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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَي سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا

Chapter Twenty Two

Mention of the Battle of *Tabkin Kwoto*

This battle was the greatest encounter between the disbelievers and us, because it was like the recurrence of the day of Badr, the “*Day of the Criterion, the Day of the encounter of the two opposing parties.*”¹ Among its events was that from the time that our messenger returned from the ruler of Gobir, he began to make military preparations. He sent out dispatches to all the regions of his lands. He wrote to his comrades, the governors of **Katsina, Raanu, Zazaki, Daura, and Azibina**. Each of them answered him by urgently rendering all their assistance and help in rounding up and arresting in their regions every person that had any affiliation with the *Shehu*. Each of these rulers also sought permission from the ruler of Gobir to also enter into the war against the Muslims. As a result each ruler made urgent military preparations to fight any *jama`ats* that were affiliated to the *Shehu* in their respective lands.

Then when the ruler of Gobir answered them giving permission for them to enter into the war, they then made a mutual treaty of confederation among themselves against the Muslims. The ruler of Gobir then went on Sunday to his soldiers stationed in the fortress. He stayed with them for two nights, or some say, nine nights. He then set out with his army heading south and stayed overnight at **Bu’ri**, and then journeyed on until they reached **Ghanbi**, where they dismounted as we mentioned previously. He then journeyed on passing the village of **Makada** eventually dismounting at a town called **Shaara**. They journeyed on until they reached a town called **Jaan Sarka**, where they dismounted and stayed two nights awaiting the rest of their forces. When these auxiliary forces arrived they were so many that only Allah knew their true number. Many **Tuaregs** well equipped for war augmented these forces as well.

¹ This is a reference to the *Quranic* verse in Chapter called *al-Anfal*: 41, where Allah ta`ala says: “*Know that whatever you gain from the spoils of war then to Allah belong a fifth, and to the Messenger, the nearest of kin, the orphan, the destitute and the wayfarer. This is if you truly believe in Allah and in what I sent down upon My servant on the Day of the Decision, the Day of the encounter between the two opposing parties.*” About this verse *Imam at-Tabari* said in his *Jaami` al-Bayaan*: “*Yunus ibn Abd’l-`Ala* related to me saying that *Ibn Wahb* informed us, saying I asked *Ibn Zayd* about the words of Allah `azza wa jalla: ‘*When We gave Musa the Book and the Criterion.*’ He said: ‘As for the Criterion in which Allah `azza wa jalla says: ‘*On the Day of the Criterion, the Day of the encounter between the two opposing parties*’, that is the Day of Badr, the day when Allah distinguished between Truth and falsehood. It is the Judgment in which Allah distinguishes between Truth and falsehood. Likewise when what Allah gave Musa the Criterion by which Allah distinguished between the two. Allah thus gave safety to Musa and distinguished between Truth and falsehood by giving him victory. In the same manner that Allah made the decision between Muhammad and the idolaters of Mecca, He also made between Musa and Pharaoh.’”

When the news of their military movement reached us in **Gudu**, we set out on Saturday morning and set up a military camp just outside our city. Over us was the Chief *Wazeer*, the brother of the *Shehu*, **Abdullahi**. He was the one who ordered us to disembark not far from our city. We passed the day there without hearing any reports about the enemy. As a result we returned to our town and stayed overnight there. Then on the Sunday morning we returned to the camp that we set up the day before. That day, some cavalry from among our Fulani brothers absconded from the disbelieving military making the emigration and leaving their families in the lands of the disbelievers. These warriors were **Abu Bakr**, who is now the general of our cavalry, **Dumi**, **Yidmami**, and **Ibn Yiyya**. They informed us that the armies of the disbelievers have already started out from **Jaan Sarka** and had now settled in a place called **Maydaja**. They said that they believed the army would set out from **Maydaja** and head in the direction of **Agga** or **Ayaami**. We then returned to our homes and found that the *Shehu* had come out in order to make supplication for us. He also informed us of the good news of our impending victory from Allah ta`ala against the disbelievers. This news from the *Shehu* emboldened our hearts.

