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# The Life of the Prophet Muhammad in Terms of Battles and Expeditions

Gazve ve Seriyeler Aısından Hz. Peygamber'in Hayatı

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**Abstract**

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) set an example for Muslims in all aspects. He showed believers how the Qur'an should be understood in different areas of life. Undoubtedly wars, or more generally, the collective struggle of people, is a phenomenon that will continue until the end of the world. The Prophet, in his own words, was a prophet of war and mercy. Islam is a religion of peace, but allowed to fight when necessary, and the prophet Muhammad (pbuh), took part in some wars himself. Therefore, the rules he set about war or how he understands the verses of the Qur'an about war are of vital importance for Muslims. Claiming that the Prophet never fought is inconsistent with historical facts. However, his battles are not similar to the wars of the great warrior emperors. There is no example in history of such great success with so few wars and losses. For this reason, he is unique too in finding solutions without fighting. He is the owner of a great strategy, such as sowing peace into wars. This article throws a little light on how societies should defend themselves or how warring societies should reconcile.

As peoples who have seen devastating wars in the name of peace in the east and west in recent centuries, we need to retrospectively reanalyze Prophet's (pbuh) wars. Quantitative information about the number of soldiers, historical records of where and when his wars were made, events reported in hadiths and theoretical rules in the fiqh literature are available in all details. Without going into unnecessary details, we evaluated the objectives, reasons, strategies and tactics of his battles, the methods of motivating his soldiers and his believers, the rules he set during the wars, the way he behaved towards his enemies and the results of all these. We will try to understand whether wars may have a peace goal or whether moral and legal rules can restrain the conflicts.

**Keywords:** Islamic History, Military History, Prophet Muhammad, Ghazwa, Sariyya.

## Öz

Hız. Muhammed'in (sav) hayatı pek çok yönüyle Müslümanlar için örnektir. O, Kur'an-ı Kerim'in nasıl anlaşılması gerektiğini tüm detaylarıyla kendisini takip eden ashabına öğretmiştir. Kuşkusuz savaşlar ya da genel manada insanların topyekûn mücadele içinde olması dünyanın sonuna dek devam edecek bir olgudur. Hız. Peygamber (sav) kendi ifadesiyle hem bir rahmet hem de bir savaş peygamberidir. İslam, bir barış dini olmakla beraber gerektiğinde savaş yapmaya da izin vermiştir. Bu sebeple Hız. Muhammed (sav) de çeşitli savaşlarda bizatihi yer almıştır. Böylece Müslümanlar için hayati bir öneme sahip cihad olgusunun vahiyle birlikte nasıl algılanması gerektiğiyle ilgili kurallar sünnetle birlikte ortaya konmuştur. Peygamberin hiç savaşmadığı iddiası tarihi gerçeklerle uyuşmaz. Ancak onun savaşları, tarihin şahit olduğu büyük komutanların savaşlarına benzemez. Onun döneminde savaşlar sonuçlarının büyüklüğü ve zayıflığın azlığı; savaşsız çözümler bulmak bakımlarından tarihte eşsiz bir yere sahiptir. Savaşların içinde bile barış kapıları açan bir stratejist olan Hız. Muhammed'in hayatı, büyük bir örneklığe sahiptir. Bu makale, saldırı altındaki insanların kendilerini nasıl savundukları ve savaşan toplumların nasıl uzlaştıkları konusuna ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Asırlardır dünyanın doğusunda ve batısında barış adına yapılan yıkıcı savaşlara şahitlik edenler insanlar olarak Hız. Peygamber'in savaşlarını geriye dönük yenden incelememiz gerekmektedir. Asker sayıları, savaşlarının nerede ve ne zaman yapıldığına dair tarihi kayıtlar hakkında hadis ve fıkıh literatüründe detaylı bilgilere ulaşabilmekteyiz. Gereksiz ayrıntılara girmeden, Hız. Peygamber'in (sav) savaşlarını amaçları, nedenleri, strateji ve taktikleri, motive yöntemleri, savaş kuralları, düşmanlara karşı davranış şekilleri yönlerinden değerlendirdik ve çeşitli sonuçlara ulaştık. Savaşların bir barış amacı olup olmadığını; ahlaki ve hukuki kuralların çatışmaları sınırlamaya katkı sağlayıp sağlamadığını anlamaya çalıştık.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İslam Tarihi, Savaş Tarihi, Muhammed (sav), Gazve, Seriyeye.

