

Mount Uhud and site of battle



This is a section of Mount Uhud, in front of which the second battle in Islam (the Battle of Uhud) took place in 3 AH. Of this mountain the Prophet (ﷺ) declared, “This mountain loves us and we love it.” [Muslim]

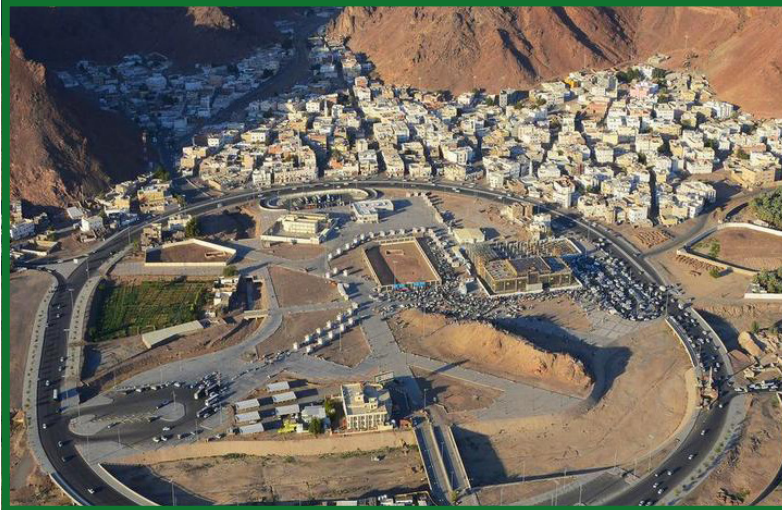
- ❖ After the humiliating defeat in the Battle of Badr a year earlier, the Quraysh of Makkah made preparations to muster a great army to fight the Muslims again and take revenge. They assembled an army of 3000 soldiers with 300 camels, 200 horses and 700 coats of mail. Wives and daughters of slain chiefs in Badr accompanied the army to see with their own eyes the spectacle of the killers being killed. Hind, the daughter of Utbah was the leader of the womens section and her husband Abu Sufyan was the commander-in-chief of the Makkan army. Both were not Muslims at the time but bitter enemies of Islam. The left and right flanks were commanded by Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl and Khalid bin Waleed respectively. Amr ibn al-As was named the commander of cavalry and his task was to co-ordinate attack between the cavalry wings. (All three subsequently became Muslims and become great generals of Islam).
- ❖ The Prophet (ﷺ) left Madinah for the valley of Mount Uhud with a Muslim army of only 700 and drew up his troops for battle. Zubair bin al-Awwam (رضي الله عنه) was the commander of the right wing and Mundhir bin Amr (رضي الله عنه) was given the left wing of the army. Hamza (رضي الله عنه), the uncle of the Prophet (ﷺ) was made the advance guard, Mus'ab bin Umair (رضي الله عنه) was chosen as the standard-bearer of Islam and Abu Dujanah (رضي الله عنه) was fortunate enough to receive the Prophet's sword (which was known as Zulfikar).
- ❖ Before the battle, the Prophet (ﷺ) had put 50 archers under Abdullah bin Jubair (رضي الله عنه) at a mountainside and ordered them strictly to stay there until further orders, whatever may be the condition. They were to obstruct the enemy if they attacked the Muslims from the rear.
- ❖ The two armies set upon each other and a fierce battle ensued. The Muslim soldiers concentrated their attack on the eleven standard bearers of the pagans until they were all wiped out. As the enemy standards sank to the ground, the Muslim soldiers hurled themselves against the enemy. Abu Dujanah (رضي الله عنه) and Hamza (رضي الله عنه), fought with great fearlessness, and their heroic feats on the battlefield were to become legendary in Muslim military history.
- ❖ Tragically, Hamza (رضي الله عنه), the Lion of Allah, was martyred in the same battle he had dominated. He was killed by the javelin of Wahshi bin Harb, an Abyssinian slave, who with that successful throw earned his freedom from his master, Jubayr bin Mutim.
- ❖ Despite the loss of Hamza (رضي الله عنه), the Muslims managed to overcome the unbelievers who, faced with yet another defeat, began to flee. The pagan women also scattered as some of the Muslim soldiers gave chase.
- ❖ It was at this point of perceived victory that events began unravelling. The archers who had been entrusted with the safety of their brothers in faith disobeyed the Prophet's clear orders and deserted their stations, thinking that the battle was over. Forty of the rearguards descended the mountain and left the Muslims vulnerable to a counter attack by the enemy.

