

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - The Battle of Uhud

Assessment of the Battle of Uhud

The Battle of Uhud is an important battle in the annals of Islam. In the early stage the battle went in favor of the Muslims, but because of a tactical mistake made by the archers, the tide of the battle was reversed, and the Quraish came to have the upper hand. The Muslims were thoroughly demoralized and practically lost the will to fight. It was at this stage that Ali took the command and prevented the Quraish from taking advantage of the victory that they had won earlier. The battle that would have otherwise ended in the annihilation of the Muslims concluded as a drawn battle. The Quraish could gain no booty; they could not make any Muslim a captive. True, many Muslims died as martyrs, but the casualties in the ranks of the Quraish were larger still.

Ali played the role of a hero in the battle. His services were highly appreciated by the Holy Prophet and the Companions. Some Muslim poets composed verses in the honor of Ali. Extolling his bravery one of the poets said: "There is no sword better than the sword of Ali; and there is no young man superior to Ali."

There is some controversy about the number of unbelievers killed by Ali at the Battle of Uhud. According to some accounts the number was about two hundred. According to more conservative accounts the number was about two dozen. We need not enter into any controversy about the number of persons killed. The basic point is that Ali played the role of a great hero at the Battle of Uhud, and he succeeded in averting a crisis which was fraught with great danger for the Muslims.

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Source : *Alim.org-Ali bin Abu Talib History*