Then on the night that we received the news that the enemies had dismounted at **Ayaami**, the *Shehu* ordered us to set out. **Ayaami** was very close to us being a journey of only half a day. So we set out that night and stayed overnight in a camp not far from our town waiting for the enemy. During this time we made military preparations and trained between two mountains in a place called Malibu. We stayed there training until we would hear any news and then return to the camp. If we saw smoke in the camp we would return back to our training. We did this until the morning. The next day we met with a large contingent of Muslims from Aydar, who were under the leadership of the jurist **al-Faqih Aghaal**, **Muhammad ibn al-Ustadh Jibril ibn Umar**, **Juude ibn Muhammad** and others. We were very happy with their joining us.

Then on the night that the ruler of Gobir and his armies dismounted at **Ayaami** they spent the night mobilizing and preparing for war. In the morning they started out against us and encountered some Bedouin Arabs who had camped near them. The Gobir forces and the Arabs fought against one another for some time until rain clouds gathered and it began to rain heavily. Then each of the armies parted and ceased fighting. When the rains clouds broke, the Gobir forces again set out against the Bedouin Arabs and fought them severely until they defeated them. These Bedouin Arabs had originally desired to join with us, but Allah decreed that they first encountered and dismounted near the Gobir forces in a place called **Ghiyaal**, and what happened to them transpired. Unfortunately, when the Bedouin Arabs were defeated, they fled with their families and cattle in the direction of the west and not the north where our forces were camped. As a result the Gobir forces set out in pursuit of them killing and taking captives until they reached a lake in the west at a place called **Kwoto**. This happened on Wednesday night.

It was earlier this same day that our armies set out from our camp waiting for the Gobir forces until the early afternoon. However we heard no reports of the enemy forces. So I went on horseback for reconnaissance and traveled until I reached near the enemy's camp. There I found some of the Bedouin Arabs who had been scattered in **Ghiyaal**. They informed me that the Gobir forces were advancing following in the traces of other vanquished Arab forces and that they were just west of our towns. I then withdrew returning back to our camp and found that the *Wazeer Abdullahi* had stirred our troops and had dismounted at a place called **Baraaghami**. I then informed him what had happened between the armies of the disbelievers and the Bedouins and

that the Gobir forces were just west of our towns. **Wazeer Abdullahi** then withdrew returning with enumerable forces back to our towns. We then set up camp just outside our towns, but most of the forces returned to their homes. When the morning came **Wazeer Abdullahi** waited until the forces regrouped and he set out with them to **Kwoto**. Some of us, however were in our homes and were able to see the fires of the enemy's camps. We then set after them and reached them Thursday morning. We continued traveling until we reached a place called **Ghurdam**. We continued on until we reached near the lake called **Kwoto** where we dismounted. We found the armies of the disbelievers already there. As a result we had to water our horses and forces from cisterns. It was then that we stirred our forces against them, they heard our forces approaching and we saw that they had positioned their forces. However, the jurist **al-Faqih Aghaal** had already proceeded alone on horseback trying to block the enemies from the cisterns. Some of the horsemen among the enemies prepared to attack. Then as we approached them we arranged our ranks and made every preparation by forming of cavalry into a single march.

The enemy forces mobilized themselves and arranged more than one hundred cavalry standing poised around their central camp dressed in imposing armor. They then called forth their foot soldiers bearing long shields and began to taunt and vilify us. However, our forces remained composed facing them. Our eyes met and our forces shouted *Allahu Akbar!* (Allah is the Greatest!), three times and attacked. The enemies began beating their war drums and then attacked us. We converged and fought for some time when their right flank intermixed with our left flank and began to push towards our center. The left flank of the enemies also intermixed with our right flank and began to push towards our center. We responded by letting off a volley of arrows against them and they did the same to us. It was then that we began losing forces due to their arrow volleys. Our cavalry only numbered twenty while the enemies' were innumerable. As the battle became more intense our flanks began to overcome theirs and then Allah vanquished the disbelievers. They began turning on their heels in flight and their unity was shattered. The Muslim forces followed on their footsteps killing and seizing spoils. The Muslim killed countless forces from among the disbelievers. Their ruler, **Yunfa**, fled and his close advisers **Baydu** and **Yamkaaji** and others were slain in battle. Then when Allah favored the Muslims with victory, they began to pursue the scattered enemies that night until the first part of the following day. The *Amir* of our armies, the **Wazeer Abdullahi** returned with most of the forces to the lake at **Kwoto** dismounted and watered the horses and men. Then the rest of the Muslim forces returned and we all prayed the late afternoon (*`asr*) prayer and then returned to our lands. Thus the affair was decided for us and "*those who were unjust were cut off and all praises are due to Allah for that.*"

