



Original Article

The truce of al-Hudaybiyyah refers by the Qur'an as an 'open victory': An Analysis

Asyiqin Ab Halim^{a*}

^a Department of Islamic History and Civilization, University of Malay, Malaysia

* Corresponding author, email; aasyiq5@um.edu.my

ABSTRACT

The truce of al-Hudaybiyyah occurred in 6 AH / 628 AC was referred by the Qur'an as an 'open victory'. Stated in surah al-Fath, the first and second verses describes the condition of the truce as "Verily We granted thee a manifest victory. That God may forgive thee thy fault of the past and those to follow: fulfill His favour of thee: and guide thee on the straightway"¹ Although these verses and the whole surah was revealed after the treaty of al-Hudaybiyyah, initially they had not been interpreted by the Muslims as an 'open victory' since they were portrayed as the weaken side from the agreement. However, the sequences of the events occurred later had led to the victory of the Muslims. Muslims had gradually achieved a victory to another and eventually capable to conquer Makkah in 8 AH/630 AC. Thus, this article attempts to discuss the sequences of these events on how it led to the manifest or open victory to Muslims as mentioned in the Qur'an in surah An-Nasr, verse 1-3.

Keywords: Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah, open victory, Makkan Quraysh, Jews.

Introduction

The truce of al-Hudaybiyyah signed by the Prophet on behalf of the Muslims and Suhayl ibn 'Amr representing for the Makkan Quraysh was due to several reasons. First, it was the Prophet's intention to have treaty with the Makkan Quraysh as it would neutralize them against the Jews.² After the three successive battles, Madinah was in a threatening situation where it was trapped between its two enemies. In the south there were Makkan Quraysh residing in Makkah, while in the north the exiled Jews from Madinah were settling down in a place called Khaybar.³ Therefore, there was a high risk for Madinah to be attacked by both of them as they were neutral alliances.

¹ Surah Al-Fath (48): 1-2

² Adil Salahi, Muhammad Man and Prophet, United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 2002, 495

³ Ibid, p 496

Secondly, the Makkah Quraysh were now in a weak situation after it had been defeated by the Muslims in three prior battles; Badr, Uhud and Ahzab. Although the Makkah Quraysh were able to kill number of Muslims during the battle of Uhud, they failed in achieving their aim to abolish Islam and drive out Muslims from Madinah. On the other hand, Muslims had not made any treaty with the Makkah Quraysh before. Therefore, if the treaty was concluded with them, at least it would last for several years. Besides, it was an advantage for both sides as naturally there were blood relation between them.

Thirdly, the Prophet PBUH did not choose to have new treaty with the Jews as Muslims had gone through bitter experience with them regarding their violation of the Madinah Charter before.⁴ The Jews had failed to assist Muslims in protecting Madinah from the raids of Makkah Quraysh as well as had a complot to kill the Prophet. In other words, to have a new covenant with the Jews means to face another violation from them which could no longer be accepted by the Muslims. Therefore, to conclude a treaty with Makkah Quraysh was the best choice they had. Hence, the intention and expedition of the Prophet and Muslims to perform *'umrah* had become the catalyst to end a treaty with Makkah Quraysh, which later was known as the truce or treaty of al-Hudaibiyyah.

The truce was signed by both sides, the Muslim and Makkah Quraysh consisted six clauses of mutual agreement, which are:

- 1) Both side agreed to conclude peace between two parties for ten years without having any fight or attack towards each other.
- 2) Anyone from the Makkah Quraysh who joint Muhammad PBUH without any permission from his chief or guardian, must be returned back to Makkah.
- 3) Whereas anyone from Muhammad PBUH side who went to join Makkah Quraysh were not necessary to be returned back to Makkah.
- 4) Any conduct of stealing or disloyalty shall be taken into action.
- 5) Anyone from Arab tribes who wanted to ally either to the Prophet or to the Makkah Quraysh were allowed to do so.
- 6) The Muslims had to return to Madinah in that year without entering Makkah. They were allowed to come back and to perform *'umrah* in the following year and were allowed to stay there only for three days.⁵

Generally, these contents of the truce apparently showed the injustice and one side feeble towards the Muslims, which could not be accepted by them as they are the believers. Moreover, the failure in performing *'umrah* during that year had made them more discontent and disgraced regarding the truce. Yet, it was a rejoice for the Prophet once the verses of surah al-Fath was revealed on their way back to Madinah which signaled that the truce was not a humiliation or 'set-back' to the Muslims but an indication of a victory.⁶

Despite of being humiliated, each clause of the truce showed a positive implication to the Muslims. The first clause of the truce had given the opportunity for the Prophet to freely spread

⁵ Adil Salahi, Muhammad: Man and the Prophet, 2002, 512.

⁶ Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi. Muhammad Rasulallah (trans) Ahamad, Mohiuddin. The Life of Prophet Muhammad, India: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1979, 268.

the teaching of Islam within that period. Thus, the Prophet had invited the rulers of neighbouring countries and tribal chiefs to Islam by sending letters including Heraclius the Emperor of Byzantine, Choroës II the Emperor of Iran, Negus the king of Abyssinia and Muqauqis the ruler of Egypt.⁷ Although the Prophet had received positive and negative responses from sending the letters, it implicitly showed that Islam is a peaceful faith which as well spread its teaching thru invitation. This kind of 'victory' had gradually completed the meaning of the 'open victory' referred in the verses of surah al-Fath stated before.

