
ALLEGED ATROCITIES OF THE PROPHET

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The Expansion of Islam, by William Cash, has an appendix of four pages in which the author has collected certain examples of what he calls "assassinations" carried out at the instigation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, for which he calls him "cruel, treacherous, and relentness" (p. 19). With the exception of one, all these examples have been taken from Sir William Muir's *Life of Muhammad*, while a list of "original authorities" has been added to each incident. The cases of "assassination" are five in all, and to these is added the "massacre" of Banu Quraiza. The seventh example—the rape of the women of Banu Mustaliq is a charge which is unknown even to Muir, and which the author has simply put in as a heading to defame the character of the Prophet, without citing any incident to show the Prophet's connection with it. Before I take up these cases individually, I think it necessary to throw some light on the value of the authorities cited by Mr. Cash.

The chief Arabic authorities cited, viz. Ibn Hishām, Wāqidi, Ibn Sa'd, Tabari, and Halabi,

are all books which fall under the heading of *sīrat* or *maghāzī*. The two words were originally used interchangeably, and books on *sīrat* (properly biographies of the Prophet) were limited mostly to accounts of the battles fought by him or what may properly be called *maghāzī*. These books are quite different from books on *hadīth* (or sayings, etc. of the Holy Prophet) which contain details of the law as promulgated by the Holy Prophet, though *hadīs* also contains an account of the battles fought or some other incidents of the Holy Prophet's life which throw light on doctrinal points. The *sīrat* and the *maghāzī*, i.e., the biographies, are later productions, and they were not subjected to the same critical test as *hadīth*. The collectors of tradition, *muhaddisīn*, are as a class quite distinct from the *arbabu's-Siyar* or biographers, and all Muslim authorities are agreed that the biographies are in point of trustworthiness much inferior to the collections of *hadīth*. Some biographies may be more reliable than others, but even the more reliable ones have not passed through the ordeal of criticism through which collections of *hadīth* have passed. On the other hand, everything that came to the biographers' hand, whether true or false, was passed on to the

readers. Thus says Hāfiz Zainu'd-Din 'Iraqi, to whom Ibn Hajr stands in the relation of a pupil: "Let the student know that the biographies contain what is true and what is false." Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal is even severer in his criticism of *maghāzī*, describing them as one of the three classes of books which "are not based on any principle." And as for Wāqidi's place among the biographers, he is the most untrustworthy of them all, and is generally known as a "liar."

The greatest error which European scholars are generally guilty of in dealing with Islam and the Prophet is that while they denounce *hadīth* as untrustworthy, they accept every story of the biographers as the very gospel truth, so long as it is damaging to the Prophet. All rules of criticism are here subjected to the one consideration that what is unfavourable to the Prophet must be true. I cannot here enter into a detailed discussion, but would only point out that while it is no doubt a difficult task to find out what is really untrue in the biographies, collections of *hadīth* can give us much help in sifting the truth from the error, because there is an unimpeachable authority in the Holy Quran. This is a point which the European

scholars have entirely neglected. It is an undeniable fact that the Quran was the only source of guidance for the Holy Prophet, and he could not go against any of its directions. "I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me," the Prophet is made to say repeatedly in the Quran (vi. 50, vii. 103; x. 15; xlvi. 9). And again: "I am commanded to be the first who submits" (vi. 14), or "I am the first of those who submit" (vi. 164). It goes further and says; "Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of a greivous day" (vi. 15; x. 15). From a Muslim's point of view, therefore, the Prophet could not go against the Holy Quran. But even a hostile critic cannot deny that Muhammad and the Quran must be in perfect agreement. From his point of view whatever the Prophet did, he "incorporated" into the Holy Quran, and this is the oft-repeated suggestion of Sir William Muir and other Western writers. We are again and again told that Muhammad produced such and such a revelation to justify a certain action which he had done. Whether he followed what was revealed to him or produced a certain verse to justify what he did, none of his actions could be read against the Holy Quran. If assassina-

tion were carried out at his instigation or rape was committed under his directions, the Quran must legalize both assassination and rape ; and if it does not legalize them, there can be no denying the conclusion that he never gave his sanction to these things.