## Introduction

There are several terms such as insurgency, counterinsurgency, asymmetric, and irregular warfare commonly used in the military historical literature to explain how small forces vanquished stronger ones.<sup>[1]</sup> On the other hand, powerful empires have large armies, and those irresistible armies often defeat weaker troops. In terms of tactics and operational techniques, we may have several interpretations and clarifications for the victories and defeats recorded some hundreds of years ago from today. For a historian, it is pretty easy to write causes and consequences for complex historical events. No historical event can be understood by simple deductions and reductions. No event in history can be known precisely, just as we do not see the present entirely and accurately. But the situation is a little unconventional when it comes to Muhammad (pbuh). The details of his life as a prophet are not just general ordinary historical records. Every single detail of his life was carefully observed during his period. For this reason, we have abundant and detailed information in the early sources. The general and academic interest in the Prophet's wars has continued to increase from the early narrations to current publications.

Legitimate wars are prohibited neither in Christianity and Judaism nor in Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. War is ancient and an unchangeable phenomenon like human nature; regardless of when, how and why, every war is an event worth taking a lesson from. The wars that Muhammad (pbuh) led are among the most noticeable, advanced, and tolerant of many wars of the past and present. He had fought the enemy three times or even twelve more times larger than his men, and he was practically always victorious.<sup>[2]</sup> In the period of Rashidun Caliphate (632-661), the conquests took place in line with his goals, teachings, and directions. So, there are traditional principles of warfare that distinguish Muslim commanders from Alexander the Great (d. 323 BC) or Genghis Khan (d. 1227 AD). However, there are differences between the concepts of jihad and war, both historically

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[1] Russ Rodgers, *The Generalship of Muhammad: Battles and Campaigns of the Prophet of Allah* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012).

[2] Muhammad Hamidullah, *The Battlefields Of The Prophet Muhammad* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1992). 2.

and conceptually. For example, historically, the spread of Islam along with jihad and the expansion of sovereignty areas by wars are not exactly alike. Jihad is not totally dependent on any personal charisma, army strength, deterrent rules, or great rewards. In addition, jihad is not a periodic event, it is actually a phenomenon.

The word jihad is derived from the Arabic root *jahd* جهد, which means to make an effort, to strive, to have a great zeal referring to all methods of struggle, including war. For example: "O Prophet! Struggle against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be firm with them. Hell will be their home. What an evil destination!" [3] "Those who were allowed to stay behind rejoiced at remaining behind and not accompanying the Messenger of Allah. They were averse to striving in the Way of Allah with their belongings and their lives and told others: "Do not go forth in this fierce heat." Tell them: "The Fire of Hell is far hotter!" Would that they understand!" [4] "Permission to fight back is hereby granted to those being fought, for they have been wronged. And Allah is truly most capable of helping them prevail." [5] "O Prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be harsh upon them. And their refuge is Hell, and wretched is the destination." [6]

Similarly, jihad, as used in the hadith literature, refers, above all, to war. However, it is also noteworthy that the word jihad is used when talking about shouting the truth to the cruel ruler [7], about the struggle of a young man who cannot join a battle because his parents are in need of care [8], and about the struggle of human beings against their own self-development. [9] However, these statements are only an emphasis made due to the importance of the subject. As can be seen in the phrase "war on drugs," the word jihad is used to mean "to make a great effort" in a figurative sense. Jihad, overall, refers to collective warfare. Indeed, the word jihad in numerous hadiths such as "when the girls, who had lost their fathers in the Battle of Uhud, are introduced as

[3] At-Tawbah, 9/73

[4] At-Tawbah, 9/81

[5] Al-Hajj, 22/39

[6] At-Tahrim, 66/9

[7] Sulayman al-Sijistani Abu Dawud, Sunan Abi Dawud (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Asriyyah). "Malahim", 17.; Abu 'Abdullah Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah (Beirut: Dār Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabi, 1951), "Fitān", 20.

[8] Muḥammad b. Isma'īl al-Bukhari, al-Jami' al-Sahih (Beirut: Dar Tawq al-Najat, 2001), "Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar", 138., "Adab", 3.; Abu al-Husain Ibn al-Hajjaj Muslim, al-Jami' al-Sahih (Cairo, 1956), Muslim, "al-Birr", 5.; Abu Dawud, "Jihad", 33. Abu Abdurrahman an-Nasai, Sunan Al-Nasai (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1981), "Jihad", 5.; Muhammad bin Isa al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-Tirmidhi (Cairo: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1933), "Jihad", 2.

[9] Al-Tirmidhi, "Fedailu'l-Jihad", 2., Abu Dawud, "Jihad", 16.

‘their father died in Uhud while fighting by your side’<sup>[10]</sup>; “Umm Salama’s reproach to the Prophet (pbuh), saying ‘men go to jihad, why do not women?’<sup>[11]</sup> “A person who wishes to go to jihad in the way of Allah will receive rewards of a martyr no matter whether he is martyred or dies later”<sup>[12]</sup> mainly refer to fighting in battles.

