

## **Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Revolt of Khurrit Bin Rashid**

### ***The Battle of Ahwaz***

Ali appreciated the services of Ziyad and his men. He asked them to return to Kufa. From Kufa Ali sent a larger force comprising about 2,003 men under the command of Muaqil b Qais. This force proceeded direct to Ahwaz. The Governor of Basra was also asked to send a force from Basra in aid of the main force under Muaqil b Qais. In the neighborhood of Ahwaz, Khurrit was able to muster a considerable following. He incited the people not to pay taxes to the Government. Brigands and other disorderly persons also joined his ranks. A pitched battle was fought outside Ahwaz. Khurrit and his men suffered defeat and fled to Ramhurmuz. The action that took place at Ramhurmuz also ended in the reverse of Khurrit. Thereafter Khurrit escaped to Bahrain. The Alid forces pursued Khurrit to Bahrain. Here Muaqil issued a warning to the people that those who deserted Khurrit would be granted amnesty, but those who chose to fight would be allowed no mercy. Many persons availed of this amnesty and defected from Khurrit. Nevertheless many persons remained steadfast to his cause and fought desperately. In the bloody encounter that ensued Khurrit fell along with many comrades. Those who survived were taken captives and all was over with the revolt.

It transpired that during these disturbances many persons who were originally Christians but had been converted to Islam were reconverted to Christianity. They felt that Christianity was a religion of peace, but Islam was a strange religion, the followers of which cut at one another's throat mercilessly. Muaqil gave an option to these persons to be reconverted to Islam, but those who refused were executed on the charge of apostasy. The number of captives exceeded five hundred. As these persons parted from their families their womenfolk raised heart-rending shrieks. The Alid Administrator of the city of Ardashir who belonged to the same tribe as the captives was touched at the plight of these unfortunate men. This officer, Masakala, by name offered to ransom all the captives. The amount of ransom was worked out at two hundred thousand dirhams. He paid one lakh dirhams forthwith, and promised to pay the balance after he had collected the amounts from the persons, concerned Muaqil accordingly handed over all the captives to Masakala. Ali was happy at the suppression of the revolt of Khurrit. He appreciated the services of Muaqil and his men for the successful termination of the campaign. He was also well impressed at the action taken by Masakala on humane and compassionate grounds. Masakala realized the amount from the persons concerned but he defalcated in depositing the amount in the state treasury. When pressed to pay the amount, he escaped to Syria where Muawiyah welcomed him and gave him an office. Ali was much grieved at this betrayal. It appeared the people had lost the Islamic values which the Holy Prophet had tried to inculcate in them.

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