Another implication was regarding the second and third clauses of the truce. Although Muslims were discriminated and judged unjustly regarding these clauses, indirectly it was a positive result for the Muslims. From the second clause, Muslims got the opportunity to spread the teaching of Islam among the Makkah Quraysh once those who planned to migrate to Madinah had to be returned to Makkah. Meanwhile regarding the third clause, any Muslims who turned away from the Prophet in Madinah would neither harm him nor the Muslims if they remained in Makkah. This due to the reason that they would not run away from the Prophet unless they had become non-believers or less in faith. This idea slowly made sense in Muslims' mind, eventually realized the hidden lesson from the truce.

On the other hand, since the treaty of al-Hudaybiyah was similarly open to any tribes of Arab who wish to join in, subsequently the Arab tribes from Banu Khuza'ah had made alliance with the Prophet, while another tribe known as Banu Bakr had concluded a treaty with the Makkah Quraysh. Banu Khuza'ah had chosen the Prophet PBUH as their ally since they were friends to the Muslims and enjoyed their assurance although they had not yet officially declared to be Muslims.⁸ Whereas for Banu Bakr, they were an old enemy to Banu Khuza'ah and reasonably could not be friend with those who had ally with their enemy, hence they went to join on the Makkah Quraysh's side. Both of them then were bound to the same contents of to truce i.e not to have any fight and to have good intention which were secure for both sides within that period.

Nevertheless, the Prophet had achieved his objective through the truce of al-Hudaybiyyah. He had able to neutralize the Makkah Quraysh against the Jews in Khaybar. As a result, Muslims went to conquer Khaybar on the 1st Muharram 7 AH/ 629 AC, with the main purpose to conquer the Jews, thus to prevent them from attacking Madinah. An immediate action had been taken as violation from the Makkah Quraysh might occur at any time if action towards Khaybar had been delayed. There might be a possibility for them to join the Jews in launching raids towards Madinah. As a result of the conquest, Madinah again was in a safe condition and received no more threat from its enemy. Whereas, the Makkah Quraysh felt more isolated as they were no longer able to ally with the Jews who were now under the protection of the Prophet.

Besides, several individuals including Khalid ibn al-Walid and 'Amr ibn al-'As had become Muslim due to the truce of al-Hudaybiyyah. Realizing the Makkah Quraysh was now had been defeated by the Muslims, in addition success achieved by the Muslim, had interested them to

⁷ Ibid, p 274.

⁸ Shibli Nu'mani. *Sirat-un Nabi*. (trans) Budayuni, M Tayyib Bakhsh. *The Life of the Prophet: Volume II*. India: Idarah-I-Adabiyat-I Delli, 1979,135.

join Islam.⁹ Later, they became the commanders for Muslims army and rewarded with special title,¹⁰ where Khalid al-Walid was known as the 'sword of Allah' and 'Amr bin al-'As was recognized as the conqueror of Egypt during the period of Umar al-Khattab.¹¹

Events that led to 'open victory' of the Muslims and conquest of Makkah

Few events had occurred after the truce of al-Hudaybiyyah, which later on completed the meaning of the 'manifest victory' referred by the Qur'an in surah al-Fath verse 1-2. In one incident when the Prophet had reached Madinah from Makkah after the truce had been signed, a Muslim man from Makkah name Abu Nasir 'Utba bin Usayd had run away from Makkah to join the Prophet in Madinah. His turning away to Madinah was realized by the Makkan Quraysh, thus they sent a letter with two men from the tribe of 'Amr to take him back to Makkah.¹² As the Muslim were tied to the contents of the truce, the Prophet could not do anything except to return him back to Makkah and ask him to be patient with the situation. However, on his way back to Makkah, he had killed one of two men that guarded him and run away from them, while the other man had reported the incident to the Prophet in Madinah.¹³

Meanwhile, Abu Basir realized that he now could not go to Madinah as the Muslims could not accept him due to the truce and not to Makkah as the Makkan Quraysh might kill him for murdering their man. As a result, he fled to al-'Is, a place in the east coast which was the trade road of Makkan Quraysh to Syria and settled down there.¹⁴ Suprisingly, his action was followed by other Muslims who have been persecuted in Makkah but could not join the Prophet in Madinah. They went to unite with him, settled down there and sometimes made raids towards the Makkan Quraysh's caravan who had passed the route. Hence, the Makkan Quraysh felt threaten with the situation but could not take any action as that place was out of agreement signed by them and the Prophet. Finally, they had written a letter to the Prophet, asking him to call all these people to Madinah while promised they will take no more action towards any Muslims who wish to be with the Prophet in Madinah.¹⁵ In other words, the fourth clause of the truce was removed from the truce which was a great news for the Prophet and Muslims.