The fact that it derives from the root of “vigorous effort” indicates the richness of the Arabic language. The term “war campaign” in English, albeit with minor differences in meaning, may be used to refer to this struggle undertaken collectively by the military, politics, media, industry, and public opinion, which can be easily observed in all societies, although their principles, methods, and goals may vary.<sup>[13]</sup> Other words such as “war,” “guerre,” or “krieg,” which are derived from Latin “werra” and Frankish “guerra” and Germanic “krigaz,” have meanings such as causing disturbance, rioting, and disorder which are not the exact equivalent of the word “jihad”.

The Arabic word “qital,” which is a part of jihads, derives from the word *قتل*, meaning to kill, and is rarely used in the main sources.<sup>[14]</sup> Qital takes place when two groups confront each other. It does not have to be aimed at a goal or a broader plan. Similarly, words such as *ba’ath* (sending), *nuzul* (taking position), *mubaraza* (duel) are all parts of jihads besides the actions in many areas such as diplomacy, intelligence, economy, bureaucracy, education, public relations, etc.

There are two special terms used for the wars or confrontations that took place in the era of the Prophet (pbuh). The first is *ghazwa* (pl. *ghazawat*). This term is used particularly for the wars involving the Prophet (pbuh) himself against the infidels.<sup>[15]</sup> The other term, *sariyya*, is the expedition sent by order of the Prophet (pbuh) but without the Prophet (pbuh). *Ghazwas* and *sariyyas* occupy a very central position for Muslims to understand the detailed dimensions and legal orders of the jihad. For this reason, many works and narrations about his wars have reached today.

The writings about Muhammad’s (pbuh) wars consist of two parts. The first is the early sources, and the second is the late works made through sources.

[10] Abu Dawud, “Faraid”, 4., Al-Tirmidhi, “Faraid”,3.

[11] Al-Tirmidhi, “Tafsir”, 5.

[12] Al-Tirmidhi, “Fadail al-Jihad” 21, Abu Dawud, “Jihad”, 42., Al-Nasai, “Jihad”,25.

[13] “War alone presents man with the opportunity of employing all his faculties, putting everything at risk, and testing his ultimate worth against an opponent as strong as himself.” Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York : Toronto : New York: Free Press, 1991). 118.

[14] Elşad Mahmudov, *Sebepleri ve Sonuçları Açısından Hz. Peygamberin Savaşları* (Istanbul: İSAM, 2010). 39.

[15] T. M. Johnstone, “*Ghazw*”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition (Brill, 24 Nisan 2012).

Our primary sources are the Qur'an<sup>[16]</sup>, hadiths<sup>[17]</sup>, siyar-maghazi-biography books<sup>[18]</sup>, and classical history books written about the history of Islam in the first period.<sup>[19]</sup> Secondary sources are also important for us in that they shed light on primary sources and establish various connections with the present. In this context, several studies were conducted in the 20th century. The most famous researcher who independently brought up the subject of the Prophet's wars was Muhammad Hamidullah. His book "The Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad" was translated into many languages and shed light on subsequent studies and reminded Muslim researchers that the life of the Prophet should also be considered in terms of military history. Russ Rodgers<sup>[20]</sup> as a command historian at U.S. Army is interested in wars that took place in the 7th century because of his interest in successful asymmetrical wars while Marsden Jones<sup>[21]</sup> as the founder of the Center for Arabic Studies at the American University in Cairo dealt with the dates of the wars. Mahmudov's PhD study<sup>[22]</sup> is one of the most comprehensive studies on this subject. He has facts, figures and good analysis on the causes and consequences of wars. Another scholar who studies the history of Islam in terms of military organization is Mustafa Zeki Terzi<sup>[23]</sup>. He has produced important works that examine not only the wars of the Prophet but also the military establishments of the Rashid Caliphs, Umayyads and Abbasids.

The Prophet not only fought personally but also sent small troops or large armies to many regions. City defence, city siege and field battles took place in his life. He did not go to war unless he had to. He was not defeated in any of the wars he found himself in. Muslims suffered minimal losses in the conflicts that took place throughout Prophet's (pbuh) life. He did not kill the enemy soldiers

[16] Surah Ali 'Imran, Al-Anfal, Al-Ahzab

[17] Hadith scholars like Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhi etc. reported wars and expeditions of the Prophet (pbuh) in dedicated chapters named Jihad, Maghazi, Kharaj and Siyar. To give an idea, in maghazi chapter of al-Bukhari there are 464 hadiths. Abu Dawud reports over 266 hadiths and Al-Tirmidhi reports over 100 hadiths directly on the subject. Also, indirectly, there are several narrations for the Prophet's wars in other chapters as a collateral subject.

[18] Kitab al-Maghazi by Al-Waqidi, Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah by Ibn Hisham, Tabaqat by Ibn Sa'd. might be mentioned in these works.

[19] e.g., Tarikh (History) by Khalifah ibn Khayyat, Tarikh al- Ya'qubi by Ya'qubi, Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk (History of the Prophets and Kings) by Al-Tabari.