About that the **Wazir Abdullahi** said in poetic verse:
“I began with the name of Allah followed with gratitude
For overcoming the disbelievers who gathered against us
In order to drive the religion of Islam and the Muslims out
From their country, however Allah in His bounty was more immeasurable.
The Tuaregs, with those of Gobir, and Yunfa was their dim-witted one
He marshaled them, however Allah sees all and hears all things
When they came to Ghunghu, they caused much corruption
By means of burning and laying waste and cutting down captives
They searched out the thickets of Bajwa where they killed
Groups of Bedouin Arabs and heaped up much wealth
They increased in disbelief and intensified their arrogance
On their horses were saddlecloths, with their crest raised up
They wore delicate clothes that made them vain, while their steeds
Paced around haughtily and their spears were drawn ready.
Then I said: and my hope was a thing made certain to me
‘Yunfa will be driven away!’; he will return with disgrace
We waited for them in places intermediate between us
For three nights and another one made it four.
Now when we saw their cowardliness in the face of our troops
We advanced towards them with our flags raised up.
It was said to us: ‘They have gone towards Kwoto, to the west of you
In order to turn you back towards the east, and gather you together
I said: ‘Save yourselves! Do not let them reach our families before us!’.
It was on the tenth of *Rabi`* while the full moon was rising
We reached our families and I passed by my house
Without entering it, while the people were slumbering
And there were with me only a few who obeyed me
In setting out after fatigue, and while hunger was burning
Now when we saw the illumination of the pillars of dawn shining.
We dismounted, and prayed until the people had re-gathered
Then we set out for Ghurdam when our troops had completely gathered
A little before the decline of the sun, and the troops were drawn in battle order
Then we drove away the forces of disbelief from their water sources
And they had thought that their troops were like two of ours! So take heed!
They thought that the places of the thicket would overcome our army
And that the hills were their helpers that would give advantageous to them
They fled towards them, then fell in ranks, and made the sounding
Of their drums, while the army of the *Jama`at* drew near, and followed them
Until when they saw us, and increased in drawing nearer to them
They opened fire, and we opened fire on them, and they turned and dispersed
And there was nothing except that you saw that their waterless cloud
Had cleared away from the Sun of *Islam* which was shining forth
By the help of Him who helped the Prophet against the enemies
At Badr with an mighty army of Angels all gathered together
How many a brave warrior did our arrows strike down
And with our swords; birds and hyenas cover him
How many a great man our hands flung down
And our axes cleft his head split asunder

We drove them off in the middle of the day, and nothing remained
 For them except the thicket for shelter in the terror of the darkness of night
 And their Yunfa joined the two noon prayers with the two evening prayers
 At Rima performing them by signs, while the morning sun was rising
 In every direction his troops were scattered apart
 To the Day of Gathering they will not be re-united
 They left to us their wealth and their women
 Against their will and it is Allah who gives and He withholds
 And we, for the sake of *Islam*, are united troops victorious
 And not for anything other than that do we hold our heads up in honor
 Tribes of *Islam* and Turudbe' is our clan
 Our Fulani and our Hausa all united
 And among us other than these certain tribes joined together
 For the help of Allah's religion was the cause of the unity
 The clan of the Turudbe' are the maternal uncles of the Fulani
 Brothers to the Arabs, and from Rum ibn `Esau, they are descended
 And `Uqba is the ancestor of all the Fulani on the Arab side
 And from the lands of Tuur came their mother, who was Bajjumanghu.
 Ask the disbelievers of Ghungha and Matankari about them
 And at Konni until the conclusion of the affair can be heard
 Oh *Jama`at* of *Islam*, make every effort and wage the *Jihad*
 And do not be irresolute, for patience always comes home to victory
 For your slain are in the Gardens of Eternity forever more
 And you who return from battle, he returns with glory and wealth
 None can destroy what the Hand of Allah has built
 None can turn back the command of Allah when it comes
 Allah's promise has become true that He will give victory to His religion
 There remains nothing but showing gratitude to Him, and being humble."

