered to be legitimate when reported by a righteous man.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ It should be noted that here the researcher is expanding the notion of *intelligence*, since normally intelligence applies to information capable of being gathered by human action, whereas *divine information* is, generally speaking, information regarding the future and hence unknowable to human beings. Muslims believe that Allāh is the only One who Knows the future. In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 6: 73, it is found: "He knoweth the Unseen." Also see Qur'ān, 9: 94 & 105, 13: 9, 23: 92, 31: 34, 32: 6, 34: 3, 35: 38, 59: 22, 62: 8, 64: 18, 67: 26, and 72: 26.

For another view of the unseen in the *sharī'a* see Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, pp. 79-80.

¹¹⁰ In the Qur'ān (ETMC), 9: 94, it is found: "They will present their excuses to you when ye return to them. Say thou: "Present no excuses: we shall not believe you: Allāh hath already informed us of the true state of matters concerning you." In addition, the Prophet was informed that he would either capture the caravan or defeat the Quraysh. This was a divine revelation of future events. See the Qur'ān, 8: 7. Also both al-Qurṭubī and al-Ḥalabī mention that the Prophet knew in advance that he would win this battle. Respectively see al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.7, p. 369 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 387. Also, verse 12 in *surah* al-Anfāl, should be considered. Similarly, see Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 288.

¹¹¹ Sometimes the Archangel Gabriel informed the Prophet about future events in the form of Islamic teachings. For example, prior to the battle of Badr, the Prophet placed his hand on the ground, indicating the spot where some of the leaders of the Quraysh would be slain. See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Tawbah*, No. 2873, v.4, p. 2202), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Siyar*, No. 8628, v.5, p. 187), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2681, v.3, p. 58), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.6, p. 187, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 395.

¹¹² That the Prophet might be allowed to see some future events is mentioned in the Qur'ān, 10: 46, 13: 40, 23: 95, 40: 77, and 43: 42.

¹¹³ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Fitan* and *Bāb: ma Qila fi Qitāl al-Rūm*, No. 2766, v.3, p. 1069), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, No. 2900, v.4, p. 2225), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: al-Ghazawāt*, No. 4089, v.2, p. 1369), and al-Aṣbahānī [457/1065-535/1141], *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah*, p. 234.

¹¹⁴ For the original form of the word vision (*al-ru'yā*) see the Qur'ān, 12: 43, 17: 60, 37: 105, and 48: 27. For the derived forms see the Qur'ān, 12: 5, 43, and 100. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.11, p. 134, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.8, p. 358, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 425. Also see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: al-Ru'ya min Allāh*, v.6, pp. 2563-2568), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Ru'yā*, v.4, pp. 1771-1775), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, No. 876, v.1, p. 232), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Ru'yā* v.4, pp. 532-543), Sunan al-Dāramī (*Kitāb al-Ru'yā*, v.2, pp. 165-176), al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.2, p. 198, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.12, pp. 390-446.

¹¹⁵ Al-Qurṭubī notes that after the revelation, the good vision remained to tell good news of the future. See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.9, pp. 122-130.

¹¹⁶ For the good vision of the righteous man see al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.11, p. 134, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.8, p. 358, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.2, p. 425. Also see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

Having said that, and taking into consideration all the available evidence, it is clear that the vision's message may be either good or bad, or possibly both.¹¹⁷ Lastly, the effect of these instances of divine assistance may be either material or spiritual, or both.¹¹⁸ The evidence suggests, and Muslims believe, that these instances of divine information cannot have been fabricated; even the Prophet himself had not the power to do so.¹¹⁹

VI.10: The Element of *al-Tawriyah*

One of the unique elements of Islamic intelligence is the application of *al-tawriyah*, 'dissimulation'. This allows the intelligence agent to divert attention from an intended goal by making a statement that can hold more than one meaning.¹²⁰ In the *ḥadīth*, except at the battle of Tabūk, whenever the Prophet intended to go into battle, once he had decided upon the destination, he deliberately asked publicly about other locations. This served to divert attention away from his intended destination.¹²¹ However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the elements of divine assistance and *al-tawriyah* at length; space does not permit full discussion of these matters.

(*Bāb: al-Ru'ya min Allāh*, v.6, pp. 2563-2568), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Ru'yā*, v.4, pp. 1771-1775), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, No. 876, v.1, p. 232), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb al-Ru'yā*, v.4, pp. 532-543), Sunan al-Dāramī (*Kitāb al-Ru'yā*, v.2, pp. 165-176), al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.2, p. 198, Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.12, pp. 390-446, and al-Amadī, *al-Iḥkām*, v.3, p. 140. In addition, al-Maqdisī said that the vision should be in harmony with the others, thus strengthening them all. See al-Maqdisī [717/1317-761/1360], *al-Furūc*, v.2, p. 173. In addition, there are also what are known as *al-Mubashshirāt* (Glad tidings). See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: al-Mubashshirāt*, No. 6589, v.6, p. 2564) and al-Muwatta' (*Kitāb al-Ru'yā*, No. 1715, v.2, p. 957).

¹¹⁷ The vision the Prophet had prior to the battle of Uḥud should be considered here. Also see the Qur'ān, 12: 5, 43, and 100. Additionally, see the section analysing the battles in this chapter.

¹¹⁸ This element's effectiveness at the material level was evident, according to the Qur'ān when Ibrāhīm (Abraham) was about to sacrifice his son (PBUṬA) in accordance with a vision he had seen. See the Qur'ān, 37: 102. However, it can be argued that its long-term effects were also spiritual.

¹¹⁹ The *surah* al-Ḍuḥā was revealed after the revelation had apparently come to an end. Then the Prophet became troubled and his enemy took advantage of the situation. Further see the exegeses of this *surah* in al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.30, p. 229, Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.20, p. 91, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.4, p. 522, and Abdul-Raof, *The Qur'ān Outlined*, pp. 142-143.

¹²⁰ Further see al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.7, p. 169, al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, p. 178, Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, v.15, p. 390, and al-Jurjānī, *al-Ta'rifāt*, p. 97.

¹²¹ Khān, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; the English Version*, v.4, p. 127, explains this point well: the Prophet concealed the true destination of a *Ghazwah* by using an equivocation, which indicates apparently that one is going to a different destination. Additionally, see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2788, v.4, p. 1078), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Dhikr wa al-Du'ā' wa al-Tawbah wa al-Istighfār*, No. 2769, v.4, p. 2128), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Bāb: ma Yaf'al al-Imām idhā Arād al-Ghazwū*, No. 8778, v.5, p. 239), Sunan al-Dāramī (*Kitāb al-Siyar*, No. 2450, v.2, p. 289), and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 387.

Thus, according to al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 387, *al-tawriyah* can be considered as a form of deception which the Muslim is permitted to commit in certain circumstances, especially in war. However, within that concept and to meet certain needs, lies are permitted in special cases. Further see al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab al-Imān*, v.4, pp. 203-204, al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.13, p. 45, al-Nawawī, *Riyād al-Ṣāliḥīn*, p. 353, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, v.3, p. 393, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa'ādah*, pp. 36-37, Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, v.15, pp. 390-400, and Naumani, *Sīrat ul-Nabī*, v.2, p. 46.

VI.11: Analysis of the Battles

IV.11.1: The Battle of Badr

Even before Badr a certain amount of information was already known to the Muslim army; however, it was important that other information should be gathered through intelligence. The Prophet had a general idea of the state of relations between Medina and Mecca.¹²² He also knew intimately the strengths and weaknesses of the Quraysh, as he himself was a member of a Quraysh clan and had lived most of his life among them. He was aware that Mecca did not have a united leadership.¹²³ In other words, at the strategic level he had some important information about the Quraysh army but at the operational and tactical levels more was needed. The Muslims must have had knowledge of who was going to be in command, what kind of fighters they were going to face, and what their style of fighting was likely to be.

Prior to this battle the Prophet missed the opportunity of capturing the Quraysh caravan. Thus, he was cautiously waiting for news regarding its return to Mecca.¹²⁴ He therefore sent several reconnaissance patrols to search for the caravan. This indicates that even though the areas of some of the actual battles were small and limited, Muslim intelligence had to cover a massive area (terrain) in order to gather the required information,¹²⁵ and for this, reconnaissance was the most suitable method. Firstly, he sent Talḥah b. ‘Ubaydallāh and Sa‘īd b. Zayd to search for the caravan; however, since the Prophet had already left Medina they were unable to report their findings.¹²⁶ After being informed secretly of the caravan’s location, the Prophet called for immediate action on the part of those who had their mounts at hand.¹²⁷ This seems to indicate that the Prophet did not tell his Companions of his intention for several reasons: so that he could have time to think without any influence, to prevent rumours from being circulated in the Muslim

¹²² See the section “The Battle of Badr” in the chapter “The Impact of the Islamic Military Leadership” (Ch.5).

¹²³ For the importance of a united leadership see the section “The Unity of Command and Leadership” in the chapter “The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership” (Ch.5). Also see the chapter “Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam” (Ch.2) for a discussion of the Quraysh leadership.

¹²⁴ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 374.

¹²⁵ Further, see Handel, “Leaders and Intelligence”, No. 3, v.3, p. 3.

¹²⁶ They were unable to report since on their return to Medina they found that the Prophet had not waited and had already left to search for the caravan. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.8, p. 57, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 381, and al-Dughmī, *al-Tajassus*, p. 55.

¹²⁷ It is reported that Bisbis b. ‘Amr al-Juhani [sometimes called Busaysah] went on an advance patrol; he it was who reported the news of the returning caravan to the Prophet at his house secretly. Upon hearing the news, the Messenger of Allāh came out hurriedly, spoke to the people and simply said: “We are in need (of men - لنا طلبه).” See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Thubūt al-Jannah li al-Shahīd*, No. 1901, v.3, p. 1510), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Jawāz Infirād al-Rajul wa al-Rijāl bi al-Ghazū*, v.9, p. 99), al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.13, p. 45, and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 277.

camp, and because he was confident he was the only one who would make the final decision.¹²⁸

Whilst searching for the caravan, he asked a Bedouin about the caravan's position, but the man did not know.¹²⁹ After reaching the valley of Dhīrfān, news reached him of the caravan's escape. News of the failure to capture the caravan, which was a vital piece of information, necessitated that the Muslims reconsider their situation quickly and carefully, as the leader had the choice either to retreat or to march forward. In other words, although the main goal of the Muslim army was to capture the caravan, changes in the surrounding circumstances encouraged them to carry out further intelligence activities regarding the expected confrontation; that is, to continue to use the element of reconnaissance.¹³⁰ The Prophet then sent a man called Ibn al-'Urayqit, an ally of the Helpers, to bring him news of the Quraysh army. The latest news the Muslims had received had prepared them psychologically for the change of the expedition's goal and for the coming events. Their initial plan had also changed in accordance with the new situation.¹³¹ Now a heavier task was laid on the leader's shoulders: he had to convince his men of the need to face the new situation. Therefore, at this point, the Prophet revealed that he had been promised one of two things: either the caravan, or the Quraysh army. It can be claimed that the Muslim army, after assurance of divine assistance, now proceeded confident of victory.¹³²

It is possible to say that reconnaissance had provided an early awareness, which had given the Muslim leaders enough time to change the army's current task of searching for a caravan guarded by forty men to the new reality of meeting a well-equipped enemy.¹³³ Intelligence gave an advance perception of the great strength of their enemy, revealing the critical position of the Muslim army, as the Qur'an makes clear: "Allāh had helped you at Badr, when ye were Helpless."¹³⁴ We can see, then, that the Prophet was carrying out several intelligence activities at the strategic level to get news of the caravan. The Muslim

¹²⁸ Further see the section "The Value of Intelligence to the Soldiers" in this chapter.

¹²⁹ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 385. This man can be considered as being among the agents with no particular title. See the previous section "Manpower as a Resource of Intelligence".

¹³⁰ At an area called al-Ḍabbah. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 163, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 27, and Yamānī, *Badr al-Kubrā*, p. 105.

¹³¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.9, p. 186.

¹³² See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 387. In the Qur'an (ETMC), 8: 7, it is found: "Behold! Allāh promised you one of the two parties, that it should be yours."

¹³³ Intelligence was very effective as it transformed the situation into a new dimension.

¹³⁴ The original word in the Qur'an "ذَلِيلٌ" is rendered differently by different translators, none of whom give the same impression as the Arabic. Examples of the variety of translations are: Yūsuf 'Alī, "contemptible little force"; Asad, "utterly weak"; Pickthall, "contemptible"; Malik, "helpless" and King Fahd English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary, "helpless". See the Qur'an (ETMC), 3: 123.

army's perception of the events had to change, causing them to use intelligence at the operational level as they were searching for their enemy.¹³⁵ Some of the tribes belonging to the Quraysh forces, having been informed of the caravan's escape from the Muslim ambush, retreated back to Mecca.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, it is not reported that the Muslim army was aware of that; if they had known, it would have encouraged them greatly and some reference would surely have appeared in the reported speeches of the Muslim leaders. During this operation, the Prophet himself sometimes led the reconnaissance patrols. This seems to have had a positive effect on the morale of the army and also served to confirm the reliability of the different pieces of information he had received. He used one of the important elements of Islamic intelligence - *al-tawriyah* - to collect information.¹³⁷ Then he sent another reconnaissance party, which captured some of the Quraysh's slaves. This allowed the Muslim army to make sure of the exact location and intention of the Quraysh army.¹³⁸ Also the Muslims' intelligent questioning of the captives provided them with good information concerning the adversary's men, equipment, intention, and some of their notables' names. The questioner was able to assess the number of the Quraysh soldiers by asking how many camels they slaughtered a day, because at that time one camel could provide sufficiently for one hundred men.¹³⁹ However, it is not reported whether the Muslims tried to learn of possible Quraysh reinforcements or an ambush. Perhaps such intelligence was considered unnecessary due to the Muslims' own experience of the Arab tribes' method of fighting, or they knew, through questioning the captured water carrier,

¹³⁵ See Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 74.

¹³⁶ This is another example of disagreement among the Quraysh leadership.

¹³⁷ He (PBUH) and Abū Bakr conducted a scouting operation when the Muslim army were in the immediate vicinity of Badr. They came across an old Bedouin and asked him if he had any news of both parties. He replied that he would tell them if they told him who they were. The Prophet agreed. And when they had obtained the necessary information the Prophet told him that they were from "من ماء" (water). This method is used in the Arab world since the location of a tribe's wells - information they managed to extract from the old man - indicates the identity of the tribe. However, there is another dimension to the Prophet's remark. He was referring to the origin of mankind, as in the Qur'ān (ETMC), 21: 30: "And We have made from water every living thing." See Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Ba'th al-'Uyūn*, v.9, p. 148), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 163, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 27, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 262, Ibn Qutaybah [671/1273-734/1334], *'Uyūn al-Akhbār*, v.1, p. 194, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 381 & 387, and al-Hirfī, *al-Mukhābarāt*, p. 41.

Additionally, it should be noted that lying was considered to be shameful, especially among the nobles, who considered such an act would diminish the status of the liar among his own people as well as his enemy. Also the liar would negatively affect his descendants. Regarding such a claim, see the statement of Abū Sufyān after he met with the Byzantine Emperor. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 264 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.3, p. 286.

¹³⁸ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 387-388 and Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 31.

¹³⁹ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 374 and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 215.

that this information was unlikely to be useful since they were already outnumbered.¹⁴⁰ It is probable that the adversary was able to estimate the number and the status of the Muslim army, and that the Muslims themselves knew this.¹⁴¹ Further, the Muslims' evaluation of the terrain allowed them to occupy an advantageous position on the battlefield.¹⁴² Also, at Badr the intelligence gatherers' activities may be considered as fulfilling *al-ribāṭ*, since they placed themselves in danger and were vulnerable to wounds or death at any moment during their missions.¹⁴³

Despite having no agent (*ʿamīl*) operating within the Quraysh camp, the Muslims used the element of surprise as they knew that their adversary would be short of water, and so it was important to control the wells of Badr and cut off the Quraysh from the only local sources,¹⁴⁴ at the same time ensuring their own supply.¹⁴⁵ It should be noted here that one of the strengths of the Muslims was that all the intelligence information was reported to a single commander, who was able to make the final decision. Hence, it is possible to say that the leader's degree of response to the information he received enabled him to improve the quality of his decisions and thus allowed the army as a whole to make the

¹⁴⁰ The following incident makes clear that they did not want to clash with the Quraysh. When the Islamic intelligence agents captured two of the Quraysh's water-carriers, they brought them to be questioned. At the time of interrogation, the Messenger of Allāh (PBUH) was standing in prayer. The person being questioned said: "I know nothing about Abū Sufyān, but Abū Jahl, 'Utbah, Shaybah and Umayyah b. Khalaf are there." When he said this, his interrogators beat him. Then he said: "All right. I shall tell you about Abū Sufyān." They stopped beating him and then asked him (again) about Abū Sufyān. He again said: "I know nothing about Abū Sufyān, but Abū Jahl, 'Utbah, Shaybah, and Umayyah b. Khalaf are there." When he said this, they beat him in the same way. When the Prophet had finished his prayer he said: "by Allāh in Whose control is my life, you beat him when he is telling you the truth, and let him go when he tells you a lie." See Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Bāb: Fi al-Asir*, No. 2681, v.3, p. 58), Musnad Aḥmad (No. 13729, v.2, p. 257), and al-Yamānī, *Badr*, p. 106.

¹⁴¹ See al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 216.

¹⁴² It is possible to say that after the Muslim army had allocated the battlefield at the operational level, it had the opportunity to allocate it at the tactical level. Further, see al-Jubbūrī, *Tadābir al-Amn*, pp. 45-50. For more on the route of approach see the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

¹⁴³ In fact, all those scouts who were ordered to go back to Medina had been injured on the way to the battlefield; but they, and those who had died on the way, and even the scouts who missed the battle were all given their share of the booty, which shows clearly that they were included in the status of *ribāṭ*. See Qur'ān, 8: 60 & 16: 97, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Manāqib al-Jihād wa al-Ribāṭ*, No. 1888, v.3, p. 1503), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Bāb: al-Ṣadaqah min Ghulūl*, No. 2303, v.2, p. 31), and Sunan al-Dāramī (*Bāb: Ay al-Ṣalāt Afḍal*, No. 1424, v.1, p. 390).

¹⁴⁴ See Maḥfūz, *al-Madkhal*, pp. 148-157 and Manāṣarah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 36. To the advantage of the Muslims, intelligence activities enable them to choose the location of the battlefield. This allowed them to bury the wells, leaving one for their own use. See the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8). For the importance of *water* as a vital resource in the Arabian desert see the section "Tribal Life and Feuding" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

¹⁴⁵ Similarly, the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 11, mentions in connection with the same event: "He caused rain to descend on you from heaven, to clean you therewith, to remove from you the stain of Satan, to strengthen your hearts, and to plant your feet firmly therewith." Also, see the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

proper use of accurate and timely intelligence. It can be argued that at Badr intelligence was one of the main sources of power for the Muslim army.

IV.11.2: The Battle of Uḥud

It is reasonable to claim that the Muslims knew that at Badr the Quraysh had been badly hurt by the loss of both men and dignity among the Arab tribes and thus they would surely be seeking revenge.¹⁴⁶ The Prophet (PBUH) was not particularly well prepared for the coming attack as he had no intelligence agents in Mecca. For that and other reasons, since the battle of Badr, the Muslims continued to send regular patrols. Yet, apparently, they were not able to find out about the launching of the attack by these means.

The first news of the impending battle came when the Prophet received from his Uncle al-ʿAbbās a letter telling him of the intention of the Quraysh army to attack Medina.¹⁴⁷ This source was considered reliable due to the previous support the Prophet had received from his uncle.¹⁴⁸ Al-ʿAbbās, taking into consideration the important factor of timing, ordered a man from the Banū Ghifār to ride as fast as possible, i.e. to make the journey in three days and nights, to warn the Prophet of the impending attack of the Meccan army on Medina.¹⁴⁹ The messenger travelled faster than usual, taking only three days to reach the Prophet and inform him of the coming attack. Al-ʿAbbās' prompt action made it possible for the Muslim army to be well prepared.¹⁵⁰ It appears that this source of intelligence was a completely voluntary agent, and had not been requested by the Muslim leadership to

¹⁴⁶ See the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁴⁷ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 489 and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 246. Additionally, it can be claimed that the elements of awareness and carefulness were fulfilled in this battle.

¹⁴⁸ Al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib is known for the love and respect he bore for his nephew the Prophet. We should not forget that al-ʿAbbās accompanied the Prophet at his second meeting with some of his Medinese supporters at a place called ʿAqabah; the Prophet twice held secret meetings with this group (before the Hijrah in 622 AD) with a view to assuring his protection and safety if he agreed to move to the Helpers' city. Even though al-ʿAbbās was late in embracing Islam, he felt tenderly towards his nephew. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.2, p. 290, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.1, p. 562, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 160, and Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 36-37. Additionally, al-Hirfi, *al-Mukhābarāt fī al-Dawlah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 47, claims that al-Katabī [1305/1888-1382/1962], *al-Tarātīb al-Idāriyyah*, v.1, p. 291, argues that al-ʿAbbās was a Muslim at the time of the battle of Badr, and that he cooperated with the Muslim army for this reason. However, taking into consideration the Prophet's statement when he questioned al-ʿAbbās after the battle of Badr it becomes clear that al-ʿAbbās was not cooperating because he was a Muslim but because he loved and respected the Prophet. Further, according to al-Katānī it was not reported that al-ʿAbbās was a Muslim at the time of the battle of Badr.

¹⁴⁹ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 489.

¹⁵⁰ It is possible to say that the Prophet continued his method of intelligence gathering in order to have continuous detailed information about his enemy's movements and status. The men in Medina were on the alert all the time, to the extent that they were praying in their heavy armour in order to be instantly ready for any attack.

provide information.¹⁵¹ Al-ʿAbbās' letter was of value in the matter of the adversary's power in arms and equipment; it also reported the intention of the Quraysh army. Apparently, however, it did not report that the Quraysh had united under the command of one leader, i.e. Abū Sufyān, nor did it mention the plan of attack. This omission of such important information must have weakened the usefulness of the message.¹⁵² At first, the Prophet thought that the information should not be given to the Companions until he had consulted his closest advisors among the notables, as releasing such news might cause disruption in the Muslim camp.¹⁵³ Whilst the Quraysh army was in the area of Dhū al-Ḥulayfah, two Muslim scouts were sent to confirm and locate the movement of the Quraysh, so that the details of the adversary's arms and equipment could be known, and the contents of al-ʿAbbās' letter about the Quraysh's strengths and weaknesses would be confirmed.¹⁵⁴ It should not be presumed, however, that the Prophet's action meant that he did not trust his uncle; rather, he was acknowledging the importance of collecting as much information as possible so as to have a clear picture of his enemy. Also, he needed to know how the situation was developing. At this time and as he was responding to the incoming information the Muslims' leader was guarded and routes in and out of Medina were patrolled and watched.¹⁵⁵ It can be argued that the exact details of the arms and equipment of the Quraysh army became known when more information was received from an ally of the Muslims.¹⁵⁶ Further, the two intelligence elements of *ʿamīl* and *mundhir* were fulfilled.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ The informant could be called a *mundhir* source.

¹⁵² Al-Jubbūrī, *Tadābir al-Amn*, p. 36, reports that the Prophet had sent a man named Yāsir b. Sufyān al-Kaʿbī to Mecca to inform him of the latest news. However, in the works of reference used by the study this story does not occur. Having said that, it seems there was a man called Bishr b. Sufyān al-Kaʿbī, of the Khuzāʿah, who embraced Islam in the sixth year of the Hijrah (628 AD) and tried to protect the Prophet by preventing him from reaching Mecca to perform ʿUmrah. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 276, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 116, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 165, al-Maqdisī, *al-Badʿ wa al-Tārīkh*, v.4, p. 224, and Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, v.1, p. 292.

¹⁵³ It was reported to the Prophet when he was at Qubāʿ and he ordered his company not to tell anyone about it. See al-ʿAlī, *Ghazwat Uḥud*, p. 22.

¹⁵⁴ According to al-ʿAlī, *Ghazwat Uḥud*, p. 23, they were Anas and Muʿnis the sons of Faḍālah and al-Ḥabāb b. al-Mundhir.

¹⁵⁵ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 490. This showed that the element of *al-ribāṭ* was fulfilled.

¹⁵⁶ When the Quraysh reached a place called Dhū Ṭuwā, Sālim al-Khuzāʿy and some of his kinsmen of the Khuzāʿah left the Quraysh and informed the Prophet of the latest developments in the Quraysh army. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 490. It also should be mentioned that Sālim b. ʿAmr al-Khuzāʿy was the chieftain of one of Khuzāʿah tribes; they had an early treaty with the Prophet which was later on strengthened by the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyyah. Of particular interest are the poems he spoke before the Prophet when the Quraysh and their allies from the Banū Bakr broke the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyyah and killed some of the Kuzāʿah men in Mecca. See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.8, p. 65, Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.5, p. 88, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 490. This action of the

Now that they knew the numbers of the Quraysh army the Muslims were driven to consider the possibility of fighting them in Medina, where they could increase their numbers to more or less match their enemy's and use the city's obstacles and their knowledge of its boundaries.¹⁵⁸ It appears, however, that the Muslims' reading of the attack on Medina was incorrect since the Quraysh army did not attack straight away but chose to camp next to the Uḥud mountains. At this juncture, the Prophet shared his information with the army and sought their advice. The ensuing debate revealed that some of the Companions underestimated the adversary since they insisted on confronting them outside Medina even though this was against the notables' wishes. Under pressure, the Prophet agreed, since the key to success was the morale of the Muslims and hesitation was not acceptable.

While the Muslim army was on its way to the battlefield, the Prophet had a vision, which was interpreted as promising that one of the main leaders of the Quraysh would be killed.¹⁵⁹ When the standard bearer of the Quraysh army was subsequently killed in a duel, the Prophet told his Companions that the vision had been fulfilled.¹⁶⁰ It seems that this explanation of the vision increased the fighting spirit of the Muslim army. Once again trust of the Prophet had in his men was put to the test as he asked for someone to lead the whole Muslim army by a route which would allow it to slip past the Quraysh army unnoticed. Any mistake might ignite the fight before the Muslim army could take up its position.¹⁶¹ The effect of the element of *al-dalīl* was successfully used as it managed to

Khuzā'ah benefited the Prophet's strategic plan. See the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

¹⁵⁷ The informants were al-'Abbās, his messenger, and the kinsmen of the Khuzā'ah. It could be added that although that each of them had a different mission, they all reported their information with the least possible delay.

¹⁵⁸ See the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁵⁹ However, this was not the whole story of the vision. It contained both good and bad news for the Muslim army. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, No. 3853, v.4, p. 1498), al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb Qasm al-Fayy*, No. 2588, v.2, p. 141), Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb Qasm al-Ṣadaqāt*, No. 13061, v.7, p. 41), Ibn Ḥajr, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.7, p. 346, and Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, v.3, pp. 193-194.

The vision, as translated by al-Mubarakpuri, occurred as follows: "By Allāh, I have dreamt of - I implore Allāh it be a dream of bounty- cows slaughtered and that there was a groove in the pointed top of my sword (the point of my sword hilt), and that I had inserted my hand into an impenetrable armour." Al-Mubarakpuri continues: "the interpretation of 'the cows' was that some of his men would be killed, and 'the groove at the pointed top of his sword' was that a member of his House would be hurt. As for the 'armour', it was Medina." Al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq; the English Version*, p. 247.

See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 387-388 and Manāṣārah, *al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁰ The standard bearer was Ṭalḥah b. 'Uthmān b. Abī Ṭalḥah from the Banū 'Abd al-Dār. See Ibn Ḥajr, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.3, p. 346 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 490.

¹⁶¹ We should bear in mind the Quraysh supremacy in arms and equipment and should also remember that their way of disposing their forces in fighting order needed little time to accomplish. See the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

allow the Muslim army to use a shortcut to get to the battle area and move into an advantageous battle position.¹⁶² The Muslims' intelligence work enabled them to perform a surprise manoeuvre and appear at the least expected position, and their detailed knowledge of the terrain allowed them to execute an effective defensive plan.¹⁶³ However, it is clear that the plan the Prophet had formulated was a risky one; as for the Prophet's decision to accept a brilliant young archer into the army, this could be an indication that he might have decided in advance that he was going to use and station the archers on the flank of the Muslim army to protect it from the cavalry of the Quraysh.¹⁶⁴ Also, his estimation of the adversary was correct as he used the terrain's natural obstacles to support his army against the adversary's superiority in men and equipment. It could be argued that, as at Badr, the Muslims' intelligence activities at Uḥud were a major factor in their survival.¹⁶⁵

IV.11.3: The Battle of al-Khandaq

At al-Khandaq intelligence was a key factor throughout the progress of the battle, which was in effect a long siege. It was often used during the battle despite the adversary's strong blockade, which the Qur'ān describes. The Qur'ān states: "Behold! They came on you from above you and from below you."¹⁶⁶ If their intelligence activities had not been conducted in good time, the Muslim army would have been in great trouble had divine assistance not come to their aid.¹⁶⁷ One of the elements of Muslim military intelligence was that of *al-ribāṭ*, which was fulfilled through continuous effort such as surveillance.¹⁶⁸ Also of great importance was the breaking of the adversary's united leadership. The Muslims' extensive knowledge of the confederates allowed them to correctly assess their

¹⁶² See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 11, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.3, p. 67, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 239, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyyah*, v.2, p. 495, and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 252. It appears that the Prophet used the intelligence element of *dalīl*, "guide".

¹⁶³ For details of their position see the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁶⁴ The effectiveness of the archers was due to a thorough analysis of the terrain, which is one of the major elements of intelligence; hence it could be argued that the Muslim army, acting on this intelligence, were better prepared for battle. See the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁶⁵ Al-Hirfī, *al-Mukhābarāt*, pp. 54-55, says that intelligence in this battle was a source of power for the Muslim army.

¹⁶⁶ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 33: 10.

¹⁶⁷ One of the important elements of the Muslims' belief at that time was that Islam would be spread and the Prophet would be protected. The Qur'ān (ETMC), 5: 67, states: "O Messenger! Proclaim (the Message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord. If thou didst not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His Mission. And Allāh will defend thee from men (who mean mischief). For Allāh guideth not those who reject Faith."

¹⁶⁸ The women in the fort also had a part in fulfilling this element, as one of them stayed on watch and later on managed to spot the adversary's scout and kill him. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyyah*, v.2, p. 636 and Naumani, *Sīrat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 98.

motivation.¹⁶⁹ As our analysis progresses, other elements of intelligence will be discussed as necessary.

Initially, it should be pointed out that since the battle of Uḥud, the Prophet had continued to send out messages and patrols within the region. He must have realised that the Quraysh would never abandon their strategic goal of destroying Islam. Therefore the Muslims had to be constantly on the alert in case of an attack from their main enemy.