[20] Rodgers, Russ. The Generalship of Muhammad: Battles and Campaigns of the Prophet of Allah. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012.

[21] John Marsden Beaumont Jones, "The Chronology of the Maghāzī—A Textual Survey", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 19/2 (1957), 245-280.

[22] Elşad Mahmudov, "Sebeb ve Sonuçları Bağlamında Hz. Peygamber'in Savaşları (Gazve ve Seriyeleri) Üzerine Bazı Notlar ve İstatistikler", Bakü Devlet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesinin İlmî Mecmuası II/2 (2005), 55-96.

[23] Mustafa Zeki Terzi, Hz. Peygamber ve Hulefâ-yi Râşidîn Döneminde Askeri Teşkilat (Istanbul: Siyer Yayınları, 2017).

even if he had the opportunity or strong reasons to do so. He continued his success on the battlefields in the diplomatic and social fields as well. He showed that wars are not fought only with swords. We will now take a closer look at his battles and expeditions by revisiting the facts, figures, causes, consequences, strategies, tactics, weapons, equipment, orders, directives, motives, and goals.

### A. Facts, Figures, Causes and Consequences

Muhammad (pbuh) stayed in Mecca for 13 years since his prophethood. During this time, he and his followers were subjected to various pressures and tortures. Despite all this, they did not respond to the attackers due to the verses about defending against oppressors had not been revealed yet. In the second and last period of his prophetic life, after migration to Madina, Muhammad (pbuh) participated in more than 20 wars<sup>[24]</sup> and against his opponents and dispatched 35-70 troops (sariyya) for several reasons.<sup>[25]</sup> The number of soldiers in the early sariyyas was around 30-40 men, and in the first ghazwas, it was around 200-300 men. Few military campaigns were organized against the Jews in Medina, Khaybar and Wadi al-Qura, and against the Christians in Mutah, Tabuk and Dumat al-Jandal. All other wars were against pagan Arabs. In only nine of Muhammad's (pbuh) military activities shed blood. These are Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Qurayza, Banu Mustaliq, Khaybar, Mecca, Hunayn and Taif.<sup>[26]</sup> In his direct battles, about 140 Muslims were martyred, and about 335 men from the enemy were killed. During his life, approximately 300 Muslims and 800 enemies died in total.<sup>[27]</sup>

Soldiers in the first Islamic armies consisted of infantry, archers, and cavalry. The infantries were called mushat or rajjalah, the archers were called rumat, and the cavalrymen were called fursan. Apart from these, there were also medics and intelligence agents. The Muslims did not need much cavalry for the wars in Arabia. However, they began to increase their horse numbers in preparation for encounters with the Romans and Persians outside Arabia. In the Tabuk campaign, the Muslims reached a cavalry unit of 10,000 people.<sup>[28]</sup>

Muhammad (pbuh) himself spent about a year and a half in total, including travelling to the wars he participated in. In the second year of Hijra, Muslims were allowed to fight back. The Prophet died in the eleventh year of Hijra. This period of 9 years has been chiefly spent with peace or peace initiatives. His

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[24] Hamidullah, 3.

[25] Abu Muhammad Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah* (Cairo: Maktabat wa Matbaat Mustafa al-Babi, 1955). 2/209. Ali ibn Husain Al-Mas'udi, *Kitab al-Tanbih wa al-Ishraf* (Cairo: Dar al-Sawi). 1/242.

[26] Ibn Hisham, 2/609.

[27] Mahmudov, 72-73.

[28] Terzi, 73.



furthest war journey was for Tabuk, which is about 700 km from Medina. One of his most difficult journeys was for Dhat al-Riqa towards the Najd desert. During this expedition, the feet of the Muslims were cracked due to walking for a long time, and their nails began to fall. The closest military operation was the siege on Jewish communities in Medina.

Fifteen battles and fifty expeditions were planned and implemented to respond to the enemy. These wars took place for standing against those who attacked directly, blocking the tribes that were preparing to attack, pursuing the enemies, or deterring the tribes that were helping the enemies. In addition, threatening the border security of Medina or using the trade routes illegally without making an agreement with Medina were also considered as grounds for disagreement. When we look at other military mobilizations, what we see is more of the troops sent after the conquests to break idols or fight against false prophets. Whether or not the clashes took place, 28 of the 29 battles were successful. In the Battle of Uhud, however, there was no gaining party.

