

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Battle of Badr

The Quraish caravan

In the winter of 623 C.E., Abu Sufyan, the Quraish leader, led a trading caravan to Syria. This caravan was to return in the spring of 624 C.E. In the first week of March, Ali and Zubair b Awwam were commissioned by the Holy Prophet to undertake a reconnoitering exercise, and bring intelligence about the movements of the caravan of the Quraish. Ali and Zubair brought the intelligence that the caravan was nearing Badr. The Holy Prophet held a council of war, and after taking the pros and cons of the case into consideration, it was decided that the Muslims should make an attempt to ambush the caravan. A force of 313 persons was raised, and they marched to Badr some eighty miles from Madina.

Abu Sufyan, the leader of the Quraish caravan, was an astute man. He apprehended that the Muslims would try to ambush the caravan. He accordingly sent a message to the Quraish of Makkah that they should send a force to escort the caravan. The Quraish raised a force one thousand strong fully equipped, and they marched at great speed to meet the caravan.

When the Muslims reached Badr they found that the caravan of the Quraish had already crossed the danger point, and could no longer be ambushed. The Muslims felt frustrated that their prey had eluded them. God, however, assured the Holy Prophet that a better prize was in store for them.

The caravan of the Quraish marched to Makkah at great speed and they met in the way the force that had come to their assistance. Abu Sufyan desired that as the danger of the ambushing of the caravan by the Muslims was over the force should return with the caravan to Makkah. Abu Jahl who commanded the Quraish force said that it was a good opportunity for them to attack the Muslims and annihilate them. The caravan under Abu Sufyan proceeded to Makkah, and the Quraish force confident of their strength and superiority rushed forward for a clash with the Muslims.

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Source : Alim.org-Ali bin Abu Talib History