

Khalifa Abu Bakr - Apostacy Campaigns in East and South Arabia

Campaigns in Uman and Mahrah

Jayfar bin Al Julanda. During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, Uman bordering on the Persian Gulf was under Persian influence. It was ruled by Jayfar bin Al Julanda who owed allegiance to Persia. When the Holy Prophet sent letters inviting the various rulers to Islam, a letter was addressed to Jayfar as well. As the Persian power was on the decline, Jayfar stood in need of some outside support to bolster up his rule. He responded favorably to the invitation of the Holy Prophet. He said that he was inclined to accept Islam, but the difficulty was that his people were not likely to agree to the payment of Zakat to Madina. The Holy Prophet assured him that if he and his people became Muslims, the amount realized from Zakat could be distributed among the poor and the destitute in Uman itself. Thereupon Jayfar became a Muslim, and under his influence most of his people were also converted to Islam. The Holy Prophet appointed Amr bin Al Aas as the Muslim Resident in Uman.

Laquit bin Malik. After the death of the Holy Prophet, like other parts of Arabia Uman also fell a prey to chaos and anarchy. A false prophet Laquit bin Malik came into prominence. He belonged to the Azdi tribe, which was very numerous. The Azdi felt elated at having a prophet of their own. They apostatized from Islam, and accepted the new creed. Laquit exempted his followers from the disciplines of fasting, prayers, and Zakat. He sanctioned adultery as well as the use of wine. He claimed that he was the recipient of divine revelations. Jayfar remained faithful to Islam, but he lost his hold on the people of Uman most of whom accepted the new creed. Laquit gained in strength, overthrew Jayfar and captured political power. Jayfar and the few people who remained true to Islam had to seek refuge in the hills. Laquit declared himself as the king of Uman. He assumed the title of "Zul Taj"-the crowned head. He established his capital at Daba.

Muslim campaign against Uman and Mahrah. With the change in the affairs of Uman, the Muslim Resident Amr bin Al Aas left Uman for Madina. Back in Madina, Amr gave a detailed report of the developments in Uman to the Caliph. Abu Bakr dispatched a force under Hudhaifah bin Muhsan to undertake operations in Uman. The wave of apostasy overwhelmed the neighboring state of Mahrah as well. The Caliph sent another force under the command of 'Urfajah to operate in Mahrah. Both the forces under Hudhaifah and 'Urfajah were required to collaborate. The operations were required to be commenced from Uman. The instructions of Abu Bakr were that if there was a battle in Uman, Hudhaifah was to lead the combined forces, and if the operations were undertaken in Mahrah, 'Urfajah was to hold the Command. When 'Ikrahah met a reverse at Yamama, he was required not to return to Madina, but to proceed with his men to Uman and Mahrah. All the three forces of Hudhaifah, 'Urfajah and 'Ikrahah were directed to act in concert.

Battle of Daba. 'Ikrahah and his force reached Uman first. The force of Hudhaifah soon joined him. Word was then sent to Jayfar and his followers to descend from the hills and join the Muslim forces. After descending from the hills, the forces of Jayfar joined the relief forces from Madina at Sa'a. The combined forces thereafter marched to Daba. The battle between the forces of Laquit and the Muslims took place in the plain outside Daba. Laquit had a large force at his command and the Muslims were outnumbered. It was a hotly contested battle, and to start with, the forces of Laquit appeared to dominate the field. At the nick of time when the Muslim ranks were likely to disintegrate under the pressure of the forces of Laquit, the Muslims received unexpected reinforcement in the shape of contingents from Bahrain and the tribe of Abdul Qais. That turned the tide of the battle. The Muslims charged with great vehemence, and the forces of Laquit were unable to stand the charge. They found safety in retreat. As the enemy fled; the Muslims pursued them, and overtaking them cut them to pieces. As many as ten thousand followers of Laquit fell on the battlefield. Laquit himself was killed, and with his death all resistance broke down, and the forces of Uman laid down the arms. As a result of the battle of Daba, Jayfar was restored as the ruler of Uman, and

the apostates were readmitted to the fold of Islam.

The campaign in Mahrah. After order was restored in Uman, and the Muslim rule was re-established, 'Ikramah crossed over with his force to attend to the affairs of Mahrah. Like the people of other parts of Arabia the people of Mahrah also apostatized after the death of the Holy Prophet. The people of Mahrah came to be divided into two sections. Shikrit led one section that was the majority section, while the other party that was in minority was led by Al-Musabbah. Taking stock of the affairs in Mahrah, 'Ikramah felt that instead of fighting against the people of Mahrah as a whole, it would be expedient to take advantage of the rift between the two sections. 'Ikramah accordingly opened negotiations with the minority party led by Shikrit. The negotiations succeeded. Shikrit and his men were converted to Islam, and 'Ikramah offered them full support to capture political power and overthrow their rival section. The majority section was asked by 'Ikramah to return to Islam but they ridiculed the offer. The combined forces of Shikrit and 'Ikramah accordingly marched to give battle to the people of Al-Musabbah. In the battle that followed the fighting was severer than the fighting at the battle of Daba. It was a hotly contested battle, and the apostates fought with a spirit of vengeance. The chances of victory were balanced but ultimately the faith and determination of the Muslims carried the day, and the forces of Al-Musabbah found safety in capitulation. Immense booty fell into the hands of the victor Muslims, including two thousand dromedaries and a large supply of arms. The defeated people accepted Islam, and they were granted amnesty. 'Urfajah carried the booty to Madina while 'Ikramah stayed in Mahrah to re-organize the administration. When order was fully restored, 'Ikramah was asked by Abu Bakr to proceed to Yemen.

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