Once again the Muslims' strategic plan bore fruit when the Prophet was informed of the confederacy's movements by a non-Muslim group, the Khuzā'ah.¹⁷⁰ The source appeared to be reliable as it had proved itself at the battle of Uḥud. However, this new information seems to have contained substantial details of the confederacy's apparently overwhelming superiority in terms of men and equipment. The Muslims were therefore able to draw a clear picture of the approaching forces. This shows the advantage the Muslim army derived from face-to-face questioning of the messengers, who also reported on the leadership of the confederate army and the cause of such a huge attack. The Muslims therefore knew that withstanding such an attack would be more difficult than in the last two battles, hence they needed to prepare well. Once again, as at Badr, it was necessary to take account of the time factor and consider how long it would take the confederates to march from Mecca to Medina. The response of the Muslim leader was prompt and well judged as, after some discussion, the Prophet went on a field reconnaissance to examine the possibilities of applying Salmān's suggestion that they should dig a trench.¹⁷¹ The Muslim leadership thought that this plan would improve the position of their inferior forces. Their immediate reaction to the new events shows that they did not underestimate the power of the huge confederate army, which they had never faced before.¹⁷² Here, apparently, the Muslims' perceptions matched the reality of the adversary's strength. However, the Muslim army had to race against time to finish the trench before the arrival of the confederate army.¹⁷³ While they were digging the trench, the Muslim army kept on the alert to the extent that they had their weapons with them all the time, even at

¹⁶⁹ The closest Companion of the Prophet, Abū Bakr, was the most knowledgeable man concerning the ways of the Arab tribes. He knew their leaders, their religion, and their social life. See Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Isābah*, v.4, pp. 169-175 and al-Sharqāwī, *al-Ṣiddiq*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁷⁰ Once again the Khuzā'ah warned the Muslims of the coming threat. It seems that among the main historical works still in use, only al-Ḥalabī reports this source. He claims that the Khuzā'ah made the trip in four nights. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 631.

¹⁷¹ Due to this reconnaissance, the Muslim army had an effective plan for defence. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 631.

¹⁷² See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 632-633.

¹⁷³ They were in such a hurry that when they had no other way of carrying the sand, they used their own clothes. Even Abū Bakr and 'Umar carried the sand in this way. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 632-633.

prayers, which is thought to fulfil the element of *al-ribāṭ*.¹⁷⁴ While they were digging, it was promised through divine assistance that the Muslims would definitely conquer the lands of al-Shām, Persia, and Yemen.¹⁷⁵ This intervention seems to have raised the believers' spirits and at the same time exposed the hypocrites.¹⁷⁶ The good news was also spread throughout the Muslim army. It is possible to say that the Muslim army was fortunate that it had been forewarned, which allowed the soldiers to complete the trench before the arrival of the confederate army.¹⁷⁷ Drawing upon his previous experience with the Jewish tribes of Banū Qaynuqā' and Banū al-Naḍīr,¹⁷⁸ the Prophet despatched a force to guard the rear,¹⁷⁹ possibly because the Muslims were already suspicious of the Banū Qurayzah. Therefore, they sent a force to watch for any movement in the rear despite not having any hard evidence.¹⁸⁰ Later the Muslims' intelligence was very effective, revealing new and important information in the report of the Banū Su'nah, Asad, Usayd, and Tha'labah, who refused to break their treaty with the Prophet;¹⁸¹ as expected, it bore news of the desertion of the Banū Qurayzah. The Muslim community now appeared to be trapped between the confederates at the front and the Banū Qurayzah at the back. If both adversaries had taken serious concerted action the Muslim army would have been split into two, potentially resulting in the defeat of the Muslims and the success of the confederate plan. It is possible that the Muslim leadership considered the likelihood that the news could be a trick of an unreliable source. The Prophet despatched some of his

¹⁷⁴ They guarded the routes into Medina around the clock. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 647 and al-'Alī, *Ghazwat Uḥud*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁷⁵ See al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Bāb: al-Nahī 'an al-Tafarruq fi al-Shi'āb wa al-Awdiyah*, No. 8858, v.5, p. 269), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 97 & 99, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 633. It is possible to say that such divine intelligence increasingly exposed the hypocrites. See the Qur'ān, 33: 12. In contrast, it raised the spirits of the Muslims. It is also believed to be referred to by the verse (ETMC), 3: 26: "Say: "O Allāh! Lord of Power (and Rule), Thou givest power to whom thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom thou pleasest: Thou enduest with honour whom Thou pleasest, and thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: in Thy hand is all good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power".

¹⁷⁶ See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.3, p. 477.

¹⁷⁷ Al-Mubarakpuri argues that if this army had attacked Medina without warning it would definitely have exterminated all the Muslims. Al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 311.

¹⁷⁸ Despite the treaty the Prophet made with them, they broke it. See the Qur'ān, 59: 2, 3, & 4, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ḥadīth Banū al-Naḍīr*, No. 3804, v.4, p. 1478), Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Bāb: Fi Khabar al-Naḍīr*, No. 3004, v.3, p. 156), and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 342.

¹⁷⁹ See the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁸⁰ In this they were obeying the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 71, which states: "O ye who believe! Take your precautions."

¹⁸¹ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 103. Their faithfulness if keeping the treaty is praised in the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 199, states: "And there are, certainly, among the People of the Book, those who believe in Allāh, in the revelation to you, and in the revelation to them, Bowing in humility to Allāh: they will not sell the Signs of Allāh for a miserable gain!"

Companions to confirm this serious news.¹⁸² So as not to weaken the resolve of the Muslim army, he asked them to act as follows: if it were true, they should not declare it openly but indicate it in a particular manner that the rest of the Muslim army would not understand; otherwise they should announce its falsehood openly. When the Prophet was assured of this news, he loudly said: “Allāhu Akbar, glad tidings O Muslims.”¹⁸³ The Prophet, facing such a threat, clearly determined not to alarm his men, and indeed these words from their Prophet seem to have affected them positively. In fact, an enemy scout was killed as he reached the fort, intending to report the status of the rearguard of the Muslim army.¹⁸⁴ Later on, the Prophet wished to undertake an intelligence manoeuvre at the operational level to weaken the adversary’s position by convincing the tribe of Ghaṭafān to retreat, but the plan was not carried out due to the wishes of some notables of the Helpers,¹⁸⁵ presumably because it might have revealed the weak position of the Muslim army. However, the slow pace of the battle made it easier for the Muslim army to collect information and pass it to their leader, but this was only at the tactical level of intelligence since their movement was limited.¹⁸⁶

As the situation got harder, the Muslim leaders took responsibility for different intelligence activities such as protecting or searching for vulnerable points.¹⁸⁷ From an Islamic military intelligence perspective, this battle increasingly exposed the hypocrites.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸² It was reported that the Prophet sent al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām to ascertain the threatening news. Because of his mission al-Zubayr was called *Ḥawāriyyu Rasulu Allāh*. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2692, v.3, p. 1047), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Manāqib Talḥah and al-Zubayr*, No. 2415, v.4, p. 1879), Sunan Ibn Mājah (*Bāb: Manāqib al-Zubayr*, No. 122, v.1, p. 45), Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Bāb: Manāqib al-Zubayr*, No. 3744, v.5, p. 646), and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 639. Another version narrates that he sent the two Saʿds, ʿAbdullah b. Rawāḥah, and Khawāt b. Jubayr. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 104 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 638.

¹⁸³ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 103 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 638.

¹⁸⁴ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 187, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 96, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 105, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 639.

¹⁸⁵ See the section “The Battle of al-Khandaq” in the chapter “The Battles and their Significance” (Ch.3). Also see al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 640.

¹⁸⁶ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2691, v.3, p. 1046), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Manāqib*, No. 8213, v.5, p. 60), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 103, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 638.

¹⁸⁷ One night the Prophet could not go to sleep until he asked for some one to go and protect a vulnerable point. To add to his worry, some confederate warriors managed to cross at a shallow point. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 103 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 638. Nonetheless, even though a few good horsemen managed to cross, the rest of the confederate army could not follow them. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 647.

¹⁸⁸ In this regard the Qurʾān (ETMC), 33: 12, mentions: “And behold! The hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease say: “Allāh and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusions!” Further, see the Qurʾān, 4: 88, Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Siyar*, v.9, p. 31), and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 628.

It is acknowledged that in a crisis a man cannot hide his true thoughts, as the Qurʾān states on various occasions. See the Qurʾān, 10: 12, 16: 53, and 17: 67.

At this time a well-known man of the confederates named Na'im b. Mas'ud al-Thaqafi became a Muslim and secretly reported to the Prophet, informing him that no one knew of his being a Muslim and that he was willing to do whatever was necessary to help lift the siege.¹⁸⁹ Thus, Na'im made a demand related to the Islamic concept of leadership, as he asked for permission to conduct his plan, and the Prophet used one of the Islamic intelligence methods as he allowed Na'im to fulfil it.¹⁹⁰ The Prophet asked him to do his best to lift the siege and so he did. Nevertheless, it appears that the Muslim army's leadership probably did not rely much on Na'im's efforts at the beginning, but he was to play an important role in lifting the siege when he tricked the confederate army.¹⁹¹ The Muslim leader did not limit or distrust Na'im's offer. Thus, it seems that he allowed him to choose the best way he could think of. Also, it is possible to say that Na'im was not experienced and his skills or plan were not clearly known to the Prophet, so it would have been risky to send him on an important mission.¹⁹² Nevertheless the Prophet gave him free rein since he, though new to the faith, knew best the status of the adversary. Al-Ḥalabī reports that towards the end of the siege, Gabriel informed the Prophet that Allāh would send both a strong cold wind and *junūd*¹⁹³ against the confederate army.¹⁹⁴ It can

¹⁸⁹ The element that at that time Islam was continually served by people of numerous races and tribes gave Na'im b. Mas'ud al-Thaqafi, as well as the Banū Su'nah, the opportunity to help the Muslims in this battle, and they assisted the Muslim army in conducting their missions. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 188, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 96, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 111, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 649.

¹⁹⁰ See the section "The Element of *al-Tawriyah*" in this chapter.

¹⁹¹ Responding to the wish of the Prophet, Na'im carried out a successful strategic plan by holding separate talks with the confederates and then with the Banū Qurayzah since he had good relations with the leaders of both. He reported to the Prophet secretly and asked if he could accomplish any mission the Prophet wished to be carried out. The Prophet said: "You are only one man among us, so go and create distrust among the enemy to draw them off us if you can, for war is deceit." He made a plan which led to the creation of dissension between the confederate army and the Banū Qurayzah. His role was one of the most effective factors in breaking the confederates' agreement with the Banū Qurayzah. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 273, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 28, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 164, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 449.

¹⁹² In this connection the following verse (ETMC), 4: 71, could be cited: "O ye who believe! Take your precautions." Also see the third point in the section "The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader; the Leader's Self-knowledge" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5), which states that the leader should know his men. Therefore, assigning any mission to a new Muslim at this very critical moment was very risky. Additionally, he was known by the other Muslims as a non-Muslim, so he would be treated as a non-Muslim.

¹⁹³ In the edition of the Qur'ān used by the study (ETMC) *junūd*, found in 9: 26 and 33: 9, means literally "soldiers". However, some important exegetical works (those of which are al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.21, p. 126, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.14, p. 144, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.3, p. 471, and al-Zuhaylī, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.21, pp. 258-259, claims that *junūd* means angels. They should not, however, have limited its meaning to denote angels only, since the Qur'ānic verses, 48: 4 & 7 and 74: 31 do not limit its meaning in this way. Furthermore, the meaning of *junūd* may be said to encompass the psychological effect of Allāh's support and blessing of the Muslim soldier.

¹⁹⁴ Al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 648. Also see Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, No. 1788, v.3, p. 1414).

be argued that during the battle of al-Khandaq the Muslims' counterintelligence activities reached the highest level of activity, by managing to create discord between the confederate army and their allies among the Banū Qurayzah.¹⁹⁵ Consequently, the Prophet carefully chose one scout and informed him that that night something would happen in the confederate camp, and whatever happened he needed to be aware of.¹⁹⁶ He also briefed him before his departure and ordered him to stick to his mission without carrying out any additional activities.¹⁹⁷

At the battle of al-Khandaq the Prophet used all available means to collect the required information; he used the method of continuous assessments. The terrain reconnaissance prior to the confrontation helped the Muslims to make a more effective defensive plan. However, despite the fact that the intelligence of the Muslim army was very limited in relation to the length of time the battle lasted, it had a great effect on the execution and outcome of the battle.¹⁹⁸ Therefore, it can again be argued that intelligence was an important source of power for the Muslim army at al-Khandaq.¹⁹⁹

IV.11.4: The Battle of al-Yarmūk

The intelligence factor in this battle has not received much attention from Muslim historians perhaps because firstly, they were unable to collect the necessary information, secondly, the leaders concealed the most important information as a matter of security, and finally, because of the extraordinary circumstances of the battle they did not see the need to record intelligence details.

¹⁹⁵ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, pp. 188-191, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 96-97, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 111-112, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 645-651.

¹⁹⁶ Al-Ḥalabī reports that the Prophet did not send an irascible scout such as al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām, who was known to be a man of quick temper, because he knew that obtaining information about the enemy was more valuable than killing a few of them. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 653 and ʿAbd al-Ghanī, *Nuzm al-Istikhbārāt*, p. 36.

¹⁹⁷ It seems that the Prophet chose Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān specifically since he knew he would be a better scout than the others, partly owing to his self-restraint. When Ḥudhayfah was about to be discovered, his quick thinking saved him. The story is as follows. When Ḥudhayfah crept into the Quraysh camp and was able to sit among them, he heard Abū Sufyān shouting and calling on his men to make sure that there was no spy of the Muslim army among them. He straightaway took the initiative and grabbed the men to his right and left, asking them to identify themselves. Both men did so, but to his good fortune, they did not ask who he was. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 191, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 114, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 653. Additionally, it can be claimed that the three steps required to send a scout on a mission were fulfilled. See the section "Manpower as a Resource of Intelligence" in this chapter.

¹⁹⁸ The only two scouts sent out prior to the battle had been caught and killed. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 628.

¹⁹⁹ It should be noted that the Prophet said after this battle: "Now we will invade them; they will not invade us". See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat al-Khandaq*, No. 3883, v.4, p. 1508). In this sense al-Khandaq is the turning point in the relationship between the Muslims and the Arabs in the Peninsula.

Having said that, this battle is different from those previously discussed and it needs special care in the assessment of the Muslims' intelligence work. However, it seems that there were certain key factors of intelligence in this battle, for example continuous surveillance, working undercover as a non-Muslim traveller, controlling the reporting of information to the soldiers, and the use of interpreters.

What the commanders knew before the battle influenced its progress since some of them had travelled among and dealt with the Byzantines before. They had a certain amount of knowledge about the Byzantine army and what their morale was likely to be after several battles with them, where both sides had tasted both victory and defeat.²⁰⁰ At al-Yarmūk they knew with certainty that they were outnumbered as far as men and equipment were concerned.²⁰¹ Therefore, they were aware that this new dimension of fighting against a relatively unknown foe implied that the Muslims' intelligence needed to work carefully in an unfamiliar area, for the adversary's forces spoke a different language.²⁰² Nevertheless, although it can be argued that everyone in the Muslim army knew that they would not have had the courage to even think of attacking such a powerful empire in the years prior to Islam, this perception seems to have encouraged them to pursue intelligence activities at the strategic level. In addition, knowing that they were fulfilling the element of divine assistance, they were prepared and determined fight, since they knew that their Prophet had been told by a supernatural source that they would conquer the region of al-Shām.²⁰³ This conviction made it possible for the Caliph and his commanders to gather together a great force. However, it should be noted that divine assistance largely ceased when the Prophet passed away.²⁰⁴

First of all, it should be recognised that to move secretly to collect information from a powerful army is a risk in itself. An adversary who speaks a different language makes the task even harder. However, that the Muslims' intelligence was working against the Byzantine army, which could not differentiate between an Arab of the Quraysh and one

²⁰⁰ Among these battles were Thātu Aṭlāḥ, Mu'tah, and Usāmah's raid. See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, pp. 144, 145, 149, 151, and 152.

²⁰¹ Regarding the Byzantines' resources of men and equipment see the section "The Byzantines and Sāsānians" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

²⁰² The study is not able to understand the reason these difficulties were not reported.

²⁰³ See al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Bāb: al-Nahī 'an al-Tafarruq fi al-Shi'āb wa al-Awdiyah*, No. 8858, v.5, p. 269), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 97 & 99, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 633.

²⁰⁴ For the types of the divine assistance see the section "The Significant Effect of Assistance through Divine Information" above.

from Bādiyat al-Shām, eased their mission somewhat.²⁰⁵ Indeed, it might have been even easier than usual, since there were other Arabs who were not Muslims living with and fighting alongside the Byzantine army; however, their movement within the enemy camp was more likely to be discovered by an Arab adversary than by a Byzantine. Also, the flexibility of the Islamic military doctrine made their mission less difficult, as they were excused from practising their daily worship in its original form, for instance the prayers.²⁰⁶ Similarly to the battle of al-Khandaq, the advantage of early intelligence saved the Muslim army from being eliminated in the region of al-Shām.²⁰⁷ Scouts informed them about the massive numbers of the Byzantine forces and their movements.²⁰⁸ The reliability of the sources was not questioned or discussed, as far as can be known from the historical records. Further, the leaders gathered some information themselves. Due to his previous experience in the region of al-Shām, Abū Sufyān was able to allocate the battlefield at the operational level.²⁰⁹ It can be argued that the reliability of this source of intelligence was beyond question. While the Muslim army retreated in the region of al-Shām, its intelligence agents kept the leadership aware of the adversary's movements.²¹⁰ The scouts reported that the Byzantine army was stationed in an area near al-Wāqūṣah.²¹¹ As far as the battlefield itself is concerned, one might argue that the accurate intelligence of the

²⁰⁵ Had they been fighting other Arabs they would have been discovered straight away because of their dialect. See the section "Tribal Life and Feuding" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

²⁰⁶ Similarly, see the case of 'Abdullah b. Unays which is narrated in Sunan Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, No. 1249, v.2, p. 18), Musnad Aḥmad (v.3, p. 495), al-Aṣbahānī, *Ḥyliyāt al-Awliyā'*, v.2, pp. 5-6, and Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, v.2, pp. 50-51.

²⁰⁷ They were saved since the leaders of the Muslim armies, as well as the Caliph, were mostly agreed on gathering together and fighting their adversary from one tactical position. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 335 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 431. Al-Ṭabarī uses the term *aḥassa*, which can be understood in two ways: the first meaning is that the Muslim army conducted intelligence work themselves, as would be indicated by the word *taḥassasū*; secondly he could have meant *aḥassu*, meaning to feel. It seems that he used the first meaning. Also see the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

²⁰⁸ To a certain extent, this allowed them to know their adversary's strengths and weaknesses. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 431. Also see the section "The Adversary at the Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Adversaries' Strengths and Weaknesses" (Ch.7).

²⁰⁹ It seems that Abū Sufyān and some of the well-known leaders at al-Yarmūk had visited the area as traders both before and after the foundation of Islam. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 333 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 130.

In the Qur'ān, the *surah* Quraysh mentions the journeys of merchants made between Mecca and other places. Further see al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.30, pp. 306-308, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.2, p. 201, and al-Zuhayli, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.30, pp. 412-418.

²¹⁰ See the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

²¹¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334, Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muḥjam al-Buldān*, v.5, p. 354, and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 433.

Muslim army allowed them to choose the battlefield at the operational level whereas the Byzantine army chose the battlefield at the tactical level.²¹²

Prior to the fight, the Muslim army sent more scouts to find out about the loud sounds emanating from the adversary's camp.²¹³ This shows how close the two armies were to each other and also demonstrates the extent of their precautions and mutual suspicion. During the negotiations, unlike in the three battles previously discussed, the leader, himself Khālid b. al-Walīd, went to meet the adversary in his own camp²¹⁴ in order to discover more about the Byzantines and particularly how they might be defeated. After the negotiations ended in failure, a scout warned the Muslim army of the attack on the following day.²¹⁵ This information was of prime importance and had a powerful bearing on the conduct and outcome of the battle, as the Muslims were able to prepare and position their men in good time. It is noteworthy that al-Ṭabarī was more accurate when he used the Arabic word *taḥassasū* in his discussion of the gathering of intelligence that night; the word indicated that the information was reported by a Muslim scout. This would make the information more reliable at that moment and in that situation.²¹⁶ During the early hours of the confrontation, two visions granted to Abū 'Ubaydah and Abū Mirthid al-Khawlānī were spread among the Muslim army.²¹⁷ These were thought to be instances of divine assistance, and increased their resolve.²¹⁸ In the heat of the fighting a message arrived from Medina instructing Abū 'Ubaydah to take over the command and Khālid to relinquish it. However, if at that moment the news had been spread in the Muslim army it would have affected its fighting spirit. This does not mean Abū 'Ubaydah was not a capable leader, or was not liked, but the removal of a leader that the soldiers loved, trusted, and admired at the most critical moment of the fight was bound to have had a

²¹² See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334, Bahadur and Sherwani, *Life of Abū Bakr*, pp. 73-74, and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 432. See the section "The Adversary at the Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Adversaries' Strengths and Weaknesses" (Ch.7). For a tactical assessment see the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

²¹³ For the reasons for these sounds see the section "The Adversary at the Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Adversaries' Strengths and Weaknesses" (Ch.7).

²¹⁴ See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 435. Khālid negotiated with his adversary only within the limitations of the three options prescribed Islamic Military Doctrine. See the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

²¹⁵ In the early hours of the day of the attack, while the Byzantine army was preparing its soldiers, Khālid and his commanders were working to dispose the ranks of their soldiers as quickly as possible. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 335 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 468.

²¹⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 335.

Further his usage of this word coincides with its usage in the Qur'ān, 12: 87, in the passage where Jacob (Ya'qūb) tells his sons to look for Joseph (Yūsuf) and his brother (PBUTA).

²¹⁷ Further see Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 468.

²¹⁸ Kamāl writes: "The Muslims were happy and rejoiced at the glad tidings". Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 469.

greatly negative effect on their performance.²¹⁹ But it should be recognised that ‘Umar, the Caliph, showed his wisdom when he chose a shrewd man to deliver his message. On his arrival this messenger was able to read the situation of the Muslim army and did the right thing, keeping the news of the transfer of command and the death of the Caliph to himself and giving the glad tidings of fresh reinforcements to the soldiers. It can be argued that Khālid made a wise decision by not telling anyone about the message until the end of that day’s fight. Withholding the news saved the Muslim army from severe confusion and internal defeat.²²⁰ Of all the intelligence activities carried out during the battle itself, this can be considered the most effective. Generally, it could be argued that since al-Yarmūk was a short fight, most of the intelligence activities were conducted prior to the confrontation.²²¹

IV.11.5: The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah

Intelligence activities were carried out for many months prior to the battle of al-Qādisiyyah, therefore only those activities which had a direct effect on the battle itself will be discussed. First of all, the Muslims had had previous experience of the power of the Persian army. They knew that it belonged to one of the two most powerful empires of that time. They had fought against it several times during the previous two years and had both lost and won. However, now, speaking of this battle and his perception of it, ‘Umar said that al-Qādisiyyah was the gateway to the Sāsānian lands.²²² The intelligence work for this battle started when ‘Umar asked the people of Iraq who had arrived in Medina to go back under Sa’d’s command. When Sa’d took over the leadership, he was urged by the previous leader in the Iraq region, al-Muthanna b. Ḥārithah, not to fight the Persian army on its own territory but in an area close to the border with the Arab lands.²²³ This advice, which was based on extensive knowledge and analysis, coincided with the view of Caliph ‘Umar.²²⁴ Their perception was that the Sāsānians would gather the best of their forces

²¹⁹ The Muslim soldiers were optimistic when they were guided by Khālid since they knew his ability as a military leader. ‘Umar remarked when he was informed of Khālid’s death that he had succeeded in everything he did. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 117.

²²⁰ Keeping problematic information secret was very effective at al-Yarmūk. The news carried from Medina was that the beloved Caliph was dead. If such news had spread it might have shattered the spirit of the Muslim army.

²²¹ It was a one-day battle. See the section “The Battle of al-Yarmūk” in the chapter “The Battles and their Significance” (Ch.3).

²²² It could be argued that ‘Umar thus pointed out in advance the next intelligence goal which the Muslims needed to concentrate on. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 386.

²²³ This intelligence information limited the area of operations for the Muslim army. It demonstrates the effect of intelligence on the army’s position in the battle at the operational level. For a full discussion of this point see the section “The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah” in the chapter “The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy” (Ch.8).

²²⁴ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 386.

against them. Therefore, the morale of the adversary, and the numbers and condition of his men and equipment, had to be continuously observed, since constant surveillance brings the best information. The need for this information focused the Muslims' intelligence activity at the operational level. Also, it allowed the Muslim army to have an advance perception of the next battle and what it would be like. In fact, 'Umar knew well what was in store when he addressed Sa'd: "And know that you are advancing towards a severe trial and be patient, patient."²²⁵

Therefore, 'Umar requested Sa'd to send extensive patrols, *'sarāyā*, in advance to obtain a clear picture of the terrain and the movements of their enemy, either the Arab tribes living there or the Persian army.²²⁶

Additionally, it is noteworthy that the highest leader, 'Umar, was kept continuously informed since he requested Sa'd to write to him daily about what he had discovered.²²⁷

Sa'd sent patrols into the Sawād²²⁸ to conduct raids while he was travelling to the battlefield. On one of these raids the Muslims captured a large booty including Sāsānian women. These scouts' activities were beneficial at the strategic level as they drew the Persian army to a specific spot. Sa'd was informed that Rustam was leading the Persian army,²²⁹ and it is likely that the experienced men of Iraq who knew the Persian army well would have confirmed that the Emperor had sent against the Muslim army one of his greatest military commanders of that time. Up until this moment the numbers and equipment of the adversary were not certain, and it seems that Sa'd's information was not communicated to the army, but it did confirm the perception of the Muslim leaders that the next battle was going to be a destructive fight and that the outcome would be decisive. Consequently, Sa'd sent forward Zuhrah, one of his commanders, to secure the front and to search for their enemy while he was on his way to the battlefield of al-Qādisiyyah.²³⁰ Scouts were sent day and night to search for and secure the front line and to seek more information.²³¹ When the Sāsānian Emperor asked to negotiate with some Muslims, 'Umar

²²⁵ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 423.

²²⁶ See al-Jubbūrī, *Tadābir al-Amn*, pp.45-50 and 'Abd al-Ghanī, *Nuẓm al-Istikhbārāt*, pp. 92-93.

²²⁷ 'Umar ordered Sa'd to be very cautious, especially when Sa'd reported that all the people of the Sawād who had entered into treaties with the Muslims had gone back on their pledges. They were even collaborating with the Sāsānians and were preparing for war against the Muslims. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 387.

²²⁸ Sawād means the lowlands of Iraq. See Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 155.

²²⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 387.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Zuhrah, 'Āṣim b. 'Amrū, and others were continuously carrying out intelligence work. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 388.

ordered Sa'd to send capable envoys²³² who would represent the Muslims skilfully and at the same time collect more information.²³³ 'Umar knew that an envoy who impressed the enemy would, in modern terms, have a negative psychological effect on his morale.²³⁴ Our knowledge of the messengers indicates that most of them possessed an imposing appearance and a strong personality, which was calculated to impress the adversary.²³⁵ Also, it seems that Sa'd sent men who could be trusted to succeed in such a mission, as 'Umar had requested.²³⁶ Apart from the matter of their appearance and personality, their number included Companions, well-known fighters, frequent visitors to the Sāsānian Emperor, and Persian speakers. Surprisingly perhaps, among Sa'd's envoys were former apostates from Islam (*Murtadūn*).²³⁷

Among the many reconnaissance parties which Sa'd sent out, that of Ṭulayḥah b. Khuwaylid al-Uṣdī and others,²³⁸ when they were on their way, came across a huge army camping nearby.²³⁹ This was to prove a turning point. They had two alternatives: either to carry on the reconnaissance, or to retreat and report their findings. The men preferred to go back and tell Sa'd what they had found, which was surely the more reasonable course.²⁴⁰ However, as the great numbers of the enemy became clear, Ṭulayḥah insisted on gathering more information and he himself captured a man from the Persian army and took him back for questioning.²⁴¹ He needed to make sure that any further perception of the enemy was built on strong evidence. This incident illustrates that Ṭulayḥah's reconnoitre was carried out differently as it was conducted by force, and his behaviour was

²³² As with Khālid's negotiations at al-Yarmūk, these envoys were ordered to put only three options to the adversary: accept Islam, pay the *jizyah*, or fight. See the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

²³³ Envoys should be able to collect information as well as convey the message of their leader well. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 389-390.

²³⁴ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 389.

²³⁵ See the section "Appearance and Personality" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4). One of the messengers, Rib'ī b. 'Āmir, was not particularly tall; but we should not forget that he was the one who suggested at the latest stages of negotiations to send only one envoy in order to show the Sāsānians that the Muslim army was not much concerned about them. His shrewd advice led Sa'd to send him. This shows that appearance is a more subtle factor than one might at first think.

²³⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 389 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 38.

²³⁷ Sa'd was following the advice of 'Umar not to use the apostates in positions of command in the army, since such positions would allow them to be in charge of other Muslims and they might mislead them. However, some of them had great skills, which could serve Islam better than those of many others.

²³⁸ There were in fact two groups: one was led by Ṭulayḥah b. Khuwaylid and the other by 'Amrū b. Ma'dī-Karib al-Zubaydī. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 397.

²³⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 397.

²⁴⁰ According to the Department of the Army, the intelligence agent should not wait until he has complete information on the enemy to report; even small amounts of combat information are useful. See Department of the Army, *Soldier's Manual of Common Tasks*, p. 12.

²⁴¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 398 and al-Tha'ālibī [d. 1363/1944], *Khilāfat al-Ṣiddīq wa al-Farūq*, p. 219.

certainly questionable since he had put his life at risk. Having said that, his luck held, and in any case the movement of one man can be more secure than the movement of many. Also, it was possible to take advantage of the Sāsānian's inability to distinguish him from one of the non-Muslim Arabs travelling with and serving in the Persian army for various purposes.²⁴² Whatever the facts may be, he was the one most responsible for revealing details of the amount of arms and equipment carried by the Persian army.²⁴³ After a few days the captive embraced Islam, and Sa'd was able to use him as an advisor and a spy in the Persian camp. Although this might have been dangerous due to his close relation with the non-Muslims, he acted as Na'im had done at the battle of al-Khandaq.²⁴⁴ Once again the Muslim army fully utilised and benefited from the skills offered by different races and tribes who had embraced Islam.²⁴⁵ At this stage, the function of the Muslim army patrols altered from pressing the Persian army to come forward to concentrating on collecting information.²⁴⁶

Again, several envoys went to meet Rustam and put to him the three options of Islamic military doctrine.²⁴⁷ From an intelligence point of view, since the efforts of the Sāsānian leaders to win over the Muslim negotiators with wealth and gifts proved fruitless, it is possible to claim that the identical message they were all conveying constituted a psychological attack on the adversary. Their steadfastness made it clear that the Muslim army was determined to accomplish its goals.²⁴⁸ The last envoy brought the news that the fight would start the following day.²⁴⁹

The Muslim army, however, failed to appreciate the power of the Persian material, i.e. how difficult it would be to fight against their elephants, despite the fact that a Muslim army had fought against a Persian army equipped with elephants at the battle of Dhāt al-

²⁴² This shows that the strategic plan of choosing the battlefield was starting to bear fruit. For details see the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

²⁴³ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 399.

