

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - The Siege of Taif

The siege of Taif

From Autas, the Muslim forces set out for Taif. The people of Taif were a proud people with traditions of bravery. They were a rich people and considered themselves to be superior to all other tribes in Arabia. Sometime in 619/620 C.E., when the Holy Prophet was persecuted by the Quraish of Makkah, he had visited Taif to seek refuge. The people of Taif had maltreated the Holy Prophet and had turned him out of their city. Now the tables were turned. The people shut themselves in the fort and could not face the Muslims in the open. The Holy Prophet decided to lay a siege to the city. The Muslim catapults began to throw stores in the fort, but this did not lead to any tangible result. The Muslims tried the Tetsudou device whereunder a group of soldiers shielded by a cover of cowhide advanced to set fire to the gate. The enemy threw red-hot scraps of iron on the Tetsudou which made it ineffective. The siege dragged on for two weeks but still there was no sign of the fall of the fort. The Holy Prophet had other business to attend, and he could not afford to remain at Taif for long. The Holy Prophet raised the siege and returned to Makkah.

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