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The Popular resistance from Al-Qunfudah to Durmaa, passing through Al-Rass The story of the Saudis' resistance to the Ottoman occupier

Al-Qunfudah was not a remote seaport, but rather it was the second important port on the Red Sea after the port of Yanbu. Here we are talking about 1814 AD, the year in which Muhammad Ali Pasha decided to send his army to seize Al-Qunfudah. Just as Turbah was the Gate of Najd, Al-Qunfudah was the Gate of the provinces of Al-Baha, Tihamah and Asir, and therefore it was of great importance.

The years (1814 AD, 1817 AD and 1818 AD), respectively, were full of decisive events that later decided the fate of the first Saudi state, following the rush of the Ottoman Sultanate and throwing its last cards to occupy and destroy Diriyah and its symbolism as the capital of the first Arab unit known in modern history.

We remember the events after the failure of the Iraqi campaign, and the refusal of the Ottoman governor in the Levant to engage with the Saudis, as well as the disintegration and defeat of Ibrahim Pasha's campaign in Wadi Al-Safraa near Medina by the Saudi cavalry.

Al-Qunfudah, Al-Rass and Durmaa were steadfast and played their national role in confronting the Ottoman occupier. The Saudi fighters kept moving from the west of the country to the south and center in order to confront the aggressor Ottoman army, which came with its heavy weapons and mercenary cavalry for only one goal, which is to eliminate the emerging state at the center of its power.

In Al-Qunfudah, Al-Rass, and Durmaa, the Ottomans used the same military policy based on a scorched-earth policy, genocide, intimidation and abuse of everyone, especially defenseless civilians, so that the influence in the environment that embraced the reformist call being deep and painful.

In Al-Qunfudah, the Ottoman army arrived and seized the city. They killed people and corrupted the city, but the Saudis took control of the water sources. The occupiers lived under siege until they fled to Jeddah.

Valiant popular resistance in Al-Rass and Durmaa against the Ottoman occupier.

In Al-Rass, following the long siege, the Ottomans had no choice but to negotiate with Imam Abdullah bin Saud to end the siege. Of course, we must not forget that the Ottoman army had modern weapons, especially heavy cannons that were used against civilians, in addition to modern rifles and thousands of cavalrymen and mercenaries from Turks, Albanians, Moroccans, Libyans and even non-Muslims.

The siege lasted for three months and seventeen days without the Turks obtaining anything from it, after Ibrahim Pasha had expected it to fall in only two days. If we talk about Al-Rass, we must be aware of the amount of Turkish losses, which amounted to 2,400 of soldiers and mercenaries.

Ibrahim Pasha was forced to end the siege of Al-Rass after his army suffered successive defeats. The Ottomans turned towards Unaizah, which fell quickly. Al-Rass was the northern gate of Najd. With its fall, Najd actually fell. As a result, Abdullah bin Saud retreated to Shaqraa, concerned about Diriyah in an attempt to protect it from the criminal Ottoman intentions that came to his country to eliminate and destroy it without right.

What happened in Al-Rass can be called the popular resistance, as all the people participated in confronting the Ottoman attack, and this made the Pasha unable to occupy Al-Rass, but rather many of his soldiers were killed. The traveler Mangan mentions: "Behind the walls, women lit dry, glue-coated palm fronds to light the square for their defenders. The shooting from the guns was continuous. The resistance fighters repelled the attack of the Turks in all areas, so they were forced to retreat, and we could only see the dead and wounded. This deadly ill-planned attack left 800 men dead or wounded".

The traveler Mangan continues saying about his monitoring of the battle: "The people of (Al-Rass) bravely defended themselves and made some raids. Since they did not have sufficient capabilities or experience in the arts of war, they contented themselves with repelling the vanguards of the attackers, and pounced on the cannons to block their holes with nails to make them unusable. They attacked their enemies with old wick guns and spears".

Perhaps the biggest crime committed by the Ottomans was killing people after promising them to be safe, which is a great betrayal. They give the man a promise of the safety of his home and his children and he throws his weapon, so the Ottoman forces enter his house to kill him, seize his money and assault his children. It happened brutally in Durmaa, which resisted the occupier, but he took control of it, and then killed its people, the Najdians, without regard for the blood of innocents. This was only because they were peaceful Najdi Arabs.

In describing the Ottoman massacre in Durmaa, the famous Najdi historian said: "The Romans entered the country from all sides, took it by force and killed its people in the markets, roads, and homes. The people of the country had fought them in its midst until the sun rose, and they had killed many of the Romans, but they had deceived them with safety". He also said: "I was told that they come to the people of the house and the gathered gang and said: (safety safety!) and took their weapons and killed them. They looted all the money, belongings, weapons, clothing, livestock, horses and other things that the country contained". He continued until he said: "Men from the people of the country and others fled quickly in the wilderness, a survivor or a slain, and the country remained empty of its people". The remaining women and children fled and were taken by Saud bin Abdullah bin Imam Muhammad Al Saud to Diriyah. When they arrived there, Imam Abdullah bin Saud Al Saud and the people of Diriyah received and honored them, and prepared to defend Diriyah.