Another vital event that led to the termination of the truce and shortly the conquest of Makkah was the violation of the truce made by the Makkan Quraysh and their ally. Banu Bakr who had entered the treaty and allied towards Makkan Quraysh suddenly took advantage of the peaceful period to attack his long-standing enemy, Banu Khuza'ah who had allied to the Prophet

⁹ Adil Salahi, *Muhammad: Man and the Prophet*, 2002, 593.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p 593

¹¹ Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi. *Muhammad Rasulallah* (trans) Mohiuddin Ahamad. *The Life of Prophet Muhammad Nadvi*, 1979, 377.

¹² *Ibid*, p 269

¹³ Adil Salahi, *Muhammad: Man and the Prophet*, 2002, 525.

¹⁴ Muhammad Husayn Haykal. (trans) Ismail Ragi A. Al-Faquqi. *The Life of Muhammad*, Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1976, 357.

¹⁵ Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi. *Muhammad Rasulallah* (trans) Mohiuddin Ahamad (1979). *The Life of Prophet Muhammad*, 1979, 269.

and Muslims. They made a night attack towards Banu Khuza'ah in a place called al-Wafir,¹⁶ with support from the Makkan Quraysh who had supplied arms and men in this attack.

The incident was then reported to the Prophet PBUH by 'Amr ibn Salim al- Khuza'i, the man from Banu Khuza'ah and requested him to take action regarding the violation of Makkan Quraysh and their ally. Thus the Prophet assured him that action will be taken. A messenger then was sent by him to Makkah and demanded from the Makkan Quraysh to pay blood money on the loss number of Banu Khuza'ah's men. However, the demand was refused, hence the Prophet directed three kinds of condition which were,

- 1) to play blood money.
- 2) to break alliance with Banu Bakr and leave them alone for the Muslims to deal with them or
- 3) to declare the treaty of al-Hudaybiyah is now cancel.¹⁷

Nevertheless, the Makkan Quraysh had rejected the first and second condition offered by the Prophet, but happily to accept the third demand which to cancel the pact. For them, to pay blood money was a humiliate action, moreover to break the covenant with their ally which was more disgrace action to take. Therefore, the easiest way they thought was to cancel the treaty as they would not felt disgrace due to this action.

Hence, the truce of al-Hudaybiyah was withdrawn, but on the second thought the Makkan Quraysh realized their mistake and wanted to restore the treaty. They had acknowledged that Makkah soon will be conquered by the Muslim, therefore wanted to avoid it by restoring the truce. Thus, Abu Sufyan, the leader of the Makkan Quraysh was sent to Madinah to discuss with the Prophet, while the Prophet who already expected their immediate reaction did not respond to his request. Although Abu Sufyan pleaded from the other Companions as well, none of them were able to reply to his demand. Thus, he had returned to Makkah frustated with a failure mission.

On behalf of the Muslims, the Prophet knew that they no longer need the treaty anymore since the Muslims had achieved their aims underlined before. The Jews were able to be neutralized against the Makkan Quraysh, furthermore the Makkan Quraysh were not a threat to Madinah anymore. Thus, Makkah was now open for the Muslims to be taken over which was the aim of the Prophet since he had migrated to Madinah.

Consequently, nearly 10,000 Muslims had marched with the Prophet to conquer Makkah in the following year, which happened on Friday, 21st of Ramadan 8 AH/ 630 AC.¹⁸ It was the peak of the Muslims' victory and the 'open victory' of the truce of al-Hudaybiyah. Thus, during that time the Prophet had removed nearly 360 idols from Ka'bah and devoted the Ka'bah solely for the worship of Allah. Besides, he had announced the amnesty to whoever kept shut in their house or in the house of Abu Sufyan or in the Sacred Mosque of Makkah. Towards the Makkan

¹⁶ Adil Salahi, Muhammad: Man and the Prophet, 2002, 607.

¹⁷ Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi. Muhammad Rasulallah (trans) Mohiuddin Ahamad. The Life of Prophet Muhammad, 1979, 314.

¹⁸ Ibid, p 271.

Quraysh, he had forgiven them and recited the verse from surah Yusuf in accepting their mistakes and forgiveness, as mentioned in surah 12, verse 92, "His said: *This day let no reproach be (cast) on you: God will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!*".¹⁹ Later on, the verses of surah al-Nasr (Victory) were revealed,²⁰ concluding the meaning or the manifest or open victory referred by the Qur'an regarding the truce of al-Hudaybiyah.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, the events that took place after the truce of al-Hudaybiyah had completed the meaning of 'open victory' to the Muslims which is referred by the Qur'an in surah al-Fath. The conquest of Khaybar, preaching Islam through letters to the emperors and rulers, incident of Abu Basir and violation of treaty by Makkah Quraysh and their ally eventually indicated the victory of Islam, although Muslims could not interpret it as a triumph at the beginning. Hence the conquest of Makkah was the climax period for the Prophet and Muslims after facing with the tribulations, where the truth of Islam was now prevailed and perceived as a true religion for the whole community.

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¹⁹ Ibid, p 326.

²⁰ Ibid, pp 331-332.