It must be further borne in mind that to condemn any man on a charge there must be very strong evidence, to say nothing of condemning a man of the unique position of Muhammad, who laid down the basis of a world peace and a world brotherhood, who bore the severest persecutions year after year and granted an unqualified pardon to all those persecutors when they were completely at his mercy, having been vanquished in battles, who released as many as six thousand prisoners of war on a single occassion without demanding a price of ransom, and whose deeds of magnanimity and generosity towards foe and friend are recorded in history by the hundred. One cannot understand the mentality of critics who would give every accused person the benefit of a doubt, but who are bold in condemning such a benefactor of humanity as Muhammad on the basis of an admittedly doubtful record—of a record which is opposed to the testimony of an

unimpeachable authority like the Quran.

And let us now take individually the cases cited by Mr. Cash. Here we find that five out of the six alleged cases of assassination and the one case of "massacre" all relate to the Jews. The Jews were "the people of the Book" and ordinarily the dealings of the Muslims with the people of the Book were much more lenient than their dealings with the Arab idolaters. How was it then that the people of the Book, people whose prophets were frequently mentioned with the utmost respect in the Holy Quran—how was it that these very people were chosen for assassination, and such crimes were not perpetrated against the Arab idolaters who had most relentlessly persecuted the Muslims for thirteen years at Makka, and had now taken up the sword to deal a decisive blow at Madina? Sir William Muir and Mr. Cash assert that all these persons were murdered for no offence other than of composing verses "which annoyed the Mussalmans." Poetry was not a special vocation of the Jews, and verses abusing Islam and the Muslims were in much greater abundance produced by the idolatrous Arabs than by the Jews. In fact, it was the Arabs, not the Jews, whose particular vocation was

poetry, and satire and abusive poetry were specially used by them as weapons to discredit and defame Islam. Sir William Muir wrote his *Life in Christian missionary interest*, and Mr. Cash has only copied him, and neither of them has taken the trouble of testing the reliability of the record on whose bases he has dared to condemn the most merciful and truest of men as cruel and treacherous. If they had gone to the root of the question, they would have found that the Prophet and the Muslims bore patiently the severest abuses and the annoying verses of all their opponents, whether Jews or idolaters. Indeed, the Holy Quran had plainly enjoined on them that they should bear all abuses patiently, whether they came from the idolaters or from the Jews and Christians. I quote only one verse belonging to a period when the Muslims had already entered on a state of war with their opponents: "And you shall certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you, and from those who are polytheists, much abuse, and if you are patient and guard against evil, surely this is one of the affairs which should be determined upon" (iii. 185). This verse occurs in a chapter which contains an account of the Battle of Uhud, fought in

the 3rd year of Hijrah, and could not therefore have been revealed earlier than that year, and this is just the period to which most of the alleged assassinations relate. How was it possible for the Prophet and his followers to go directly against the plain injunction of the Holy Quran? As I have already said, the Prophet could not go against any Quranic injunction, and the Quran says plainly, and says it at a time when war was going on with both the polytheistic Arabs and the Jews, that the Muslims shall have to bear much abuse, and they must not only bear the abuse patiently but should even guard against doing similar evil, to say nothing of murdering the abusers. How could the Prophet in the face of such a plain injunction order the murder of those who abused him, and how could the Muslims carry out an order which was directly opposed to the Holy Quran? It was simply impossible. And if Ibn Hishām or Wāqidi says that the Prophet ordered the assassination of his abusers it is Ibn Hishām or Wāqidi—a frail authority after all and not the Quran, which is admittedly the most reliable source of information as to the doings of the Prophet, that must be rejected. The Quran had allowed fighting against an

aggressive enemy, yet it refused to give sanction to the murder of one who abused the Prophet and Islam ; nay, it required plainly such abuse to be borne patiently. From a hostile critic's point of view, it is simply inconceivable that the Prophet should order the murder of people for annoying poems and, at the same time and in the same breath, forbid that abuse should be met with otherwise than bearing it patiently. What he should have done was when ordering such assassinations to produce a verse sanctioning the murder of abusers.

