

## **Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - The Kharijites**

### ***Ali and the Kharijites***

As these people had formerly been the allies of Ali and had defected under some misunderstanding, Ali contacted them with a view to arriving at some conciliation with them. They criticized Ali for his acceptance of arbitration. Ali pointed out to them that he was against the acceptance of cease-fire when victory was almost in sight but he did so because of their pressure. They confessed that in putting pressure on him they had sinned, and to atone for that sin they had offered repentance to God. They insisted that as Ali had also sinned he too should offer repentance. Ali said that he had merely made a political mistake and not committed any sin, and as such no particular act of repentance was called for. In his prayers he repented every day, and that cleared him before God. They said that it was wrong on his part to accept the verdict on human umpires instead of the decision of God. Ali pointed out that according to the agreement, the umpires were bound to give their verdict in accordance with the injunctions of Islam, and if such decision was not in accord with the commands of God as revealed in the Holy Book it could be repudiated. They demanded that Ali should lead them to the battle again to fight against the Syrians. Ali said that he agreed with them, and appreciated their offer but as he had entered into an agreement to keep peace it would not be advisable for them to take up arms for that would be against the injunction of Islam which enjoins the scrupulous observance of agreements. He assured them making God his witness that if the decision of the umpires was not in accord with the injunctions of Islam, he would lead them to war as desired by them. He observed that in the meantime they could make preparations for war, so that they should be ready to march to the battlefield as soon as there was a violation of the agreement by the other side. That apparently satisfied the Kharijites and at the instance of Ali they broke the camp at Harura and returned to their homes in Kufa.

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