- ❖ Khalid bin Waleed saw the sudden vacuum created by the disappearance of the rearguard and his cavalymen attacked the Muslims from behind, killing many in the process. When the Muslims saw themselves surrounded, they were overtaken by panic and disorder and failed to map out a cohesive plan.
- ❖ The enemy fought their way close to the Prophet (ﷺ) who was hit with a rock and fell on his side. One of his front teeth was chipped, his lower lip was cut, and his helmet was damaged. As an enemy soldier thrust his sword at the Prophet (ﷺ), he caught his bone below the eye, and two rings from the Prophet's helmet pierced his face. The blood ran down his face and he wiped it away, saying, "How can a people prosper who have stained their Prophet's face with blood while he summoned them to their Lord!".
- ❖ Mus'ab bin Umair (رضي الله عنه), was targeted by the enemy as he was the Muslims standard-bearer and he was killed. Since Mus'ab (رضي الله عنه) resembled the Prophet (ﷺ) to a great extent, his killer, Abdullah bin Qam'a, thought he had slain the Prophet (ﷺ) and jubilantly shouted out that he had killed Muhammad.
- ❖ Rumours of the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) filtered through the Muslims, plummeting their morale. Grief stricken and lost, some of them simply abandoned the field, while others were infused with resolve and rallied saying, "Come, let us die for what the Prophet (ﷺ) gave his life."
- ❖ The crisis receded only when Ka'b bin Malik (رضي الله عنه) caught a glimpse of the Prophet (ﷺ), making his way to join the besieged Muslims. K'ab recognised the Prophet's eyes although his face was covered with the helmet. He cried loudly, "O Muslims, rejoice! Here is the Prophet!".
- ❖ Ka'b's words galvanised the remaining Muslims, and they streamed to the Prophet's side. Within a short time thirty Companions assembled around him. The Prophet (ﷺ) decided against further combat, wisely choosing to retreat. He made his way through the rows and successfully led his troops towards the mountain pass.
- ❖ By retreating, the Prophet (ﷺ) managed to save his army from further losses; losses that had come about from simple disobedience of his orders. Disobedience had changed the Muslim victory into catastrophe, but with Allah's help the Muslims were pulled back from the edge of disaster.

Aerial view showing the whole of Mount Uhud behind Masjid-e-Nabwi:



Jabal Rumah



This small mountain in front of Mount Uhud is where the Prophet (ﷺ) had positioned archers during the Battle of Uhud with the strict instructions not to move. It was the desertion of their posts by many of the archers on thinking the battle was over that led to a reversal of fortune for the Muslims in the war.

- ❖ The Prophet (ﷺ) appointed 50 archers under the command of Abdullah bin Jubair (رضي الله عنه) and said to him, “Drive off the horses from us, lest we should be attacked from the rear. Whether we win or lose the battle stand steadily at your position. See that we are not attacked from your side.”
- ❖ Seeing that the battle was going in the favour of the Muslims and the polytheists were retreating created a zest and fervour among the Muslim archers hearts to chase the escaping enemy and to collect the booty left behind. Many began to leave their position. Abdullah bin Jubair (رضي الله عنه) tried his utmost to check them by reminding them of the Prophet’s command and solicited them to stay on, but no more than ten persons would listen to him, arguing that the orders given by the Prophet (ﷺ) were only for the duration of the actual fight.
- ❖ The enemy cavalry then noticed the unguarded pass in the rear, made a flank movement, forced a passage through it, and fell right on the rear of the Muslims, who were pre-occupied with the booty. Abdullah bin Jubair (رضي الله عنه) was martyred on the spot. This sudden attack by the polytheists created a temporary confusion in the Muslim ranks and they stopped chasing the Makkan army. The chaotic condition of the Muslim ranks emboldened Ikramah bin Abi Jahl and Abu Sufyan to stop fleeing and they gathered their soldiers together to launch another attack on the Muslims while they were in the state of turmoil. This sudden onslaught only added to the trouble and losses in the Muslim ranks.
- ❖ It was in this state of affairs that Anas bin Nadhr (رضي الله عنه) saw Sa’ad bin Ma’az (رضي الله عنه) passing in front of him. He shouted to him: “O Sa’ad! Where are you going? By Allah! I smell the fragrance of Paradise coming from Mount Uhud.” Saying this, he threw himself into the very thick of the enemy, and fought tooth and nail till he met his martyrdom. After the battle, it was found that his body had been mauled and mutilated to such an extent that only his sister could identify him, and that barely from the finger tips. No less than eighty wounds of arrows and swords were counted on his body.
- ❖ To be cheated of victory over the Quraysh when it was within grasp was a great disappointment to the Prophet (ﷺ), especially as the archers had disobeyed a direct instruction. At this bitter moment, the holy verses of the Quran came down to console and guide him with the following words: “By the mercy of Allah you have softened towards them. Had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would have dispersed away from you. So pardon them, ask forgiveness for them and consult them in affairs. Once you make a decision, then trust in Allah. Allah loves those who trust in Him.” [3:159]
- ❖ The Qur’an ordered him to forgive them, as Allah in His mercy forgives the erring, and not only was he to forgive them, but to call them to him and consult them in affairs, thus restoring their self-respect.