²⁴⁴ This shows that apart from knowing his men, a good leader should be a good judge of men, and be able to act on his intuition at short notice. See the section "The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader; the Leader's Self-knowledge" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

²⁴⁵ As at al-Khandaq, when Salmān al-Fārisī advised the Prophet to dig the trench before Medina. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 182 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 633.

²⁴⁶ See the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3). Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 398.

²⁴⁷ See the section "The Concept of the Just War" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4). Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 406.

²⁴⁸ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 401-403. For a full discussion of this point see the section "The Significance of Islamic Military Doctrine" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

²⁴⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 406.

Salāsīl in the first month of the year 12 of AH (Apr. 633 AD).²⁵⁰ Had they taken proper account of this weapon it is likely that they would have attempted to eliminate the threat before the battle began, or at least made a plan to do so later. When Sa'd eventually asked the newly converted Muslims whether the elephants had vulnerable spots, they specified the eyes and trunks.²⁵¹

Sa'd continued to send out night scouts to protect critical points and also to get news of the Persian army.²⁵² One of these scouts' reports resulted in both armies resting for several hours on the third night before the fighting started again at midnight (there was a full moon). It seems that the view of both armies was that whoever carried on fighting to the end would be the victor; stamina was a crucial factor after three long consecutive days of fighting. The Qur'ān states: "O ye who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance."²⁵³ Sa'd's first recognition of the good progress the Muslim army was making in the Night of *al-Harīr* came when he heard the poem of al-Qa'qā'c.²⁵⁴ Despite his continuous concern to collect information during the battle, it is not reported that Sa'd conducted any intelligence activities himself.²⁵⁵ Additionally, no visions of glad tidings were reported in this battle.²⁵⁶ Unlike in the other battles under study, the element of *al-ribāṭ* at al-Qādisiyyah was particularly effective as it served to control the impatience of the Muslim army.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁰ See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Madā'in*, p. 212. Also see the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

²⁵¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 406. This is another instance of the advantages of different races embracing Islam. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 419. They also specified for them the two most important elephants, which the other elephants followed; these became the targets of the next attack.

²⁵² See the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3). See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 421.

²⁵³ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 200. Both al-Qurṭubī and al-Zuḥayli state that the phrase "vie in such perseverance" implies that the Muslims should have greater patience than the non-Muslims. See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.4, p. 221 and al-Zuḥayli, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.4, p. 213.

²⁵⁴ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 423. It is worth mentioning that one of the methods the Arabs used to announce their intentions was to proclaim them aloud in the form of poetry.

²⁵⁵ See Hirfī, *al-Mukhābarāt*, p. 123.

²⁵⁶ However, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, v.8, p. 204, mentions that an instance of divine assistance did occur which assured the support of Allāh for the Muslim army. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, 'Āṣim b. 'Amr was sent on a patrol looking for sheep and cattle, he encountered a man on the edge of a thicket, and asked him where the cattle and sheep were; the man swore that he did not know. It became clear, however, that he himself was the cowherd, for a bull then exclaimed "By God, he is lying! Here we are." 'Āṣim went in and led the bulls away. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 388 and Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.2, p. 303. For the translation see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī; the English Version*, v.XII, p. 28.

²⁵⁷ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 397.

The above evidence leads us to conclude that Sa'd used all available means to collect the information he needed.²⁵⁸ Although each scout and patrol had a particular mission, they all had to use their knowledge, daring and skill to provide their leaders with the information they needed and had requested with the least possible delay.²⁵⁹ Their good work allowed the leaders to choose the battlefield at all levels, i.e. strategic, operational, and tactical. Even though the leadership sometimes failed to respond promptly to the whole range of information they received about the adversary, their intelligence allowed them to do their best to prepare their men, arms, and equipment for the decisive battle with the Sāsānian Empire.

The preceding discussion has shown that at al-Qādisiyyah intelligence was a source of power, was a contributing element of *al-ribāṭ*, and prevented the destruction of the Muslim army.

VI.12: Comparison of the Battles

From the foregoing discussions and analyses of the five battles, it seems that the element of Islamic military intelligence affected the soldiers' performance differently in each battle. However, the intelligence-gathering environments in the last two battles were more difficult since the Muslims were confronting professional armies with different religious backgrounds. We have seen that purely Islamic concepts were applied in some cases which varied from one battle to another. Additionally, some general points shared by other schools of intelligence were examined from an Islamic perspective.

Divine assistance was involved in most of the battles in varying degrees. However, in the first three battles, it was manifested in its three types while the revelations to the Prophet were still in progress.²⁶⁰ At al-Yarmūk the last two types, advance information in the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*, and vision, were manifested, and at al-Qādisiyyah only the second type was involved.

The element of *al-ribāṭ* was seen to cover a wide area of performance; this Islamic element was an important factor in all the battles. In fact, the longer the battle, the more this element was in evidence. Hence, the last three battles were mainly affected by this element since the Muslim army had to bear the hardships associated with these battles for a long period.

²⁵⁸ Ḥanzalah al-Tamīmī was helpful in guiding the Muslim army to Iraq since he was an experienced man of the Iraq region. See Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 67.

²⁵⁹ See Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 63.

²⁶⁰ See the forms of divine assistance in the section "The Significant Effect of Assistance through Divine Information".

Al-tawriyah is another purely Islamic concept. Since it was not continually employed as *al-ribāṭ* was, the use of this element was reported only at the battles of Badr and al-Yarmūk. It allowed the Muslim army to gather the information it needed without having to resort to deception.

Intelligence was conducted in two forms: *taḥassasū*, 'look by yourself' and *tajassasū*, 'others might do it for you'.²⁶¹ In these battles, the Muslim armies conducted both types. The element of *taḥassasū*, however, was not fulfilled at Uḥud or al-Khandaq, since the army at that time was fighting for the survival of the community and was not yet experienced in highly organised warfare as it was in the last two battles.

Additionally, it can be argued that information provided in these battles had an impact upon the Muslim army both spiritually and materially. Reconnaissance was a most useful tool in three of the battles, but was not much used in the battles of Uḥud and al-Khandaq, where preventive intelligence proved most effective.²⁶² In contrast, it was the major element in the form of subjective intelligence gathering in the other battles. Additionally, while terrain was not a major factor chosen by the Muslims at al-Yarmūk, it was clearly advantageous in the other battles, especially al-Khandaq. Additionally, speed and secrecy in collecting and reporting information were two elements employed in an Islamic manner which were maintained and used positively in all the battles. Secrecy was particularly effective at al-Yarmūk, and speed at al-Khandaq.²⁶³

Generally, the adversaries' strengths and weaknesses were discovered and clearly understood. However, at al-Yarmūk there were few intelligence activities prior to the confrontation. The lack of intelligence activity was especially critical prior to the battle of Badr.

The element of planning, which was based on the above elements, was properly carried out even though it was disrupted at the battle of Uḥud. However, the best examples of planning based on intelligence can be seen in the battles of Badr, al-Khandaq, and al-Qādisiyyah, although there was a major flaw in planning at al-Qādisiyyah, where the Muslims had at first no way of dealing with the Persians' elephants.

VI.13: Conclusion

In this chapter, after defining the term *Islamic Military Intelligence*, the study went on to prove its validity from an Islamic point of view. Following this, the types of intelligence

²⁶¹ Since both types were ordered and conducted by the Prophet, this would allow them to be counted as a part of the *shari'a*.

²⁶² See the Qur'ān, 4: 71.

²⁶³ See the stories of the two Sa'ds for secrecy and the story of Bisbis for speed, referred to in the discussions of the battles of Badr and al-Khandaq in this chapter.

gathering including reconnaissance, which is considered to be one of the main methods, and manpower as an important resource, were investigated. Next, the leader's relationship with his intelligence gatherers and his degree of response to their intelligence reports were examined. This was followed by an analysis of the importance of information gathering and its value to the soldiers. In the last part of the theoretical section of this chapter, the elements of divine assistance, i.e. revelation and vision, and of *al-tawriyah* were investigated.

The events of each battle were considered in the light of the theoretical section, and a critical analysis was attempted. Lastly, the battles were compared in order to show how Islamic military intelligence proved to be a key factor in the Muslim army's successful achievement of its goals in all five battles.

Therefore, from the evidence considered, albeit briefly, in this chapter it seems that Islamic military intelligence was a source of power for the Muslim armies in the five battles. It used all the available means, i.e. both divine assistance and human abilities. The Muslim armies in these battles gathered and acted upon the collected information according to the commands and teachings of Islam. This conclusion is supported by Handel's argument that a weak army with first-rate intelligence would be victorious over a strong army with weak intelligence.²⁶⁴

Once the leader is provided with the necessary intelligence information, he can build an accurate assessment of the adversary's strengths and weaknesses. On the basis of this assessment he can then construct the necessary strategic and tactical plans, taking the appropriate measures which will allow the army to attain its goals.²⁶⁵ The next chapter considers the importance of knowing the adversary's strengths and weaknesses, referring in detail to the battles under study.

²⁶⁴ However there are obviously other factors essential to the achievement of victory. See Handel, "Intelligence and Military Operations", No.2, v.5, pp. 33-65.

²⁶⁵ For a similar view see Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 40.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Adversaries' Strengths and Weaknesses

This chapter plays an important part in the study since it concentrates on the various powers opposed to the Muslims. Every power has its own strengths and weaknesses, which are key factors in the course and outcome of any battle. In the five battles considered by the study the stability of these factors varied greatly in accordance with the effect of both internal and external factors. However, there are standard measures that can be used to determine, with some confidence, the strengths and weaknesses of the Muslims' adversaries. For the sake of balance these strengths and weaknesses will be analysed to complete the picture already partly drawn by the analysis of the Muslims' intelligence activities presented in chapter six.

Among these external and internal influences were those of religion, leadership, military mobilization, psychology, terrain, and planning. It should be noted, however, that some of these factors were recognised by the Muslim army, as stated in chapter six, while others were not. This chapter also draws on the discussion presented in chapter two, "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam".

VII.1: The Adversary at the Battle of Badr

It can be argued that the Quraysh lost this battle for three main reasons: first, their army was not united by religious conviction, and they were consequently unable to comprehend the vital unifying effect of the Muslims' religious motivation; second, their overconfidence in their own power and underestimation of their adversary; third, the increasing divisions among the leadership. This section will attempt an assessment of the relative importance of these three causes of defeat.

The Muslims already knew a great deal about the Quraysh army. They knew that the Quraysh were divided, commanded by a squabbling disunited leadership, and driven by different motives.¹ Nevertheless the Quraysh owed their reputation among the Arabs

¹ For evidence of a divided leadership, it is worth mentioning that even while the Quraysh army was on its way to the battlefield, more than one clan broke away and retreated. This is in accordance with the third type of leadership. See the section "Types of Leadership" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5). Also see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 166, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 29, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyyah*, v.2, p. 391. Further see the section "The Special Characteristics of the Arabs" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

partly to religion: they were united by a veneration of the Ka'bah and their idols.² However, despite this reputation, their main reason for fighting the Muslims was not a religious one, since of all the varied pronouncements of their leaders not one emphasised religious differences.³ Moreover, the Quraysh's religion was well understood by the Muslims, since they themselves had practised it prior to Islam. Therefore, it can be said that the Muslim army was well aware that a true and single united religion, such as they practised, did not exist among the Quraysh forces. Further, the Quraysh as a whole were not known as the most pious people of Arabia; they were the custodians of the Ka'ba, but their piety was partly driven by economic factors.⁴ In fact, even though their city was a focus of Arab religious feelings, their lack of a unifying religion caused disunity from the beginning. Hence, on the one hand, one of their strengths was that they were custodians of this focus of belief. This was certainly an important factor in their morale. On the other hand, their lack of true religious commitment was a weakness when fighting the Muslims, whose strong religious motivation made them a 'band of brothers' and forged an unbreakable comradeship.⁵ The Quraysh were incapable of understanding the unifying affect of Islam on the Muslims since such a religious power was beyond their experience. Thus they were led to make a serious misjudgement of how the battle would proceed. In terms of manpower alone, the Quraysh army was superior to the Muslim army by a factor of more than three to one.⁶ The Muslims' sources of information told them of their adversary's military superiority and that the expected confrontation would be against the Quraysh alone without their allies.⁷ The Muslims also learned that the Quraysh forces included a high proportion of their nobility. This news disheartened some of the Muslim soldiers, who would rather not have met the Quraysh army in such circumstances. In this

² In *The Holy Qur'an ETMC*, p. 2015, it is found that the Quraysh were given the honour and profit due to their position as servants of the sacred shrine of the Ka'bah. Also see the section "The Arabian Peninsula before to Islam" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

³ Among them was Abū Jahl, one of the highest ranking Quraysh leaders, who insisted that they proceed to Badr and stay three nights there to conduct festivities. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 165, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 28, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 390, and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 212. Additionally, this matter is mentioned in the Qur'an (ETMC), 8: 47: "And be not like those who started from their homes insolently and to be seen of men."

⁴ The Quraysh also used to sell the pilgrims sculpted stones to carry with them on the journey back to their tribes. See al-Nāsir and Dirwīsh, *al-Ḥayāh al-Dīniyyah*, p. 23.

⁵ See the section "The Element of Strong Motivation" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁶ In this connection the Qur'an (ETMC), 8: 7, describes the Quraysh army as *al-shawkah*, meaning 'the one with the power', indicating that they were superior in men, arms, and equipment to the Muslim army.

⁷ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 164 and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 28. For the alliance factor see the section "Tribal Alliances" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

connection the Qur'ān says: "Ye wished that the one unarmed should be yours."⁸ This was an initial weakness of the Muslims which can be considered as strengthening the adversary, even though the Quraysh were unaware of it at the time. The same might be said of the initial disappointment of the Muslim army over losing the caravan.⁹ It is probable, however, that the escape of the caravan increased the Quraysh's confidence, as despite the extensive intelligence activities of the Muslim army, the adversary, at first, was able to win a kind of victory due to the abilities of its cautious leader, Abū Sufyān,¹⁰ whose scouts had alerted him to the impending Muslim ambush. After evaluating the threat, he sent a man to warn the Meccans so that their caravan could be saved; although, as we have seen, he did not wait for reinforcements but avoided Badr and evaded the Muslim forces. This success, although temporary, gave the adversary some psychological advantage. On the other hand, knowing that they would soon meet the Muslim army after the escape of the caravan unsettled the Quraysh forces and caused them to hesitate.¹¹ Although the Muslims knew of the Quraysh nobility's involvement, their intelligence did not report that when a nobleman had not been able to join the advancing army, he had sent someone instead of him to represent him in the battle, as historians have later revealed.¹² This action weakened the Quraysh somewhat, as the replacement could not have been as effective as the nobleman himself, who could have offered valuable advice and been supported by his kinsmen and clan loyal to him.¹³ The Quraysh's rush to join battle with the Muslims indicates that they underestimated their adversary's power, and therefore failed to take time to consult together or to make

⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 7.

⁹ Some of these points strengthened the Quraysh army only indirectly, since they were not recognised at the time, as the Qur'ān, 8: 7, later makes clear. Also note the comment of Ibn Mas'ūd that he never thought that any among the Muslim army were seeking worldly wealth until the Qur'ān, 8: 7, revealed that fact. See Musnad Aḥmad (No. 4414, v.1, p. 463) and Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.7, p. 348.

¹⁰ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 374.

¹¹ The Qur'ān states that a Higher Power was directing both armies towards confrontation. The Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 42, states: "Remember ye were on the hither side of the valley, and they on the farther side, and the caravan on lower ground than ye. Even if ye had made a mutual appointment to meet, ye would certainly have failed in the appointment: But (thus ye met), that Allāh might accomplish a matter already decided."

¹² Nevertheless, the histories in question can be criticised as they mislead the reader through the way they structure the following sentence: "When a man could not go he had sent someone instead". They make it sound as though there were many men who did not go and were replaced by others, whereas they specifically mention only Abū Lahab. Abū Lahab sent as a replacement al-ʿĀṣ b. Hishām, who owed him some money. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 156, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 24, and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 258.

¹³ It was not possible for this study to ascertain whether substitution was carried out in the other battles or not. In other words, it is not clear if this practice was usual in the Arab method of fighting. At any rate, no similar incidents were reported in any of the other four battles considered by the study.

adequate preparations.¹⁴ The Quraysh army's underestimation of the Muslim army is also shown by its refusal of the reinforcements offered by Khaffāf b. Imā' al-Ghifārī.¹⁵ Additionally, when one of their slaves was captured while bringing water, they should have considered the possibility that the Muslim army had taken control of the wells and could deny them access to fresh water, which is what happened.

It would surely have raised the Muslims' morale if their intelligence had managed to inform them that the Quraysh army was weakened by division, even up to the last moment before the battle. The Quraysh were undecided whether to press forward with the confrontation or not.¹⁶ The weakness and division of the Quraysh army appeared clearly when their opinions divided after the escape of the caravan, whether to take revenge for the killing of the son of Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī, or to heed the argument of 'Utbah b. Rabī'ah, who tried to dissuade the Quraysh from fighting.¹⁷ This major rift severely damaged the fighting spirit of the Quraysh army, which received a further blow when 'Umayr b. Wahb al-Jumhī reported that the Muslims had no protection other than their swords but were determined to conquer or die.¹⁸ The Quraysh's timely gathering of intelligence was a strength but its interpretation and effect weakened their resolve.

The extent of this weakness can be seen in Abū Jahl's decision to call on the bereaved Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī, who succeeded in rallying the Quraysh army. This shows that the Quraysh

¹⁴ They did not discuss either the way to approach or what type of tactic they were going to use. For example, they were in such a hurry that 'Utbah b. Rabī'ah, who was one of their leaders, had no helmet even when fighting a duel. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 172 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 400.

¹⁵ Khaffāf b. Imā' al-Ghifārī offered the Quraysh army, as they passed, his tribe's arms and equipment. They accepted his gift of some camels, and thanked him for his other offer but declined it. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 169.

¹⁶ The Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 47, states: "And be not like those who started from their homes insolently and to be seen of men, and to hinder (men) from the path of Allāh. For Allāh compasseth all that they do." The use of the plural form "those" may show that they did not have an overall leader and were divided between number of contending leaderships.

¹⁷ 'Utbah b. Rabī'ah said: "You will gain nothing if you fight Muḥammad and his Companions. By Allāh! Each man of you would hate to look at the face of the one who had killed his uncle or his relatives". See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 170.

Also the element of *al-aṣabiyyah* should not be forgotten since the Arabs' culture enjoined them to help each other, and especially their blood kin even when they were mistaken. See the section "Tribal Life and Feuding" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

¹⁸ The Quraysh sent out 'Umayr b. Wahab al-Jumhī in an attempt to assess the power of the Muslims. He reported that the Muslim army numbered about three hundred men, and that the Muslims were too brave to surrender and intended to carry out their military duties: they were "keen to fight to the last man." Later he made sure that the Muslims had not been reinforced. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 169, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 396, and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, pp. 216-217.

Possibly, he might have reached this conclusion since the Muslim army was away from their protected city, Medina, and had neither room nor enough mounts to escape; they had to either defend themselves or die. Additionally he might have seen the formation of the Muslims and their behaviour in their camp.

army was on the point of deciding to abandon the fight, being torn between two loyalties. Although they were won over by the case of Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī, they were not wholeheartedly committed to the conflict, as they had almost been persuaded by ‘Utbah’s argument. Additionally, it can be argued that the Quraysh’s leaders were more occupied with fighting over the leadership than with how to seize the advantage by uniting. All these factors must have affected the Quraysh soldiers’ performance, especially knowing that Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī was an ally of ‘Utbah b. Rabi‘ah, who had been urging retreat. Even during the battle itself these doubts must have weakened the Quraysh; the enthusiasm generated by Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī was fragile and constantly in danger of being undermined by the equally morally compelling argument that they should cease fighting men related to them and return to Mecca.

From an economic point of view the Muslims’ perception that the Quraysh army would be short of the main resource of survival in the desert of Arabia, i.e. water, was correct.¹⁹ They must have known that if the Quraysh army approached the battlefield and saw the Muslims occupying the wells, their fighting performance was likely to be less effective. Thus the Muslims’ taking control of the wells gave them a strong tactical advantage. That the new concepts held by the Muslim army were hated by many tribes in the region can be considered a source of weakness and potentially advantageous for the adversary, as the Muslims were away from their base in Medina. However, the Quraysh failed to take advantage of this factor, due to their underestimation of the Muslim army and exaggeration of their own strength.

As for intelligence, the Muslim army was very well acquainted with the Quraysh’s method of fighting; yet, the Quraysh intelligence was able to give neither a report of the Muslims’ expected method of fighting nor a clear understanding of their motivation.²⁰ Nevertheless, the Prophet’s intelligence gathering was not new or unique or essentially different from the Quraysh’s. Therefore the Quraysh can be criticized; but in their defence it must be acknowledged that they were dealing with an unprecedented situation: unable to comprehend the motivation of the Muslim army, even a united Quraysh force would not

¹⁹ This shows that the Quraysh were ill-prepared: they were not carrying enough water and were thirsty even before the battle. Of course the amount of water they could carry was limited, but they should not have forgotten that the Arabs mostly fought over control of water wells. Nevertheless it is possible that they trusted their kinsmen not to deny them access to water; if so, they must have chosen to forget that in Mecca they had tortured and slaughtered Muslims, as well as stripping them of their wealth prior to emigration. See the section “The Battle of Badr” in the chapter “The Battles and their Significance” (Ch.3).

²⁰ See the section “The Battle of Badr” in the chapter “The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy” (Ch.8).

have been determined enough to engage in a religious war, which it was not familiar with.²¹ The result was that the Quraysh focused their attention on the military strength - the material capability - of the Muslim army; they failed to realise that high morale born of religious conviction was the key psychological advantage of the Muslims. Thus the Quraysh were able to collect information but unable to interpret it correctly. Further, they had already decided where the advantage lay and so had grown overconfident. Consequently, once they had already decided that they were going to win, everything they perceived, they perceived in the light of this judgement, which turned out to be wrong. This helps to explain their lack of foresight regarding water supplies. They were not, of course, the first, nor would they be the last, to fail to adapt to new circumstances; but it can be argued that one of the keys to their defeat was that they chose to fight the battle on the basis of their past experience, while Badr was a new situation. It was this experience that convinced them that their superiority in manpower and equipment would secure an easy victory.

It seems, then, that the balance of material power was to the advantage of the Quraysh army,²² but spiritual power lay with the Muslims. Further, the Muslims' assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Quraysh was neither underestimated nor exaggerated since their status was reported accurately and judged thoroughly.²³

VII.2: The Adversary at the Battle of Uḥud

In certain respects the Quraysh had changed since the defeat of Badr. One of the key factors of Uḥud was that the whole army was focused on a single clear aim from the initial steps of preparation for battle. The cause now motivating the Quraysh army was revenge for the injury to their pride, which had been struck a grievous blow at Badr. Abū Sufyān went so far as to order that no one in Mecca was to mourn their dead until another - and this time successful - attack had been made on the Muslims. It was a deliberate attempt to raise the morale of Mecca.²⁴

²¹ It should be noted that the Quraysh's experience of the Muslims in Mecca was that they had been able to torture them with impunity. Also, according to 'Urwah b. Mas'ūd al-Thaqafi's statement prior to the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyyah, the Quraysh did not realise the absolute determination of the Muslims to defend their Prophet. This shows that the Quraysh lacked an accurate reading of the Muslims' morale. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 281, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 167, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 699.

²² A man who came to watch the battle said that he thought to wait for the right moment to take something of value out of the Muslim camps since he was certain of a Quraysh victory. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 181 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 426.

²³ This will be discussed in detail in the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

²⁴ Abū Sufyān's order appears to have been unprecedented in the Arab world at that time.

Several clashes had taken place since Badr, but only a decisive victory over the Muslims could assuage the Quraysh's humiliation.²⁵ It had been to the disadvantage of the Quraysh that their adversary had been part of Arab tribal culture and knew its ways intimately.²⁶ This only increased their anger, and the watchword throughout Mecca was "revenge".²⁷ Besides the prohibition on public mourning, no attempt was made to ransom those taken captive at Badr.²⁸ Although, again, religious conviction on the part of the Quraysh was of little importance, their desire for revenge was a unifying factor and a strength of the Quraysh army, which was allowed time for a thorough preparation.²⁹

The Meccan leadership aimed to maximise the Arabs' anger against the Muslims, with some success: the Quraysh managed to gather together most of its power and to enlist the support of some clans from the tribes of al-Aḥābiṣh³⁰ to attack Medina and eliminate Islam.³¹ They also used other methods of recruitment including hiring poets to persuade the tribes to fight the Muslims.³² It also appears that some leaders were accompanied by their wives.³³

The status of the Quraysh religion had remained unchanged since Badr, and it could be argued that the Muslims did not need to verify this. The Muslims must have been aware, however, that the Quraysh would surely not be unprepared for the coming battle, a battle they knew was inevitable given the Quraysh's loss both of men and reputation

²⁵ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 5.

²⁶ For a discussion of the advantage of the Muslim army in this respect see the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

²⁷ Al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq; the English Version*, p. 245.

²⁸ Some mourners, however, went secretly a short way from Mecca to give vent to their grief privately.

²⁹ The statement of al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq; the English Version*, p. 246: "The Quraysh precipitated and accelerated their preparations for a decisive battle with the Muslims" does not seem to be correct since the preparations lasted several months.

³⁰ The Aḥābiṣh were a combined tribe made up of some clans of the tribes of al-Qārah and Banū Layth. Its name was taken from the mountain called Ḥubshī close to Mecca where the alliance was agreed. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lishān al-ʿArab*, v.6, p. 278.

³¹ Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Wadīʿah*, No. 12620, v.6, p. 32) and Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.2, p. 21.

³² See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 6. Also see the section "The Special Characteristics of the Arabs" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2). For the important position of the poet in his tribe see al-Rushood, *The Poet*, pp.93-168.

³³ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 11, uses the word *al-Ḍaʿan*, "women", but does not give the exact number. Nevertheless he implies that the leaders had their wives with them. The rest would have had the choice to take their wives had they so wished. Al-Ḥalabī mentions about fifteen women. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 489.

We might ask whether this practice was common among the Arabs, in order to maintain their enthusiasm until the battle. For an answer see the section "The Reasons for Conflict and the Mounds of the Arabs" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

among the Arab tribes.³⁴ Despite these suspicions, to the advantage of the Quraysh, it seems that the Muslim leadership was not engaged in any urgent preparations to withstand this attack as, according to the available information, they had not stationed any intelligence agents in Mecca to keep them informed of the latest Quraysh plans. This is not to say that the Muslim leadership underestimated the Quraysh; it is likely that they were already prepared for any attack, being more or less continually at war.³⁵ The new community needed to establish its position in the region, where only the strongest were able to survive.³⁶ Additionally, it is not reported that the Muslims were aware that the Quraysh had united under a competent and wily commander, Abū Sufyān, whose cunning had accomplished the escape of the caravan from the Muslims' ambush. This unification was bound to strengthen the power of the adversary since unity of command is a very important aspect of leadership.³⁷ Moreover Abū Sufyān harboured the greatest rancour against the Muslims because he had lost most of his supplies in al-Sawyq and sustained heavy economic losses as a result of other caravan attacks.³⁸ Up to this moment, the Quraysh's strategic goal was clear but the way to execute it was not. In other words, the Quraysh were able to control activities at the strategic level; however, at the tactical level their adversary managed to decide the course of events.³⁹

As we have seen, the Quraysh's intention was reported at the beginning of these events; yet, the strength of their arms and equipment remained unknown until much later when the Quraysh reached Dhū al-Ḥulayfah, about twenty miles from Medina. This time Abū Sufyān allowed the soldiers to bring their women so that they would be encouraged to

³⁴ Further see the section "The Reasons for Conflict and the Mounts of the Arabs" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

³⁵ This is to judge from the Muslims' point of view. However, such a judgement may be misleading, since al-Khandaq was to reveal that a timely knowledge of the adversary's intentions is invaluable.

³⁶ Several battles and raids had been conducted by the Muslim community since the battle of Badr. Among the most important were the battles of Banū Salīm, Banū Qaynuqā', al-Swayq, Qarīrat al-Kadr, Ghatafān, and Najrān. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 342.

See the section "Leadership and Unity of Command" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

³⁷ See the section "Unity of Command" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

³⁸ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 310, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, v.3, p. 189, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 479. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 54 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.5, p. 217.

³⁹ See the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

fight “manfully” (*Brujūlah*).⁴⁰ This was an important decision on the part of Abū Sufyān for two reasons: first, to encourage his men; second, to regroup the whole army.

To the advantage of the Quraysh, the Muslims' expectation that they would be attacked in Medina was a misjudgement, since in the event the Quraysh army camped next to Mount Uḥud, probably intending to force the Prophet (PBUH) and his warriors to join battle outside Medina. On the face of it this was a good tactical decision, since if the Quraysh had entered Medina the Jewish tribes who had a treaty with the Muslims might have become involved. Also the city was the Muslims' base and the Quraysh would have been fighting on unfamiliar and dangerous territory. In any event, the Quraysh army succeeded in drawing the Muslims out of Medina by allowing their horses and camels to graze on the Medians' farms.⁴¹

It cannot be argued that at Uḥud the Quraysh were overconfident, as they had been at Badr.⁴² In fact, the Quraysh army came to this battle having experienced defeat. On the Muslim side it is possible that some of the Companions underestimated the strength and determination of the adversary since they requested that battle be joined outside Medina despite the advice of their leading figures. The Muslims' underestimation of their adversary can also be seen in the disobedience of the archers.⁴³ Thus, it seems that the Muslims' decision to confront such a large army outside Medina was a tactical error, as their adversary gained the advantage by weakening their defensive plan.⁴⁴ It is a pivotal factor that the Quraysh were able to choose the battlefield at the operational level. This was more or less to the advantage of the Quraysh army. Yet, they were not able to secure a decisive tactical position. Although the balance of advantage lay with the Quraysh, the negligence (i.e. failure to pay attention to a necessary matter) and nonfeasance (omission to perform some necessary action) of the adversary were made plain when a whole army was allowed to manoeuvre around their camp and take up a superior position without being noticed or intercepted. This indicates that the Quraysh's precautions were grossly

⁴⁰ Al-Mubarakpurī, *al-Raḥiḳ*, p. 246. This word connotes the need to enthruse the warriors and prevent their desertion. The tactic was practised by the Arabs. For example, Mālik b. 'Awf, the leader of Hawazin, ordered his people to take their wealth, women, and children when they confronted the Muslims away from Taif. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Itq*, No. 2402, v.2, p. 89) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Iṭā' al-Mu'allafati Qulūbuhum*, No. 1059, v.2, p. 735).