Shaykh Abdullahi also produced another poem about this event:

"O who will convey from me to Dadi
 And Zayd, and all who dwell in the towns
 Friends of the disbelievers, from fear of loss of wealth
 And from hope of security from the corrupt
 That there do not remain between the Muslims and you
 The signs of loving affection
 You deserted the army of Islam openly
 Content to help the enemy
 You forgot what you had read in the Book
 For that reason you missed the straight way
 Do not the *Quranic* verses: "*If they come on you*"²;
 "*And do not take for your intimates*"³ suffice you in this point?

² Qur'an, 60: 2 – "*If they come to you, they will be enemies to you, and stretch their hands and their tongues against you, to do you evil, and they wish that you may disbelieve.*"

³ Qur'an, 3: 114 – "*O you who believe, do not take for intimates outside yourselves, those men who would spare nothing to ruin you.*"

Thus also: “*You will not find*”⁴; “*Do not take My enemies*”⁵
 Up to: “*We are free of you*”⁶; and “*O My servants*”⁷
 Up to: “*...is spacious*”⁸; “*If they had truly*”⁹ and the beginning
 Of *Surat al-Bara’*¹⁰; therefore understand the direction of right!
 We have no words for one who intermixes with them
 Their love is like an empty desert that is apparent
 And do not ask about the companion of Hell¹¹
 He is like the companion of the She Camel, the foundation of corruption.
 He turned away in arrogance, showing hatred for the religion
 He was their *Qudari*¹² and they were like the people of `Aad.
 And I am in a country in which nothing has sway
 Except the legal judgments of Allah upon the servants
 The *Amir al-Mu’mineen* is our leader
 And all of us have become people of *Jihad*.
 We make *jihad* in the Way of Allah, always
 We fight the people of disbelief and those who are obstinate.
 Ask about us, the place where we fought in Ghungha
 Matankari, Konni in the days of the *Jihad*.
 Ask the *shaytaan* of Gobir, Yunfa
 Was he not driven away (*yunfa*) from among the nomads.
 He had gathered together armies to cut off the religion
 And he shouted out in the cities in every meeting place.
 Upon them were ample suits of armor
 And beneath them were excellent long-necked stallions.
 They then dispersed killing and taking captives
 From the people of Islam desiring corruption.
 We encountered them on Thursday
 At Gurdam before midday in the high places.
 They had fixed up meats around the fire,
 And they withdrew into tents equipped for war
 With fine transparent garments bundled in chests
 And all kinds of carpets, along with cushions
 And do not ask about the various kinds of pastries
 Mixed with butter and honey, which were among the provisions!
 They slept in luxury and nothing frightened them
 Save the tread of night sentries and fine horses

⁴ Qur’an, 58: 22 – “*You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving anyone who opposes Allah and His Messenger, not though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their clan.*”

⁵ Qur’an, 60: 1 – “*O you who believe do not take My enemies and your enemies for protecting friends.*”

⁶ Qur’an, 60: 4 – “*You have an excellent example in Abraham, and those with him, when they said to their people: We are free of you and that which you worship besides Allah.*”

⁷ Qur’an, 29: 56 – “*O My servants who believe, surely My earth is spacious.*”

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Qur’an, 5: 84 – “*If they had truly believed in Allah and the Prophet and what has been revealed to him, they would not have taken them as protecting friends.*”

¹⁰ Qur’an, 9: 1 – “*Allah and His Messenger are free of the idolaters with whom you have made a covenant.*”

¹¹ The reference here is made to Yunfa, the leader of the Habe’ Gobir armies.

¹² It was Qudar who rashly slew the miraculous she-camel sent by Allah to Prophet Saalih as a sign to the people of `Ad.

They awoke, and made everything in preparation
For war, then they arranged themselves in ranks in large numbers.
Then our flags began to draw near to them
And they seemed to them like demons in high grounds.
We fired our arrows at them and they fired arrows soaked in oil.
But the fires of their arrows became like ashes
As if their arrows had no heads to them
And their swords as if they were in the hands of inanimate things
As if their lances were in the hands of blindmen
Then they turned in flight, fleeing without any provision
And the unity of their army was scattered, while they were thirsty
They fled confused like the chaos of young locusts
We killed them, and collected all the wealth
Belonging to them that they left strewn in the valley
We killed Kaabughi and also Namadghi
Likewise Waru al-Qiyama in the beginning of the battle
Likewise others like them, one by one, and all of them
Were devils and the most wretched of them was Maghadi
And Yunfa, he fled headlong, fleeing
In front of his cavalry, who also fled in disorder
What saved him from foreordained death
Was his clinging to the mane of his charger
The darkness of the night became a fortress for him
He passed the night, without tasting the taste of death
His horsemen were like brides in garments of silk.
Sticking to their horses like ticks.
They considered the thickets of Bajuwwi's palaces
And showed no concern for the thorns or spikes therein.
They did not return with any sound clothing
All was torn to rags in the thorny low grounds
They will never return to fighting against
Us there until the Day of Resurrection”