Cave of Uhud



This naturally formed cave, on the side of Mount Uhud facing Masjid-e-Nabwi is where the Prophet (ﷺ) took refuge after being wounded during the Battle of Uhud. He was carried there on the back of Talha (رضي الله عنه).

Close-up of the mouth of the cave:



The view towards Masjid-e-Nabwi from inside the cave:



Martyrs of Uhud



This enclosure, at the foot of Mount Uhud, contains the graves of Hamza (رضي الله عنه), Abdullah bin Jasht (رضي الله عنه) and Mus'ab bin Umair (رضي الله عنه) who were all martyred in the Battle of Uhud. The rest of the martyrs of Uhud are buried behind this enclosure.

- ❖ Hamza (رضي الله عنه) was one of the greatest Muslim warriors. In the battle of Badr, he had killed many of the Qurayshi nobles and now he cut his way through their ranks like a mighty wave sweeping all before it. One of the Qurayshi nobles had a black slave called Wahshi from Abyssinia (present Ethiopia) who could use the javelin with great skill. His master, Jubayr bin Mut'im had promised him freedom if he killed Hamza (رضي الله عنه) as he had killed his uncle in Badr. Wahshi prowled amongst the fighters until he saw Hamza (رضي الله عنه). He says, "I held my spear and balanced it well, then I aimed it. It entered into his abdomen and went out the other side. I waited until he was dead, then I took my spear and went to wait in the camp. I had no quarrel with anyone. I killed him only to be set free." Wahshi later on in life became a Muslim and killed Musailimah, the imposter who claimed Prophethood after the demise of the Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ).
- ❖ When the tide of war turned towards the Quraysh, the women of Quraysh, led by Hind, whose brother, uncle and loved ones had been killed in Badr began to mutilate the Muslim dead. She particularly vented her fury on the body of Hamza (رضي الله عنه), cutting off his nose and ears, making a slit in his chest, taking out his liver, chewing it but unable to swallow it. The Prophet (ﷺ) was greatly grieved when he came upon the body of his beloved uncle. Years later, when Makkah lay open at his feet, he gave all its inhabitants, including Hind a free pardon. Hind subsequently accepted Islam.
- ❖ Mus'ab (رضي الله عنه) held the flag of Islam. When the Muslims on meeting defeat were dispersing in confusion, he held the flag and stood at his post like a rock. An enemy came and cut his hand with a sword, so that the flag might fall and the defeat might be accomplished. He at once took the flag in the other hand. The enemy then cut the other hand also. He held the flag to his bosom with the help of his bleeding arms. The enemy at last pierced his body with an arrow. He fell dead and, with him fell the flag that he had not allowed to fall while he was alive. Another Muslim ran and took over the flag. At the time of his burial, he had only one sheet to cover his body. This sheet was too short for his size. When it was drawn to cover the head, the feet would be exposed, and when it was drawn to cover the feet, the head would become uncovered. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Cover his head with the sheet, and his feet with the 'Azkhar' leaves."
- ❖ Around sixty-five Ansar and four Muhajirun were honoured with martyrdom, while there were twenty-two fatalities among the polytheists.
- ❖ The Prophet (ﷺ) instructed the martyrs to be buried still covered with blood, in the condition that they had fallen. Two or three of the martyrs were buried in a single grave. In some cases, he directed his Companions to shroud the martyrs in pairs. The martyr who had learned more of the Quran was lowered in the grave first. Paying tribute to their sacrifice in the cause of Allah, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I shall be a witness unto them on the Day of Resurrection."
- ❖ The Prophet (ﷺ) used to visit the graves of the martyrs of Uhud and thus it is sunnah to also visit them. However, care should be taken not to engage in any innovative or non-Muslim practices such as supplicating to the martyrs, throwing letters or money into the graveyard, the tying of threads or tawaf.