Let us now take the cases individually. The first case cited by Mr. Cash is that of Asma, of the tribe of Aus. She is said to have been a poetess who wrote some verses stating that the Prophet was an upstart who had slain many of their chiefs, referring to the battle of Badr. It is stated that she was brutally murdered for this abuse by a Muslim named 'Umair, and that the Prophet not only approved of this murder but also praised 'Umair for the deed. The authorities quoted are Wāqidi, Ibn Hishām, and Ibn Sa'd. That this is not a reliable record is not only shown by what has been stated above, that the Holy Quran never allowed the murder of an abuser, but also by clear direc-

tions repeatedly given by the Holy Prophet that no woman was to be killed even though she took part in actual war with the Muslims. No less an authority than Bukhāri has a chapter on the "Murder of women during War" (Kitābu 'l-Jihād) in which the following report from Ibn 'Umar is recorded: "A woman was found killed in one of the battles fought by the Holy Prophet, so the Holy Prophet forbade the killing of women and children." If the Prophet forbade the killing of women even when they were actually accompanying the enemy forces, how could he approve or applaud the killing of a woman for simply abusing or composing some annoying verses? Even the companions of the Prophet were so well aware of his strict orders against the killing of women that when Abu 'l-Huqaiq's wife interposed herself between them and Abu 'l-Huqaiq they had to withhold their raised swords "because they remembered that the Holy Prophet had forbidden the killing of a woman" (*Fat-hu'l-Bāri*, ch. Killing of Abu 'l Huqaiq). In the face of this clear testimony, none but a biased mind can accept as reliable a report which relates that the Holy Prophet had ordered and applauded the killing of a woman simply for

the offence that she composed annoying verses. I have no hesitation in calling such a report a baseless forgery.

While dealing with the alleged murder of Asma, I have shown that the Holy Prophet gave a clear interdiction against the murder of women even in wars. In this connection I have quoted a saying of the Holy Prophet from the most reliable traditionist of Islam, the Imam Bukhāri. The heading under which Bukhāri quotes this saying is "Murder of Woman during Wars," thus showing that the interdiction against the murder of women was to be observed even in wars. Bukhāri is not alone in reporting the incident and the interdiction ; it is contained in all the books of the *Sihāh Sitta* (the six reliable collections) with the exception of only one, and therefore its authenticity is beyond dispute. Not only this, this interdiction is accepted as a basic principle by later jurists. Thus according to Mālik and Auza'ī, the killing of women and children is not allowed under any circumstances whatsoever, and according to Shāfi'ī and the Kufis a woman may be killed only when she is a combatant, while according to one authority, even when a woman is a combatant it is not lawful to kill

her intentionally unless she is about to kill or attacks a man with the intention of killing him ('Aunu 'l-Ma'būd, *Commentary on Abū Dawūd*, ch. Murder of Women). According to Mālik and Auza'ī, however, as already stated, a woman should not be killed under any condition, so much so that if a fighting force takes the shelter of women and children or takes shelter in a fort or a boat in which there are also women and children with them, it is not lawful to shoot at or set fire to the fort or the boat (*Fat-hu'l-Bāri*, ch. Ahlu 'd-Dāri yabītūn). In the face of these facts it is simply unthinkable that the Prophet should have ordered the assassination of a woman, under peaceful conditions, for no other fault than singing certain annoying verses.

The next incident related by Mr. Cash is that relating to the alleged assassination of Abū Afak, "an aged Jewish proselyte, whose offence was similar to that of Asma." I have no hesitation in calling this story as baseless a fabrication as that relating to the murder of Asma. My reason for doing this is that the interdiction against the murder of women also included two other classes, viz. children and old men. It is true that the saying of the Prophet as

reported in the Bukhāri mentions only women and children, and not aged persons, but there is a tradition in *Abū Dawūd* (ch. Du'au 'l-Mushrikin) reported by Anas, son of Mālik, according to which the Holy Prophet said: "Do not kill an aged person, nor a child, nor a minor, nor a woman." That the Prophet expressly forbade the killing of old men appears also from the directions given by Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, to Yazid, son of Abu Sufyan, when he sent him in command of an army to Syria. In the directions given to him the following relates to our subject: "Do not kill children, nor women, nor old men" (*Fat-hu'l-Qadīr*, vol. v, p. 202). It is clear that Abū Bakr could give such directions only on the authority of the Holy Prophet. Hence there was an interdiction against the killing of old men, as there was against the killing of women. And it is impossible, I repeat, that the Holy Prophet should have given such clear injunctions and then himself ordered the killing of "an aged Jewish proselyte," as Abū Afak is said to have been, and for no offence but that he composed some annoying verses.