Hamza, Ali, Abu Bakr, Ubaydah ibn al-Harith, Abdullah ibn Jahsh, Abdurrahman ibn Awf, Khalid ibn al-Walid, Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, Zayd ibn Harithah, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, Abdullah ibn Rawaha and Usama ibn Zayd are among the commanders appointed by the Prophet (pbuh). Also, Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, Muhammad ibn Maslama, Zubair ibn al-Awwam, Abbad b. Bishr and Mughira ibn Shu'ba can be counted among the close guards of the Prophet (pbuh).<sup>[29]</sup>

A significant number of Muslim women, such as Nusaybah bint Al-Harith, Umm Sulaym, Umm Waraqa, participated in wars.<sup>[30]</sup> In fact, the Prophet's daughter Fatima and some of her wives like Aisha were present in the wars. Likewise, some names, such as her aunt Safiya or Ummu Umara, fought with their swords. Women, in general, were found in the fronts as auxiliary forces and dealt with treating the wounded. No Muslim women died in wars.<sup>[31]</sup> The number of women known to have participated in wars is around 10. However, it is not difficult to guess that the unrecorded numbers are higher. In general, Muhammad (pbuh) advised women not to participate in the war while answering Aisha's request to join the war, "your jihad is a pilgrimage".<sup>[32]</sup>

The ultimate goal of Islam is not war but peace. Ethics and rules are required for even wars in order not to fight for no reason. Also, unnecessary blood should not be spilt, and civilians and even soldiers should not be persecuted during

[29] al-Jawziyya Ibn Qayyim, *Zad al-Ma'ad* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risalah, 1994). 1/123.

[30] Muslim, "Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar", 142, Ibn Majah, "Jihad", 37.

[31] Abdurrazzaq al-San'ani, *Musannaf* (India: Al-Majlis al-Ilmi, 1982). 5/298. Al-Bukhari, "Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar", 67. Muslim, "Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar", 142. Ibn Majah, "Jihad", 37.

[32] Al-Bukhari, "Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar", 62

wars. Islam guarantees human rights with specific rules and the morality of war. The rules of war, like the rules of prayer or ablution, were laid out in detail throughout the life of the Prophet (pbuh).

Religions, similar to ideas, wants to spread. However, Islam does not hesitate to make peace with those who do not show hostility towards Islam. Muslims do not have the belief and tradition of total hatred towards a society in the form of an obsession like anti-Semitism. In Islam, wars are not declared for wealth or the unbridled ambitions of a charismatic leader. Wars must have real and lofty causes. There are general reasons and actual reasons for war in Islam. The general war reason of Islam is to pave the way for this religion against those who want to prevent the free movement of Islam and to prevent those who put obstacles between peoples and Islam. Another common cause of war is self-defence. The state has the right and duty to protect its citizens. For this reason, if Muslims were under attack, then, of course, the state had to have a response. This is a natural state reaction seen throughout history. Similarly, the people willingly oppose an attack against the state or the system of the state or the borders of the state. As in the Battle of the Khandaq, individuals take action and protect the state's borders. Sometimes the protection of borders can start a little further away. As in the military campaign against the people of Ghatafan, an operation can be organized in a preventive and deterrent way. All of these are for the purpose of protecting individuals, society and the state, and this trio is interconnected. To put it more precisely, the causes of the wars that took place during the reign of Muhammad (pbuh) were as follows.

1. Protecting people's lives.
2. Protecting people's estates and honours.
3. Protecting assured allies.
4. Stopping border violations of enemies, even if it's a trade caravan.
5. Punishing crimes against the state, such as killing ambassadors or delegations.

Of course, every state can put forward valid and reasonable reasons when the war is required. For this reason, it is necessary to look at the objectives of the wars as well, rather than the causes of the wars. When we read the Quran and the hadiths along with the wars of Muhammad (pbuh), we deduce that the following goals were pursued.

1. Spreading Islam<sup>[33]</sup>
2. Removing the barriers preventing Islam from reaching the people

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[33] "I have been commanded to fight against people till they testify that there is no god but Allah, that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and they establish prayer, and pay Zakat and if they do it, their blood and property are guaranteed protection on my behalf except when justified by law, and their affairs rest with Allah." Muslim, "al-Iman", 8.

3. Liberating oppressed nations<sup>[34]</sup>
4. Convincing enemies not to attack<sup>[35]</sup>
5. Ensuring safety and order<sup>[36]</sup>

While the wars were taking place, some benefits were also obtained for the state and its people. It would not be right to ignore such natural acquisitions. Expressing them as they are will also prevent unnecessary speculation with exaggeration. The following benefits were obtained in the wars that took place in the time of the Prophet (pbuh).

1. Meeting new people and inviting them to Islam.
2. Exploring new places, gathering news and intelligence.
3. Generating income and reducing the enemy's revenues.
4. Showing strength to the enemy and motivating the believers.
5. Uniting and keeping people together around a common goal.