⁴¹ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 14.

⁴² Further see the section “The Battle of Uḥud” in the chapter “The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy” (Ch.8).

⁴³ For the archers' disobedience see the section “The Battle of Uḥud” in the chapter “The Battles and their Significance” (Ch.3).

⁴⁴ This unexecuted plan was suggested by the Prophet and other well-known figures in Medina. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 59, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 60, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 157, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyyah*, v.2, pp. 492-493.

inadequate and it seems that no scouts were stationed at critical points. They also failed to take advantage of the retreat of one third of the Muslim army commanded by the hypocrite 'Abdullah b. Ubayy.⁴⁵ At this critical juncture, therefore, the Quraysh made two mistakes in the matter of intelligence: first, the intelligence gathering itself was poor; second, they were not vigilant. Nonetheless, the Quraysh were justified in being confident as they greatly outnumbered the Muslim army, but the Muslim leadership redressed the balance by using the terrain's natural obstacles to the advantage of the Muslim army. Thus the balance of power shifted in the Muslims' favour as the battle progressed.

Several weaknesses of the Quraysh were exposed during the battle itself; most notably perhaps their inability to defend their standard was a major tactical weakness, as was the failure to destroy the archers at the outset despite three attempts.⁴⁶ Further, decisions that seemed wise at the time turned out to be miscalculations; the choice of terrain, and the decision not to attempt to take Medina are obvious examples. Generally speaking, however, the Quraysh's greatest error was yet again to underestimate the skills, imagination, and commitment of their adversary.

VII.3: The Adversary at the Battle of al-Khandaq

The main points to note about the adversary's conduct in this battle are the unification of different tribes and their constancy during the siege. However, this external appearance of unity was not matched internally, as was shown when the Muslim army succeeded in splitting the confederacy through its leadership. The confederacy's overconfidence was also critical; it appears that the Quraysh had not learned from their mistakes at Badr and Uḥud.

Initially, twenty chiefs of the Jewish tribes, together with some notables of the Banū al-Naḍir, made an "unholy" alliance with the tribes of the Quraysh and other tribes,⁴⁷ combining against the Muslims in order to achieve a range of objectives while promising their allies full support (but without contributing men).⁴⁸ Thus a confederate army was

⁴⁵ See the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*

⁴⁷ The Quraysh, Kinānah and other allies from Tihāmah in the south rallied, ranked and recruited four thousand men under the leadership of Abū Sufyan. From the east came the tribes of Banū Salīm, Ghaṭafān, Banū Murrah, and others. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 171, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 95, and al-Mubarakpurī, *al-Raḥīq*, p. 311.

⁴⁸ The phrase "unholy" (*ghayr Muqaddas*) is used by al-Mubarakpurī to show that this alliance was not mainly undertaken for any religious purpose, but largely for economic reasons, at least on the part of the Banū al-Naḍir and the Quraysh; and probably the Ghaṭafan and Kinānah, and the other tribes expected to be well rewarded. In *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. 1722, the reasons are given as follows:

raised. The Muslims' military intelligence failed to take note of the activities of these Jewish tribes - a definite shortcoming given the circumstances.⁴⁹ From the religious point of view the situation had changed somewhat: the Quraysh started preparing for this battle enthused with the belief that their religion was better than the Muslims', or so they had been informed by the People of the Book.⁵⁰ According to the Qur'ān, they committed blasphemy, which is an inauspicious beginning to any alliance.⁵¹ Unlike the Muslim force, the adversary was from different religious backgrounds and had joined forces only to eliminate the new and expanding religious power.⁵² Moreover, it seems that the main thrust of the confederacy's preparation consisted of attempts to persuade the tribes to agree on a single goal: attacking Medina. Even though the main cause of the impending battle was not the interests of the Quraysh alone, and despite the lessons of the battle of Uhud, it seems that the Quraysh did not make any attempt to keep its intention to attack Medina secret. It would have been to their advantage to use the element of surprise, which might have allowed them to counter any unexpected plan put into action by the Muslims.⁵³ It seems that yet again the adversary was placing too much reliance on the superiority of men and equipment.⁵⁴ If they had sent an advance scouting party they might have recognised the importance of the Muslims' trench and ordered the troops to reach Medina as soon as possible. As delegations were never sent due to the clear intention of the tribes of al-Khazraj and al-Aws, i.e. the Helpers, to defend the Muslims, the confederate leadership was unable to make a reliable assessment of the morale of the commanders and troops of the Muslim army.⁵⁵ The confederacy was further

"The Meccan Pagans want to keep their own unjust autocracy; the Medina Hypocrites wish for their own domination in Medina; and the Jews want their racial superiority established over the Arabs."

⁴⁹ However, if we consider this matter from a different angle we find that the Muslims were unwilling to send their men to live among the non-Muslims, as these men had come to Medina expressly to learn about Islam. It was also important to keep as many men as possible in Medina to respond to any unexpected events.

⁵⁰ In this connection the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 51, states: "Hast thou not turned thy thought to those who were given a portion of the Book? They believe in Sorcery and *Tagūt* and say to the Unbelievers that they are better guided in the (right) way than the Believers!"

⁵¹ Their blasphemy is mentioned in the phrase, (ETMC), 4: 51: "They believe in Sorcery and *Tagūt*".

⁵² The first part of the previous verse shows that the People who had been given a portion of the Book, the Jews, had a greater and truer knowledge than the Idolaters. Despite this, to the main books of exegesis maintain that this battle was instigated for other than religious reasons according to the Qur'ān, 4: 54. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, p.5, p. 150, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.5, p. 249, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.1, p. 312. Also, see the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

⁵³ See the section "Manpower as a Resource of Intelligence" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

⁵⁴ For whether this superiority enabled them to make a better tactical deployment, see the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁵⁵ However, Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.2, p. 657, state that letters were sent between the two leaders.

disadvantaged by the fact that the amount of their arms and equipment was revealed at an early stage of the battle, and that the intention and leadership of the confederacy were also known.⁵⁶ Also at al-Khandaq the Quraysh had allied themselves with other powerful tribes in the region, which brought a new dimension to the challenge of accomplishing their plan.⁵⁷

The confederacy's first success occurred as its forces marched toward Medina: they were able to capture and kill two of the Muslims' scouts, thus depriving the Muslim army of intelligence about the confederacy's advance.⁵⁸ On the other hand, it can be argued that if the adversary had engaged in intelligence activity at the strategic level they would have been forewarned of the Muslim's unfamiliar method of defence instead of being surprised on discovering it. They would at least have prepared themselves better in the matter of supplies. Be that as it may, the confederate position was strengthened by the defection of the Banū Qurayzah.⁵⁹ It can also be claimed that the intelligence activities of the adversary at the operational level made it possible for them to threaten the Muslim army on several fronts. Further, the adversary's intelligence activities consisted of continual observation of the trench and seeking, there and elsewhere, for any weak or unguarded points. In fact, they tried to penetrate once or twice but were not successful, and one of their scouts was killed in another location.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, through their activities at the operational level of intelligence, the confederates were able to initiate another phase of fighting from the south by persuading the Banū Qurayzah to join them against the Muslim army without the knowledge of the already restricted Muslim intelligence sources. On the front line, the unity of the confederate leadership was weakened by the decision of some of the allies to retreat without the knowledge of Abū Sufyān. Moreover, as their supplies could not reach them easily the adversary, failing to realise that the trench would hold them in their position for a long period because this method of defence was unfamiliar in Arab warfare, eventually began to run short. Additionally, at the operational

⁵⁶ See the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

⁵⁷ For the number of the tribes in the confederacy see the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

⁵⁸ They were Sulayṭ and Sufyān b. 'Auf. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 628.

⁵⁹ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2692, v.3, p. 1047), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 104, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 368-639, and al-Funaysān, *Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, p. 44.

⁶⁰ When a man from the Banū Qurayzah reconnoitred the fortress which sheltered the women and children, he was killed by Ṣafiyyah d. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (an aunt of the Prophet). See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 187, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 96, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 105, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 639.

level, the adversary's intelligence failed to secure supplies sent by the Banū Qurayzah,⁶¹ whose caravan was either not sufficiently well protected, or it was travelling in such a way that it could easily be noticed. It could be argued that at this stage of the confrontation the confederacy was itself under siege because of the far distance of their cities, because the orchards of Medina were unreachable, and due to the loss of the caravan sent by the Banū Qurayzah. Certainly the lack of supply lines was a weakness of the adversary, who failed to organise such lines at any time during the siege.⁶² Moreover it seems that this failure impacted negatively on the confederate army's morale, as they resorted to sending night scouts to search for any weak or unguarded points.⁶³ What made the adversary's position worse was the slow progress of the battle, and the fact that every tactic they employed was unsuccessful.⁶⁴ Although a few good horsemen managed to cross the trench, the rest of the confederate army was prevented from following their example. In the only recorded clash one of their most admired heroes was killed. There seemed to be nothing the confederacy could do to raise its morale, and the longer the siege went on the more desperate and short of supplies they became. Unwilling to abandon hope, the confederate leaders attempted to conduct various intelligence activities themselves, such as searching for vulnerable points during the day and by night.⁶⁵ Abū Sufyān must have known that if he did not make any progress this time he might not be able to gather such a combined force in the future. This was also the Prophet's view. He said: "(After this battle) we will go to attack them (i.e. the infidels) and they will not come to attack us."⁶⁶ Just as the leadership was divided internally, it was also divided externally since it should not have been so easily convinced by, or at least should have investigated thoroughly, the new tale told by Na'im b. Mas'ūd.⁶⁷ Logically, such fatal news should have been treated with suspicion. It may be concluded that the confederates' hearts were no longer in the

⁶¹ The Muslims captured a twenty-camel caravan of food supplies which had been sent by the Banū Qurayzah to the confederate army on the northern side. It was captured by chance by a group of Helpers who were on their way to the cemetery. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 647. It consequently gave the Muslims some relief against starvation.

⁶² The reason the confederacy did not organise a supply line from Mecca, which was distant but secure, remains unknown.

⁶³ See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 647.

⁶⁴ See the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁶⁵ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 103 and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 647 & 649.

⁶⁶ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Ghazwat al-Aḥzāb*, No. 3883, v.4, p. 1508).

⁶⁷ See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 273, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 28, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.3, p. 164, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 449. It should be noted that Na'im b. Mas'ūd is sometimes referred to as al-Ashja'i, and sometimes as al-Thaqafi. For his different family names see the previous references and also see Naumani, *Sīrat un-Nabī*, v.2, p. 105.

struggle, as mentioned in the Qur'ān.⁶⁸ Two questions arise to which the study has been unable to discover satisfactory answers: why was there no coordination or effective communication between the allies, i.e. the Banū Qurayzah and the confederates, and why were they unable to derive any advantage from the long siege they imposed upon the Muslim army?

Towards the end of their fruitless siege, the confederate army, disconcerted by the cold and windy weather, lack of proper supplies, and disappointment with their allies, the Banū Qurayzah, gave up and returned home. At the last moment, the confederate army failed to secure its area as it was penetrated by a Muslim scout, who managed to collect up-to-date information about their miserable situation and report the speech of their leader Abū Sufyān.⁶⁹

Even though the Quraysh army had failed twice to accomplish its goals, the adversary had not learned from their mistakes at Badr and Uḥud, as they continued to underestimate the Muslims' creativity. Had they learnt as much as possible about their enemy, especially the psychological strength and endurance they derived from their faith, they might have formulated an effective plan.

The confederates began very confidently; they considerably outnumbered the Muslim army and were sure of the financial support of their Jewish allies; yet such was the degree of uncertainty or indecisiveness created within their ranks by the Muslim army's steadfastness that they were paralysed by the unprecedented tedium, discomfort and stress of a long siege, and failed to press home their initial advantage.

VII.4: The Adversary at the Battle of al-Yarmūk

The adversary at al-Yarmūk was completely different from the Quraysh and their allies in every respect. The Muslims recognised that the Byzantines were not only immensely powerful; they were potential invaders and being a 'people of the Book', were also driven by religious motives.⁷⁰ The Byzantines were determined to defend their faith, as well as their lands and their Empire. Despite this they had not had a long history of conflict with

⁶⁸ The Qur'ān (ETMC), 59: 14, states: "Thou wouldst think they were united, but their hearts are divided."

⁶⁹ Abū Sufyān announced to the army that the supplies had run short, the weather was cruel, the Jews had deserted and the siege was no longer possible. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 653.

⁷⁰ Further see Stout, "Justice and Resort to War", in Johnson and Kelsay (eds), *Cross Crescent, and Sword*, pp. 3-29.

For discussing their *power* see the section "The Byzantines and Sāsānians" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

the Arabs, and tended to be disdainful of what they saw as an inferior culture, a view which, while increasing their motivation and their morale, proved to be fatally mistaken.⁷¹ Nevertheless the Byzantine leadership intended to leave nothing to chance, but to gather its utmost power to annihilate the Muslim army or expel them permanently from the region. In fact after a long chase and the failure of their plan at the strategic level, the Byzantine leadership knew before the battle that the confrontation would have to be final and decisive; if they failed it was unlikely that they would be able to gather such a powerful force again and there might be no second chance.

Prior to the battle, the Byzantine Emperor had sent several large armies to al-Shām to confront each Muslim army separately.⁷² However, it seems that the adversary was unable to keep their movements and plans secret,⁷³ and so their strategy became known to the Muslims, who discovered both their intentions and the extent and nature of their arms and equipment. The Byzantines probably perceived the coming battle in terms of a struggle between religions, since they had their priests lead the army to the battlefield.⁷⁴ Up to this moment the adversary could be said to have the advantage in both material and control of terrain.

Even though there is no direct evidence that the adversary's intelligence agents were reporting the movements of the Muslim army, it can be argued that such a powerful Emperor would have had the means to gather information about the army his forces were about to confront.⁷⁵ The Byzantines knew that the Muslim army would not retreat to Medina; therefore in obedience to their emperor's command the adversary made camp in an area which had been allocated in advance.⁷⁶

The Byzantines' continuous observation of their adversary allowed them to locate and observe the Muslim army's movements at the strategic level.⁷⁷ Although it was to their

⁷¹ Further see the section "The Byzantines and Sāsānians" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

⁷² See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 335 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 431. Also see the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁷³ This allowed the Muslims to discover their adversary's strengths and weaknesses. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 431. Also see the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

⁷⁴ See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 474.

⁷⁵ In this connection see Keith and McKercher, *Go Spy the Land*, p. 1. Also see Glass and Davidson, *Intelligence is for Commanders*, p. 68.

⁷⁶ See the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁷⁷ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334, Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, v.5, p. 354, and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 433. For a comparison see the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

disadvantage that certain of the Muslims' leaders had some knowledge of the terrain of al-Shām,⁷⁸ at the operational level it is possible that the adversary might have deliberately allowed news of the location of their final camp to reach the Muslim army in order to bring them to the chosen battlefield.⁷⁹

The Byzantines' leadership were concerned to maintain the troops' fighting spirit, and ensured that morale was increased through the joy aroused in the camp by the gifts the Emperor had sent.⁸⁰ The moment the gifts were distributed seems to have been carefully chosen as the confrontation was expected to occur shortly. This also shows that the Muslims' intelligence activity at the operational level did not match that at the strategic and tactical levels, since the cause of the adversary's rejoicing was not reported on time, and so the Muslim army was about to go into a situation without full preparation. Unlike in the previous three battles, requests were made that the leaders of both armies should negotiate concerning the reasons for the confrontation and the goals of the invasion.⁸¹ This would appear to have been to the advantage of the adversary, who needed to make a more accurate assessment of the Muslim army's strengths and weaknesses. Also the Byzantines wanted to test their enemy's commitment to the fight, since various offers were put forward to the effect that if the Muslims retreated, they would be given gifts and charity to be collected yearly.⁸² It can be argued that these offers were a psychological manoeuvre and were recognised as such by the Muslim leadership.⁸³ Therefore, both sides intended to derive the maximum benefit from face-to-face negotiations.⁸⁴ The Byzantines would have the opportunity to assess the Muslim army's loyalty and its willingness to fight, while the Muslims would, it was hoped, gain valuable information. Despite the adversary's manifold intelligence activities, they were unable to prevent their plan falling into the Muslims' hands; this seems to have been a clear failure of security, which was of

⁷⁸ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 333 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 130. Also see the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

⁷⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334, Bahadur and Sherwani, *Life of Abū Bakr*, pp. 73-74, and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 432. For a strategic and tactical assessment see the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁸⁰ The rejoicing was due to the arrival of new gifts sent by the Emperor to his army. The source does not state whether these were mainly for the commanders or were distributed to the whole army; but they had been for the leaders only the 'loud sounds' of acclaim would surely not have reached the Muslims' camp. See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 435.

⁸¹ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 7 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 435.

⁸² See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 10.

⁸³ See the section "Psychological Warfare" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁸⁴ On one occasion, it was reported that the adversary tried to take advantage of the situation by sending one of their commanders to ask that the Muslims should send a delegation to meet their field commander. See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 435.

great benefit to their enemy.⁸⁵ The deficiencies in their intelligence performance, at a moment when speed of communication was of crucial importance, can be seen at the strategic and operational levels; a vital piece of news failed to reach them which they could have used to great advantage - the death of the Caliph.⁸⁶ That this valuable information, which would probably have turned the tide of battle immediately to the advantage of the adversary, was not reported, shows that the Byzantines' intelligence activities grew weaker as the battle drew to an end. Since they were a large professional force, they should have watched all the points of access to the Muslims' position and captured the messenger. Most if not all of the adversary's intelligence activities were conducted prior to the battle due to the effectiveness of the Muslims' precautions.⁸⁷ Moreover, the adversary had to use the services of interpreters in order to comprehend and act on the information they received, which might be considered a weakness; but this was not a problem for them, due to their long experience of fighting with neighbouring powers speaking different languages.

The Byzantine Emperor ordered all his forces to engage the Muslim army in a frontal assault, and that the troops should be disposed in a battlefield broad in front and narrow in the rear.⁸⁸ It is possible to argue that at the beginning of the battle the adversary's plan was likely to bring a quick victory: it was reasonable to suppose that the massive cavalry, supported by archers firing showers of arrows, would defeat the Muslim army, which would have surely failed to break the infantry from the front or outflank it, since the Byzantines were greatly superior in numbers and equipment.

It is reported that many of the adversary's infantry were chained together, but it is not clear whether this would have had a negative or a positive effect.⁸⁹ Presumably the

⁸⁵ In the early hours of the day of the attack while the Byzantine army was preparing its soldiers, Khālid and his commanders were working to deploy their troops as quickly as possible. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 335 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 468.

⁸⁶ At the strategic level the adversary should have installed spies in Medina to report new developments such as the arrival of reinforcements.

⁸⁷ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 333 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, p. 130. Also see the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Task of the Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

⁸⁸ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 334 and Bahadur and Sherwani, *Life of Abū Bakr*, pp. 73-74. It seems that he intended to push the army to its limit as he left no space for them to escape in the case of defeat.

⁸⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 335.

This chaining of the adversary's soldiers would have been advantageous only if the cavalry and archers had succeeded in creating confusion and inflicting heavy losses among the Muslims. Moreover, if they were chained willingly and the course of the battle had been clearly in their favour they would have been able to advance confidently or form an unbreakable barrier. Their morale would have been high and they would have fought valiantly to support their comrades. On the other hand, if they were chained by force their morale would have been low from the start, and the prospect of defeat would

Byzantines were confident of its effectiveness, and furthermore it was a method used in the professional army of the Sāsānian Empire.⁹⁰ Since infantry fighting among the Arabs was largely a matter of duelling, the chained footsoldiers were little more than captives forced to defend themselves or die. It might be, however, that the Byzantine leadership wanted to prevent their troops from breaking ranks in the event of the defeat of the cavalry because if the frontal assault was broken, it would hardly have been possible to regroup such a large force.⁹¹ In fact the infantry played no decisive part in the action, other than to block the cavalry's retreat. In the ensuing confusion desperation drove the infantry to jump into the river. Thus the Byzantine plan to rely on the power of the cavalry and the archers at the beginning of the assault came to nothing.⁹² Additionally, as the battle started, to the disadvantage of the adversary, one of their field leaders became a Muslim.⁹³

At the beginning of the battle the adversary seemed to have every advantage over the Muslim army, but these decreased as the battle progressed and the Muslims' tactical plan eventually triumphed.⁹⁴

It is clear that the adversary's intelligence gathering was sometimes very beneficial, sometimes less so, and that it varied as the actual battle drew closer and failed completely towards its end.

VII.5: The Adversary at the Battle of al-Qādisiyyah

The adversary at al-Qādisiyyah was very different from those discussed previously, mainly in religion, motivation, tactics, communications, equipment, and language.⁹⁵ However, while these factors might be considered to be both strengths and weaknesses, the Persian

have been likely to cause panic, since a chained army cannot manoeuvre easily. In such circumstances an army trapped from behind must have been demoralised and desperate.

⁹⁰ The Muslim army of course was treated very differently, as the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* state. See the section "The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader: Bravery and *Taqwā*" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

⁹¹ See the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁹² Commenting on the circumstances, Qays b. Habīrah said that cavalry needs the support of infantry. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 422.

⁹³ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 10.

⁹⁴ See the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

⁹⁵ Rodinson, *Muḥammad*, p. 6, has vividly described the Persian forces: "The army was very powerful. The principal shock troops, the cavalry, were recruited from the nobility. These horsemen were clad in close-fitting armour and formed, in the mass, something like a solid wall of metal gleaming in the sun. Behind the cavalry came the elephants, striking terror into the enemy with their trumpeting, their smell and terrible appearance; and after them the footsoldiers, a rabble of peasants conscripted for military service and of little practical value. A great deal more useful were the auxiliary forces made up of mercenaries and of mounted warriors from the Persians' warlike subject peoples."

army was undoubtedly a real challenge for any power, let alone for a new invader such as the Muslims. In addition, it can be argued that the Sāsānians had learned from the defeat of the Byzantines at the hands of the invaders, and that these lessons were applied at al-Qādisiyyah.⁹⁶

The references in use show that the Persians were not a people of a divine Book, which can be considered a disadvantage. The Muslims believed that they were no better than fire-worshippers.⁹⁷ However, despite the differences in the religious backgrounds of the Persian troops, they were united by the conviction that it was necessary to destroy the Muslim army.⁹⁸ Their motivation was based upon their desire to protect their various interests, but the fact that they were not primarily driven by religious zeal might be regarded as a weakness.⁹⁹ One potentially important factor was that the Persians' religion did not permit them to bury their dead.¹⁰⁰ During a battle, therefore, they would leave them on the battlefield. It can be argued that this would have had a negative effect on their morale, especially during a battle lasting several days.

The Persian army came to this battle knowing the instability of the Emperor's position.¹⁰¹ However, the current Emperor, Yazdajird [d. c. 652], had assigned the best of his commanders to lead this huge force.¹⁰² This was Rustam, who was fully authorised to take any necessary measures. It was a strength of the Persians that he had the trust and

⁹⁶ See the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

⁹⁷ See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.3, p. 426, Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.3, p. 426, and Faiṣāl, *Ḥarakat al-Fath*, p. 95. For more see Sālim, "al-Jazīrah al-ʿArabiyyah", No.3, v.1, p. 135.

⁹⁸ The Sāsānian army in this region mainly consisted of Persians and Arabs. The soldiers were therefore of mixed backgrounds and varied in their faith, social life, and origins. For more see the section "The Byzantine and the Sāsānians" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

⁹⁹ It can be argued that if the main motivation of the Persian army had been their religion, Muslim historians would have mentioned it, as they did when recounting the battle of al-Yarmūk. Further, it would have been reflected in the Muslim army's narration of the battle, but the Persians, unlike the Byzantines, made no attempt to perform a religious ceremony such as lighting a fire on an altar, which would have indicated that their opposition to the Muslims was a religious matter.

¹⁰⁰ See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.2, p. 326 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Madā'in*, p. 118.

The official Persian religion was Mazdakism, sometimes referred to as Zoroastrianism. Its main purpose was to fight on the side of good against the forces of evil, whatever forces form these might take. They believed that their prophet Zoroaster, or Zarathustra, had come down to earth some three millennia before. Zoroastrians are now settled in north-west India. There are currently about 130,000 adherents of the faith world-wide. See Hinnells, *The Penguin Dictionary*. Also see www.geocities.com/zoroastrianismtoday/intro.txt.

¹⁰¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.1, pp. 493-494. In addition, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.1, p. 460, mentions that, within a space of four years, no fewer than ten Sāsānian rulers had ascended the Imperial throne. For more see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.1, pp. 491-494 and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Madā'in*, pp. 104-105.

¹⁰² See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 133, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.6, p. 194, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sirah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.6, p. 194.

blessing of the Empire's rulers and was accompanied by other leaders of high rank and ability. It should be noted, however, that the Emperor's rejection of Rustam's advice - that he should appoint another leader - limited the Persians' strategic options if the army should be defeated.¹⁰³ In fact, the leaders of the Persian army approached this battle knowing that other Persian commanders had suffered defeats since the victory at al-Jisr the (Bridge) (c. 14/635) and that these had weakened the position of the Sāsānian Emperor in Iraq.¹⁰⁴ On the one hand, this could have lowered the army's morale; on the other, this knowledge could have been a source of strength since they were moved to proceed slowly and cautiously. Rustam's slow advance certainly succeeded in causing the Muslim soldiers to run out of patience and complain to their leaders,¹⁰⁵ and there was the admittedly remote possibility of mutiny.¹⁰⁶ Also, his slow progress allowed Rustam to make continuous assessments and better preparations. He also organised an excellent system of communication by creating a chain of men, the first of whom was at his camp and the last of whom was stationed at the Emperor's palace in the capital.¹⁰⁷ Despite his competence and loyalty, however, we know from the letters Rustam sent to his brother that he had been pressured to take command of this army and had been unwilling to do so; this was clearly a defect in the army's leadership.¹⁰⁸

Unlike at the battle of al-Yarmūk, the Emperor himself asked to meet a Muslim delegation.¹⁰⁹ It is possible to argue here that the Emperor considered the Arabs to be an ignorant nation but not weak militarily. However, his words should not be taken at face value as expressing his real opinion, to which his army's actions in the field are a far better guide. The Emperor's statements constituted an attempt to engage in psychological

¹⁰³ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 393.

¹⁰⁴ After their great victory at the battle of the Bridge, they were defeated in minor battles and also at the more important battle of al-Buwayb. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 373, Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓim*, v.4, p. 148, Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.2, p. 290, and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, pp. 29-30.

¹⁰⁵ It was known that to remain for long in one encampment was against the Arabs' nature. So his action was effective whether he intended it or not. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 394.

¹⁰⁶ What Rustam did not know is that disobedience to proper authority is considered to be a major sin in the *sharī'a*, and is considered as such in Islamic Military Doctrine. See the section "Obedience" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

¹⁰⁷ The chain of communication required the participation of about 5000 men, each one of whom, except the first and last, had to be within earshot of two others.

¹⁰⁸ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 394.

¹⁰⁹ It can be argued that there was no need to present the three options prescribed by Islamic military doctrine to the Emperor himself since he had been called to Islam by the Prophet some years before, and Muslims believe that the Christian scripture contains a prophecy made by Jesus (PBUH) himself that a later prophet would be named Aḥmad. See the Qur'ān, 2: 89 & 146, 6: 20, 7: 157, and 61: 6.

warfare at the strategic level against the Muslim army;¹¹⁰ he could also have been trying to assess the Muslims' consistency of commitment, and it also showed the over-confidence the Emperor had in his army.

Thus, the Persians had prepared a massive army, three or four times bigger than that of the Muslims, aiming through positive morale to destroy them once and for all. They had also mobilised a large number - about thirty - of war elephants to secure an overwhelming tactical advantage. Their position was also strengthened at the operational level in that before the approach of the Persian army there were many tribes in the region of Iraq who had revolted against the Muslims and desired again to be subjects of the Sāsānian Empire.¹¹¹ This should have given the Persians a considerable advantage over the Muslims, who were now unable to rely on the Arab tribes in the region, but the Persians failed to profit from the situation since they had not kept their part of the agreement to protect them, and the tribes no longer trusted them.¹¹²

As Rustam saw his warriors cross the river and take up their positions for battle, his confidence knew no bounds. He remarked to one of his officers: "With this army we will shatter the Arabs into pieces." The officer replied: "If God wills it," whereupon Rustam retorted: "Even if He does not will it."¹¹³

With hindsight it is obvious that it was dangerous for the Persian army to cross the river into what turned out to be a trap, but from their point of view their battle position was likely to be advantageous. Nevertheless they had not learned from their wrong assessment of the Muslim army leadership at the battle of the Bridge or even from their defeat at the battle of al-Buwayb. However, it is important to understand that this position, with the river at their back and the Muslim army in front, was considered to suit their method of fighting.¹¹⁴

The best of the Persian warriors fought duels with their Muslim counterparts at the beginning of the battle, which was a substantial tactical error as this was the method of fighting the Arabs preferred. In addition, it resulted in the death of one of their most valuable leaders and of other warriors of repute. This was a severe blow to the Persian

¹¹⁰ On one occasion the Emperor said: "I know of no other nation on earth that was more miserable, smaller in numbers, and more rancorous than you." See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī; the English Version*, v.2, p. 36.

¹¹¹ For more detail see the section "The Byzantines and Sāsānians" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2).

¹¹² See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 396 and Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.2, p. 308.

¹¹³ From an Islamic point of view this is a blasphemy. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 407 and Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, v.2, p. 305.

¹¹⁴ For more detail see the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

army militarily and psychologically. However, to their advantage, at the approach of the Persian elephants the Muslim horses panicked, causing great confusion among the cavalry. The Persians pressed the attack and the Muslims fell back. The power of this unfamiliar weapon almost tipped the scale of the fighting twice: in the early stages of the first and third days of the four-day battle. Therefore, at the beginning the elephants were clearly a strength, but the Persian army became tactically over-reliant on them, and was gravely weakened by their elimination on the third day.¹¹⁵

The Persian army, similarly to the Byzantines, created a tactical problem for themselves by chaining their infantry and thus limiting their ability to manoeuvre. If only one of the chained soldiers became exhausted or was killed, the performance of the others could not but be affected.¹¹⁶ Additionally, they were unable to use arrows since the confines of the battlefield were so limited and no advantage could be gained from the terrain. Further, it can be argued that the Persian practice of not burying the dead would have made the sight of thousands of their slain comrades in arms covering the battlefield unendurable, especially if we bear in mind that according to our references huge numbers were killed in the first two days.¹¹⁷

The Persian army's morale continued to deteriorate as continuous reinforcements of the Muslim army apparently kept pouring into the field throughout the battle.¹¹⁸ This shows the poor intelligence of the Persian army at the operational level; they were unable to discover the trick played by the Muslim leadership.¹¹⁹ The Persians were also exhausted after continuous fighting over twenty-four hours. It seemed that victory would be won by the side with the most stamina. When Rostam was killed, the Persian army's resistance collapsed. The long fight had broken their resolve.¹²⁰

Towards the end of the battle the balance of advantage had clearly changed. At the beginning, a Persian victory seemed assured, but after the elephants were eliminated the advantage was with the Muslim army. The morale of the Persians had fluctuated

¹¹⁵ For more details of the elephants' performance see the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹¹⁶ This study can find little justification for chaining the soldiers. For a brief discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of chaining soldiers see fn: 89 in the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in this chapter.