In fact, as the *Hidāya* has put it clearly, a person's life—unless he is a murderer—can-

not be taken on any ground other than that he is a combatant: "And they should not kill a woman, nor a child, nor an aged person, nor one who does not take part in a war, nor a blind man, because what makes it lawful to take a man's life, according to us, is his being a combatant, and this is not true in their case" (ch. Kaifiyyatu 'l-Qitāl). In fact, this conclusion, which is the basic principle of the Hanifite law, is based on the express words of the Holy Prophet himself. As Abū Dawūd reports on the authority of Rabah, son of Rabī: "We were with the Prophet in a certain battle, and he saw the people gather together in one place. So he sent a man to make an inquiry as to why the people had gathered together. The messenger came back and said, 'There is a woman killed.' The Holy Prophet said, '*She was not fighting.*' The reporter says that Khalid was leading at the time. So the Prophet sent a man to Khalid and asked him to tell Khalid that he should not kill a woman nor a 'hireling" (ch. Qatlu'n-Nisā). By remarking that "she was not fighting," the Holy Prophet made it plain that even in battle only such persons could be killed as actually took part in fighting, and along with women he excepted hirelings, be-

cause they were only hired for other work and did not take part in actual fighting. It is on this basis that the Hanifite law excepts, along with women, children, and old men, all such persons as cannot take part in fighting. And the conclusion is inevitable that according to the Holy Prophet's own injunctions the killing of a person was not lawful unless he took part in fighting, and any report to the effect that a person was killed though he was not a combatant is either untrue or defective, even if it is met with in a reliable collection of traditions. And as for biographies, I have already said that they cannot be trusted at all in such matters, and the case of Ibn Sunaina's murder must be rejected as untrue. The circumstances that this murder was due to the Prophet giving a general order for the slaughter of the Jews is sufficient to discredit this report, for not only would such an order be against the clear injunctions of the Holy Quran, but also because if such an order were given it would not have resulted in the murder of a single Jew.

I must here add that the Prophet's express injunction not to kill even in a battle anyone who was not a combatant though he may be with a fighting army is based on the Holy

Qur-ān itself. For when the permission was given to the Muslims to take up the sword, it was given in the express words that none but a fighter should be fought against: "And fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, and do not exceed this limit, for God does not love those who exceed the limits" (ii. 190). And to the same effect, we have elsewhere: "Permission is given to those on whom war is made because they are oppressed" (xxii. 39). It was in obedience to these Divine commandments that the Holy Prophet gave the direction that women, children, and old men were not to be killed even in the battles because they were not combatants, and hence no non-combatant could be killed unless, of course, he was guilty of murder, for which the Holy Quran has an express provision: "Retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain" (ii. 178). Thus both the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet's sayings lay down a clear rule that the life of a person can be taken only if he is either a murderer or a combatant, and it is under one of these two heads that all these cases fall in which the Prophet ordered the killing of a person.

I now come to the genuine cases which are

mentioned in collections of traditions. The first of these is the case of Ka'bbin Ashraf. I propose to discuss it in detail, for this one case would show how the Holy Prophet has been misrepresented. Ka'b's father belonged to the tribe of Tayy, but coming over to Madina he became an ally of the Jewish tribe of Banū Nazīr and became so influential that he succeeded in marrying the daughter of a Jewish leader. Ka'b thus stood in a very real relationship to both the Jews and the Arabs. When the Holy Prophet came to Madina, the Jews made an agreement with him, by the terms of which the Jews and the Musims were to live as one people, both retaining their own faith, and in the case of an attack on Madina or an unaggressive war with a third party they bound themselves to help each other. The Prophet was accepted as the final court of appeal in all disputes. When, however, a Makkan army advanced on Madina in the 2nd year of Hijrah, the Muslims had to meet them alone, and notwithstanding that they were less than a third of the Makkan army and very inferior in efficiency and arms, they inflicted a crushing defeat on the invading army at Badr. The Muslim victory only added to the Jewish spite against Islam. Ka'b, who

was bound by the Madina treaty, now used his poetic gift freely to excite hatred of Islam and the Muslims. Not content with this, he proceeded to Makka and openly joined hands with the enemies of Islam. He urged upon the Quraish the necessity of attacking Madina with a strong force at an early date, and swore in the Ka'ba that he would fight against the Muslims when Madina was invaded. Not only this; he returned from Makka with a plan to put an end to the Prophet's life by underhand means. It is only in the true Christian missionary spirit that Muir, in his *Life of Mahomet*, has no place for these facts while he has sufficient room for the minutest details as to how Ka'b was put to death, and he gives vent to his inner feelings when he concludes his description of one of these "assassinations" in the following words :

