

Khalifa Umar bin al-Khattab - Expansion of Islam and Military Campaigns

Episodes Of Yermuk

Some episodes of the battle of Yermuk highlighting the courage, and heroism of the Muslim warriors have passed into legend, and have come down to us. Some of these episodes are noticed hereunder.

It was the last day of the battle of Yermuk. The Byzantine soldiers furiously attacked the right wing of the Muslim army. The wing was commanded by Salama. He bravely defended his position and in his heroic effort to stem the advance of the enemy he received numerous wounds on his person.

Suddenly the horse of Salama was found running in the battle-field without its rider. Hodhaifa, a friend of Salama, set out to seek Salama. He ran here and there, and at last found the wounded warrior fallen on the ground in a state of utter exhaustion caused by profuse bleeding.

Salama parted his lips with great difficulty and asked Hodhaifa about the condition of the battle. Hozaiifa said that the Byzantine attack had been beaten and the Muslims were now on the offensive and there were already marks of confusion among the Byzantines.

On hearing this the pale face of the dying General flashed with joy. He collected his vanishing strength and shouted to his men "Comrades forward and forward. Victory is yours. Turning to Hodhaifa he said, "I wish to hear the news of victory before I die".

Utterly exhausted, Salama sank back on the ground and gasped for water. Hodhaifa went to the camp and brought a tumbler of water. Salama took up the tumbler and was to drink it when a wounded soldier Hisham by name who lay on the ground at some distance was heard crying for water. Salama said to Hodhaifa, "Take this water to that wounded soldier. His need is more than mine."

Hodhaifa went up to the wounded soldier Hisham and handed him the cup of water. He was about to drink it when from some distance a cry came for water. Hisham said to Hodhaifa, "Give it to him over there."

Hozaiifa ran to the third man with the cup in his hand but when he reached there the man was dead. Hodhaifa returned to Hisham, but he was dead. Hodhaifa next ran to Salama but in the meantime Salama had breathed his last.

Hodhaifa threw the tumbler of water and lifted his hands in prayers for the souls of the departed warriors who had preferred the needs of others to their own needs.

When the war was raging at its highest, Habash bin Qais a noted warrior fought most bravely in the thickest part. Some one from the enemy ranks struck him a blow with a scimitar on one of his feet which was severed clean away. Habash continued fighting unconscious of the fact that he had lost a foot. When the war was over he found that one of his feet was missing and he asked of the people around him whether they had seen his missing foot. Habash belonged to the Attab clan and this episode became a matter of pride for the tribe. A poet sang:

"Habash comes of us,

And of us cometh straight

The seeker of the foot,

He, who has made his clansmen great."

In 'Bang-i-Dare' in one of his poems, Iqbal has dramatised an episode of the battle of Yermuk. In this battle the total strength of the Muslim army was 40,000 while the forces of the enemy numbered two lakh. In spite of the smallness of their number, the Muslims were in no way overawed by the superior strength of the enemy. Each Muslim warrior was fired with the urge to win or die, to live as a Ghazi or die as a martyr.

As the Muslim forces stood ready for battle awaiting the signal of their General, a young Arab warrior stepped forward and addressing the General Abu Ubaida said:

"O Commander of the forces of the faithful, I am impatient for the martyrdom and I cannot afford to await your orders for advance. Kindly have pity on me, and allow me to fall on the enemy. The Holy Prophet is calling me, and I want to rush to him after seeking martyrdom. O Amir, if you have any message for the Holy Prophet, give me such message and I will convey it to him when I meet him after my martyrdom. But O Amir do not hesitate to give me the permission. I see the Holy Prophet yonder calling me and any delay will be sacrilegious."

On hearing these words, tears trickled from the eyes of Abu Ubaida. He embraced the young soldier and said:

"Young man, your love for the Holy Prophet is so intense that it puts me to shame. I wish each one of us could burn in the flame of the love of the Holy Prophet in the same way as you do. I do not want to stay between you and the Holy Prophet. You have my permission to fall on the enemy and seek martyrdom. And when you meet the Holy Prophet offer my respectful greetings and say 'God has been very kind to your followers; and all the promises that God made about conquests for the Muslims have been fulfilled.'"

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Source : *Alim.org-Umar bin al-Khattab History*