¹¹⁷ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 44 and Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, p. 167.

¹¹⁸ See the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹¹⁹ For details see the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy" (Ch.8).

¹²⁰ The Department of the Army, *Soldiers Team Development*, p. 2, emphasises this point, arguing that psychological strength is "the most critical element of a combat-ready team." Also see the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

according to the flow of events during the battle; nevertheless, their leadership, the destructive power of an unfamiliar weapon - the elephants - and their well-considered use of the terrain helped the Persian army to sustain the battle to the last moment.

VII.6: Comparison of the Battles

The battles of interest will now be briefly compared and discussed with reference to the factors of religion, leadership, military strength, intelligence, creativity, and psychology.

Concerning religion, we have found that the adversaries differed in their backgrounds. However the study's research has shown that the religious factor was of small importance except in the case of the Byzantines at al-Yarmūk; but it could also be argued that the adversary's relative lack of religious zeal was a grave disadvantage, confronting as they were an enemy whose strength, unity, loyalty, stamina, and fighting spirit were overwhelmingly driven by a steadfast commitment to a religious cause. It is noticeable that throughout history the conflicts between nations that have been sustained over a long period have mainly been conflicts of religion. Hence, as far as comradeship is concerned, the adversaries' armies could not match the Muslims. In addition, in all five battles the adversary judged the Muslims as Arabs and not as Muslims and so failed to give their religious motivation the importance it deserved. Consequently, they were - inevitably - unprepared for the tenacity with which their enemy fought, and could not adapt to the new circumstances.

Regarding leadership, it was found that the adversary's leadership at Badr was poorly organised, consisting as it did of disunited tribal leaders rather than one supreme commander. Additionally, at al-Qādisiyyah Rustam was ordered to take command against his better judgement. Both these types of leadership can be considered as disadvantageous. On the other hand, the leadership in the other three battles was in the main united and able to make sound decisions - despite the interference of higher authorities at al-Yarmūk. Continuous assessments of the Muslim army were beneficial at the strategic level, except at Badr, where assessment was largely absent. At the operational level, however, the leaders at Uḥud, al-Khandaq, and al-Qādisiyyah failed to give sufficient attention to this element, although at al-Yarmūk, the Emperor had sent separate armies to take advantage of the small numbers making up the Muslim armies spread across the region of al-Shām.¹²¹ Further, we find that in every battle one of the main failings of the leadership was their initial over-confidence.

¹²¹ See the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

Militarily, the numbers of men and amount of equipment of the adversaries in all five battles were definitely superior to those of the Muslim armies, whom they outnumbered by at least three to one. In addition the Persians at al-Qādisiyyah had the immense advantage of their thirty elephants, a weapon even the Byzantines could not match. It was therefore reasonable that they should have been confident; yet, the Muslims' judicious use of the terrain and skilful planning successfully countered this superiority. The Muslims were also superior in stamina, as at al-Khandaq and al-Qādisiyyah.

Even though the adversary's intelligence activities were far from perfect in these battles, it can be claimed that they made positive attempts to use this factor as best they could. The Quraysh's intelligence gathering gradually improved, while the Byzantines and Persians, being professional soldiers of great, although declining, empires, had their own ways of gathering the information they needed about the Muslim army, and it must be admitted that the chain of communication established by the Persian leadership was certainly one of the most impressive phenomena of that battle. Nevertheless the Quraysh failed to take advantage of the terrain, while at al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah the location and terrain appear to have satisfied the adversaries.

A weakness common to all the adversaries was that they were generally content to rely on traditional methods of fighting and failed to match the Muslims' creativity, although at al-Yarmūk, it is reported that Mahān used a plan the like of which had not been seen.¹²²

This lack of creativity is especially noticeable in the Quraysh's conduct at Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq; they could not cope with the imaginative flexibility of the Muslim army.

As far as the factor of psychology is concerned, this varied according to circumstance, but generally the Muslims had the advantage. The adversary's disunited or unwilling leadership and the chaining of the infantry were negative factors. Previous defeats were also important. All of these circumstances had a negative impact on the adversary's fighting spirit.

VII.7: Conclusion

This chapter has examined in some detail the strengths and weaknesses of the Muslims' adversaries. A brief introduction explained the importance of having a separate chapter to discuss this subject. The significance of each battle was considered from the adversaries' viewpoints. A brief analysis followed of the various factors of importance in each battle. A comparison was then made to highlight the similarities and differences between the

¹²² See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 336.

adversaries. Lastly the conclusion drew attention to certain key points. It should be noted that this chapter has relied on the second chapter of the study to build its arguments.

Since 'on paper' as we have seen, the adversaries in all five battles were massively superior to the Muslim armies, the question arises, how did the Muslims, militarily speaking, manage to overcome this superiority? Specifically, what types of strategy did they use to defeat these apparently invincible powers and accomplish their goals? In the next chapter we will discuss the element of *strategy* from the Islamic military viewpoint.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Importance of Islamic Military Strategy

Strategy, generally considered, is a very broad concept which may be thought to cover almost every aspect of daily life capable of being organised and planned. Since Muslims believe that everything they do must be in accordance with the Islamic *sharī'a*, it follows that their ultimate goal is to conform their thoughts and actions to its precepts and purposes; in short, to serve Allāh: "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me."¹ This verse emphasises that this is indeed the ultimate, and the only unalterable and eternally valid goal of every action or intention of every Muslim.² Hence, it can be argued that it is in the light of this verse that the broadest conception of Islamic strategy, which subsumes the category of Islamic military strategy, should be considered. However, this general notion of Islamic strategy is too large a matter to bring within the scope of this study, which is focussed here upon the narrower characteristics of Islamic military strategy. Further, the study is innovative in that the following discussion will consider Islamic military strategy by investigating the validity of the principles of war, as commonly understood, from an Islamic point of view.

However, it should be noted that of all the factors considered so far that of strategy is the most closely connected with doctrine, since Islamic military strategy is governed by Islamic military doctrine and is indeed that doctrine's expression in the conduct of military campaigns.

The chapter is organised as follows. First, it will define the term 'strategy' itself and consider its place in relation to the Islamic *sharī'a* and to what the study will define as the main 'pillars' of Islamic strategy in general, which are to some extent subject to circumstances. Second, the chapter will discuss the narrower term 'Islamic military strategy' and its fulfilment through serving these two pillars. Third, the most relevant principles of war will be examined from an Islamic point of view. Fourth, the chapter will explain how these principles are implemented through the practice of military strategy, operations, and tactics. Fifth, the most important principles will be compared and analysed with reference to the five battles in question. Lastly, some conclusions will be drawn.

¹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 51: 56.

² See the discussion of Islamic doctrine in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

The ultimate and unalterable goal at the highest level, as we have seen, is to serve Allāh.³ This concept will be considered after we have briefly attempted to define the term 'strategy'.

VIII.1: Definition of Islamic Strategy and the Two 'Pillars'

As is the case with many scientific and technical terms, the word *strategy* is derived indirectly from the Greek; *strategos* may be translated as 'commander in chief'; but as Luttwak suggests, it "does not carry the connotation of the modern word."⁴ The Shorter Oxford Dictionary identifies strategy as "the art of projecting and directing the larger military movements and operations of a campaign".⁵ Strategy is also considered to be built upon previous experience and available information.⁶ In Arabic, however, no single word conveys the meaning or range of meanings the word has in English.⁷ However, its Arabic equivalents are *fann al-sawq*, *fann* or *ilm idārat al-harb*, and *wadd' al-khuṭaṭ wa idārat al-'amaliyyāt al-ḥarbiyyah*.⁸ In addition, Ṭlās mentions that the Greek word *strategos* means the art of leading troops⁹ while al-Sanāfi says that strategy means the art of military planning.¹⁰ It is clear, then, that these definitions in both Arabic and English firmly connect the word with the theory and practice of war. However, while the primary meaning is generally accepted to be the general direction of a military campaign, the concept in recent and current usage covers a far wider range of activity and is commonly applied to the fields of economics, politics, sport, business, and so on.¹¹

Therefore strategy in the military sense can be said to serve a higher strategy; in the present case Islamic military strategy should be judged not only by its success on the battlefield but also by its conformity with the essentially religious purposes of *Islamic strategy* as defined by Islamic doctrine.¹² The Qur'ān states: "Invite (all) to the Way of thy

³ See the definition of Islamic military doctrine in the chapter of "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁴ Luttwak, *Strategy*, p. 239. Also see the following section.

⁵ Shorter Oxford Dictionary.

⁶ See Brewer, *Perception and Reason*, p. 23.

⁷ Further see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, and al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Fā'iḳ*.

⁸ A rough English equivalent of these phrases would be "the art or science of planning and administering military activities." See al-Ba'labakī, *al-Mawrid; English-Arabic Dictionary*.

⁹ See Turkumānī, *al-Madhāhib*, p. 38.

¹⁰ See al-Sanāfi, *al-Istrātiyyah al-'Askariyyah*, p. 20.

¹¹ See Maḥfūz, *al-Madkhal*, p. 28.

¹² See the Qur'ān, 16: 125. Also the command to spread Islam appears in various verses and texts as in 2: 119-225, 21: 92, 23: 52, 39: 15 & 54, 41: 33, 42: 13 & 53, 43: 43, 61, & 63, 48: 2, 20, & 28, 61: 9, 67: 22, 72: 13, and 98: 5.

Lord”.¹³ This verse enjoins Muslims to spread Islam, but not by any means necessary; they are instructed to propagate the faith “with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.”¹⁴ Force is not to be the first resort: “And have patience with what they say, and leave them with noble (dignity).”¹⁵

Therefore, this general Islamic strategy can be said to be fulfilled through two essential ‘pillars’, or means of faithfully serving Allāh: defending and/or spreading Islam.¹⁶ But military might is not the only, or even the chief means; Islam may also be defended or spread through economics, political activity, diplomacy, scholarship, moral example, and so on. Thus while the study’s focus is upon Islamic military strategy, it should be understood that using military means to defend or spread the faith is to be considered the last resort.¹⁷ In this connection the Qur’ān says: “But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace.”¹⁸ So it can be said that for Muslims there is no merit in armed conflict for its own sake.¹⁹

While it is possible to argue that many verses in the Qur’ān regarding Islamic strategy can be cited as relevant depending on the approach to their interpretation, the study will, in accordance with its purposes, limit itself to a small number of verses, which seem to be sufficient to illustrate the broadest scope of Islamic military strategy.²⁰

VIII.1.1: Definition of Islamic Military Strategy

Although both Ṭlās and al-Sanāfi deal with strategy from an Islamic viewpoint, they do not discuss it within the context of the *sharī’a*.²¹ Therefore their definitions should be reconsidered and amended from a more strictly Islamic perspective: so one might say that *Islamic military strategy* is the Muslim commander’s art of leading his troops within the

¹³ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 16: 125.

¹⁴ See the rest of the previous verse, 16: 125.

¹⁵ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 73: 10.

¹⁶ It should be emphasised that during the period under study Islamic military strategy was never either purely defensive or purely offensive; but it should be noted that the Prophet’s strategy was largely defensive whereas in the battles of conquest the strategy was mainly offensive.

¹⁷ See the section “The Concept of the Just War” in the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4).

¹⁸ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 61.

¹⁹ See *The Holy Qur’ān ETMC*, p. 487, fn: 1228.

²⁰ Among them for instance is: “To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, Allāh is Most Powerful for their aid” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 22: 39.

²¹ See the previous definitions of both writers. In addition, Faraj wrote a book entitled *al-Madkhal ilā al-‘Aqidah wa al-Istrātijyyah al-‘Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, but it does not discuss the concept of Islamic military strategy.

main guidelines of the *sharī'a* in order to accomplish the ultimate goal of the Muslim army through unswerving devotion to either of the two main pillars of general Islamic strategy. This broad definition raises the question of the relationship between Islamic military strategy and Islamic *sharī'a*.

The Qur'ān states: "Fight in the cause of Allāh those who fight you but do not transgress limits; for Allāh loveth not transgressors."²² This verse reveals that fighting is only permissible in self-defence, and then only within well-defined limits. It also succinctly expresses the essence of the Islamic military strategy's first goal: to defend the faith.²³ Nevertheless the Muslim army was given permission to retaliate against any aggressor. It is important to notice here that this verse is one of the first to enjoin the Muslims to change their stance from being a peaceable group, following the instruction of "more than seventy"²⁴ verses not to fight, to being an independent and united community which was not merely permitted, but definitely commanded, to defend itself under certain restrictions.²⁵ The verse is clearly suited to the conditions under which the Muslim community was living during their early years in Medina; it is also applicable to their situation in the first three battles.

It has been widely argued that the Muslim army initiated an aggressive campaign against the Quraysh after the emigration. However, after careful investigation it can be argued that this view, which relies on the biographical works taken from Ibn Hishām without considering the books of *ḥadīth*, is misleading. Abū Dā'ūd, one of the main narrators of the *ḥadīth*, recounts that the tribes in Medina received letters threatening severe retribution if they did not expel the Prophet (PBUH) and the *Muhājirūn*.²⁶ This indicates that the Muslim community needed to remove the threat posed by the Quraysh against their supporters in Medina. Also, they needed to show their adversaries that they were no longer weak and that they were willing and able to defend themselves and their new

²² See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 2: 190. There among the classical exegetes a debate concerning whether this verse was the first to be revealed permitting Muslims to fight or whether 22: 39 was the first. However, both verses emphasise the importance of not making war except in self defence. Further see al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.2, pp. 348-352 and al-Zuḥayli, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.2, p. 184. Also see al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2376, v.2, p. 76), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 4292, v.3, p. 3), and Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Bāb: Surah al-Ḥajj*, No. 3171, v.3, p. 32).

²³ See *The Holy Qur'ān ETMC*, p. 79, fn: 204. It should be remembered that a factor which could affect the validity of this verse is the concept of abrogating and abrogated verses. See the section "The Assistance of Non-Muslims" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

²⁴ See al-Zuḥayli, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.17, p. 227.

²⁵ For details of the prohibition of some specific practices conducted prior to Islam see the section "The Twenty 'Don'ts'" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

²⁶ See Abū Dā'ūd (*Kitāb al-Kharāj wa al-Imārah wa al-Fayy'*, No. 3004, v.3, p. 156) and Muṣanaf 'Abd al-Razāq (*Bāb: Ghazwat Banū al-Nadīr*, No. 9733, v.5, p. 358).

lands.²⁷ Hence, it is possible to say that these letters had a great influence in bringing about the first three battles.

The second goal of Islamic military strategy during the period covered by the study is indicated in the verse: “And fight them on until there is no more persecution and the religion becomes Allāh’s. But if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression”.²⁸ Most of the exegeses in use reported that the aim of the Muslim army was to spread Islam peacefully but if this was prevented force could legitimately be applied.²⁹ Historical reports of the period relate that the Muslims had sent several letters to inform people about Islam, but their messengers were either killed or prevented from carrying out their mission.³⁰

It is possible to argue that this verse inspired and justified the Muslim invasion of the Byzantine and Sāsānian Empires, thus fulfilling the second ‘pillar’ of Islamic strategy, since it freed them to take aggressive action in conveying their message. The statement of ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb upon his refusal to join the *fitnah*, “turmoil”,³¹ could be used to support the view that the Muslims’ strategy at that time accorded with the guideline of the verse: “We have not sent thee but as a (Messenger) to all mankind, giving them Glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men know not.”³² Thus the Prophet and his Companions were commanded to inform people everywhere of his message, but the peaceful propagation of Islam was not always possible.³³ The Prophet’s messengers were killed, his letters were torn up, Medina was threatened with invasion and men were sent to bring him before their emperors.³⁴ On one occasion, the Prophet said,

²⁷ See al-Ghaḍbān, *al-Manhaj*, v.1, p. 232.

²⁸ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 2: 193. It should be noted that the original Arabic word is *فِتْنَةٌ* whose more precise meaning is persecution, which is the suppression of some opinion by violence, force, or threats. See *The Holy Qur’ān ETMC*, p. 92, fn: 239.

²⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 192-194, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.2, pp. 352-354, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.1, pp. 227-229, and al-Zuḥayli, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.2, pp. 187-188.

³⁰ For example see Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.7, p. 511 and Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, v.3, p. 381.

³¹ This turmoil or temptation, which is known in Islamic history as *fitnat maqṭal ‘Uthmān*, emerged upon the assassination of the Caliph ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān. Further see al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Bāb: Dhikr Maqṭal Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Uthmān*, v.3, pp. 107-116), al-Jāmi‘ [d. 151/768], (*Bāb: Maqṭal ‘Uthmān*, v.11, p. 444), and Ibn Abī Bakr [674/1276-741/1341], *al-Tamhīd wa al-Bayān*, pp. 138-197.

³² See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, No. 4243, v.4, p. 1641), al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, No. 11026, v.6, p. 298), and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 5690, v.2, p. 94). For the verse see the Qur’ān (ETMC), 34: 28. Also see Qur’ān, 13: 30, 17: 106, 21: 107, 35: 24, and 48: 8.

³³ See the section “Islamic Military Doctrine” in the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4).

³⁴ However, the order to fight and seek victory or martyrdom, as mentioned in the section “Islamic Military Doctrine” in the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4), is bound and restricted by the Qur’ān, 8: 61: “But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace.” In this connection, in the commentary of *The Holy Qur’ān ETMC* p. 487, fn: 1228, it is found: “While we must always be ready for the good fight lest it be forced on us, even in the midst of the fight

regarding the Sāsānian Emperor, who had torn up the letter he had sent: “Allāh will tear up his kingdom”.³⁵ In the case of the Byzantines, there were several incidents which provoked the Muslims to conquer al-Shām; among them was the killing of the Prophet’s messenger before he could fulfil his mission,³⁶ and their preparing to invade Medina.³⁷

We have seen that Islamic military strategy³⁸ must at all times be conceived and practised in the light of the *sharī‘a* of Islam in order to fulfil certain goals. However, it should be noted that the military strategy of defending Islam can be pursued together, according to need, with the military strategy of spreading the faith. In fact, it should be emphasised that during the initial stages of constructing the fledgling state of the Islamic community and completing the revelation of Islam, it was logical to insist that the strategic imperative demanded that the faith should be defended before it could be spread. Hence, the two ‘pillars’ - unlike the absolute duty to serve Allāh - are to some extent subject to the surrounding circumstances.³⁹

we must always be ready for peace if there is any inclination toward peace on the other side. There is no merit merely in a fight by itself, but to establish the reign of peace.” In support of this view the Qur’ān (ETMC), 2: 256, says: “Let there be no compulsion in religion.”

³⁵ See Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Izhār Dīn al-Nabī* v.9, p. 181) and Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, v.3, p. 689.

³⁶ He was al-Ḥārith b. ‘Umayr al-Uzdī, who was killed by Sharḥabīl b. ‘Amrū al-Ghassānī before he could deliver his message. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.7, p. 511 and Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, v.3, p. 381. It should be mentioned that Prophet would not countenance the killing of his messengers while he had the power to revenge their slaughter. For example, on one occasion, the rumour that ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, his messenger to the Quraysh, had been killed, caused the Muslims to take a solemn pledge at the insistence of the Prophet that they would sacrifice their lives to avenge the death of their Companion and stand firmly by their Prophet under all conditions. See the Qur’ān, 48: 18, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Manāqib ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān*, No. 3495, v.3, p. 1352), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: Bay‘at al-Riḍwān*, No. 1856, v.3, p. 1483), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 283, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 702.

³⁷ See Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *‘Uyūn al-Athar*, v.2, p. 339.

It is known that the best way to defend against an external aggressor is through a mobilised defence, which means moving the theatre of operations to the adversary’s territory. See al-Ghaḍbān, *al-Manhaj*, v.3, pp. 96-97.

³⁸ It should be mentioned that in the coming pages when the study uses the term ‘military strategy’, ‘Islamic military strategy’ is meant, this having been already understood from the theoretical discussion.

³⁹ It can certainly be argued that from the moment the Prophet first spoke in Mecca he was spreading Islam, but generally speaking the first phase consisted of constructing a defensible nation. This explains why it has been thought necessary to discuss the strategy of Islam in this way. There was as yet no power base; therefore, the Muslims had to construct a form of Islamic state which would consolidate the power necessary to defend or spread the faith by military means. Yet the Muslims were spreading Islam, but not through military activity: in several consecutive years, the Prophet asked the tribes in the Ḥajj seasons to give him protection while he was calling people to Islam. And although on a few occasions patrols were sent out for the purpose of exploring the area around Medina and trying to intercept the Quraysh’s caravans, these could not be described as the activities of an organised Muslim army; it would be more accurate to call them skirmishes, which were not conceived and executed in order to spread Islam.

VIII.2: The Relationship between Religious Decisions and Military Decisions⁴⁰

Since Muslims believe that military decisions, like all other decisions, are subordinate to religious precepts and aims, military strategy must be decided according to the teachings of the *sharī'a* of Islam. Also, since the supreme leader of the Islamic community (the Caliph, after the Prophet's death) was essentially a religious leader,⁴¹ almost all his decisions were religious in nature, and all strategic, operational and tactical decisions were subject to religious considerations. Therefore, the military leader could not act independently but was under the command of the supreme leader.⁴² This situation necessitated good coordination between both leaderships. As a result the field commander was considered to be a valued adviser on military matters; nevertheless his power to decide strategy was limited. It could not be formulated or carried out on purely military grounds. Hence, military decisions had to be compatible with the religious principles which governed the conduct of war, and a military decision could not override a religious decision, even though the field commander might think it would bring a quicker or more decisive victory, or even prevent defeat. It should be noted here that the mechanism by which these decisions were made and carried out became clearer as the revelation continued.⁴³ Therefore, it can be argued that just as the religious or higher strategic decision took precedence over any purely military strategic decision, the caliph took precedence over the field commander, and thus that in Islam there was, and continues to be, a hierarchical relationship between religious decisions and military decisions.

This study has explained in the foregoing section the importance of Islamic military strategy as a guideline for the Muslim army, although subordinate to the unchangeable imperatives of defending and spreading the faith in order to serve Allāh. These goals are to be attained through military means, which are changeable, according to military principles. These military means are 1) strategy, 2) operations, and 3) tactics. It is therefore necessary at this point to discuss briefly the relationship between military strategy and its implementation at the operational and tactical levels.

⁴⁰ See Turkumānī, *al-Madhāhib*, p. 72.

⁴¹ See the section "The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader: *Sābiqūn*" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

⁴² See Turkumānī, *al-Madhāhib*, p. 72. This element is more evident in the last two battles.

⁴³ See the section "The Division of Booty and the Treatment of Prisoners of War" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

VIII.3: Relationship between Strategy, Operations, and Tactics

Although the Muslim leadership considered that it was essential that Islam should be defended or, later, spread through military activity, they were well aware that the aims of Islamic military strategy had to be conceived and executed in accordance with the ultimate goal of Islamic strategy generally.

We have seen that the goal of Islamic military strategy is to serve the two main 'pillars' of the higher, or more general, Islamic strategy, and that these are constants and their purpose, to serve Allāh, is eternal and unalterable. However, these somewhat theoretical considerations need to be fulfilled in reality through the specific, practical means of operations and tactics.

Thus while military strategy concerns the widest scope of military activities, it must be implemented in detail through operational and tactical activities.⁴⁴ It can be said that operations are related to strategy in that they accomplish its goals through a narrower focus. The operational level is concerned with the possibilities of attaining these goals in the theatre of operations without specifying in great detail the way they are to be accomplished. Further, the distinction between strategy and tactics may be summarised as follows: strategy is a continuous activity at the broadest level, whereas tactics only come into play at the time of need; the Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines tactics as, "The art or science of deploying military ... forces in order of battle, and of preparing ... manoeuvres".⁴⁵ It is clear from the brief discussion above that strategy is not dictated by operations and tactics but that these are elements of, and subordinate to, military strategy.⁴⁶ It should be noted, however, that the Qur'ān recognises the importance of tactical manoeuvres in the first five verses of the *surah* al-ʿĀdiyāt.⁴⁷ Also, it can be argued that strategy in general ends in the 'pitched battle' and is thus focussed with increasing intensity through the operational levels.⁴⁸

VIII.4: Islamic Principles of War

According to Henderson, the principles of war can be considered principles of military strategy.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, there are different views as to how many of these principles may

⁴⁴ See Turkumānī, *al-Madhāhib*, p. 39 and Aḥmad, *Naḥwa Qānūn Muwaḥḥad*, p. 91. Also see al-ʿĀrif, *al-Jaysh*, p. 174.

⁴⁵ See the Shorter Oxford Dictionary.

⁴⁶ See Buffer, *Introduction A La Strategie*, p. 17.

⁴⁷ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 100: 1-5.

⁴⁸ Henderson, *The Science of War*, p. 39.

⁴⁹ See Henderson, *The Science of War*, p. 42.

be usefully discussed and differentiated. Also some are very closely connected while others are best considered to some extent as standing alone.⁵⁰ In addition, it must be admitted that the principles of war are not explicitly referred to by the verses of the Qur'ān. Hence the question arises, does the Islamic *shari'a* have an opinion on these principles? Moreover, if it does not take a clear position, is it possible for this study to attempt to use its understanding of the Qur'ān and the *hadith* to construct an acceptable set of Islamic principles of war? This is what this section will investigate. It should be stressed that some of the verses covered below may not appear to be directly relevant; however, the task of this study is to make a connection between these principles of war and the verses in the Qur'ān through an academic analysis. In addition, there are elements which could be effective in applying these principles, such as the quality of the warriors involved, which are relevant to the discussion.

Since the military aspects of Islamic military strategy are always subservient to the doctrinal aspects, as we have seen in the foregoing discussion, the principles of war in this chapter will be discussed according to an Islamic perspective.⁵¹ This intention calls for the adoption of a new method, which is to interpret several verses in order to shed light on the principles, as generally understood, as they were applied before, during or even after the battles of interest.⁵² It should be noted, however, that this section does not discuss the principles in a chronological framework, as its focus is on their validity and application from an Islamic point of view. Further, since the chosen verses are capable of more than one interpretation, some verses will be used in more than one context to strengthen the argument. This course is considered preferable to allowing the inclusion of verses of doubtful relevance merely for the sake of avoiding repetition.

VIII.4.1: Morale

Morale (*al-ma'nawiyyāt*)⁵³ is a major principle of war. Its importance is acknowledged in the teachings of doctrine and the statements of military commanders. It is usually considered to be the primary source of a soldier's energy and fighting spirit. In works

⁵⁰ See Khalfāt and As'ad, *al-Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, pp. 97-111 and Faraj, *Fann Idārat al-Ma'rakah*, p. 150. Additionally, they do not constitute one solid set of principles but vary somewhat according to the background of the military school. See 'Armūsh, *Qiyādat al-Rasūl*, pp. 173-174. However, the study has chosen to consider the points which are agreed upon by strategists who discuss them in the light of Islamic norms, i.e. the Qur'ān and *hadith*.

⁵¹ See the previous section "The Relationship between Religious Decisions and Military Decisions".

⁵² Khalfāt and As'ad, *al-Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 9, remark that Islamic military strategy starts where Islamic military doctrine ends.

⁵³ See Khalfāt and As'ad, *al-Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 109.

devoted to military matters throughout history morale has been thought to be a major influence on the outcome of a battle. It is also a matter thoroughly considered by the Islamic *sharī'a*. In the present context it is possible to say that the Muslim army applied this principle in three main ways. First, the Muslims believed that their task was justified by their doctrine.⁵⁴ Second, the trust they had in their leaders removed any doubt or hesitation.⁵⁵ Third, they were dedicated heart and soul to the protection of their brothers in religion.⁵⁶ The Qur'ān discusses morale in various verses, for example: "If there are Twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the Unbelievers."⁵⁷ Thus in military terms Islam changed the concept of quantity - mere numbers of men - to that of quality - the instilling of the military virtues through the inspirational force of Islamic doctrine as revealed to the Prophet. In many verses the Qur'ān promises rewards for those who fight for Islam, for example, as in: "Those who believe, and emigrate, and fight for the faith, in the Cause of Allāh, as well as those who give (them) asylum and aid,- these are (all) in very truth the Believers: for them is the forgiveness of sins and a provision most generous."⁵⁸ In addition, the *ḥadīth* emphasises the great virtue and benefit of fighting for the faith; the quantity of similar statements indicates the importance placed on raising and maintaining morale. For example, the Prophet (PBUH) said: "A single endeavour (of fighting) in Allāh's Cause in the afternoon or in the forenoon is better than all the world and whatever is in it."⁵⁹ However, high morale can only be built and sustained by a unified command, which will be discussed in the next section.

VIII.4.2: Unity of Command

The second important principle is unity of command, which means that every task of every soldier is the ultimate responsibility of a single commander. Only thus can unity of

⁵⁴ Further see the section "The Reasons for Islamic Combat" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁵⁵ Further see the section "Types of Leadership" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

⁵⁶ Further see the section "Loyalty and Self-denial" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4). See also Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Birr wa al-Ṣilah wa al-Adab*, No. 2587, v.4, p. 1999) and Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā (*Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Istisqā'*, No. 6223, v.3, p. 353).

⁵⁷ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 65.

⁵⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 74.

⁵⁹ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Siyar*, No. 2643, v.3, p. 1029) and Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Jihād*, No. 1651, v.3, p. 181).

effort be ensured.⁶⁰ The Qur'ān states the importance of unification of command: “And obey Allāh and His Messenger; and fall into no disputes. Lest ye lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering: For Allāh is with those who patiently persevere.”⁶¹ Here, the stress is on obedience to the leadership, and the prohibition of discord. We may understand from this that the Qur'ān is recommending a new concept of comradeship, which could be used to transform the entrenched practice of *‘aṣabiyyah* in Arab life into an Islamic brotherhood.⁶² This can be seen in the warriors’ acceptance of commanders from other tribes despite their long history of destructive vendettas and tribal wars. Hence, it can be claimed that the function of this principle is based on a comradeship of the faithful. This principle is intimately connected with another, that of cooperation and coordination.