## B. Strategies, Tactics, Weapons and Equipment

If we consider Muhammad's (pbuh) wars in the context of strategy, operation, and tactics, we can say that he was a superior commander. The strategy of the Muslims was to spread Islam. All operations and tactics are planned to serve this overall strategy. Operations were open to consultation. The opinions of only those with knowledge and experience were taken, not everyone's. Also, sometimes the time and direction of the operation were hidden. For example, when they set out for the conquest of Mecca, the majority of the army did not know where they were going. Tactics were also flexible. Commanders were variable, and a different commander gained experience in each battle. In case the commander was killed, the second and third commanders were also predetermined. Everyone was taking part in all processes in a short period of time and undergoing rapid training.

Prophet's wars were on land, not at sea. For this reason, from a tactical point of view, troop movements became the main issue. Military mobilizations required detailed planning. Because there was always the possibility of facing the enemy any minute. The army dispatch plan was made as follows: Preplanning, map

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[34] "And fight them on until there is no more Tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease, Let there be no hostility except to those who practise oppression." al-Baqara 2/193.

[35] Prepare against them what you 'believers' can of 'military' power and cavalry to deter Allah's enemies and your enemies as well as other enemies unknown to you but known to Allah. Whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be paid to you in full and you will not be wronged. al-Anfal, 8/60.

[36] Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued. at-Tawbah, 9/29.

exploration, route and checkpoints selection, marching speed determination, stop-overs regulation and, the establishment of intelligence flow during the journey.<sup>[37]</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) preferred to fight after sunrise in the morning. In the heat of the afternoon or in case of worsening weather conditions, he postponed the hot clashes.<sup>[38]</sup> He controlled the army one by one, put them in line, and ensured that they were lined up in an orderly manner.<sup>[39]</sup> Before the war started, he would talk to his soldiers and pray to Allah abundantly after the preparations were completed. When the war started, he would fight by taking a position close to the enemy.<sup>[40]</sup> In the war, he allowed the Muslims to swagger on the enemy. In non-war times, it was forbidden because it was arrogance. As a tactic in war, he also allowed deceiving the enemy, saying “war is deception”.<sup>[41]</sup>

Arabs were able to find out who went where and when, from footprints, camel dung, date seeds or leftovers.<sup>[42]</sup> During the Battle of the Khandaq, he told his men who would bring news from Bani Qurayza, “Give your news in a coded language, do not put fear in the hearts of the people by saying it openly.”<sup>[43]</sup> In addition, Muslims used a different motto in each war. For example, in the Battle of Badr, they used the motto “Ahad Ahad (one, one)” to emphasize monotheism against the polytheistic enemy. This usage was for motivation rather than getting to know each other. Because the enemy Arabs also knew this usage style. It was also used in wars in pre-Islamic times and was not difficult to decipher the motto of the Muslims. For this reason, we can say that these passwords are mostly used to establish nervousness and control each other. Aws and Khazraj from Ansar also used different mottos. <sup>[44]</sup> They used to utter takbir (Allahu akbar) when attacking the enemy or at the moment of victory. <sup>[45]</sup>

The tactic of deceiving the enemy about the size of the army was also used in the wars of the Prophet (pbuh). The night after the Battle of Uhud and the nights just before the conquest of Mecca, they lit hundreds of campfires, and in both cases, Meccans had an incorrect estimate of the number of Muslims.<sup>[46]</sup> The Meccans thought that reinforcements had arrived to help the Muslims and decided to return to Mecca instead of attacking Medina.

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[37] Terzi, 101.

[38] Al-Bukhari, “Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar”, 112.

[39] Al-Bukhari, “Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar”, 97.

[40] Muslim, “Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar”, 28.

[41] Al-Bukhari, “Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar”, 157.

[42] Al-Bukhari, “al-Maghazi”, 40.

[43] Al-Waqidi, 2/459.

[44] Al-Waqidi, 1/71.

[45] Al-Bukhari, “Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar”, 130.

[46] Al-Waqidi, 1/338.

The Prophet used offensive weapons and equipment such as swords, daggers, spears, arrows, and catapults in his wars. They donned armour such as shield, armour, helmet, tanner.<sup>[47]</sup> As for the personal belongings he used in battles, he had nine known swords, seven armours and six bows. He liked to name his items. The names of his swords were Ma'sur, Adb, Zulfiqar, Qali, Battar, Khatf, Rasob, Mehzam, Qadib. The names of his armour were Dhat al-Fudul, Dhat al-Wishah, Dhat al-Hawashi, Sadiyyah, Fidida, Batra and Hirneq. His bows were Zawra, Rawha, Bayda, Ketoom and Sadad.<sup>[48]</sup> He wanted Muslims to fight with the weapons they were accustomed to. Therefore, he recommended that Persian bows not be used.<sup>[49]</sup>