The teacher Abdullahi also said in verse:

“O deliver to Abu’l-Hassan ibn Ahmad

A message making clear the intention

That we will collect for the purpose of the *Jihad*

An army from as far as Kuwari in Niger even to Wataadi

Whose front wing will alight at Ghazik and will cover

With its right and left wings Radeenu all the way to Qalaadi

They will bring cheer to every man possessing a heart at peace

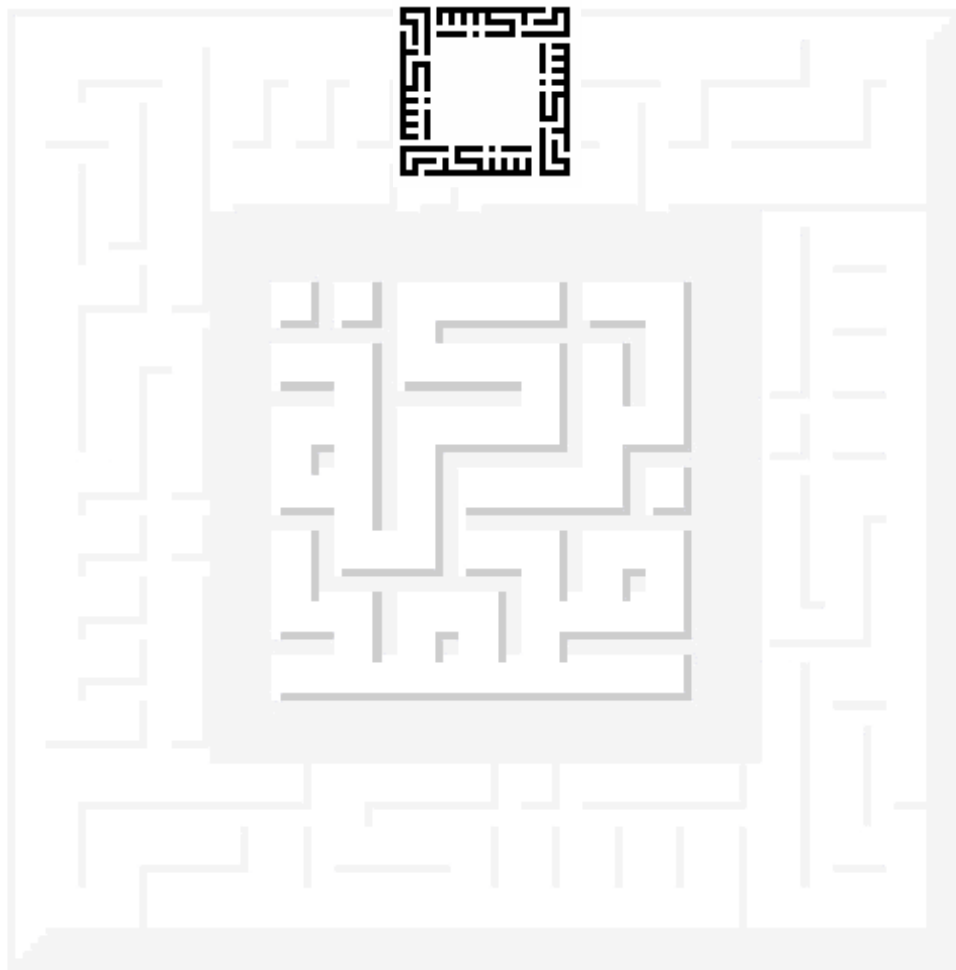
And bring pure grief to every disbelieving heart

Verily Allah will give victory to His helpers

By a promise which comes from the Lord of all worshippers

For the promise of Allah is fulfilled in the victory of religion

There is nothing for us after that except showing gratitude for Divine Assistance.”



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