VIII.4.3: Cooperation and Coordination

Cooperation and coordination (*al-ta‘āwun*)⁶³ means unifying the effort and working together harmoniously in order to reach the goal. Islam has much to say on this matter, which it discusses in several places, as we have noted in the chapter on Islamic military doctrine. In addition, the Qur'ān clarifies the need for cooperation and unity of effort and their connection with the principle of obedience.⁶⁴ The Qur'ān states: “Those who believed, and emigrated and fought for the faith, with their property and their person, in the Cause of Allāh, as well as those who gave (them) asylum and aid, these are (all) friends and protectors, one of another.”⁶⁵ It must be emphasised that this cooperation is not merely the result of obedience to an external authority; Muslims believe, following the Qur'ān, that this principle can only be fully applied through the coordination and cooperation of their hearts, as the Qur'ān states: “And remember with gratitude Allāh’s favour on you; For ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren.”⁶⁶ It is possible, then, to argue that the Qur'ān’s discussion of

⁶⁰ Leadership and unity of command, though closely related, are not identical. See the section “Leadership and Unity of Command” in the chapter “The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership” (Ch.5).

⁶¹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 46.

⁶² Further see the section “Leadership and Unity of Command” in the chapter “The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership” (Ch.5).

⁶³ See Khalfāt and As‘ad, *al-‘Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 105 and Faraj, *Fann Idārat al-Ma‘rakah*, p. 179.

⁶⁴ See the section “Obedience” in the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4).

⁶⁵ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 72 and 9: 71.

⁶⁶ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 103. Also see the Qur'ān, 5: 2.

matters related to this principle shows its important relationship with the principle of unity of command.

VIII.4.4: Surprise

The principle of surprise means to strike the adversary at a time, at a place, or in a manner for which he is least prepared.⁶⁷ Its essential nature was summed up by the Prophet (PBUH), when he said: “War is deceit.”⁶⁸ It relies much on the element of intelligence.⁶⁹ It can be argued that its demands are considered clearly by the Qur’ān: “Beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war).”⁷⁰ This verse directs the army to be aware and fully alert when lying in ambush, and encourages endurance and patience, which link the principle to the operational level of the Islamic military strategy.⁷¹

In this connection, since this verse has several meanings other than that given above, it can also be used in connection with a plan of defence such as digging a trench to repel a besieging force.⁷² So it is possible to say that the principle of surprise is considered and encouraged in its widest sense in the Islamic *shari‘a*.

VIII.4.5: Security

Security, which means taking measures to prevent being taken by surprise, is another vital principle of war.⁷³ Among these measures is assuring the security and safety of the army as well as its support lines. The Qur’ān emphasises that Muslims should not trust or easily accept offers of friendship or aid from non-Muslims, even their closest relatives: “O ye who believe! Take not My enemies and yours as friends (or protectors), offering them

⁶⁷ See Khalfāt and As‘ad, *al-‘Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 100 and Faraj, *Fann Idārat al-Ma‘rakah*, p. 165.

⁶⁸ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: al-Ḥarb Khid‘ah*, No. 2846, v.3, p. 1102) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Bāb: al-Taḥrīd ‘ala Qatl al-Khawārij*, No. 1066, v.2, p. 746).

⁶⁹ See the section “The Value of Intelligence to the Soldiers: Surprise” in the chapter “The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence” (Ch.6).

⁷⁰ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 5.

⁷¹ The element of endurance should also be considered under surprise. See the section “The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader; Patience and Endurance” in the chapter “The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership” (Ch.5). Of course, it is not only the leader who should exhibit these qualities; they are also essential to the effectiveness of his men.

⁷² Here once again there is a problem of translation, since in Arabic the words are *كُلٌّ مَرَصِدٌ* and *وَأَنْتَدِرُوا*, which are difficult to translate accurately. According to the exegeses and dictionaries the verse can be said to have several meanings. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.10, p. 78, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.8, p. 73, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.8, p. 314. Also see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, v.8, p. 109 & v.3, p. 358. Further see the different translations of the Qur’ān including those of Pickthall and Yusuf Ali.

⁷³ See Khalfāt and As‘ad, *al-‘Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 104 and Faraj, *Fann Idārat al-Ma‘rakah*, p. 175.

(your) love, even though they have rejected the Truth that has come to you, and have (on the contrary) driven out the Messenger and yourselves (from your homes), (simply) because ye believe in Allāh your Lord! If ye have come out to strive in My Way and to Seek My Good Pleasure, (take them not as friends), holding secret converse of love (and friendship) with them: for I know full well all that ye conceal and all that ye reveal. And any of you that does this has strayed from the Straight Path.”⁷⁴ This long verse needs to be quoted in full since it deals in detail with the threats that might harm the Muslim community.⁷⁵

The Arabs’ system was to form alliances which usually involved protection of their movements in the desert; however, Islam developed this arrangement through jurisprudence, since awareness of security concerns is essential at the level of troop movements. The Qur’ān states: “When ye travel through the earth, there is no blame on you if ye shorten your prayers, for fear the Unbelievers may attack you: For the Unbelievers are unto you open enemies.”⁷⁶ It is also possible to use the general concept of the following verse to refer to military security in those cases where an army is marching or even in combat: “O ye that believe! Betray not the trust of Allāh and the Messenger, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you.”⁷⁷ Even though this verse is general in nature its relevance to security lies in its insistence on loyalty to Allāh and His Messenger, since an act of betrayal obviously constitutes a grave breach of security. It can be argued that the prohibition is not only of consciously willed treachery, but also of the careless or undisciplined execution of an important mission. In addition, the Qur’ān discusses a similar case related to the security of the army at the tactical level, which gives a deep insight into the importance attached to this principle. The verse in question concerns the soldiers’ performance of their prayers at a decisive moment in a confrontation: “When thou (O Messenger) art with them, and standest to lead them in prayer, let “one party of them stand up (in prayer) with thee, taking their arms with them; when they finish their prostrations, let them take their positions in the rear. And let the other party come up - which hath not yet prayed - and let them pray with thee, taking all

⁷⁴ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 60: 1. Further see *The Holy Qur’ān ETMC*, p. 1728, fn: 5409. Also see the Qur’ān, 60: 2.

⁷⁵ Further see the section “The Assistance of Non-Muslims” in the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4).

⁷⁶ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 101. Similarly see the Qur’ān, 3: 121 and 4: 71.

⁷⁷ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 27. Similarly see the Qur’ān, 3: 118, 4: 139 & 144, 5: 21, 51, & 57, and 9: 23.

precautions, and bearing arms.”⁷⁸ Thus even the pattern of prayer can be modified when Islam itself is threatened. Indeed, the significance of this verse should not be underestimated as it is the only place in the Qur’ān where the method of performance of a prayer, *Ṣalāh*, is described in detail.

One further example will serve to emphasise the importance given to security; the Qur’ān states: “O ye who believe! take your precautions, and either go forth in parties or go forth all together.”⁷⁹

VIII.4.6: Choosing the Target and Aiming for it

Choosing the target and aiming for it (ikhtiyār al-qaṣd wa idāmatih) is an important principle of war.⁸⁰ The Qur’ān explains and emphasises the need for a clear and well-defined goal. In many places, the focus on and the repeated calls to “serve Allāh” show the importance of discerning one main goal and then aiming to attain it without doubts or distractions.⁸¹ Subsidiary goals, such as those of Islamic military strategy, tend to be accomplished by collective action, which the Qur’ān often enjoins and praises, as in: “Only those are Believers, who believe in Allāh and His Messenger: when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they do not depart until they have asked for his leave: those who ask for thy leave are those who believe in Allāh and His Messenger.”⁸²

Also, it is possible to argue that the following verse is relevant to the discussion of this principle, as it states: “Allāh has not made for any man two hearts.”⁸³ In this context it means that a man cannot hold two inconsistent attitudes; so it is possible to claim that he should concentrate on one main object in order that his approach and performance should be effective.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 102. For further explanation see al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2432, v.2, p. 92) and Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Jihād*, No. 1639, v.4, p. 175).

⁷⁹ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 71.

⁸⁰ See Khalfāt and As‘ad, *al-‘Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 108.

⁸¹ See the Qur’ān, 2: 21, 5: 72 & 117, 7: 59, 65, 73, & 85, 11: 50, 61, & 84, 16: 36, 23: 23 & 32, 27: 45, 29: 16 & 36, and 71: 3. Also see the previous definition of Islamic military strategy. Further see the section “The Well-Defined Goal” in the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4).

⁸² See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 24: 62.

⁸³ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 4.

⁸⁴ See *The Holy Qur’ān ETMC*, p. 1238, fn: 3669 and al-Zuḥayli, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.21, p. 234.

In addition, the Prophet himself provided an example of keeping to the main objective when he made a manoeuvre by leaving the main route and avoiding confrontation with the Quraysh troops on the march to Mecca. He then forced them to accept negotiations after long years of confrontation. See al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr (No. 14, v.20, p. 15), Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.4, p. 276, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 692.

A good leader will often choose a set of goals and then concentrate on one of them as the major or the most pressing one.⁸⁵ Advising the person responsible for choosing the most advantageous course of action, the Qur'ān states: "O ye who believe! When ye go out in the cause of Allāh, investigate carefully, and say not to any one who offers you a salutation: "Thou art none of a Believer! Therefore carefully investigate."⁸⁶ The repetition of the phrase 'carefully investigate' emphasises this principle, suggesting that when the Muslim army is on a mission it should not deviate from the main designated goal. In addition, the Muslim soldiers are warned not to take it upon themselves to decide the goal and bend the principle in order to profit materially. Here the goal is intimately connected with the overall strategy of Islam.

VIII.4.7: Offence

The principle of offence⁸⁷ means to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative. The Qur'ān, generally, encourages the implementation of this principle by clear demands or by pointing out its advantages. On many occasions there is a clear order for offence, for example: "O Prophet! Strive hard against the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be firm against them."⁸⁸ The Qur'ān explains further, and clearly, how the principle is to be applied: "Go ye forth, (whether equipped) lightly or heavily, and strive and struggle, with your goods and your persons, in the Cause of Allāh."⁸⁹ Additionally, the Prophet's urging of his Companions can also be used to illustrate this principle; he pressed them to go to reinforce the Muslim army, which had left Medina some time before.⁹⁰ Thus it is possible to say that the *sharī'a* has focused directly or indirectly on this principle of war.

VIII.4.8: Chasing the Enemy

Chasing the enemy (*al-muṭāradah*) entails following the vanquished and trying to stop them from regrouping and returning to the battlefield.⁹¹ The importance of this principle

⁸⁵ See the section "Obedience" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁸⁶ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 94. Also see al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.5, pp. 223-226, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.5, pp. 336-341, and al-Zuhayli, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, v.5, pp. 214-218.

⁸⁷ See Khalfāt and As'ad, *al-Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 102 and Faraj, *Fann Idārat al-Ma'rakah*, p. 170.

⁸⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 66: 9. Also see Qur'ān, 49: 1 and 9: 38. However, it should be noted that there are aspects to be considered in this matter other than a purely offensive position. See the section "The Concept of the Just War" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁸⁹ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 94. Also the Qur'ān (ETMC), 4: 84, states: "And rouse the Believers."

⁹⁰ See al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Bāb: Manāqib Jābir b. 'Abdullah*, No. 8249, v.5, p. 69) and Musnad Aḥmad (No. 22619, v.5, pp. 300-301).

⁹¹ See Khalfāt and As'ad, *al-Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 107 and Faraj, *Fann Idārat al-Ma'rakah*, p. 181.

of war can be seen in the Qur'ān, as it illustrates the need to scatter not only the adversary's warriors but also the people who follow the adversary's forces, not necessarily killing them but preventing them from returning to the battlefield: "If ye gain the mastery over them in war, disperse, with them, those who follow them."⁹² Thus the Muslim army is commanded to pursue the defeated and retreating forces, together with their followers, and prevent them, by dispersing them, from regrouping with the same army, being reinforced by another army, or being strengthened by any sort of power even if it is not a military power.⁹³ Hence it can be argued that this principle of war is well considered in the *sharī'a*.

VIII.4.9: Mass and Force Concentration

Although some theorists separate the principles of mass and force concentration, it is thought more convenient for the purposes of the study to bring them together. So a general definition covering both might be: to concentrate combat power at a decisive place and time, directing every military operation towards clearly defined, decisive and attainable objectives. However, it should be understood that *mass*, which means to concentrate combat power at the decisive place and time,⁹⁴ should not be simply taken to mean superiority in numbers of troops or quantity of equipment, as the Qur'ān states: "On the day of Ḥunayn: behold! Your great numbers elated you, but they availed you naught: the land, for all that it is wide, did constrain you, and ye turned back in retreat."⁹⁵ Therefore it can be argued that the following verse can be taken to refer to the principle of mass: "Truly Allāh loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure."⁹⁶ The phrase "solid cemented structure" implies massiveness, firmness and impregnability, in other words a concentration of power. Therefore by this criterion to dispose the available forces in a single easily penetrable line is not to concentrate one's forces but to use mass in an incorrect way. Therefore, the Qur'ān advises that the deployment of the soldiers should be sufficiently concentrated to be able to repel any attack by being as resistant as a "solid structure". However, our understanding of this

⁹² See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 57.

⁹³ The original Arabic word is *فَشَرَدَ*, is translated as *disperse* in the main translation of the Qur'ān in use, i.e. *The Holy Qur'ān EMTC*, p. 486, which does not, however, convey the wide meaning of the original. Therefore the study has consulted the main Arabic lexicons for its discussion of this verse. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, v.3, p. 237 and al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, v.1, p. 141. Also see the section "Awareness and Readiness Levels" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

⁹⁴ See Khalfāt and Asʿad, *al-ʿAskariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 98 and Faraj, *Fann Idārat al-Maʿrakah*, p. 155.

⁹⁵ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 9: 25.

⁹⁶ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 61: 4.

verse should not be limited to material aspects only, since it can be argued that the solidity recommended by the Qur'ān is also a matter of spiritual power. This consideration links this principle of those of morale and cooperation and coordination, as well as to the principles of leadership and training.

In addition, the last verse may be related to another principle not easily separable from mass; that is, the principle of *force concentration*, which means to direct every military operation towards a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective.⁹⁷ The Qur'ān says: "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of Allāh and your enemies"⁹⁸ The phrase "to the utmost of your power" does not indicate superiority of numbers, but rather that power should be concentrated to the utmost degree.⁹⁹ Also, although it can be argued that the phrase "including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies"¹⁰⁰ refers primarily to the equipment available to the army, the meaning of the verse should not be limited to material considerations, since 'power' denotes spiritual as well as material strength.¹⁰¹ Finally, in connection with both these principles, it should be noted that on one occasion, prior to the battle of Mu'tah, the Prophet asked almost everyone in Medina to go with the army to Mu'tah.¹⁰²

Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the Qur'ān considers mass and force concentration in both their material and spiritual aspects.

VIII.4.10: Economy in the Use of Force

This principle involves allocating the minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts. However, this does not mean that the task should be accomplished using the minimum combat power. The principle indicates that the leader should judge wisely and effectively when deploying his troops, so that he will be free to be able to make any necessary manoeuvre using secondary power. Although this principle is not mentioned in the Qur'ān, as far as the researcher is aware, one verse could be adduced to show the importance of economy in the use of force. It is: "It is not for the Believers to go forth

⁹⁷ See Khalfāt and As'ad, *al-Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 99 and Faraj, *Fann Idārat al-Ma'rakah*, p. 160.

⁹⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 60.

⁹⁹ For a discussion of the term 'power' see the section "Awareness and Readiness Levels" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4). Also see Khalfāt and As'ad, *al-Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 98.

¹⁰⁰ The original form is "وَمِنْ رِّبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ" (Steed of war). See the Qur'ān, 8: 60.

¹⁰¹ Hence, this verse links the idea of mass with the idea of morale.

¹⁰² See Musnad Aḥmad (No. 22619, v.5, p. 300).

together: if a contingent from every expedition go forth to devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them, that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil).”¹⁰³ So it is not considered right that all the faithful should go to war at once, since religious study and instruction are also of great importance for the attainment of the ultimate goal, to which every action a Muslim undertakes should be directed. Hence, this verse may be taken as indicating the desirability of dividing the available forces into primary and secondary capabilities, where both are dedicated to the service of Allāh.

In connection with this principle we might also consider the verse: “Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute.”¹⁰⁴ Now according to the exegetical works, this verse concerns spending money in the cause of Allāh, but it can be interpreted to suggest that a leader should be aware of the importance of economy in the use of force when he positions his troops; he should not carelessly mass them in one particular place and forget the opportunities afforded by reserving a certain number to secondary efforts.¹⁰⁵ Hence, it is possible to claim that the principle of economy in the use of force should be linked with that of simplicity, which means to prepare and execute clear, uncomplicated plans and clear, concise orders, and which is also a part of the next principle of war.

VIII.4.11: Manoeuvre and Simplicity

Manoeuvre means the positioning of military resources to favour the accomplishment of the mission and also to place the adversary in a position of disadvantage through the flexible application of combat power. For maximum effectiveness, moreover, manoeuvre should be combined with the principle of simplicity, as complexity all too often results in confusion and may lead to defeat. In addition, although manoeuvre in itself may not produce a decisive result, if properly employed it makes decisive results possible through the application of the principles of offence, mass, economy in the use of force, force concentration, and surprise, as we will see in the verses cited below.¹⁰⁶ Although this principle is not mentioned explicitly in the Qur’ān, it can be argued that several verses make reference to it, as in: “Remember ye were on the hither side of the valley, and they

¹⁰³ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 122.

¹⁰⁴ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 17: 29.

¹⁰⁵ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, v.6, p. 301, al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.13, p. 73, and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, v.3, p. 38.

¹⁰⁶ Several authors have discussed this principle in conjunction with these other five. See Khalfāt and As’ad, *al-‘Askariyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 103 and Faraj, *Fann Idārat al-Ma’arakah*, p. 172. Also see Boatner, “Principles of War”, in www.civilwarhome.com.

on the farther side, and the caravan on lower ground than ye.”¹⁰⁷ This also shows the connection of this principle with that of mass. Furthermore, another verse shows the importance of manoeuvre in attacking from different sides: “Behold! They came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes swerved and the hearts gaped up to the throats, and ye imagined various (vain) thoughts about Allāh!”¹⁰⁸ It also shows the connection of this principle with those of offence and surprise. These two verses demonstrate the importance given to the principle of manoeuvre by Islam.

In addition, it is narrated that the Prophet said that war is deceit.¹⁰⁹ Hence, it is possible to claim that within the wide range of usage of the Prophet the principle of manoeuvre as well as that of surprise can be considered under this *ḥadīth*.¹¹⁰ Therefore it can be argued that this principle of war is discussed in the Islamic teachings, broadly understood.

Having discussed the principles of war from a theoretical viewpoint, the study will now consider the practical application of these principles in the battles of interest. It will be shown that some principles were more effectively used than others, and that some were used in combination while others were not. In addition, as the discussion will make clear, the following examination of the principles of war will be enriched by referring to other chapters of this study, and therefore comparisons and cross references will be made when they are thought to be relevant. It should also be noted that the principles will be discussed according to their relative importance and whether or not they were used in combination.

VIII.5: Analysis of the Battles

VIII.5.1: The Battle of Badr

As mentioned above, the principles of war will be considered according to their importance and degree of involvement in this battle. Accordingly unity of command and morale are judged to be of the greatest significance, although surprise should not be forgotten since it was very effectively integrated with manoeuvre.

Although the Muslims had taken the step of seeking to attack the Quraysh's caravan, they were, it could be argued, merely responding to a transgression of the peace. The *ḥadīth*

¹⁰⁷ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 8: 42.

¹⁰⁸ See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 33: 10.

¹⁰⁹ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: al-Ḥarb Khud'ah*, No. 2864, v.3, p. 1102) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Siyar*, No. 1739, v.3, p. 1361).

¹¹⁰ However, al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, v.12, p. 45 and Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.6, p. 158, agreed that the breaking of treaties is not included or permitted in this case.

reported that the Quraysh had forced the Muslims to take up arms in self-defence, since they had sent two letters: One threatened the Jewish tribes and the unbelievers of Medina that there would be dire consequences if they did not expel the Muslims, and another threatened the emigrants gathered in the city.¹¹¹ In addition, the 'three options' of the Islamic war doctrine were not put to the Quraysh army.¹¹² This indicates that at this stage the Prophet's forces were not spreading Islam, but defending it. As for the battle itself, morale was crucial if the Muslim army was to be able to match the numerous and well-equipped forces of the adversary; and in several ways, either through divine assistance or other principles, morale was indeed raised. The last words the troops heard from their Prophet before the battle were: "Rise to enter Paradise."¹¹³ It can also be seen in the army's collective determination to achieve the goal.¹¹⁴ Spiritually, therefore, the army went into battle powerfully motivated by their desire to serve Allāh. This high morale had been created prior to the battle and was sustained throughout the engagement.¹¹⁵

As can be said of all five battles, at Badr the command of the Muslim army was united, which enabled it to quickly take important decisions, including the one to engage with the numerically superior Quraysh rather than retreat, as the Qur'ān explains.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the Prophet was fully aware of the situation and, encouraged by prayer, was able to control the course of events. He also knew that he could rely on another principle of war, that of the full cooperation and coordination of the whole Muslim army.¹¹⁷ This principle allowed the Prophet to choose the goal and to aim for it.

Also, as we have seen, Badr was a defensive action, and strategically the Muslims aimed to secure several goals, among which were: securing their main base in Medina in case the Quraysh did not stop at Badr; operationally, to prevent their position in the region from being eroded by the Quraysh; and tactically they were promised one of two alternatives:

¹¹¹ See al-Ghaḍbān, *al-Manhaj*, v.1, pp. 217-218.

¹¹² See the section "The Concept of the Just War" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

¹¹³ See the section "Production of Powerfully Motivating Elements" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

¹¹⁴ See the section "The Well-Defined Goal" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

¹¹⁵ See the section "The Element of Strong Motivation" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

¹¹⁶ See the Qur'ān, 8: 7.

¹¹⁷ The concept of this element is derived from the element of consultation. See the section "Consultation" in the chapter "The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine" (Ch.4).

either the caravan or the adversary.¹¹⁸ In addition, it can be argued that at the operational level the Muslim leadership had made provision against any attack from other quarters, having concluded several treaties with various local tribes, including the Banū Dumrah and Banū Mudlij.¹¹⁹ Further, the securing of the wells and the leadership on the battlefield were well managed.¹²⁰ However, the principle of surprise was crucial in this battle. Two elements were used: burying the wells and the novel formation of the ranks,¹²¹ both of which demonstrated the Muslims' tactical superiority.

Regarding the principle of mass and force concentration, it should be remembered that it entails concentrating power at a decisive place and time, and is not dependent upon superior numbers. Thus it can be argued that the Muslims made good use of mass at Badr, even though their aim had been to capture the caravan and they were lightly equipped. The Prophet did not wait for reinforcements, which would have meant losing the initiative and the principle of surprise. His effective use of this principle, in combination with unity of leadership and high morale, proved decisive. He also chose the terrain and the right formation for the combat. He disposed his forces in two parallel lines, which fulfilled the principles of mass and force concentration, as they were able to rain arrows on the adversary without breaking ranks.¹²²

This manner of deployment also relates to manoeuvre, where the strategic plan was clear, and the tactical plan was put into action as the two armies faced each other on the day of the battle.¹²³ The Prophet's forces, advancing in ranks, were tactically superior to the Quraysh, who also had the morning sun in their eyes. The effect of the Muslims' arrows coming out of the sun, as it were, must have been disconcerting.¹²⁴ However, it should be emphasised here that the Muslims were also successful in the traditional method of

¹¹⁸ For further detail on these goals see the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹¹⁹ Respectively see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, v.3, p. 135 & v.3, p. 143, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, v.3, p. 163, & v.3, p. 166, and al-Mubarakpuri, *al-Raḥīq*, pp. 197 & 199. Also see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, No. 3733, v.4, p. 1546).

¹²⁰ See the Qur'ān, 8: 7. Also see the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹²¹ See the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3). In addition, Henderson, *The Science of War*, p. 41, mentions that the distribution of force plays an important role in battle.

¹²² See the Qur'ān, 8: 7.

¹²³ See the Qur'ān, 61: 4.

¹²⁴ See the direction of approach in the map of the battle.

fighting, often in single combat.¹²⁵ At Badr the Prophet adopted a defensive position which allowed him to make good use of the terrain.¹²⁶

As for the principle of chasing the enemy, this was unnecessary at Badr. It was enough to have eliminated the principal leaders by, as Muslims believe, divine assistance. Many of the Quraysh's notable fighters had also been killed, which broke the morale of the adversary and thus prevented the remaining seven hundred fighters from regrouping and returning to the battlefield, even though the Muslim army was encamped for three days after the confrontation.¹²⁷

In addition, the principle of economy in the use of force was not applied in this battle since the Prophet needed every warrior to be involved in the fighting.

We have seen that at Badr some principles of war were crucial while it was not possible to apply others. It is reasonable to argue, however, that most of the principles were considered and fulfilled at the strategic, operational, or tactical levels.

VIII.5.2: The Battle of Uḥud

At Uḥud the strategy was different from that applied at Badr, since this time the adversary was intent on attacking Medina and threatening to destroy the Muslim community. Again, the Muslim army's strategy was not one of offensive action, and so they could be said to be serving the first 'pillar' of Islamic military strategy, i.e. to defend Islam. At Uḥud, as at Badr, the chief principles affecting the conduct and outcome of the battle were unity of command, morale, and manoeuvre.

The morale of the whole army was high despite the disagreement with 'Abdullah b. Ubayy, who caused the retreat of one third of the army at a most critical moment, as the Muslims were enthusiastic and looking forward to rewards similar to those given to the men who had attended the battle of Badr, and to demonstrating their loyalty and honour.¹²⁸ However, as the battle began to turn in the Quraysh's favour the morale of some of the men wavered when they thought the Prophet had been killed.¹²⁹ By contrast,

¹²⁵ See the section "The Reasons for Conflicts and the Mounts of the Arabs" in the chapter "Brief Background of the Region Prior to Islam" (Ch.2). See also the story of 'Ali b. 'Abī Ṭālib, who called upon a man to come down to him from the top and managed to kill him. See Yamānī, *Badr*, pp. 159 & 160.

¹²⁶ See Kamāl, *al-ʿAskariyyah fi al-Qurʿān*, p. 63. Further see the section "The Battle of Badr" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹²⁷ See the Qurʿān, 8: 7.

¹²⁸ For a similar case see the story of Anas b. al-Naḍir in Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Bāb: min Surah al-Aḥzāb*, No. 3201, v.5, p. 349) and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 11. Further see al-Mustadrak ʿala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2557, v.2, p. 130).

¹²⁹ See Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Maʿād*, v.3, p. 209 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 34.

the morale of others remained unaffected as they sacrificed themselves to save the Prophet. Their self-sacrifice was integrated with the principle of choosing the target and aiming for it, since to save the Prophet was surely to save Islam. It should be noted that the Qur'ān makes a distinction between the intention or goal of the Muslims who had hesitated to meet the Quraysh at Badr and that of the hypocrites, led by Ibn Ubayy, who retreated at Uḥud.¹³⁰

Further, these two principles (choosing the target and aiming for it and morale) were directly carried out through unity of command, which allowed the army, even at the most critical moment of the Muslim community, to save their religion. Through unity of command the Prophet and his warriors managed to choose the right manoeuvre and the right route of escape for what was left of the Muslim army on the battlefield at the right moment. It was able to change the element of quantity to the element of quality while they were engaged in the defence of Islam. It also succeeded in integrating several principles, among which were *mass* and *force concentration*, where the right location was chosen, providing a decisive and timely position on the battlefield for both the main body and the detachment of archers stationed on the mountain - this also fulfilled the principle of economy in the use of force.¹³¹

At the start of the battle the Muslim army's security was effective; on the mountain the Prophet's position was protected. It should be noted that the adversary was seeking above all to eliminate the united command, as the announcement of their leader, Abū Sufyān, made clear.¹³²

Again, before the battle itself the principle of cooperation and coordination was fruitful at the strategic level when the Muslim army was warned of the coming attack by one of their allies.¹³³ The application of this principle, however, broke down as the battle progressed; first through the retreat of one third of the Muslim army, second through the disobedience of the archers, and lastly through the flight of most of the army to Medina. Thus the principle of security was also breached, for the action of Ibn Ubayy showed that from a strategic point of view it was necessary to defend Islam against hypocritical friends and allies. Nevertheless the principle of coordination and cooperation was reasserted

¹³⁰ See the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹³¹ See the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹³² See the section "The Adversary at the Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Adversary's Strengths and Weaknesses" (Ch.7).

¹³³ Further see the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence" (Ch.6).

when the remnants of the Muslim army, their wounds having been dressed, pursued their enemy the following day.¹³⁴

The principle of manoeuvre was well applied at the beginning of the battle; yet it was not successfully implemented during the latter stages, leading to heavy losses among the Muslims. Initially the Muslim army seemed capable of defeating their enemy despite being outnumbered. At first the leadership was successful, as it stationed the troops in the right place at the right time, and directed all the power it had at its disposal towards a set of decisive and obtainable goals: defending Islam as a strategic goal, defending Medina as an operational goal, and outmanoeuvring the adversary through the right application of a well-conceived plan and the right usage of terrain. Hence, it is possible to say that at the beginning of the battle, the right application of manoeuvre and simplicity of plan allowed the leadership to fulfil the principles of mass, force concentration, economy in the use of force, and surprise.

Even when the tide of battle changed, again the right manoeuvre saved what was left of the Muslim army, who sought the protection of mount Uḥud. This manoeuvre can be said to have fulfilled various strategic, operational, and tactical goals: it protected the Prophet from assassination, it saved Medina from being invaded by the Quraysh and dominated by the hypocrites and the increasingly hostile Jewish tribes, and it prevented the elimination of the most notable leaders and warriors of the Muslim army. Thus the Muslims were able to regroup after the battle and take advantage of the Quraysh's decision not to drive forward to take Medina (which would almost certainly have been militarily and diplomatically costly). This successful manoeuvre proved the importance of the principle of security.

The principle of chasing the enemy was therefore carried out for strategic reasons, chiefly to demonstrate that the Muslim army was still powerful and that its morale had not been crushed, since the pursuers were the same warriors who had been involved in the confrontation at Uḥud. It was also strategically necessary to counter any Quraysh claims that Uḥud had been a disastrous defeat for the Muslims, and to raise morale in preparation for the next confrontation; for the outcome had not been decisive, and the Muslims would soon show that their inventiveness, courage and determination could yet win the day against numerically superior forces.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ See the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹³⁵ See the section "The Battle of Uḥud" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

VIII.5.3: The Battle of al-Khandaq

The overall Islamic military strategy remained unchanged at al-Khandaq; similarly to the two previous battles, the Muslims were still acting in accordance with the verse “but do not transgress limits.”¹³⁶ In other words, they adopted the same principle: that of defending their faith against an apparently overwhelming attack. Hence in this battle some principles of war retained their importance, such as unity of command, morale, and security, while others, such as the principle of offence, were not implemented; however, others, such as economy in the use of force, were used inventively. Some were used alone, and some in combination, as will be shown in the following discussion.

