



حبر أبيض
WHITE INK



D. Ali Albassam

King Abdulaziz and the Ottomans in Al-Ahsa

Al-Ahsa region has been of geopolitical, natural, economic and cultural importance due to its many ports overlooking the Arabian Gulf, such as the port of Uqair and Qatif, which are considered of the most important sea ports for communication with the outside world, with its wide horizons and its different continents and countries. This region was the focus of King Abdulaziz's attention since the early beginnings of the blessed unification movement. Rather, he was determined to unite Al-Ahsa and Qatif with the countries of Najd, because they were an integral part of the first and second Saudi states.

He did his best in his march towards Al-Ahsa until the favorable conditions were created to achieve the goal. Al-Ahsa, which was subject to the Ottoman authorities at the time, became a refuge for the opponents of King Abdulaziz from the desert, who were seeking refuge in the towns of the region when he attacked them. On the other hand, the messages and letters from the people of Al-Ahsa multiplied, asking him to save them from the miserable situation that has afflicted their town and from the bad and weak Turkish administration and its unjustified domination of people's livelihood. This was in addition to the state of lawlessness and the spread of robbery in the streets, so that the people in their towns and in their homes were no longer safe. In the face of all these circumstances, Islamic jealousy was a great motive for the founder, so he went to help the people and save them from the injustice and aggression that was inflicted on them by that unjust administration.

King Abdulaziz began to develop his military plan to unify Al-Ahsa and save it from the rule of the Turks, so he tended to careful planning before the launch. He worked secretly so that the opponents would not know his true goals, so he moved in 1913 AD, along with his soldiers from the people of Al-Arid and some Bedouin tribes, and he stopped at Rawdat Al-Khafs north of Riyadh. He stayed there for a month, waiting for news from Al-Ahsa, so Yusuf bin Suwailem, one of his loyal men residing in Al-Hofuf, came to tell him about the deteriorating conditions in Al-Ahsa in general. The king asked him about the easiest way to carry out the sudden storming of Al-Ahsa.

After the situation became clear to him, the king put an elaborate military plan and set the hour of the attack on Al-Hofuf and the headquarters of the Turkish Moutassarifiya administration. After that, the king sent several messages with him to some of his notable friends informing them of the imminent attack on Al-Ahsa and asking them to reassure the people during the expected attack. Here, we can note that the humanity of King Abdulaziz, his kindness to the people and his concern for them, above all, was what led him to save them from the injustice and transgression against their rights and lives.

King Abdulaziz moved from Rawdat Al-Khafs with his army of about six hundred fighters from the city and the desert towards achieving his goal of recovering Al-Ahsa and unifying it, as it is part of the first and second Saudi states. He reached it there and stayed for a month near the famous Najm spring, waiting for the right time to start a direct and actual attack on the walls of Al-Hofuf. This made the Turkish administrator of Al-Ahsa feel suspicious of his presence there, so he sent him to inquire about the reason for his presence in the west of Al-Ahsa. King Abdulaziz cunningly replied that he intended to invade some hostile tribes, and that he needed to provide supplies for his army from the markets of Al-Ahsa.

To remove doubts, King Abdulaziz sent some of his followers in a trading caravan to Al-Hofuf and they pretended to buy dates, rice and some other commodities as their declared goal. Their real goal was to find out the fortifications and the military situation inside Al-Hofuf. After completing the necessary preparations that Ibrahim Al-Qusaibi had prepared at the walls at night with the aim of climbing them, the awaited hour came, and King Abdulaziz delivered a sermon to his army, saying: "We will attack the Turks in Al-Kut, and we will defeat them, if Allah wishes, so walk for this purpose and do not make noise. If someone talks to you on our way, do not answer him. If he shoots you with guns, do not exchange fire. If you enter Al-Kut and seize Al-Hofuf, then fight only those who fight you. As for the peaceful ones, treat them with kindness".

Perhaps what King Abdulaziz said to his army shows us the personality of a brave and inspiring military leader who knows when to raise positive morale in soldiers before entering the battlefield. After that, he divided his army into two divisions. The first division was under his command and aimed to directly attack the walls and enter Al-Hofuf. The other division was led by Prince Abdullah bin Jalawi Al Saud and with him three hundred fighters from the Bedouin sons, and he set out with them towards Al-Raqiqa, west of Al-Hofuf, to protect the rear of the attackers from the invasions of the Bedouins.

King Abdulaziz, accompanied by about three hundred of his men, set out with them to penetrate Sifah farms located to the west of Al-Kut neighborhood until they reached its western and northern walls at night. There, he divided them into three divisions. The task of the first division was to attack the southern gate of the city to take control of it. The task of the second division was to march towards the Turkish military barracks to engage them and eliminate them. As for the third division, its role was to march to all the military towers surrounding the city and take control of it and secure it by force. They began to cross the trench surrounding the wall after placing the trunks of palm trees on it, so those brave men crossed to the wall and climbed it with the stairs prepared in advance. Each division proceeded to carry out its mission with strict adherence to the orders of King Abdulaziz.

The Turkish guards felt a bit of noise, but they did not dare to take any step, so they started asking them about their identity, and no one answered them, so they started shooting randomly. The other soldiers heard that and resisted in a weak and insignificant way. When they knew that the one who was attacking them was King Abdulaziz, they were terrified, and then King Abdulaziz and his brothers Muhammad, Saad, Abdullah, Abdulaziz bin Musaed bin Jalawi and others entered from a hole in the western wall of Al-Kut neighborhood. He went directly to the house of the Mufti Sheikh Abdul Latif bin Abdul Rahman Al-Mulla, who welcomed him warmly and hosted him in his house. He stayed there until the fighters managed to take control of some forts from the northwestern and southern sides.

After that, King Abdulaziz sent to Al-Ahsa notables inviting them to attend, so they came from the hole that had been made in the wall because the eastern and northern gates were still under the control of the Turks. They met in the house of the Mufti and he asked them to pledge allegiance to him, so they pledged allegiance to him to comply and obey. The Mufti advised King Abdulaziz to write to the Turkish administrator of his desire to reach a peaceful solution to hand over the area and to guarantee him a safe exit with the rest of the Turkish garrison. King Abdulaziz authorized the Mufti and his son Sheikh Ahmed, Muhammad bin Saleh bin Shalhoub and Abdulaziz bin Quorain, who was fluent in the Turkish language, to negotiate and hand over Al-Ahsa in a peaceful way to save the city from the deteriorating security situation. The Turkish administrator agreed to this with conditions, and the king agreed to the first condition and amended the second condition.

The Turkish garrison handed over the keys of Ibrahim's palace and wrote a document signed by King Abdulaziz and the Turkish administrator, Ahmed Nadim, and they were deported to the port of Uqair and from there to Bahrain and then to Basra. The king resided in Al-Ahsa, where he organized its affairs and arranged its administration, then appointed a prince, Prince Abdullah bin Jalawi Al Saud. After that, the king left for Riyadh. Thus, a new glorious phase of modern Saudi history began, and Al-Ahsa joined the rest of the unified regions under the banner of the founding King, may Allah have mercy on him and reward him with the best reward for his work for the benefit of this blessed country.