

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Banu Quraizah

Operations against Banu Quraizah

The Banu Quraizah had expected the Battle of the Ditch would end in the defeat of the Muslims, and that they would be duly rewarded by the confederates for the services rendered to their cause. When the Battle of the Ditch ended in the discomfiture of the Quraish and their allies, the Banu Quraizah felt themselves stranded and exposed to the wrath of the Muslims. Soon after the Battle of the Ditch, the Holy Prophet sent a small force under the command of Ali to the Jewish quarter. Ali contacted the leader of the Jews Ka'b b Asad, and brought home to him the point that as they had violated the terms of their agreement with the Muslims, and were guilty of high treason they could no longer be allowed to live in Madina. They were advised that they should lay down arms and migrate elsewhere. The Jews ridiculed the proposal and abused the Holy Prophet and the Muslims. Ali tried his best to make them see the light of reason and migrate elsewhere in their own interest. When Ali did not succeed in prevailing upon the Jews to migrate from Madina on their own account, he reported the matter to the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet thereupon ordered a military operation against the Jews. The Holy Prophet handed the war banner to Ali and the Muslim force-marched to the quarter of the Jews under the command of Ali. The Jews shut themselves in their citadel and the Muslim force besieged them. Banu Quraizah had expected that the Quraish and the Jews of Khyber would come to their assistance, but as the days passed on no help came, and things became difficult for them with the prolongation of the siege. On the Sabbath Day, Ka'b b Asad the leader of the Banu Quraizah told his people that things were getting difficult for them from day to day, and that it would not be possible to withstand the siege for long. He placed three proposals before his people. The first proposal was that they should be converted to Islam, and should accept Muhammad (peace be on him) as the Prophet of God. His people turned down the proposal, and said that they would never accept Islam. K'ab said that the next alternative was that they should kill their women and children, and thereafter fall upon the Muslims, and either kill them or be killed. His people said that they would not kill their women and children, Ka'b said that as it was Sabbath Day the Muslims would not be expecting any attack from them. His third proposal was that they should attack the Muslims on the Sabbath Day. The Jews said that their ancestors who fought on the Sabbath Day were converted to apes and that therefore they would not fight on the Sabbath Day lest they might also be turned into apes.

[View Page](#)

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