



Life of Muhammad^{sa}

BY

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Battle of Mauta

The Holy Prophet^{sa} began to receive reports that Christians were on the Syrian Border

The Christian tribes were instigated by the Jews

He sent a party of 15 to find out the truth.

They saw an army on the Syrian border but did not report it straight away.

Battle of Mauta

The Christian tribe attacked the party of 15 with arrows. The party remained unmoved.

They did not turn back and fell fighting- 15 against thousands.

The Prophet^{sa} planned an expedition to punish the Syrians.

He wrote a letter to the Emperor of Rome about this situation and the unjust murder.

Battle of Mauta

This letter was carried by al-Harth^{ra}; a companion of the Prophet^{sa}. He was stopped at Mauta where a Ghassan chief acting as a Roman Official arrested him, tied him up belaboured him to death as a result of being a messenger of the Prophet^{sa}

This 'Roman Official' could have been leader of the Christian Army who killed the fifteen Muslims as he felt it was necessary to kill the messenger to protect his own Tribe.

The Prophet^{sa} got to know of the murder. To avenge this and the earlier murders, he raised a force of three thousand and despatched it to Syria under the command of Zaid bin Haritha^{ra}

Battle of Mauta

Zaid bin Haritha^{ra}, [was a] freed slave of the Prophet^{sa}.

The Prophet^{sa} nominated Ja'far^{ra} ibn Abi Talib as the successor of Zaid^{ra}, should Zaid^{ra} die, and 'Abdullah bin Rawaha^{ra}, should Ja'far die. Should 'Abdullah bin Rawaha^{ra} also die, Muslims were to choose their own commander.

A Jew who heard this exclaimed, "O Abu'l Qasim^{sa}, if thou art a true Prophet^{sa}, these three officers whom thou hast named are sure to die; for God fulfils the words of a Prophet^{sa}."

Turning to Zaid^{ra}, he said, "Take it from me, if Muhammad^{sa} is true you will not return alive." Zaid^{ra}, a true believer that he was, said in reply, "I may return alive or not, but Muhammad^{sa} is a true Prophet of God"

Battle of Mauta

The Muslims set out on the long march.

A large and important expedition such as this had never before gone without the Prophet^{sa} commanding in person.

As the Prophet^{sa} walked along to bid the expedition farewell, he counselled and instructed. ... :

I urge you to fear God and to deal justly with Muslims who go with you. Go to war in the name of Allah and fight the enemy in Syria, who is your enemy, as well as Allah's. When you are in Syria, you will meet those who remember God much in their houses of worship. You should have no dispute with them, and give no trouble to them. In the enemy country do not kill any women or children, nor the blind or the old; do not cut down any tree, nor pull down any building.

Having said this, the Prophet^{sa} returned and the Muslim army marched forward.

Battle of Mauta

It was the first Muslim army sent to fight the Christians.

When Muslims reached the Syrian border, they heard that the Kaiser himself had taken the field with one hundred thousand of his own soldiers and another hundred thousand recruited from the Christian tribes of Arabia.

Confronted by such large enemy numbers, the Muslims half wanted to stop on the way and send word to the Prophet^{sa} at Medina.

For he might be able to reinforce their numbers or wish to send fresh instructions.

Battle of Mauta

When the army leaders took counsel, 'Abdullah bin Rawaha^{ra} stood up, full of fire, and said,

"My people, you set out from your homes to die as martyrs in the way of God, and now when martyrdom is in sight you seem to flinch. We have not fought so far because we were better equipped than the enemy in men or material. Our mainstay was our faith. If the enemy is so many times superior to us in numbers or equipment, what does it matter? One reward out of two we must have. We either win, or die as martyrs in the way of God."

The army heard ibn Rawaha^{ra} and was much impressed. He was right, they said, with one voice. The army marched on.

Battle of Mauta

So at Mauta the Muslims took up their positions and the battle began

Soon Zaid^{ra}, the Muslim commander, was killed and the Prophet's cousin Ja'far ibn Abi Talib^{ra} became commander

This action meant that at least he was not going to flee; he would prefer death to flight.

Cutting the legs of one's mount was an Arab custom to prevent stampede and panic.

When he saw that enemy pressure was increasing and Muslims, because of utter physical inferiority, were not holding their own ...

... he dismounted from his horse and cut its legs.

Battle of Mauta

Ja'far^{ra} lost his right hand, but held the standard in his left.

He lost his left hand also and then held the standard between the two stumps pressed to his chest.

True to his promise, he fell down fighting.

Then 'Abdullah bin Rawaha^{ra}, as the Prophet^{sa} had ordered, grasped the standard and took over the command. He also fell fighting.

Battle of Mauta

The order of the Prophet^{sa} now was for Muslims to take counsel together and elect a commander.

Khalid bin Walid^{ra}, took the standard and went on fighting until evening came.

The following day, he changed the positions of his men—those in front changed with those in the rear and those on the right flank changed with those on the left.

The enemy thought Muslims had received reinforcements overnight and withdrew in fear.

Khalid^{ra} saved his remnants and returned.

Battle of Mauta

The Prophet^{sa} was informed of these events through a revelation. He collected the Muslims in the mosque. As he rose to address them his eyes were wet with tears

He said:

I wish to tell you about the army which left here for the Syrian border. It stood against the enemy and fought. First Zaid^{ra}, then Ja'far^{ra} and then 'Abdullah bin Rawaha^{ra} held the standard. All three fell, one after the other, fighting bravely. Pray for them all. After them the standard was held by Khalid bin Walid^{ra}. He appointed himself. He is a sword among the swords of God. So he saved the Muslim army and returned.

The Prophet's^{sa} description of Khalid^{ra} became popular. Khalid^{ra} came to be known as 'the sword of God'.


Battle of Mauta




- Khalid^{ra} was one of the later converts and often mocked.



- [Once such an incidence was] reported to the Prophet^{sa}.



- Upon this the Prophet^{sa} .. said, "You must not taunt Khalid^{ra}. He is a sword among the swords of God which remains drawn against disbelievers.'



- The Prophet's^{sa} description came to literal fulfilment a few years later.

Battle of Mauta

On Khalid's^{ra} return with the Muslim army, some Muslims of Medina described the returning soldiers as defeatist and lacking in spirit. The general criticism was that they should all have died fighting. The Prophet^{sa} chid the critics.

Khalid^{ra} and his soldiers were not defeatist or lacking in spirit, he said. They were soldiers who returned again and again to attack.

The words meant more than appeared on the surface. They foretold battles which Muslims were to fight with Syria.