

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Banu Nadeer

Expedition against Banu Nadeer

At the treacherous conduct of Banu Nadeer, the Holy Prophet sent an ultimatum to them that as they had violated their agreement with the Muslims, they should evacuate their settlement within ten days. The Banu Nadeer were incited by other Jewish tribes, and the hypocrites in Madina to accept the challenge of the Muslims and give them a fight. After the expiry of the period of ultimatum, Holy Prophet led a force to the Jewish settlement. The Jews shut themselves in their citadel and the Muslim camp was set up outside the fort. The Jews archers shot arrows which struck the Holy Prophet's camp. The camp was shifted to a safer place, and the safety arrangements were tightened by Muslims. The Holy Prophet appointed Ali on intelligence duty. One day Ali received the intelligence that a party of the Jews led by Urwa b Anis, a renowned warrior among the Jews was to fall on the Muslims that night. Their plan was to steal into the Holy Prophet's camp, and pierce him with arrows. Ali kept the watch hidden in a safe place. When at nightfall the party appeared Ali foiled them and sliced off Urwa's head. Ali, thereafter fought single handed with the followers of Urwa till some warriors from the Muslim camp joined him, and all Jews were exterminated. Under the orders of the Holy Prophet, the severed heads of Urwa and his followers were hung outside the citadel of the Jews.

The Banu Nadeer had expected help from other Jews and the hypocrites of Madina. The Holy Prophet blocked all ways from which any help could reach the beleaguered Jews. The siege dragged on for eleven days, and when no help came from outside, the Banu Nadeer lost heart and surrendered. According to the Jewish law, all male members of the Jews could be killed and their women and children could be enslaved. The Holy Prophet took a lenient view. They were required to evacuate the settlement and migrate to Syria or elsewhere. They could carry movable property with them except arms. The Jews accepted these terms and they migrated to Syria. The immovable property left by them was distributed among the Muhajirs. In the operations against the Banu Nadeer, Ali played a conspicuous role. It was his action against Urwa and his followers that demoralized the Jews and led to the ultimate victory of the Muslims.

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