32762 - The Jews’ attempts to kill the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

the question

I have heard the following: that the Jews tried to kill the Messenger 3 times. And the last time was 6 years before the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) died, with poisoned mutton, of which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) ate two mouthfuls, then Allaah caused the sheep to speak and tell the Messenger that it was poisoned. When the Messenger died, he said that it was as if he could taste that mutton. Is this true? If it is true, then it means that we have a great score to settle with them.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Jews wanted to kill the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) on several occasions, including the following:

1 – When he was a child. Ibn Sa’d narrated in al-Tabaqaat, with an isnaad going back to Ishaaq ibn ‘Abd-Allaah that when the mother of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) gave him to the Sa’di woman who breastfed him, she said to her, “Keep him safe,” and she told her what she had seen. Haleemah al-Sa’diyyah passed by some Jews and said, “Will you not tell me about this son of mine? I conceived him in such and such a manner, and I gave birth to him in such and such a manner, and I saw such and such,” and she repeated what his mother had told her. They said to one another, “Kill him!” They asked her, “Is he an orphan?” She said, “No, this is his father and I am his mother.” They said, “If he had been an orphan we would have killed him.” Haleemah (his wet nurse) took him and said, “I nearly lost that which had been entrusted to me.”

This report is mursal, but the men of its isnaad are thiqaat (trustworthy).

2 – They tried to kill him (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) after Badr. Banu al-Nadeer

sent for him to come out to them with thirty of his companions, and said “We will send out thirty of our rabbis, to meet in such and such a place, halfway between us and you, so that they can listen to you. If they believe in you then we will all believe in you.” Then they said: “How can we reach an understanding when there are sixty of us? Send out three of your companions and we will send out three of our scholars to listen to you. They were carrying concealed daggers and they wanted to kill the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). A sincere woman from among Banu al-Nadeer sent word to her nephew (her brother’s son) who was a Muslim man from among the Ansaar, and told him about that, and he told the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went back, and the following day he brought his troops and besieged them, and the Jews of Banu al-Nadeer were expelled. This story was narrated by ‘Abd al-Razzaaq in his Musannaf, and by Abu Dawood in his Sunan (3004), via ‘Abd al-Razzaaq, but he does not mention the details of the story, rather he says, “… ‘They will listen to you and if they believe in you, we shall believe in you.’ The narrator then narrated the whole story. When the next day came, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went out in the morning with an army, and besieged them.” This hadeeth was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

3 – Ibn Ishaaq mentions another reason for the expulsion of Banu al-Nadeer, which is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went to Banu al-Nadeer to ask them for help in paying the diyah of two men of ahl al-dhimmah who had been killed by mistake by ‘Amr ibn Umayyah al-Dumari. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sat by a wall belonging to Banu al-Nadeer, and they plotted to throw a rock on him and kill him. The Revelation informed him of that and he rushed back to Madeenah, then he issued orders that they should be besieged.

4 – Then came the poisoning incident, after the conquest of Khaybar. Al-Bukhaari (2617) and Muslim (2190) narrated from Anas that a Jewish woman came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) with some poisoned mutton. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) ate from it, then he asked her about that. She said, “I wanted to kill you.” He said, “Allaah would not let you do that.” They said, “Shall we kill her?” He said,

“No.” He said, I can still see the effect of that on the palate of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

Al-Nawawi said: It is as if the poison still left some trace of blackness etc.

The name of this woman was Zaynab bint al-Haarith, the wife of Salaam ibn Mashkam, one of the leaders of the Jews.

The reports differ as to whether or not she was killed. It seems that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not kill her at first, but when Bishr ibn al-Bara’ ibn Ma’roor died as a result of the effects of this food, then he executed her as a qisaas punishment.

Al-Bukhaari (5777) narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: When Khaybar was conquered, a roasted poisoned sheep was presented to the Prophet as a gift (by the Jews). The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, “Let all the Jews who have been here, be assembled before me.” The Jews were gathered and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, “Will you now tell me the truth, if I ask you about something?” They replied, “Yes.” He asked, “Have you poisoned this sheep?” They said, “Yes.” He asked, “What made you do that?” They said, “We wanted to know if you were a liar in which case we would have got rid of you, and if you are a Prophet then the poison would not harm you.”

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to feel ill because of this food, and he would be treated with cupping for that.

Ahmad (2784) narrated from Ibn ‘Abbaas that a Jewish woman sent a gift to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) of a poisoned roasted sheep. He sent for her and asked her, “What made you do what you did?” She said, “I wanted to see if you were a Prophet, then Allaah would tell you about it, and if you were not a Prophet the people would be rid of you.” Whenever the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) felt ill as a result of that he would have himself treated by cupping. On one occasion he traveled and when he entered ihraam he felt ill as a result of that and he had himself treated by cupping. The editor of al-Musnad classed it as saheeh.

That had an impact in causing his death, so he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) died as a martyr (shaheed), as Ibn Mas'ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) said:

"If I were to swear by Allaah nine times that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was killed, that is more beloved to me than swearing once, because Allaah made him a Prophet and made him a martyr." Narrated by Ahmad, 3617. The editors said, its isnaad is saheeh according to the conditions of Muslim.

Al-Sindi said: The words "he was killed" mean by the poison in the meat of the sheep's foreleg that he ate, when the effects of that appeared when he was dying.

Quoted from Haashiyat al-Musnad, 6/116.

Al-Bukhaari narrated in his Saheeh, in a mu'allaq report, and al-Haakim narrated in his Mustadrak in a mawsool report, that 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to say, in the illness which would be his last, 'O 'Aa'ishah, I still feel the pain of the food that I ate in Khaybar, and this time I feel that my aorta is being cut from that poison."

The aorta is the vein that is towards the back and is connected to the heart; if it is cut then the person will die.

The conquest of Khaybar took place in Muharram or Rabee' al-Awwal of the year 7 AH. So this event took place four years before the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) died.

This is in addition to the recorded crimes of the Jews which know no limit in ancient or modern times. The enmity between us and them will last until we fight them and kill them at the end of time, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) has told us.

See al-Yahood fi'l-Sunnah al-Mutahharah, by Dr. 'Abd-Allaah ibn Naasir al-Shaqaari; Zaad al-Ma'aad, 3/279

And Allaah knows best.