Banners and flags were waved in wars. The Commander-in-Chief was carrying the banner. In addition, unit commanders have their own flags. The Prophet's banner was white, and his flag was black. He had the word "Tawhid" written on them. While Ansar used green and red flags, Muhajir preferred black and white. The unfurling of the flags meant war. It was also useful to see the location of the divisions.<sup>[50]</sup> Muslims would also have personal turbans or signs they wore on their helmets. For example, Hamza wore a feather from an ostrich or eagle's wing. The turban tail of Ali was white, Zubayr's black, Abu Dujana's red, and Hubab bin Mundhir's was green.<sup>[51]</sup> Armies travelled on foot or on horses and camels. Heavy items such as tents, tanners and rams could be carried on camels.<sup>[52]</sup> The alternative to camels was ox carts. However, this was a technique mostly used by the Romans. Using camels was the only way to make a solid way through the desert, even in the African deserts and Australia, until the emergence of modern war vehicles.<sup>[53]</sup>

### C. Orders, Directives, Motives and Goals

Analysis of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as a military commander and understanding his battles by putting the modern conceptual frames aside would be a good starting point to see him from the other way around. He was preaching the religion in wars rather than giving tactics. He was trying to teach the morals of war, knowing that wars would last until the end of the world. Rather than romantically rejecting war, he accepted this reality and

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[47] Terzi, 221-239.

[48] Ibn Qayyim, 1/126.

[49] Ibn Majah, "Jihad", 18.

[50] Al-Waqidi, 2/804; Hamidullah, 35.

[51] Al-Waqidi, 1/76, 259.

[52] Terzi, 215.

[53] Philip G. Jones - Anna Kenny, *Australia's Muslim cameleers: pioneers of the inland, 1860s-1930s* (Kent Town, S. Aust: Wakefield Press, 2010).

shed light on sustainable peace by proposing to limit and frame wars. His advice to Muslims regarding the war is summarized as follows.

1. Fight in the name of Allah and for the sake of Allah.
2. Do not betray each other, do not be unfair to others.
3. Do not touch women, children, elders, clergies, mentally ill persons, and other non-military civilians.<sup>[54]</sup>
4. When you meet the enemy, first invite them to Islam.
5. Do not act with revenge. Treat the dead bodies of your enemies well.<sup>[55]</sup>

According to Islamic law, it is not right to kill not only unarmed civilians but also servants, administrators, bureaucrats, and kings. Monks, priests, farmers are also considered non-combat civilians.<sup>[56]</sup> It is also forbidden to cut down trees, demolish buildings and kill animals.<sup>[57]</sup> A person who gives a peaceful salute cannot be treated with hostility. The call to prayer heard from a city besieged for conquest meant that any war plan had to be cancelled. The prisoners should be treated well. The Prophet (pbuh) divided the captives among the Muslims, and each person would have taken the responsibility of meeting the needs of the captive, such as giving food to them, dressing them etc. The captives were released, sometimes free of charge, sometimes for ransom. He did not take anyone prisoner while entering Mecca and declared a general amnesty.<sup>[58]</sup> Considering the fact that the Prophet (pbuh) also buried the dead and treated the wounded,<sup>[59]</sup> we can understand that the moral principles of Islam were shown to the enemy during wars. Because at war, people's perceptions are at a high level. They remember in detail the events that took place during the crisis. Because Muslims behaved respectfully towards their enemies, people who once fought against Muslims continued to fight in the name of Islam after they became Muslims and did not hold grudges because of what happened in the past.

After the victory is achieved, the loot is collected. First of all, those who show benefits during the war and deserve it or those who are new to Islam are given the share determined by the commander. One-fifth of the remainder is reserved for government spending. Women, children, and the elderly who are not in the war are given a share of this part. The remaining booty was distributed among the Muslim soldiers, considering the costs of horse care, a little more, and a little less for the infantry, but an equal share for everyone.<sup>[60]</sup>

[54] Muslim, "Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar", 8, 48.

[55] Al-Tirmidhi, "Siyar", 48, Abu Dawud, "Jihad", 90.

[56] Abul Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad Mawardi, *Al Ahkam Al-Sultaniyyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, 1994). 94.,212.

[57] Abdurrazzaq, 5/198.

[58] Al-Waqidi, 2/835.

[59] Muslim, "Jannah", 17.

[60] Al-Bukhari, "Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar", Muslim, *Al-Jihad wa al-Siyar*", 17.

Even when the Prophet had no power, and the Muslims looked like a handful of adventurers from the outside, they were talking about big goals and never losing their motivation. What motivated Muslims was the Hereafter rather than this world. Because human beings want to be happy, but more than that, they want happiness to be permanent. In the Qur'an, the devil deceived Adam, who was already in heaven, with the promise of eternity.<sup>[61]</sup> The biggest motivation for Muslims was that they were fighting for a goal in the name of Islam, hoping the eternal happiness.