"The progress of Islam begins to stand out in unenviable contrast with that of early Christianity. Converts were gained to the faith of Jesus by witnessing the constancy with which its confessors suffered death; they were gained to Islam by the spectacle of the readiness with which its adherents inflicted death. In the one case, conversion imperilled the be-

believer's life ; in the other, it was the only means of saving it."

And if Muir concealed the facts which show that from an ally Ka'b had turned into a combatant, Mr. Cash, notwithstanding his parading the original authorities, is guilty of the same offence. That there was a war between the Muslims and the non-Muslims at the time of the alleged "assassination," in the third year of the Hijrah, is an undeniable fact. The question is whether Ka'b was among the combatants or the non-combatants. If he actually joined hands with the enemies of Islam and placed himself among those who were fighting with the Muslims, and he was killed by the Muslims, can this be called a case of treachery, cruelty, or butchery? That Ka'b had openly joined the combatants and become their ally is borne out by all historical accounts ; nay, some of them go so far as to say that he had planned to murder the Holy Prophet treacherously. I give here some quotations :—

"He went to Quraish, weeping over their killed (at Badr) and inciting them to fight with the Prophet" (Zurqani, vol. ii, p. 10).

(The Prophet said) "He (Ka'b) has openly assumed enmity to us and speaks evil of us and

he has gone over to the polytheists (who were at war with the Muslims) and has made them gather against us for fighting" (Zurqání, vol. ii, p. 11).

"And according to Kalbí, he united in a league with the Quraish before the curtains of Ka'ba to fight against the Muslims" (Zurqání, vol. ii. p. 11).

"And he prepared a feast, and conspired with some Jews that he would invite the Prophet, and when he came they should fall on him all of a sudden" (Zurqání; vol. ii, p. 12).

Commenting on Bukhari's report relating to the killing of Ka'b the author of *Fat-hu 'l-Bári* relates the reports which I have quoted above from Zūrqání, viz. Ka'b's going to Makka and inciting the Quraish, entering into a league before the curtains of the Ka'ba to fight against the Muslims, the Prophet's declaration that he had assumed open enmity, and his plan to kill the Prophet by inviting him to a feast. Bukhari himself speaks of the incidents relating to the killing of Ka'b under headings in which the word *harb* (fighting) occurs, thus showing that he was looked upon as a combatant. Abú Dawúd speaks of the incident under the heading "When the enemy is attacked and he is un-

prepared," showing that Ka'b was dealt with as an enemy at war with the Muslims. And the comment on this is that "Ka'b used to incite people to murder the Muslims"; and discussing the legality of what the party sent out for the punishment of Ka'b did, the same commentator adds: "This is not allowed in the case of an enemy after security has been given to him or peace has been made with him but it is allowed in the case of one who breaks the covenant and helps others in the murder of Muslims." And Ibn Sa'd tells us that when the Jews complained to the Holy Prophet that their leader was killed, "he reminded them of his deeds and how he urged and incited (the Quraish) to fight against them," and adds that the Prophet then "called upon them to make an agreement with him," and this agreement "was afterwards in the possession of 'Ali." All this evidence is too clear to show that Ka'b was put to death for having broken the agreement with the Prophet and joined his enemies who were at war with him, and he was therefore treated as a combatant. while the other Jews who did not go to this length though they were not less active in speaking evil of the Holy Prophet, still lived at peace with him, and

all that they were required to do was to sign an agreement that they would not join hands with those who were at war with the Muslims.

