

Wearing out of Medinan Forces before the Syrian Army

Following the prolongation of hit-and-run fighting and the expansion of battle front and the treachery of Marwān b. Hakam and Banū Hāritha, the early resistance of the leading fighting troops of Medina little by little began to slacken. In addition, with a part of the forces being killed and wounded, their women and children burst into wailing and crying and the non-military men, who were wearing armor, rapidly lost their morale. The fighting combatants whose number barely exceeded a thousand¹, gradually began to feel weak and unsupported before the massive army of the enemy who were armed to the teeth and unworried of their women, children, property, and lives contrary to the people of Medina – and who would take to the open desert behind them in case of retreating.

The standard bearer of the Medinan troops was killed and the number of their fighters was significantly reduced in a short time. To provoke the people, 'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala took off his armor, unsheathed his sword and called people to resistance and defense; but the Syrian troops kept moving onward, until they killed 'Abd Allāh's three sons before his very eyes.²¹¹⁹

Muslim b. 'Uqba, who was viewing the movement of his mounted Syrian forces on the stony ground as difficult, in order to encourage the infantry men of his army, ordered them to dismount from their horses and move on foot. He said: “O People of Syria! Fighting on foot is not exclusive to a particular group. O Husayn b. Numayr and O 'Abd Allāh b. 'Idāt Ash'ar! Dismount your horses along with your army!

They all dismounted their horses and advanced on foot.

The Syrians were attacking from all directions and killing the people of Medina. The battle was going on to the advantage of the Syrians, overshadowing the vigorous resistance of the defenders of Medina.

'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala was striking his sword and reciting following couplets:

Far from those who seek corruption and rebellion and turn away from the truth and the signs of guidance;

*The Merciful God will not keep anyone away from His Mercy except the disobedient.*³¹²⁰

Normally, a combatant at that time in history would brag with such utterances in the battle field when he wants to express his goal of offence or defense. 'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala was seeking to encourage the people of Medina to resist on the one hand and to remind the Syrians of his motive and to resist the Umayyid distorters of religion, on the other.

Muslim b. 'Uqba ordered 'Abd Allāh b. 'Idrīs Ash'arī to move towards 'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala and his companions with fifteen archers and when they were close enough, start shooting arrows at them.⁴121

Thus, finally, 'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala fell on the ground and was killed by Syrian troops and with his death the remaining resisting defenders of Medina broke up. The Syrian army chased the Medinans and killed several people in this way.⁵

The sun was setting while the dark shadow of the avaricious and revengeful army of Syria was weighing down on the defenseless people of Medina and setting the monster of death, horror, and plunder over their women, children, and life!

- ¹. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa, vol. 1, p. 212.
- ². Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqāt, vol. 5, p. 48; Tabarī, Ta'rīkh, vol. 1, p. 212.
- ³. Ibn Athar, Al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīkh, vol. 4, p. 117.
- ⁴. Tabarī, Ta'rīkh, vol. 4, p. 377.
- ⁵. Mas'ūdī, Murāj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 69.

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