It should be noted here that the Companions did not hesitate to meet the adversary outside Medina, despite their huge numbers, as the Muslims had learned from their mistakes at Uḥud.¹³⁷ The Muslims’ morale was put to the test in terms of the element of sincerity,¹³⁸ as the actions of the hypocrites were not as significant as other circumstances, according to the Qur’ān: “They were shaken as by a tremendous shaking.”¹³⁹ The Muslims’ morale was raised when they saw their leaders working side by side with them in digging the trench; but as their situation became more difficult and challenging this high morale needed to be maintained. This was accomplished by an effective unity of command. The leadership had to contend with the lack of food, the threat to the warriors and their families, and a powerful and united enemy eager to eliminate them once and for all. The leadership was able to rise to this challenge, and to raise and preserve the army’s morale in difficult conditions. The demands they made of the men were responded to with enthusiasm and courage; here we can see the army’s full cooperation and coordination in action. A well-conceived defensive plan, incorporating the principle of surprise, was put into action with all speed, as the adversary’s arrival was imminent. Here surprise was integrated with manoeuvre to produce a new method of fighting, which disconcerted and bewildered the confederacy, as siege warfare was unfamiliar among the Arabs. The confederacy was not the only threat to the Muslims’ security; there was also the matter of the breaking of one of the strategic treaties.¹⁴⁰ Hence only the Muslims’ success in holding off the adversary at the trench could guarantee full security, and

¹³⁶ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 2: 190.

¹³⁷ In the *ḥadīth* is it narrated: “Do not wish to meet the enemy, but if you meet him stand firm”. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Siyar*, No. 2804, v.3, p. 1082) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Siyar*, No. 1742, v.3, p. 1362).

¹³⁸ Further see the section “The Essence of Islamic Doctrine” in the chapter “The Role of Islamic Military Doctrine” (Ch.4).

¹³⁹ See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 11. Also see Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, v.7, p. 347.

¹⁴⁰ For the content of the treaty see al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sirah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 291.

therefore economy in the use of force needed to be used to close the gap that had been created by the broken treaty. In this connection, it can be argued that had it not been for the strategic treaties with the non-Muslim tribes, such a secure and surprising defensive plan could not have been carried out successfully.¹⁴¹ In addition, the trench needed to be secured against any force attempting to cross it. So it can be argued that the phrase: “lie in wait for them” does not refer only to an ambush, where it might be necessary to wait for half a day; as the events of this battle show it may also be cited in connection with a besieged army’s need to prevent an adversary from attacking. It also incorporates an important subordinate element, also praised by the Qur’ān; that of patience and perseverance.¹⁴²

At al-Khandaq the Prophet continually reminded his men of the main goal and his assurance of victory. He also made it clear that at the strategic level the Islamic military goal was not only to defend but also to spread Islam, as he promised his Companions that they would conquer the Yemen and Syria as well as the Sāsānian lands.¹⁴³ While serving both to raise morale and to convey the message of Allāh, this assurance united and directed the thoughts and actions of the Muslims to the ultimate goal even before the battle started; that is, while they were digging the trench.¹⁴⁴ For this reason above all, although they were threatened from both front and rear, their stamina stood the test. Overcoming exhaustion and fear through high morale, cooperation and coordination, and the efforts of their united leadership, they held to their positions and aimed unswervingly at the designated goals.

Had they not implemented the principles of mass and force concentration, the Muslim army would not have been able to make good use of the two principles of surprise and security, especially as they were engaged in a race against time and needed to ensure that the trench would not be crossed. Therefore force concentration was a matter of deploying forces of equal strength along the defensive line to protect the trench rather than one of constructing a fighting formation. This apparently simple manoeuvre, however, required continuous supervision; and here again unity of command was most effective, showing the

¹⁴¹ For the treaties with the non-Muslim tribes see the section “The Battle of al-Khandaq” in the chapter “The Task of Islamic Military Intelligence” (Ch.6). Also see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 167.

¹⁴² For a similar view see Luttwak, *Strategy*, p. 47; he mentions that defence will continue to obtain an advantage, moral as well as material, so long as resistance persists.

¹⁴³ See the section “The Battle of al-Khandaq” in the chapter “The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership” (Ch.5).

¹⁴⁴ See the event of the *rock* in the section “The Battle of al-Khandaq” in the chapter “The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership” (Ch.5).

leadership's tactical superiority in this respect. It can also be claimed that the principle of economy in the use of force can be seen in the detachment of two hundred men, which increased the principle of mass as it protected a vulnerable area at the right time. Nevertheless the question might be raised whether this principle was always implemented wisely, for it cannot be denied that the forts where the women and children were held remained vulnerable to an attack from the rear.

As we have seen, at al-Khandaq the Muslims used a different manoeuvre and tactic; the battle was essentially defensive in nature and casualties were few; cold, weariness, frustration, and hunger, rather than swords and arrows, finally defeated the besieging forces. Although the confederacy had learnt from their mistakes at Badr - they had not attacked in the summer when water supplies are a crucial factor - they were short of food, unused to siege warfare (and somewhat scornful of it), and increasingly cold at night. In operational and tactical terms, the Muslim leadership's choice of terrain proved crucial to the successful outcome of the confrontation, as it had at Badr. On the other hand, even though this plan disrupted the attacking force,¹⁴⁵ it did not allow the Muslim army to develop other strategic plans such as capturing prisoners of war and booty, or to fulfil the two principles of offence and chasing the enemy.¹⁴⁶ However, this merely serves to emphasise that strategy must be flexible in its conception and execution, and each new circumstance requires a revision of the strategic approach.¹⁴⁷

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that at al-Khandaq some principles were of crucial importance while others were negligible. But in general one can say that the joining of the tribes into a united confederate army faced the new community with a powerful challenge.¹⁴⁸ Henceforward the Muslims' strategy would be, in part, to forestall any plan the adversary might conceive against them, on the principle 'forewarned is forearmed'.¹⁴⁹ The strategy adopted in connection with the battle of al-Yarmūk was a result of this new conception.

¹⁴⁵ Henderson, *The Science of War*, p. 41, mentions that disrupting the force of the adversary's plan is an essential element.

¹⁴⁶ The principle of chasing the enemy was developed later on in another battle known as the Ghazwat Banū Qurayzah. See the Qur'ān, 33: 26, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, No. 2658, v.3, p. 2035), and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (*Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Siyar*, No. 1769, v.3, p. 1398).

¹⁴⁷ See Aḥmad, *Naḥwa Qānūn Muwaḥḥad*, p. 91.

¹⁴⁸ For details of the tribes in the confederacy see the section "The Battle of al-Khandaq" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁴⁹ See the causes of the battle of Mu'tah and the expedition of Usāmah b. Zayd. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*, No. 3547, v.3, p. 1372), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, p. 241, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, pp. 786-787, and Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, pp. 144, 145, 149, 151, and 152.

VIII.5.4: The Battle of al-Yarmūk

Al-Yarmūk marked a change in the Muslim army's strategic approach. The Prophet was no longer among them, and the emphasis had shifted from defence of the faith - 'the first pillar' of the Islamic military strategy - to spreading Islam. This had been made possible by the Islamic army's conquest of the Arabian Peninsula, which now proved a rich source of both men and equipment, and could provide a strategic terrain in case of defeat.

Similarly to the battles discussed previously, at al-Yarmūk some of the principles, such as unity of command, morale, and manoeuvre, were conspicuously applied, while others did not need to be as effectively used as they had been in the other battles. Again, some were well integrated, thus enhancing their effectiveness.

The Muslim leadership was united under one convincing unity of command. They knew that the field commander was himself under the command of the supreme leader, i.e. the Caliph,¹⁵⁰ who nonetheless placed great value on the military advice he received from the commander. This unity of command eased the transmission of the field leadership from Khālid to Abū 'Ubaydah. However, it might be placed at risk if it was not continually strengthened by consideration of the ultimate goal. The unity of the field command prevented the leaking of the news of the Caliph's death, which would have been destructive of the troops' morale at a critical moment in the fighting. Here, unity of command was integrated with the application of another principle of war, security; the securing of this information, it can be argued, helped to produce a positive outcome. A care for security was not only seen in this event, moreover; the leadership also divided and disposed the soldiers according to their own tribes so that they would be prevented from killing one another by mistake, since they had no distinctive uniform by which they might recognise one another. Also their battle-gear made recognition more difficult.¹⁵¹

Predicting the outcome at al-Yarmūk was a task quite unlike the apparently similar calculations they had made before, especially as both armies were so well prepared. Therefore, morale needed to be raised and maintained. This was done primarily by ensuring that every man was aware of the purity of the cause that united the army. The goal - to serve Allāh through spreading Islam - was clear, and moreover the conflict was to take place for the highest motives and against a respected adversary. The Byzantines

¹⁵⁰ See Turkumānī, *al-Madhāhib*, p. 72. Also see the section "The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader: *Sābiqūn*" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5). This element is observable in the last two battles.

¹⁵¹ See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, p. 272.

were a 'people of the Book', unlike the Sāsānians, and so when the armies clashed, it was not for mundane reasons. They were fighting for their faith.

Cooperation and coordination was evident in a variety of ways; for example, all the tribes were willing to obey the commands of one field leader without question or hesitation and accept his changes regarding leaders and deployment of forces as the new plan demanded. The notables responded quickly to the demands of the plan and came together to discuss the imminent threat. The newly received information that the Byzantine army had united focused their minds on the need for unity among the Muslims. Their cooperation exemplified the joining together of the best of the Muslim abilities and experience in the region, and their wise use, to the Muslim army's advantage. Their effort demonstrated the unity of command, where sound advice as well as personal sacrifice was crucial to the outcome.¹⁵²

It seems at first glance that the principle of surprise - as it applies to an ambush - was not implemented, because both armies had laid their tactical cards on the table. Nevertheless this principle was evident at a crucial moment of the battle when manoeuvre assured its effectiveness. In addition, it might be argued that the adversary would have been disconcerted to discover that their powerful attack in the first wave of the battle, as Khālid described it, was resisted for several hours with great courage and determination by a much less numerous army without reinforcements.¹⁵³

The time the Arabs spent in al-Shām and their insistence on confronting the Byzantine army show that al-Yarmūk was well planned at the strategic level; and indeed the leadership were well aware of the strategic consequences of losing this battle since it was clearly to be decisive. And not only the leadership; the whole army as well as the reinforcements that arrived from Iraq knew that the goal had been chosen and were determined to aim for it. Here the goal required the principle of offence to be applied by the entire Muslim community. The situation demanded that battle be joined rather than that peace be spread,¹⁵⁴ "especially when two incidents that happened prior to the conquest of al-Shām called for warlike action."¹⁵⁵ This principle of choosing the target and aiming for it was incorporated in the leadership's strategic planning for the expected

¹⁵² See Turkumānī, *al-Madhāhib*, p. 72. Also see the section "The Significant Qualities of the Muslim Leader: *Sābiqūn*" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

¹⁵³ Khālid expected a sweeping assault at the beginning of the battle. See the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Impact of Islamic Military Leadership" (Ch.5).

¹⁵⁴ See the above discussion of the principle of offence.

¹⁵⁵ The two incidents were: the killing by the Ghassanians of a messenger sent by the Prophet, and the attempt to seal the border between al-Shām and the Arabian Peninsula. See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, pp. 146 & 148.

confrontation, which was initiated and thought through at the highest level. Hence not even a change of the Caliph could have changed this strategy, which shows the closely-knit integration of this principle with that of unity of command.¹⁵⁶ Further, the offensive strike into al-Shām was in accordance with the element of divine assistance, since the Muslims had long prepared themselves for such a confrontation, their Prophet having told them at al-Khandaq that they would conquer the region.¹⁵⁷ This divine promise not only raised morale; it encouraged the Caliph and his commanders to gather most of the power they had.

Since strategy must be formulated and carried out according to the strengths and weaknesses of each new adversary,¹⁵⁸ mass and force concentration were not only applied to ensure that most of the available men and equipment would be assembled in the right place and time in a key terrain, but also facilitated the important role the principle of economy in the use of force played in this decisive battle. The Muslims' assessment of the adversary's power, based on the intelligence gathered by their scouts, enabled the Caliph and his commanders to make the best use of their forces both materially and spiritually, especially as they had to move another force from one front to another.¹⁵⁹ It also made possible the redeployment of the whole army just before the battle. Although it can be argued that both armies had striven to accomplish mass and force concentration, the Muslims' application of the principle of manoeuvre was crucial in deciding the final outcome.¹⁶⁰ For the Muslims the strategic plan was clear; however, the details of the tactical plan took shape only as the two armies drew close to each other. The successful use of economy in the use of force, seen in the actions of Qays b. Habīrah and Sa'īd b. Zayd, and especially in the cavalry charge led by Khālid himself, was decisive in turning the battle to their advantage.¹⁶¹ There was no simplicity of plan but its conduct shows the readiness of the soldiers to accept and follow new orders.

The principle of chasing the enemy was implemented at al-Yarmūk since both leaderships had intended to utterly defeat their enemy and drive him from the region. Therefore, the

¹⁵⁶ See al-'Asalī, *al-Madhāhib al-'Asakariyyah*, p. 182.

¹⁵⁷ See al-Sunan al-Kubrā (*Bāb: al-Nahī 'an al-Tafarruq fi al-Shi'ab wa al-Awdiyah*, No. 8858, v.5, p. 269), Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.4, pp. 97 & 99, and al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*, v.2, p. 633.

¹⁵⁸ See Aḥmad, *Naḥwa Qānūn Muwaḥḥad*, p. 91.

¹⁵⁹ See the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁶⁰ It is worth noting here that they did not follow the normal strategy of the Muslim army during the conquest, which was "move fast and attack fast". See al-'Asalī, *al-Madhāhib al-'Asakariyyah*, pp. 183-184.

¹⁶¹ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.7, p. 8.

Muslim army's victory in the field enabled and encouraged them to engage in a long pursuit, during which many of the adversary's warriors were slain.¹⁶²

VIII.5.5: The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah

Al-Qādisiyyah was the second of the battles in question to be concerned with the second 'pillar' of the Islamic military strategy. It also saw the implementation of all the principles of war, some of which were more important than others, such as morale and unity of command, surprise, and mass and force concentration. However, the integration of some of these principles strengthened others, for example the combination of security and surprise with manoeuvre.

Once again the principle of morale was crucial to the outcome of this battle, as the leadership's strategy relied on the quality of the Muslim troops rather than on their numbers, as can be seen when the tribe of Bujaylah stood firm against the first destructive assault even though about five hundred of them were killed.¹⁶³ It is not recorded whether the Muslim leadership used the religious hatred and scorn the Muslims felt for the Sāsānians in order to raise their morale; nevertheless, this principle is likely to have been strongly present in their minds. Evidence for this is provided by the first verses revealed in *surah* al-Rūm.¹⁶⁴ In addition, morale was raised due to the great interest and concern shown by the Caliph, as evidenced by his letters and gifts.¹⁶⁵ In one of his letters to Sa'd he wrote that he was sure of their victory.¹⁶⁶ Although it is not known whether Sa'd passed this message on to the troops, it would certainly have encouraged them and raised their performance, coming as it did from 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb himself.¹⁶⁷ This leads us to consider another important principle of war, unity of command.

It is clear that unity of command was well established and effective since the whole army was led by a single field commander, who at al-Qādisiyyah benefited from this unity, which facilitated communications down the chain of command. Nevertheless, this unity was placed at risk owing to the doubts and dissensions of some of the soldiers regarding

¹⁶² See the section "The Battle of al-Yarmūk" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁶³ See *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ See the Qur'ān, 30: 1-6. Among these verses one refers clearly to the element of hatred, (ETMC): "On that day shall the Believers rejoice".

¹⁶⁵ See the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁶⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 387.

¹⁶⁷ See the Virtue of 'Umar in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (*Bāb: Manāqib 'Umar*, v.3, p. 1346) and Sunan al-Tirmidhī (*Bāb: Manāqib 'Umar*, v.5, p. 617).

the designated field-commander, Khālīd b. ‘Arfaṭah.¹⁶⁸ Thus the risk in this battle was not due to the death of the Caliph as at al-Yarmūk but to the dissatisfaction among some of the soldiers, which was assuaged by the leadership’s constant exhortations reminding the warriors of the ultimate goal. Hence, it can be argued that this problem was solved by the application of another important principle, that of cooperation and coordination. The soldiers were asked to report any mutinous acts against the field-commander. It is also seen in the lifting of the ban on the *Murtadūn*, who played an important part in the conduct of the battle.¹⁶⁹

In fact, ‘Umar’s letters connect the above three principles with Islamic military doctrine.¹⁷⁰ These letters also explain that the doctrine had in effect chosen the goal and inspired the army to aim for it as one united body. Also the huge mass of the army and the leadership’s strategic planning illustrate the great importance given to winning this battle.¹⁷¹

It might be thought that this planning demanded strong security measures, but these were not apparent in the earlier stages of the confrontation, especially prior to the battle, since the aim was to provoke the adversary to approach the Muslim army’s position. Hence, the principle of security was cautiously applied in accordance with special criteria, as particular information needed to be provided to the adversary. There was, however, another aspect of the principle of security as applied by the Muslims at al-Qādisiyyah: the security of the army and its movements was essential, as was the protection of its flanks and rear during the battle. In addition, ‘Umar knew that in order to conquer the East and at the same time to secure the Arabian Peninsula, the Muslim army’s penetration into the Sāsānian lands had to be through al-Qādisiyyah.¹⁷² This security effort was linked to another important principle of war, that of surprise; here it can be noted that the adversary was unable to make any sudden moves at the operational level since the timing and location of the battle was chosen by the Muslim leadership.

¹⁶⁸ See the section “The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah” in the chapter “The Battles and their Significance” (Ch.3).

¹⁶⁹ See *ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, pp. 384-389.

¹⁷¹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.2, p. 384. It is worth mentioning that ‘Umar had demanded that everyone who was eligible should come to Medina to take part in the army’s preparations to conquer the Sāsānian Empire. Also see Kamāl, *al-Qādisiyyah*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁷² See the section “The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah” in the chapter “The Battles and their Significance” (Ch.3).

Since the Islamic military strategy implemented in this battle had as its goal the spreading of Islam, offensive action became necessary when the messages of peace were rejected. This fulfilled the principle of offence.

To be successful, offence must be effectively combined with another principle of war, that of mass and force concentration. Despite being greatly outnumbered - by more than four to one - the Muslims realised that victory might yet be assured by gathering at a decisive time and place and making the strategically correct choice of battlefield. Their concern for this principle is also seen in the lifting of the ban on the *Murtadūn*. Availing themselves of this concession, Ṭulayḥah b. Khuwaylid and his tribesmen joined the Muslim forces in large numbers because of the great scale of the campaign to be undertaken.¹⁷³ Their location allowed both armies to apply mass and force concentration; yet the Persian leadership did not allow their army enough room to manoeuvre or to retreat. Further, the way the troops were deployed into ranks and small units later on allowed the Muslims to gain superiority in mass and force concentration.¹⁷⁴

The principles of manoeuvre and simplicity lay behind the choice of a battlefield with limited access; this choice was made in the knowledge of strengths and weaknesses of the Persians, since every new adversary has to be fought using a different strategy.¹⁷⁵ Considered at the strategic level it was important that the battlefield lay between the Persian lands and the Arabian Peninsula. At the operational level its location was secured, and it was tactically crucial that the battle would take place on that particular spot. Moreover, dividing the army into small units, starting with groups of ten, facilitated the rapid redeployment of the army and its quick response, as can be seen in the reaction to the plight of the Bujaylah. Although the plan was not sophisticated, as at al-Yarmūk, and the attack, it must be acknowledged, was sometimes premature since the tribes would not wait for the final signal of the leader, what was lacking in the orthodox application of mass and force concentration or even manoeuvre and simplicity was achieved by the reinforcements and especially by the cunning way the reinforcements were introduced into the field over the four days of the battle. This tactical stroke was an important instance of the principle of *surprise*; the adversary was tricked and remained unaware of

¹⁷³ Prior to the battle ‘Umar made an oath that he would use the ‘kings’ of the Arabs to defeat the ‘kings’ of the non-Arabs (*al-‘Ajam*). See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.5, p. 36.

¹⁷⁴ See the section “The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah” in the chapter “The Battles and their Significance” (Ch.3).

¹⁷⁵ See Aḥmad, *Naḥwa Qānūn Muwaḥḥad*, p. 91.

the deception for a considerable time.¹⁷⁶ Also, the powers of endurance of the Muslim army, which fought tenaciously for many hours, must have astonished the adversary; and the focused assault on the leadership on the fourth day of the battle was another example - this time decisive - of surprise.¹⁷⁷

Thus we come to the final principle, that of chasing the enemy. Since al-Qādisiyyah was considered a decisive battle the aim was to eliminate the Persian army and pursue the fleeing troops in order to thoroughly accomplish the second 'pillar' of the Islamic military strategy. It can be argued that in this the Muslims were entirely successful, since it was not long before the capital of the Sāsānians fell to the forces of Islam.¹⁷⁸

VIII.6: Comparison of the Battles

As we have seen the two 'pillars' of the Islamic military strategy - defending and spreading the faith - were served through the five battles under consideration. Badr, Uḥud, and al-Khandaq accomplished the first while al-Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah accomplished the second. Each of these battles saw the application of the Islamic military principles of war; however, some were fully applied, either alone or in combination, while others were either absent or not fully implemented. Generally speaking, the most important appear to have been unity of command, morale, surprise, and manoeuvre.

Raising the morale of the army was accomplished in different ways according to the circumstances. It was particularly successful in the five battles, either through the wise approach of the leadership or through divine assistance as at Badr and al-Khandaq.

Unity of command was evident in all five battles, where it proved very effective despite the minor difficulties that arose in the last two, and was crucial to their successful outcome.

Security was barely successful at al-Khandaq, unlike the other battles. However, surprise was effectively - sometimes brilliantly - used in all the battles, strengthening the principle of security.

Mass and force concentration were well applied, but not according to the general understanding of having superiority in the number of men and amount of equipment; in fact, as we have seen, the Muslims lacked this advantage in every one of the battles in question. However, they were able to gather the available men and equipment at the right time and place, using the element of terrain affectively. Success was achieved through the

¹⁷⁶ For the tactic of continuous reinforcements see the section "The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah" in the chapter "The Battles and their Significance" (Ch.3).

¹⁷⁷ See Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ See Kamāl, *al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Madā'in*, p. 105.

thorough, and usually simple, planning of the army's manoeuvres, and economy of force also played an important part in this respect, except at Badr. With regard to the principles discussed above, it is possible to say that strategy was clear from the beginning of every battle, but its operational and tactical application differed according to the surrounding circumstances.

The principles of offence and chasing the enemy were not universally applied. At Badr, Uhud, and al-Khandaq offence was not a factor since the second 'pillar' of the Islamic strategy was not yet possible, while chasing the enemy was not applied at Badr and al-Khandaq.

VIII.7: Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the Islamic military strategy applied in the five battles under study using a new approach. First of all, strategy, Islamic strategy, and - the subject of our interest - Islamic military strategy, were defined, differentiated, and discussed. The useful notion of the two 'pillars' of the general Islamic strategy was introduced, and the concept of the ultimate goal was explained. Next, the relationships between religious and military decisions, and that between strategy, operations, and tactics, were examined. Following this, a number of principles of war were considered from an Islamic viewpoint. On the basis of this theoretical discussion the practical application of these principles was extensively investigated, and their relative importance in the battles was established.

As the revelation continued it became evident that the Muslims' military activities were permissible only in so far as they were governed by Islamic principles of war.

The power of the Muslim army depended not so much on material strength (numbers of men and amount of equipment) as on the army's spiritual force, which derived from the soldiers' zeal and devotion to Islam.

Some of the principles of war such as morale, unity of command, and cooperation and coordination, were constant features of the Islamic military strategy in all five battles.

The study has now discussed all the major factors under consideration. The final chapter will sum up and draw conclusions from the argument presented in the foregoing pages.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion of the Study

The preceding chapters have shown that from a purely military perspective it is difficult to explain the Muslim armies' success in overcoming their adversaries; they should certainly not have won such decisive victories. The study's central concern has been to address this apparent anomaly of history and attempt to answer the question, how could a small persecuted minority living in an area marginal to the main centres of power and considered as barely civilized by their neighbours have come to dominate the region within a generation? Within two decades they managed to accomplish the unexpected. While it must be admitted that the battles under study provide no more than one means of measuring this transformation, the question remains, in precisely what ways did Islam make a decisive difference to each of the factors we have discussed and, to what extent were these factors, in combination, important to the outcomes of the battles? Hence, the object has been not merely to decide which specifically Islamic elements could shed light on a study of the battles; the main interest of the thesis can be said to lie in its method of explaining the Muslims' decisive victories, without having recourse to the notion of divine assistance, by analysing the causes of those victories through a detailed study of the chosen factors.

The research methodology applied in this study has involved both theoretical and practical approaches; the theoretical approach produced a searching analysis and detailed comparison of the factors in question, while the practical approach focused on the conduct of the battles. It must be admitted, however, that as the study has been essentially an exploration of the possibility of constructing a synthesis which goes beyond the bounds of its constituent elements as they are analysed in each individual chapter, it is open to criticism. It has not attempted to furnish proof, rather it has suggested that strong arguments exist in favour of its conclusions. In a nutshell, the study has been concerned with the social transformation of a people through religion and with the effects of that transformation on the conduct of military affairs.

No academic research seems to have been published on the interrelationship of these important factors and their influence on the five key battles. In the study this relationship has been subjected to thorough investigation using a modern approach, our intention being to reach a new and comprehensive understanding built upon a solid academic basis. The study has attempted to look at the past through the experiences of the people who actually lived it, and as we have admitted it is to a certain degree speculative. While

examining the past through the eyes of the present, using modern concepts and categories, the study has also attempted to look at the past through the eyes of the past; that is the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*, which for Muslims embody eternal verities, and, by using these sources, to discover the causes of the outcomes of the battles, which has been one of the key projects of the thesis. It should be noted, however, that while the study has relied on the commentaries of both classical and modern exegetes it has sometimes disagreed with their conclusions.

The study has deliberately chosen to examine these important battles and to emphasise their significance by comparing and contrasting them and analysing their differences and similarities. There has, however, been no attempt to explore their many interesting aspects from the point of view of the military expert; of, for example, the specialist in strategy. The battles have been seen as important historical events, and the influence of a number of carefully selected factors on each battle has been considered. The connections between these have been made clear through an examination of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*.

As some of these aspects have been considered from various perspectives in previous works of scholarship while others have not, the decision to focus on these particular battles has been based chiefly on the following reasons. Badr was a decisive battle and the first to be fought against the Quraysh, and, for Muslims, was distinguished by divine intervention of a physical nature; Uḥud revealed the consequences of disobeying orders; al-Khandaq took the form of a protracted siege and was primarily a psychological conflict involving the purification of faith; al-Yarmūk was a battle of conquest against an empire ruled by one of the peoples of the Book; and al-Qādisiyyah was fought against an empire whose people were regarded by the Muslims as adherents of an “unrevealed” religion.

The study has attempted to discover a way to reconstruct from an Islamic standpoint the usual definitions of military doctrine, military leadership, military intelligence, and military strategy. It must be acknowledged that these usual definitions are largely modern formulations and as such have only been used as guidelines; the study has argued, however, with certain reservations, that they could be said to have been put into practice during the period under study.

Thus the study's significance is enhanced by its use of a specifically Islamic analysis of the phenomena connected with the battles. For example, an Islamic interpretation of the modern concept of intelligence and of the leaders' relationship with his sources and agents can illuminate the past and provide food for thought in the present day.

Two points should be emphasised here: the study has discussed and interrelated set of factors in great detail and these factors and their salient features have been analysed

through a meticulous examination of the two main sources: chiefly the Qur'ān and to a lesser degree the *ḥadīth*. In other words, the study has been able to show that aspects of these factors are extensively mentioned in the Qur'ān, and these Qur'ānic references have been used to elucidate the various dimensions of the Islamic military practices of the period.

The study's discussion of these factors is original in that it has connected and integrated their most important elements and shown that their relationship is intricate and dynamic. Although other factors could have been considered, it was felt that the chosen factors were arguably influential enough to determine the outcomes of the battles: doctrine provided motivation, leadership provided control and direction, intelligence provided an overview of the military situation, as well as a knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the adversary, which in turn provided the particular information necessary for effective action, and strategy was the final and decisive factor, designed and implemented on the bases of the other four. All five factors have been shown to be important and to be interconnected, and because they can be seen as forming a sequence, it is important to realise that each is essential to an understanding of the nature of each battle, although they and their interconnections vary in their degree of influence on each battle. In addition, these relationships have been examined in their various manifestations throughout the study, and this method has yielded significant findings, which form the basis of this concluding chapter.

Islamic military doctrine was not only the cause and effective motivational factor, as a matter primarily of the heart and only secondarily of intellectual conviction, governing the other factors in question; it has been shown to be essential to the fruition of the other factors. The study has argued that it was the main cause of the huge changes that took place among the Arabs, which have been described in the comparisons made in the second and third chapters. The present study is the first to discuss the principles of Islamic military practice from a chiefly Qur'ānic perspective, and has argued that because of its particular features, Islamic military doctrine succeeded in unifying the Arabs' loose collection of aims into the clear and constant goal of exalting the word of Allāh above all, which was crucial as cohesion among the Muslims depended absolutely upon faith. It demanded obedience to the classical components of the Islamic military doctrine of what some modern scholars call *the lesser Jihād* (which Muslims believe are still binding upon them), such as providing the 'three offers' before any clash of arms. It managed to stimulate the fighting spirit of the Muslim soldiers, who knew in advance the divine promises of victory or martyrdom, which were made conditional upon the willingness to

sacrifice wealth and life. However, it must be admitted that not every soldier or lower ranking officer was devoted to the cause of Allāh, as the Qur'ān mentions. Thus the Muslims were obliged to observe certain rules and regulations derived from the *sharī'a* such as the prohibition of dismembering the dead (one of what the study called the “twenty ‘don’ts’”) and that the assistance of non-Muslims was bound by certain limits. The doctrine’s exhortation to take all appropriate measures to reach its goal through victory or martyrdom was, however, limited by the type of strategy being implemented. Nevertheless, it encouraged the conviction that although the Muslim should understand that divine assistance is a conditional support, the help of Allāh is not limited to any particular occasion; but even in the heat of battle Allāh should not be forgotten, as in this situation it is recommended that the warriors remember and pray to Allāh “in a murmuring voice”. However, this remembrance and supplication did not permit them to neglect the element of *al-tawakkul*, nor were they permitted to despair of the assistance of Allāh. It is also very significant that the absence of the excellent example and inspiring leadership of Muḥammad did not lead the soldiers to abandon their commitment to Islamic doctrine, as they showed no sign of reverting to their former ways after his death. The study has shown that the Muslims’ military leadership was an important factor in its effect upon the soldiers. In other words, Islam offered significant philosophical and religious tenets and principles whose exercise enabled the leaders to exert a positive influence on their soldiers’ performance in the five battles under study. One significant example of these principles may be reiterated here: according to the Qur’ānic concept of *al-raqīb* we should understand that from an Islamic perspective all the Muslim leaders knew that every leader, even the Prophet himself, has One above him Who observes his actions, which ensured accountability of action and behaviour. We have suggested that the unity of leadership, whose roots are found in the unity of doctrine, springs intellectually speaking from the theological principle of the unity of Allāh, Who is the supreme Observer.