The only question that is worth considering is why Ka'b was put to death by certain Muslims attacking him suddenly and unawares. In the first place, it must be clearly understood that the responsibility as to the manner in which he was put to death does not at all lie with the Prophet. That the Prophet considered Ka'b as deserving death is quite true, but there is no proof at all that he gave any directions as to the manner in which that sentence was to be carried out. On the other hand, according to one report, when the Prophet was asked by Muhammad bin Maslamah whether he should kill him he assumed silence, while according to another he said: "If you are going to do it, be not in a hurry until you have consulted Sa'd bin Mu'áz" (Zurqání, vol. ii, p. 12). At any rate he knew nothing about the details, and it is even doubtful whether the details as given are true, and on this point even Muir has his doubts. But supposing that all these details are true, the Holy Prophet had nothing to do with them. And leaving aside the question of the Prophet's responsibility, there was no other

method to which resort could be had under the circumstances. The hostile critic takes it for granted that the conditions under which the Muslims lived at Madina were very much like those under which he lives in the twentieth century. They had to deal with an enemy, and they dealt with him in the only way in which it was possible to proceed under the circumstances then existing.

From what I have said above, it is clear that Ka'b had along with the Jews at first entered into an agreement of alliance with the Muslims, but had later become inimical to them, and ultimately entered into a league with their enemies to annihilate the Muslims and their Prophet. From a peaceful citizen he had turned into an open combatant, and had even tried to kill the Prophet by treachery. As such he deserved death, and the only question is whether there was any treachery or cruelty on the part of the Muslims to have killed him unawares. The only other way open to them was to obtain a judgment in their favour in some constituted court of justice and then have him beheaded by some constituted authority. But constituted authority there was practically none at Madina, and if there was, it was the

Prophet himself, because he was the head to whom all disputes should be finally referred according to the agreement entered into by the different communities at the Prophet's advent, and therefore this course was impossible. Nor could the Muslims, if they had the least care for their own lives, wait and sit silent, as, living in Madina, Ka'b could work the greatest mischief and all the time be immune from punishment. The Prophet was a spiritual teacher, no doubt, but he was also a general, and he had to act like a far-sighted general to protect the Muslims against the evil designs of an enemy who, living within Madina, could work immense mischief if he was not dealt with promptly. Ka'b had chosen to enter into a league with an enemy at war with the Muslims, and according to all human and Divine laws he could not but be treated as an enemy at war. And dealing with him as a combatant, the Holy Prophet sent a party against him ; it is definitely called a *sariyya* (lit., *a portion of an army*) in all biographical works, thus showing that the party was sent to fight with him : but it rested with the leader of the party to choose the best way in which he could deal a blow at the enemy. And Muhammad bin Maslama, the leader chose

a method which was recognized among the Arabs, and I have no doubt that similar methods are adopted even to-day by civilized nations and go under the name of "effective" measures of dealing with the enemy. I am sure that if a civilised Government had to round up a dacoit to-day it would do it by similar methods. Nay, if necessary it would bomb peaceful citizens along with a culprit. If the leader of the party had chosen to attack Ka'b openly, there would have been much more bloodshed, and probably the whole Jewish tribe of Banú Nazír would have suffered along with Ka'b, Ka'b had broken his agreement with the Prophet, he had revolted against him, he had entered into a league to fight against the Muslims till they were extirpated and he had secretly planned to take away the Prophet's life. For every one of these offences he had forfeited his life. A party was sent to execute this decree, and his life was taken in a manner which if it had the fault of being secret, had also the merit of not involving innocent people along with the culprit, which would surely have been the result in the case of an open attack; but the Holy Prophet was not in any way responsible for the method of the execution.

Having discussed the case of Ka'b at length the case of Abu 'l-Huqaiq (Abú Ráfi') need not detain us long. In fact, Muir has admitted his guilt with the suppressed tongue. Thus under the heading "Assassination of Abu 'l-Huqaiq, a Jewish Chief," he says :—

