

BATTLE OF Yarmūk

During the Khilāfah of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ؓ, the Roman Emperor Heraclius, fearing he would lose control of all his lands in Syria to the Muslims, sent reinforcements to his garrisons in the region. As a result, the Muslims were slowly driven back. Abū Bakr ؓ when informed of the situation instructed Khālīd ibn Walīd ؓ to take an army to Syria, and no sooner had he arrived the tides turned back in favour of the Muslims. [al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah]

Heraclius responded by sending a huge force of over 240,000 men under his most experienced generals. The Ṣaḥābah ؓ who had been fighting in various regions in Syria, decided to consolidate all of their forces in a place called Yarmūk. Additional reinforcements from Ḥijāz arrived strengthening their numbers to 40,000. But even with these reinforcements they were still outnumbered 6:1.

The commander of the Roman army haughtily said to Khālīd ؓ before the battle, “We know that you have been driven out of your native land due to hunger and poverty. We shall give each one of you ten gold coins, garments, and food, then you may return to your land. Next year we will send you the same.” Khālīd ؓ listened to these insults calmly and then responded, “It is not hunger that has driven us out but we are a people who drink blood and we have learnt that no blood is as good as Roman blood, so, we have come for it.” [al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah]

Among the warriors that day was Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām ؓ - the cousin of Nabī ؐ. Some brave warriors came to him and suggested that he lead them in a charge against the enemy. Zubayr ؓ replied, “If I lead, you people will not be able to keep up with me and fail to support me.” They said, “No, we will support you.” So, Zubayr ؓ attacked them and pierced through their lines, and went beyond them and none of his companions could keep up with him. Then he turned around and fought his way back until he returned. One of the enemies then got hold of the bridle of his (horse) and struck him two blows (with the sword) on his shoulder. Between these two wounds there was a scar caused by a blow, he had received on the day of Badr. The gash left by these two blows was so deep that ʿUrwah ibn Zubayr ؓ narrated, “When I was a child, I used to play with those scars [after it had healed] by putting my fingers in them.” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]

ʿIkrimah ibn Abī Jahal ؓ called out, “Who will pledge allegiance to me to fight to the death?” Khālīd ؓ cautioned ʿIkrimah ؓ, “Do not do that, O ʿIkrimah, for verily your death will be an unbearable loss upon the Muslims.” But ʿIkrimah ؓ replied, “Leave me be, O Khālīd! Verily you preceded me in going to the side of Nabī ؐ but as for my father and I, we were the severest enemies of Nabī ؐ. Leave me so that I may compensate for my wrongs of the past. How can it be that I stood firm when fighting against Nabī ؐ and now flee when I am fighting for Islam?” He then called on the Muslims to rally to him and four hundred brave souls immediately answered his call. Together they managed to drive the enemy back, many of them attaining

“Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will certainly make them (His) vicegerents in the land, as He made those before them, and will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and will certainly give them peace in place of fear in which they were before; [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that, then those are the defiantly disobedient.” (Nūr: 55)

martyrdom in the process. [al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah]

Three of them lay injured in the battlefield, ʿIkrimah, Ḥārith ibn Hishām, and ʿAyyāsh ibn Abī Rabīʿah ؓ. Ḥārith ؓ called out for some water, and as it arrived, he gazed upon ʿIkrimah ؓ. Seeing him to have a greater need of it, sent it to him instead. When it reached ʿIkrimah ؓ, he gazed at ʿAyyāsh ؓ and saw him in need of it. He, thus, instructed that it be given to him. When the person reached ʿAyyāsh ؓ, he found that he had already passed on and so returned quickly back to Ḥārith ؓ only to find that he too had passed on. So, he rushed to ʿIkrimah ؓ and discovered that he too had passed away. All three passed on without having even a sip of that water, giving preference to his Companion who lay beside him. May Allah ؐ grant them to drink from the refreshing ponds of Jannah. [Suwar min Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah]

At one point the cavalry of the Muslims was routed, and they began to retreat only to have their way blocked by their wives. Hind bint ʿUtbah came carrying a tent peg, followed by the Muhājirāt, she came to the Muslim horsemen and called out, “Why are you fleeing? Do you flee from Allah and Jannah when Allah is watching you?” When she saw her husband Abū Sufyān ؓ, fleeing, she struck his horse in the face with a tent-peg and said, “Where do you think you are going, O Sakhr? Go back to battle and put great effort into it until you compensate for having incited people in the past against Nabī ؐ.” Her words made him turn back to the battle and he rallied the Muslims again and they followed his lead. [Futūḥ al-Shām]

The Battle of Yarmūk lasted six days and despite being severely outnumbered, the Ṣaḥābah ؓ were victorious. This was a humiliating defeat for the Romans, one from which they could not recover. The remaining cities in Syria were quickly covered with the flag of Tawḥīd after this encounter. May Allah ؐ reward these personalities abundantly, because of whose steadfastness the dīn of Islam spread. 3,000 Ṣaḥābah were martyred in this Battle. [al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah]

The noble Ṣaḥābah ؓ set the standard for self-sacrifice, courage, and bravery. It is from their glorious achievements that all who came after them drew strength. Truly they are most worthy of emulation after Nabī ؐ. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masūd ؓ aptly said: “Those to follow are Muhammad’s Companions who were the most excellent among the people, purest in heart, most profound in knowledge, most unassuming, whom Allah chose for companionship with His Prophet and to establish His religion.” [Mishkāṭ]

May Allah ؐ inspire us to follow in the footsteps of these great personalities and infuse within us a deep love for them, the disciples of Nabī ؐ, and for their teacher and mentor Nabī ؐ, and unite us with all of them in the everlasting gardens of Paradise.