The study has also shown that as Islam has ordained three gradual steps that the Muslim leader must consider when applying the quality of *courage* and *al-taqwā* in commanding the Muslim army, his belief in *al-qadar* increased his bravery and in turn his performance, and this applies equally to his soldiers on the battlefield. In addition, during the period under study, the leadership was bound by an obligation to continually remind the troops of the noble cause of the fighting. Another point to note is that in spite of the principle that the Muslim leader or field commander should ideally be among the *sābiqūn* (those having precedence in Islam), experience of and competence in military leadership were of

greater importance. It should not be forgotten, however, that without exception the Muslim leadership at that time was characterised by a strong commitment to Islamic doctrinal concepts. This commitment not only created strong bonds of comradeship among individuals, groups and their leaders but also bore fruit in a mutual concern and just social relations between the leaders and their soldiers. On the one hand, the soldiers accepted new forms and varieties of affiliation and obedience, notably to fight under a single united leadership without insisting on being commanded by their own tribal leadership. On the other hand, the humility of the leadership was a direct result of their submission to Islamic military doctrine.

Islamic military intelligence has also been shown to be crucial to the outcomes of the battles. Its role varied according to the missions it conducted. As with the other factors, however, it was found to have special features and boundaries, which were fixed by Islamic concepts. Important aspects of Islamic military intelligence are discussed in the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*, among which may be numbered divine assistance of various kinds which provided important information, and intelligence activities were also an essential element of *al-ribāṭ* which the Qur'ān also encourages.

Further, it was found that although *al-mundhir* (warner) and *al-tawriyah* 'dissimulation' were essential elements of intelligence gathering, reconnaissance was the method most commonly used to collect information. The leader's relationship with his intelligence gatherers and his degree of response to their information directly impacted on the soldiers' performance. Hence choosing the correct moment to reveal important information to the troops was essential, and the leaders' quality of response to their intelligence reports and withholding of any potentially disruptive news made the intelligence they received particularly effective. Moreover, reliable intelligence gave the leaders freedom to take risks, although always within the context of the relationship between religious and military decisions.

Before each of the five battles, the advantage seemed to lie with the adversaries, but for a variety of reasons the outcomes were unexpected. As has been made clear, however, not all these reasons were equally evident in all the battles, but all have been relevant to the discussion.

The adversaries were distinguished by many differences. The Quryash and their allies were not united by doctrinal affiliation. The adversaries were not able to extinguish the fighting spirit of the Muslim army. They were able to comprehend only the material power, not the moral power - derived from their faith - of the Muslims, and so made a

quantitative judgment when a qualitative one was essential. Their actions therefore failed to achieve their goals.

In addition, the adversaries failed to take the initiative; even Abū Sufyān was not equal to these new circumstances and misread the unfamiliar aspects of the situations at Badr and al-Khandaq, due to the shortcomings of the Quraysh's intelligence activities. The adversaries' leaderships relied on their military superiority in men and material, and the two empires considered the Muslims to be no different from the Arabs whom they had dealt with successfully before. Therefore, strategy at various levels was generally insufficiently well considered and executed, especially in the first three battles, showing that their failure to appreciate or match the Muslim army's creativity was a weakness of the adversaries' plans and performance. The Muslims' setback at Uḥud was not due to the Quraysh's strategy but to the indiscipline of the archers and the subsequent confusion among the Muslim ranks. The similarities and differences between the adversary's strengths and weaknesses and their own were discovered and well used by the Muslims. A common factor was the relative lack of comradeship binding the adversaries' armies in comparison to that uniting the Muslim soldiers.

Islamic military strategy during this period was clearly subordinated to the ultimate goal of the general Islamic strategy - to serve Allāh - and was dedicated to the service of the two 'pillars' of that strategy - to defend and/or to spread the faith. In addition, since the military aspects of Islamic military strategy are always subservient to the doctrinal aspects, as we have seen in the foregoing discussion, the principles of war in this study have been constructed through a painstaking search of the Qur'ān. As the revelation of Islam continued it became evident that the Muslims' military activities were permissible only in so far as they were governed by Islamic principles of war. Moreover, some of the principles such as morale, unity of command, and cooperation and coordination were constant features of the Islamic military strategy in all five battles. Further, all strategic decisions were subservient to the ultimate goal, and all military decisions were subordinate to religious decisions. Therefore every decision maker, from the supreme commander to the lowly soldier on a scouting mission, was duty bound to serve the ultimate goal before all others.

Moreover, the Islamic military strategy emphasised that the power of the Muslim army depended not so much on material strength (numbers of men and amount of equipment) as on the army's spiritual force, which derived from the soldiers' zeal and devotion to Islam.

As we have indicated, the study's claim to originality rests on its delineation of the dynamic interrelationship and interaction of the factors under study, and on its exploration of the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth to illuminate its subject matter and support its arguments.

Since the Muslim leadership acted according to religious tenets and principles, its strategic decisions were made in accordance with doctrinal principles. It gathered and used intelligence within the limits laid down by Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* in order to learn and understand the methods of the adversary and his weak and strong points.

While doctrine was a stable factor in all the battles the other factors were subject to modification; however, these changes were made in the light of and according to the guidance of Islam, as the study has shown. Also the other factors differed in their degree of influence according to the exigencies of the battles.

In addition, we have seen that each of these factors was necessary to victory. The performance of the Muslim soldiers was clearly enhanced by their commitment to Islamic military doctrine. In all five battles the main goals remained unchanged in spite of the changes of command. In addition, it is evident that Jihād was not fought merely for the sake of worldly gain nor were civilians attacked.

Therefore, even though the Muslims' actions may seem superficially indistinguishable from those of other armies, the study has argued that they were transformed by the inner quality of belief in and commitment to Islam, and has attempted to show that Islam purified and transformed the particular virtues of the pre-Islamic Arabs into Muslim virtues, directing their energies into the proper channels and prohibiting the old undesirable behaviours. So it is not a matter of Islam adding a civilising gloss to barbaric traditions, but of a revolutionary change in the fundamental structure of the Arab culture, so that the mentality of the Muslim leaders and the soldiers alike was wholly altered. Therefore, to consider the battles as we have done from an Islamic point of view is to analyse the seeds of the process by which Islam was to flourish into a great power, by virtue not only of conquest but also of its civilising influence.

The study has cast some light on a period of history which, though brief, witnessed momentous changes, and on a region which, though small, gave birth to a great civilisation. It has explained how a destitute community of refugees, who had been driven from their own land to take shelter among strangers came to control the whole peninsula, and were able to challenge and defeat the regions' two great powers.

Indeed what began as apparently no more than an insignificant tribal feud over access to resources and forms of worship, of no interest to anyone outside this harsh land, had

within a generation become a struggle between a new religion and old order ripe for conquest, and the victors were to spread a great civilisation throughout not only the Middle East but also north Africa and parts of Asia and Europe.

Suggestions for Further Studies

This study has explained the crucial importance of Islam to the process by which the faith was defended and spread, and has argued that these early victories could not have been so decisively accomplished (if accomplished at all) without the transformation of the Muslim soldiers and their commanders by Islam.

At the close of this study, it may be useful to make a few suggestions regarding areas of further research related to the subject matter of the thesis.

First: The ‘twenty ‘don’ts’” as a coherent body of prohibitions might be compared and contrasted with the articles of the Geneva Convention.

Second: The effect of location on the progress of the battles could be further investigated.

Third: The routes leading to the battlefields and their selection (as at the battle of Uḥud) as effective “avenues of approach” could be further examined.

Fourth: The availability of logistics provided by the surrounding natural resources might be investigated.

Fifth: A study of the major factors between, and their influence, in different periods could be made.

Sixth: the element of *al-tawriyah* might be more extensively studied.

Seventh: The major factors considered in this study might be compared from different perspectives, for example from those of the *sunna* and *shari‘a*.

Eighth: The decision of the leadership to participate actively in the conflict, and the advantages and disadvantages of this decision, could be studied.

Ninth: The authority of a leader to decide on the question of martyrdom might be examined.

Tenth: Two important questions arising in connection with the battle of al-Khandaq could be investigated: why was there no coordination or effective communication between the allies, i.e. the Banū Qurayzah and the confederates, and why were they unable to derive any advantage from the long siege they imposed upon the Muslim army?

Verses in Use

The Verses are listed in according with the numerical order of Qur'ānic *surahs*:

- “On earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time.” See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 2: 36.
- “On earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time. Then learnt Adam from his Lord certain words and his Lord turned towards him; for He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.” See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 2: 37.
- “Fight in the cause of Allāh those who fight you but do not transgress limits; for Allāh loveth not transgressors.” See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 2: 190.
- “And fight them on until there is no more Persecution and the religion becomes Allāh's. But if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression”. See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 2: 193.
- “Let there be no compulsion in religion.” See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 2: 256.
- “Say: “O Allāh! Lord of Power (and Rule), Thou givest power to whom thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom thou pleasest: Thou enduest with honour whom Thou pleasest, and thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: in Thy hand is all good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power.” See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 26.
- “Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers: if any do that, they shall have no relation left with Allāh except by way of precaution, that ye may guard yourselves from them. But Allāh cautions you (to fear) Himself; for the final goal is to Allāh.” See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 28.
- “As for those who sell the faith they owe to Allāh and their own solemn plighted word for a small price, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter: Nor will Allāh (deign to) speak to them or look at them on the day of Judgment nor will He cleanse them (of sin): they shall have a grievous Chastisement.” See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 77.
- “The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakkah (another name for Mecca): full blessing and guidance for all the worlds.” See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 96.
- “In it are Signs Manifest; the station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allāh.” See the Qur'ān (ETMC), 3: 97.

- “And remember with gratitude Allāh’s favour on you; For ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 103.
- “Allāh had helped you at Badr, when ye were Helpless.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 123.
- “And that He may take to himself from your ranks Martyr-witnesses (to truth).” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 140.
- “If he died or were slain.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 144.
- “And swiftly shall We reward those that (serve us with) gratitude.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 145.
- “Allāh did indeed fulfil His promise to you when we with His permission were about to annihilate your enemy, until ye flinched and fell to disputing about the order and disobeyed it after He brought you in sight (of the victory) which ye covet. Among you are some that hanker after this world and some that desire the Hereafter.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 152.
- “Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met,- it was Satan who caused them to fail, because of some (evil) they had done.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 155.
- “And if you are slain, or die, in the Way of Allāh, forgiveness and mercy from Allāh are far better than all they could amass.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 157.
- “It is part of the Mercy of Allāh that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allāh’s) forgiveness for them: and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allāh. For Allāh loves those who put their trust (in Him).” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 159.
- “No Prophet could (ever) act dishonestly if any person acts dishonestly he shall, on the Day of Judgment, restore what he misappropriated; then shall every soul receive its due whatever it earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 161.
- “And the Hypocrites also. These were told: “Come, fight in the way of Allāh, or (at least) drive (the foe from your city).” They said: “Had we known there would be a fight, we should certainly have followed you.” They were that day nearer to

Unbelief than to Faith, saying with their lips what was not in their hearts. But Allāh hath full knowledge of all they conceal.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 167.

- “Think not of those who are slain in Allāh’s way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance from their Lord.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 169.
- “They rejoiced in the Bounty provided by Allāh.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 170.
- “Those to whom men said: “A great army is gathering against you, so fear them”: But it (only) increased their Faith: they said: “For us Allāh Sufficent, and He is the best Guardians.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 173.
- “And there are, certainly, among the People of the Book, those who believe in Allāh, in the revelation to you, and in the revelation to them, Bowing in humility to Allāh: they will not sell the Signs of Allāh for a miserable gain!” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 199.
- “O ye who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allāh; that ye may prosper.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 3: 200.
- “O ye who believe! If ye will help (the cause of) Allāh, He will help you, and plant your feet firmly.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 47: 7.
- “Then We put thee on the (right) Way of Religion.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 45: 25.
- “Allāh doth wish to make clear to you and to guide you into the ways of those before you; and (He doth wish to) turn to you (in Mercy): and Allāh is All-knowing, All-wise.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 26.
- “Hast thou not turned thy thought to those who were given a portion of the Book? They believe in Sorcery and *Tagut* and say to the Unbelievers that they are better guided in the (right) way than the Believers!” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 51.
- “And when ye judge between people that ye judge with justice.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 58.
- “O ye who believe! Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 59.
- “O ye who believe! Take your precautions and either go forth in parties or go forth all together.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 71.
- “Let those fight in the cause of Allāh who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter, to him who fighteth in the Cause of Allāh whether he is slain or gets victory, We give him a reward of great (value).” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 74.

- “Let those fight in the cause of Allāh who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter to him who fighteth in the cause of Allāh, whether he is slain or gets victory soon shall We give him a reward of great (value).”
- “Those who believe fight in the Cause of Allāh, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of Evil (Tāgut): so fight ye against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 76.
- “And rouse the Believers.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 84.
- “Go ye forth, (whether equipped) lightly or heavily, and strive and struggle, with your goods and your persons, in the Cause of Allāh” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 94.
- “O ye who believe! When ye go out in the cause of Allāh, investigate carefully, and say not to any one who offers you a salutation: “Thou art none of a Believer! Therefore carefully investigate.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 94.
- “Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) except those who are disabled. And those who strive and fight in the Cause of Allāh with their goods and their persons. Allāh hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 95.
- “When ye travel through the earth, there is no blame on you if ye shorten your prayers, for fear the Unbelievers may attack you: For the Unbelievers are unto you open enemies.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 101.
- “When thou (O Messenger) art with them, and standest to lead them in prayer, let “one party of them stand up (in prayer) with thee, taking their arms with them; when they finish their prostrations, let them take their positions in the rear. And let the other party come up - which hath not yet prayed - and let them pray with thee, taking all precautions, and bearing arms.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 102.
- “Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to Allāh, does good, and follows the way of Abraham the truth in faith.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 4: 125.
- “Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 5: 2.
- “Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days of) Ignorance? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allāh?” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 5: 50.

- “Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allāh, His Messenger, and the believers, those who establish the regular prayers and pay al-Zakāt and bow down humbly (in worship).” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 5: 55.
- “O ye who believe! Take not for friends and protectors those who take your religion for a mockery or sport whether among those who received the scripture before you, or among those who reject faith: but fear Allāh, if ye have faith (indeed).” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 5: 57.
- “O Messenger! Proclaim (the Message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord. If thou didst not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His Mission. And Allāh will defend thee from men (who mean mischief). For Allāh guideth not those who reject Faith.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 5: 67.
- “When it is said to them: “Come to what Allāh Hath revealed; come to the Messenger”: They say: “Enough for us are the ways we found our fathers following.” What! Even though their fathers were void of knowledge and guidance?” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 5: 104.
- “He knoweth the Unseen.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 6: 73.
- “To whom We gave life” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 6: 122.
- “Verily, this is My way leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about From His path.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 6: 153.
- “He hath raised you in ranks, some above others that He may try you in the gifts He hath given you.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 6: 165.
- “Behold! Allāh promised you one of the two parties, that it should be yours: Ye wished that the one unarmed should be yours, but Allāh willed to establish the Truth according to His words and to cut off the roots of the Unbelievers.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 7.
- “Remember ye implored the assistance of your Lord. And He answered you: “I will assist you with a thousand of the angels, ranks on ranks.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 9.
- “Remember He covered you with drowsiness, to give you calm as from Himself, and He caused rain to descend on you from heaven, to clean you therewith, to remove from you the stain of Satan, to strengthen your hearts, and to plant your feet firmly therewith.” See the Qur’ān, 8: 11.

- “Remember thy Lord inspired the Angels (with the message): “I am with you: give firmness to the Believers: I will instil terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 12.
- “O ye who believe! When ye meet the unbelievers in hostile array, never turn your backs to them.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 15.
- “If any do turn his back to then on such a day - unless it be in a stratagem of war, or retreat to a troop (of his own)- he draws on himself the wrath of Allāh, and his abode is hell,- an evil refuge (indeed)!” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 16.
- “O ye that believe! Betray not the trust Of Allāh and the Messenger, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 27.
- “On the Day of *Furqān* (Discrimination)- the day of the meeting of the two forces.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 41.
- “And know that out of all the booty that ye may acquire (in war), a fifth share is assigned to Allāh, and to the Messenger, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 41.
- “Remember ye were on the hither side of the valley, and they on the farther side, and the caravan on lower ground than ye. Even if ye had made a mutual appointment to meet, ye would certainly have failed in the appointment: But (thus ye met), that Allāh might accomplish a matter already decided.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 42.
- “Remember in thy dream Allāh showed them to thee as few: if He had shown them to thee as many, ye would surely have been discouraged.” See the Qur’ān, 8: 43.
- “That Allāh might accomplish a matter already decided and unto Allāh are all matters returned.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 44.
- “O ye who believe! When ye meet a force, be firm, and call Allāh in remembrance much (and often); that ye may prosper.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 45.
- “And obey Allāh and His Messenger; and fall into no disputes. Lest ye lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering: For Allāh is with those who patiently persevere.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 46.
- “And be not like those who started from their homes insolently and to be seen of men, and to hinder (men) from the path of Allāh. For Allāh compasseth all that they do.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 47.

- “Remember Satan made their (sinful) acts seem alluring to them, and said: “No one among men can overcome you this day, while I am near to you.” But when the two forces came in sight of each other, he turned on his heels, and said: “Lo! I am clear of you; Lo! I see what ye see not; Lo! I fear Allāh; for Allāh is strict in punishment.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 48.
- “If ye gain the mastery over them in war, disperse, with them, those who follow them.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 57.
- “Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the heart of) the enemies, of Allāh and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allāh doth know. Whatever ye shall spend in the Cause of Allāh, shall be repaid into you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 60.
- “But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 61.
- “If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the Unbelievers.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 65.
- “It is not fitting for a Prophet that he should have prisoners of war until he hath thoroughly subdued the land. Ye look for the temporal goods of this world; but Allāh looketh to the Hereafter.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 67.
- “Those who believed, and emigrated and fought for the faith, with their property and their person, in the Cause of Allāh, as well as those who gave (them) asylum and aid,-these are (all) friends and protectors, one of another.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 72.
- “Those who believe, and emigrate, and fight for the faith, in the Cause of Allāh, as well as those who give (them) asylum and aid,- these are (all) in very truth the Believers: for them is the forgiveness of sins and a provision most generous.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 8: 74.
- “Beleaguer them, and *lie in wait for them* in every stratagem (of war).” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 5.
- “O ye who believe! take not for protectors your fathers and your brothers if they love infidelity above Faith: if any of you do so, they do wrong.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 23.

- “On the day of Ḥunain: behold! your great numbers elated you, but they availed you naught: the land, for all that it is wide, did constrain you, and ye turned back in retreat.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 25.
- “Fight those who believe not in Allāh nor the Last Day ... until they pay the *Jizya*”. See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 29
- “Say: can you expect for us (any fate) other than one of two glorious things- (Martyrdom or victory)?” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 52.
- “They will present their excuses to you when ye return to them. Say thou: “Present no excuses: we shall not believe you: Allāh hath already informed us of the true state of matters concerning you.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 94.
- “Allāh hath purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise): they fight in His Cause and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in truth, through The Torah, The Gospel, and the Qur’ān: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allāh? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 111.
- “It is not for the Believers to go forth together: if a contingent from every expedition go forth to devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them, that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil).” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 122.
- “Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should suffer, ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 9: 128.
- “Those who fulfil the Covenant of Allāh and fail not in their plighted word.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 13: 20.
- “Is then He Who standeth over every soul (and knoweth) all that it doth?” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 13: 33.
- “We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and glad tidings to the Muslims.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 16: 89.
- “Allāh commands justice, the doing of good, and giving to kith and kin, and He forbids all indecent deeds, and evil and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 16: 90.

- “Fulfil the Covenant of Allāh when ye have entered into it, and break not your oaths after ye have confirmed them; Indeed ye have made Allāh your surety; for Allāh knoweth all that ye do.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 16: 91.
- “Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 16: 125.
- “And if ye punish, let your punishment be proportionate to the wrong that has been done to you: But if ye show patience, that is indeed the best (course) for those who are patient.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 16:126.
- “Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard’s) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 17: 29.
- “Not a messenger did we send before thee without this inspiration sent by us to him: that there is no God but I; therefore worship and serve Me.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 21: 25.
- “We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 21: 107.
- “And We have made from water every living thing.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 21: 30.
- “To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged;- and verily, Allāh is Most Powerful for their aid;- (they are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right,- (for no cause-except that they say: “Our Lord is Allāh.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 22: 39 & 40.
- “And strive hard in Allāh’s Cause as you ought to strive (with sincerity and with all your efforts that His Name should be superior). He has chosen you (to convey His Message of Islamic Monotheism to mankind by inviting them to His Religion of Islam).” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 22: 78.
- “Only those are Believers, who believe in Allāh and His Messenger: when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they do not depart until they have asked for his leave: those who ask for thy leave are those who believe in Allāh and His Messenger.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 24: 62.
- “But only he (will prosper) that brings to Allāh a sound heart.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 26: 89.

- “On that day shall the Believers rejoice.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 30: 4.
- “Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them as a reward for their good deeds.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 32: 17.
- “Allāh has not made for any man two hearts.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 4.
- “But We sent against them a hurricane and forces that you saw not: But Allāh sees clearly all that ye do.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 9.
- “Behold! They came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes swerved and the hearts gaped up to the throats, and ye imagined various (vain) thoughts about Allāh!” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 10.
- “In that situation were the believers tried: they were shaken as by a tremendous shaking.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 11.
- “And behold! The Hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease say: “Allāh and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusions!” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 12.
- “Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent example for him who he hopes in Allāh and the Final Day, and who remembers Allāh much.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 21.
- “And Allāh turned back the non-believers for (all) their fury: no advantage did they gain; and enough is Allāh for the believers in their fight.” See Qur’ān (ETMC), 33: 25.
- “From Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the heavens or in earth: nor is there anything less than that, or greater, but is in the record perspicuous.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 34: 3.
- “We have not sent thee but as a (Messenger) to all mankind, giving them Glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men know not.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 34: 28.
- “Who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 42: 38.
- “Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in fight) smite at their necks; at length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind (the captives) firmly: therefore (is the time) either, generosity or ransom until the war lays down its burdens.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 47: 4.
- “O ye who believe! If ye will help (The Cause of) Allāh, He will help you, and plant your feet firmly.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 47: 7.

- “While the Unbelievers got up in their hearts Heat and cant-the heat and cant of Ignorance.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 48: 26.
- “O ye who believe! If a sinner comes to you with any news ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 49: 6.
- “But Allāh has endeared Faith to you, and Has made it beautified in your hearts, and He Has made hateful to you Unbelief, wrongdoing, and Rebellion: such indeed are those who walk in righteousness.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 49: 7.
- “O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their back, ... Spy not on each other.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 49: 12.
- “I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 51: 56.
- “Soon will their multitude be put to flight, and they will show their backs.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 54: 45.
- “Verily, all things have We created in proportion and measure.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 54: 49.
- “(Some part is due) to the indigent Muhājirs, those who were expelled from their homes and their property, while seeking Grace from Allāh and (His) Good Pleasure, and aiding Allāh and His Messenger: such are indeed the truthful”. See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 59: 8.
- “And those who before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith, show their affection to such as came to them for refuge and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves even though poverty was their (own lot). And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,- they are the ones that achieve prosperity.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 59: 9.
- “Thou wouldst think they were united, but their hearts are divided.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 59: 14.
- “O ye who believe! Take not My enemies and yours as friends (or protectors), offering them (your) love, even though they have rejected the Truth that has come to you, and have (on the contrary) driven out the Messenger and yourselves (from your homes), (simply) because ye believe in Allāh your Lord! If ye have come out to strive in My Way and to Seek My Good Pleasure, showing friendship

unto them in secret: for I know full well all that ye conceal and all that ye reveal. And any of you that does this has strayed from the Straight Path.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 60: 1.

- “Allāh forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, for dealing kindly and justly with them: For Allāh loveth those who are just.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 60: 8.
- “Truly Allāh loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 61: 4.
- “O ye who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Chastisement?” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 61: 10.
- “That ye believe in Allāh and his Messenger, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allāh, with your wealth and your persons: That will be best for you, If ye but knew!” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 61: 11.
- “He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to the Garden, beneath which rivers flow, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the supreme Triumph.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 61: 12.
- “O Prophet! Strive hard against the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be firm against them.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 66: 9.
- “And have patience with what they say, and leave them with noble (dignity).” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 73: 10.
- “May arrive at certainty.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 74: 31.
- “We showed him the way: Whether he be grateful or ungrateful.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 76: 3.
- “For the familiarity of the Quraysh, their familiarity with the journeys by winter and summer.” See the Qur’ān (ETMC), 106: 1 & 2.

Glossary

The glossaries have been used are:

- Aḥlāf: (sing. Ḥilf) making alliances between tribes.
- Allāh: God; the name of the Creator of the universe.
- Al-‘Amīl: (pl. ‘Umalā’) one who, although not a Muslim, helps the Muslims.
- Al-Anṣār: (sing. al-Anṣārī) the Helpers. This is the epithet given to the Medinians who helped Muḥammad.
- ‘Aqīda: (pl. ‘Aqā’id) doctrine, dogma, faith, belief, creed.
- ‘Aṣabīyah: Tribal loyalty, Group solidarity, kinship ethos.
- Asbāb al-Nuzūl: (sing. Sabab al-Nusūl) occasions of revelation.
- Al-‘Asharah al-Mubashsharūn bi al-Jannah: The Ten who were promised or glad tiding of Paradise by the Prophet.
- Aswāq: (sing. Sūq) the markets or fairs which used to be held annually in the Arabian Peninsula.
- Al-Aws: Major Arab tribe of Medina which constituted an important section of the Anṣār after the arrival of the Prophet in Medina.
- ‘Ayn: (pl. ‘Uyūn) a spy, scout.
- Bādiyat al-‘Irāq or al-Simāwah: The area comprising the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula and the southern part of Iraq.
- Bādiyat al-Shām: The area comprising the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula and southern Syria.
- Banū Qaynuqā’, Banū Qurayzah, and Banū al-Naḍīr: Major Jewish tribes in Medina.
- Al-Dalīl: (pl. Adilā’) guide; one that knows the area and its routes.
- Al-Dirāyah: Cognizance of the *ḥadīth*.
- Fatwā: (pl. Fatāwā) a technical term used in Islamic law to indicate a formal legal judgement or view.
- Fiqh: Islamic Jurisprudence.
- Fitnah: (pl. Fitān) turmoil; also temptation, trial, enchantment, civil war, strife.
- Ghazwa: (pl. Ghazawāt) the battles the Prophet led himself.
- Ḥadīth: (pl. in English ‘Ḥadīths’ - In Arabic ‘Aḥādīth’) the tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). It is the second source of the *sharī‘a*.
- Al-Ḥajj: Pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Ḥarb: (pl. Ḥurūb) war.

- Hijrah: The Migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in 622, which became Year 1 of the Muslim lunar calendar.
- Ijmā': Consensus.
- Isnād: chain of authorities at the beginning of a Ḥadīth.
- Al-Jāhiliyyah: State of ignorance. The Arabic word is used to designate the pre-Islamic period.
- Al-Jizyah: Poll tax imposed on non-Muslims in areas ruled by Muslims.
- Al-Ka'bah: The black cubic building in Mecca towards which Muslims face during their prayers. Muslims believe it to be the first house of Allāh, built by Adam. Pilgrimage is said to have been made to it since the days of Abraham, who rebuilt it and began the practice of pilgrimage, calling on others to perform it.
- Khal': Annulment of an alliance between tribes.
- Al-Khazraj: Major Arab tribe in Medina which constituted an important section of the Anṣār.
- Kutub al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah: The Six Authentic Books. The title given to the six most trustworthy collections of traditions received by Sunnī Muslims, namely, those by: Ṣāḥiḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣāḥiḥ Muslim, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Sunan Ibn Mājah, Sunan Abū Dā'ūd, and Sunan al-Nasā'ī.
- Al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz: (The Preserved Tablet) a book in which Allāh has recorded all things that will come to pass before bringing them into existence and according to predestined proportions and measures known only to Himself.
- Al-Maghāzī: (sing. ghazawāt) battles, military campaigns, expeditions, especially those undertaken by the Prophet Muḥammad.
- Matn: (pl. mutūn) the main text of a ḥadīth.
- Mecca: The holy city of Islam where the faith was first revealed, towards which Muslims turn during prayer and to which they undertake pilgrimage (al-Ḥajj).
- Medina: the second holiest city in Islam after Mecca. It was the city to which the Prophet migrated to and the first headquarters of Islam.
- Al-Mum'inūn: (sing. mu'min) the Faithful.
- Al-Munāfiqūn: (sing. munāfiq) hypocrites.
- Al-Mundhir: (pl. mundhirūn) warner; one who alerts others to an impending danger which he has seen and reported without being assigned to do so by his group.
- Al-Murtadūn: (sing. Murtad) those who abandon their faith or religion.
- Al-Nasī': Postponing one of the sacred months.
- PBUH: Peace Be Upon Him.

- PBUTA: Peace Be Upon Them All, the Prophets and Messengers.
- Al-Qaḍā': Perfect commanding, decreeing, ruling, accomplishing and perfect precision in execution.
- Al-Qadar: Setting, commanding, executing, and encompassing in due and precise proportions.
- Qur'ān: Islam's holiest book, being the uncreated word of Allāh revealed through Jibrīl (Gabriel) to the Prophet Muḥammad. It is the primary source of the *sharī'a*.
- Quraysh: Major tribe in Mecca to which the Prophet Muḥammad belonged.
- Al-Raqīb: (pl. ruqabā') the watcher, observer; one of the ninety-nine names of or attributes of Allāh.
- Al-Riwāyah: (pl. al-Riwāyāt) narration, transmission of the *ḥadīth*.
- Sābiqūn: (sing. sābiq) those having precedence in Islam.
- Al-Sharī'a: The right way of religion, the law, including both the reaching of the Qur'ān and of the *sunna*.
- Shaykh: (pl. shuyūkh) old man, chief, title of respect for Islamic religious leader, tribal head.
- Al-Sirah: (pl. siyar) biography, particularly that of the Prophet Muḥammad.
- Al-Sunna: Often used as a synonym for the *ḥadīth*, but more properly the mode of life of the Prophet. There is a slight difference between them, for a *ḥadīth* may not contain any *sunna* or a single *ḥadīth* may contain more than one *sunna*.
- Surah: (pl. suwar) chapter of the Qur'ān.
- Tafsīr: (pl. tafāsīr) exegesis, interpretation, commentary, especially relating to the Qur'ān.
- Al-Tawakkul: Trust in Allāh.
- Al-Tawriyah: A pun or dissimulation.
- Al-Zakāh: (pl. Zakawāt) obligatory alms tax which constitutes one of the five pillars of Islam.

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