"A party of the Baní Nádhir, after their exile, settled down among their brethren at Khaibar. Abul Huckleick, their chief, having taken a prominent part in the confederate force which besieged Madina, was now suspected of encouraging certain Bedouin tribes in their depredations. An expedition was therefore undertaken by Ali against the Jews of Khaibar. ... As a surer means of stopping these attacks, Mahomet resolved on ridding himself of their supposed author, the Jewish chief." And we are further told that "the assassination of Abul Huckleick did not relieve Mahomet of his apprehensions from the Jews of Khaibar : for Oseir elected in his room, maintained the same relation with the Ghatafan, and was even reported to be designing fresh movements against Medina." The Banú-Nazír, a Jewish tribe, originally lived at Madina, and were in alliance with the Holy Prophet, but being suspected of keeping up correspondence with the Quraish,

and one of the Arab tribes in alliance with them having murdered some Muslims treacherously, they were asked to renew the alliance, which they refused, and were ultimately banished from Madina. They settled at Khaibar, a Jewish stronghold, and became a source of immense trouble to the Muslims, constantly inciting the tribes around Madina to commit depredations on the Muslims. Abul 'l-Huqaiq, their head, was also a leader in the battle of the allies in which the Arabian and Jewish tribes had gathered together to give a crushing blow to Islam. Abu 'l-Huqaiq and the Jews had thus come out into the field of battle against the Muslims, and even after the allies had to go back in discomfiture, Abu 'l-Huqaiq continued to excite and help the Arab tribes living around Madina in their depredations against the Muslims. The Prophet was thus justified in sending an expedition against the Khaibar Jews, but before doing this in the 7th year of Hijrah, he sent a small party to deal with Abu 'l-Huqaiq alone in 6 A.H. Undoubtedly, the underlying idea was that bloodshed might be avoided as far as possible, and that if the ringleader was taken away, the mischief might cease. But even Abu 'l-Huqaiq's death did not

bring peace to the Muslims, and accordingly Khaibar had ultimately to be attacked and conquered. That the party sent against him chose to adopt the method which was successfully adopted against Ka'b, again throws no blame on the Prophet.

The case of Banú Quraiza is dealt with in the Holy Quran in connection with the Battle of the Allies in the following words :—

“And He drove down those of the followers of the Book who backed them from their fortresses and He cast awe into their hearts : some (of them) you killed, and you took captive another part. And He made you heirs to their land and their dwellings and their property, and to a land which you have not yet trodden, and God has power over all things” (xxxiii. 26, 27.)

Originally there were three Jewish tribes living at Madina : Banu Qainuqa', Banú Nazír, and Banú Quraiza. All three tribes, as stated already, entered into an alliance with the Muslims when the Holy Prophet first came to Madina, by which the two parties were bound to help each other in the case of an unaggressive war or an attack on Madina. But none of the three Jewish tribes remained faithful to the agreement. They did not remain even neutral. The Banu Qainuqa'

were the first to break with the Muslims. As Ibn Hishám has it : "The Banú Qainuqa' were the first Jewish tribe to violate the agreement which was made between them and the Prophet of God, and they declared war against him between the battles of Badr and Uhud." They were besieged and ultimately agreed to submit to the Prophet's decision, and their banishment from Madina was the result. This happened in the second year of Hijrah. Soon afterwards it was discovered that both the other Jewish tribes were in secret alliance with the enemies of Islam, and accordingly the Holy Prophet required them to renew their agreement. The Banú Quraiza agreed to this but the Banú Nazír refused. They were besieged, and ultimately submitted to banishment and settled at Khaibar.

The 5th year of Hijrah was a time of sore trial for the small Muslim community at Madina. The activities of the Quraish and the Jews resulted in uniting numerous Arab tribes against the Muslims, and an army of between ten and twenty-five thousand besieged Madina. The Muslims, who did not number more than two or three thousand, defended themselves by digging a trench. It was the most critical time in the life of the Muslim community. The

Holy Quran thus describes the situation :
 "When they came upon you from above you
 and from below you, and when the eyes turned
 dull, and the hearts rose up to the throats, and
 you began to think diverse thoughts of God"
 (xxxiii. 10). The Banú Quraiza were guilty of
 the most heinous treachery at this juncture. I
 would only quote Muir :—