In the most challenging times, the Prophet was giving his friends the good news that the most difficult goals would be achieved. Those who heard the prophecies did not laugh, saying that it was just a dream or keeping quiet as not to offend him. On the contrary, they followed these glad tidings and reminded each other of the relevant hadiths when they came true. For example, while emigrating from Mecca to Medina, with a bounty placed on their heads, he told Suraqa b. Malik that "I see you wearing Kisra's bracelet, and I feel as if I was with you at the time."<sup>[62]</sup> In the Battle of Khandaq, at a time when all the Arab tribes came to besiege Medina while digging a trench, he was breaking a hard rock with his own hands, giving the news of the conquest of Yemen, Rome and Iran in the near future.<sup>[63]</sup>

When we look at the Prophet's rules, practices, goals and motivations in general, we see harmony. Because most of the time, leaders compromise their principles to achieve big goals. Sometimes they do injustice to the people with whom they have achieved success together and destroy the motivation of the soldiers. The rules laid down by the Prophet were both just, merciful, and sensitive enough to not leave a grudge even after the war. None of his commanders rebelled in his life. After he died, the people he educated did not change the rules of war he set.

## Conclusions

The first meaning of the concept of jihad is a collective struggle. The Prophet (pbuh) stated that he was the Prophet of both mercy and war. The main goal of Muslims is to spread Islam, and war is the last resort. Muslims have not had a strategy to impose war as an art and to impose their domination on other societies, to carry out exemplary massacres to intimidate the next society, and to leave the enemy helpless by deliberately touching civilians. For this reason, they did not fight those who did not attack Muslims, and they did not

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[61] But Satan whispered evil to him: he said, "O Adam! shall I lead thee to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?" Taha, 20/120.

[62] Tahir Al-Maqdisi, *Kitab al-bad' wa-l-ta'rikh* (Port Said: Maktabat al-Siqafah al-Diniyyah). 5/41.

[63] Al-Waqidi, 2/450.

take revenge on those who gave up fighting. It is evident that early Muslims learned from the Prophet (pbuh) how to understand war and peace.

The war came to the fore in Medina. There Muslims became citizens of a city-state where they were independent. Thereby, the previous forms of relations with the Meccans of the same status have changed. This new situation brought many things with it. The individual, social and institutional situations of Muslims are regulated. Muslims have entered the phase of establishing new economic, social, political, and military institutions and using them effectively. For example, Muslims built a mosque in the heart of the city, established their own marketplaces, made a deal with the Jews, and started to send intelligence officers and military units out of Medina. The Meccans, who did not understand the new situation, continued border harassment, unauthorized commercial crossings, and various attacks. As a part of this new status, a conflict took place in Batn al-Nakhla and then Mecca and Medina came face to face with the Battle of Badr. These are more than a simple and accidental war; it is a war driven by the Meccans' rejection of the sovereignty of Medina, the actions of sending their caravans to Damascus by violating the lands dominated by the Muslims without the need to make an agreement, and not recognizing them as a challenge and interlocutor. Therefore, the permission verses for war are related to the new situation of the Muslims in Medina. Before that, The Prophet always advised patience while Muslims were persecuted in Mecca.

The wars of the Prophet are divided into three groups. The first is the special operations units, where the commander and the soldiers are determined one by one. Secondly, non-compulsory, voluntary wars are declared by a general invitation. The third is the wars in which all Muslims are expected to participate in mobilization. He commanded some of these wars by participating directly (ghazwa); in others, he only sent troops but did not participate directly (sariyya). In all these wars, about a thousand people from all sides lost their lives. As a result, Arabia was united for the first time in its history. It is difficult to find an example of such bloodless and significant changes in history. Wars took place in the last nine years of his life, and he fought for a total of about one and a half years. His life has generally been spent with peace and peace initiatives. Additionally, during his wars, the laws and morals of war were revealed in detail, and an extensive literature has emerged on the rules to be followed in wars. Because of his wise compassion, his enemies joined him instead of continuing to be hostile to him.

His basic strategy was to spread Islam with the least harm. The Arabs were not accustomed to the tactics he used. He was working with different commanders, using different tactics, and acting out of the ordinary. He kept the motivation of the army at a high level. They were not discouraged when



they were defeated or made decisions out of their expectations. Weapons of war, on the other hand, were traditional, familiar to the warriors, and easy to supply. However, he did not hesitate to use unusual war tools such as catapults. Muslim warriors were limited to harsh rules of war rather than tactics and weapons. They were forbidden to kill women, children, the elderly, farmers, clergy, and animals. They could not cut down trees and they could not wash houses. Due to the practical application of many such rules, Muslims did not face the enemies' quest for revenge after the victories. These detailed moral warfare orders were the main reason why wars had lasting results. Consequently, Muhammad (pbuh) and his wars left a legacy of a balanced morality policy that offers absolute peace by accepting human realities, not rhetoric that set the world on fire with the rhetoric of peace talks.

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