"Meanwhile, Abu Sofian succeeded in de-
 taching Bani Coreitza, now the only remaining
 Jewish tribe, from their allegiance to Mahomet.
 Huwey, the exiled Jew and ally of the Coreish,
 sent by him to their fortress, was at first refused
 admittance. But, persevering in his solicitations,
 dwelling upon the ill-concealed enmity of
 Mahomet towards the Jews at large, and repre-
 senting the overwhelming numbers of the con-
 federate army as 'a surging sea' he at last persua-
 ded Ka'b their chief, to relent. It was agreed
 that the Coreitza would assist the Coreish, and
 that Huwey should retire into their fortress in
 case the allies marched back without inflicting
 a fatal blow upon Medina. Rumours of this
 defection reaching Mahomet, he sent the two
 Sa'ds, chief of the Aus and Khazraj, to ascertain
 the truth, and strictly charged them, if the
 result should prove unfavourable, to divulge it

to none other but himself. They found the Coreitza in a sullen mood. 'Who is Mahomet, said they, 'and who is the Apostle of God, that we should obey him? There is no bond or compact betwixt us and him.' After high words and threats, the messengers took their leave, and reported to Mahomet that the temper of the Jews was worse even than he had feared."

The treachery on the part of Banú Quraiza is one of the blackest deeds that history records. Only imagine what would have been the fate of the Muslims if they had succeeded! Therefore when the besieging army took to fight and the Quraiza returned to their fortress, it was besieged by the Holy Prophet. After twenty-five days they made an offer of "submitting to the judgment of Sa'd bin Mu'az, because he was the chief of the Aus tribe, with whom they were in alliance before the Prophet came to Madina. The Holy Prophet accepted their offer, and Sa'd's decision was that the combatants from among the Banú Quraiza should be put to death and the non-combatants reduced to slavery. The Christian critics of the Holy Prophet call the execution of this judgment an act of cruelty, while the Jews themselves had no complaint against it. And how could they

call it cruel when the judgment was based on the express words of their own law, which prescribes the following course in the case of a town which makes war and is besieged :—

“And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it :

“And when the Lord the God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword ;

“But the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself” (Deut. xx. 12-14).

We are not aware what reasons led Sa'd to give his judgment. It may be that, being their ally, he inquired of the Jews as to how they would act under similar circumstances, and when he came to know what their own sacred law was, he gave his judgment in accordance with it. Or, perhaps on account of his erstwhile relations with them, he already knew their law. Leaving aside the heinous deed of treachery of which they were guilty, it is clear that if they had triumphed over the Muslims they would have dealt with them exactly in the same manner. The Jews would not call it cruel, nor should

even the Christians, because even they consider it a revealed law. The punishment may seem severe at this distant date, though ten thousand times more blood may be shed in one civilized war of the present age, but exigencies of national existence do sometimes require an exemplary punishment. This was the second act of treachery on the part of Banú Nazír ; it was committed at a time when the Muslim national existence was in danger of being swept off entirely ; the judgment was delivered by a man whom the Jews had themselves chosen as an arbiter ; the judgment given was in accordance with their own law ; and that law was considered by them to be a Divine law. How can the Prophet be blamed for it ?

Mr. Cash's last charge against the Holy Prophet, *i. e.*, having allowed rape of the women of Banú Mustaliq, is one of the most grievous calumnies that have been uttered. And the allegation that "all the Tradition Books" mention it is bolder still. *I challenge Mr. Cash to produce testimony from a single collection of Traditions establishing the charge—a charge of which even a hostile writer like Muir is unaware.* The only thing that is met with in the collections of Traditions is a report from Abú

Sa'id Khudrí that some people in the Muslim army *intended* contracting temporary marriage relations with some women who were prisoners of war and making use of a birth-control device but there is not the least evidence that they ever did it. Abu Sa'id's report, in fact, relates to the legality of 'azl, a birth-control device, and it does not say at all how the women of Banú Mustaliq were treated. It is a fact that before the advent of Islam, temporary marriage relations were allowed. The Holy Quran puts an end to them, but all reforms was, and ought to have been, gradual. The Quran is explicit on marriage with the prisoners of war, and the verse quoted below is a clear rebuttal of Mr. Cash's unfounded charge:—

“ And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means to marry free believing women, then he may marry of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens so marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries justly, they being chaste, not fornicating nor receiving paramours; and when they are taken in marriage, then if they are guilty of indecency they shall suffer half the punishment which is inflicted upon free women. This is

for him among you who fears falling into evil ; and that you abstain is better for you, and God is Forgiving, Merciful" (iv. 25).

As regards the treatment of the women of Banú Mustaliq in particular, there is the clearest historical evidence in all Tradition Books that they were all set free without demanding any ransom, because one of them, Juwairiyya, was set free and married by the Holy Prophet.

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