

Muhammad (Muhammad) - The People of Ta'if Accept Islam

The idolaters of Taif, the very people who had driven the Messenger of Islam from their midst with violence and contempt, now sent a deputation to pray forgiveness and ask to be numbered among his followers. They begged, however, for temporary preservation of their idols. As a last appeal they begged for one month of grace only. But even this was not conceded. The Prophet said Islam and the idols could not exist together. They then begged for exemption from the daily prayers. The Prophet replied that without devotion, religion would be nothing. At last they submitted to all that was required of them. They, however, asked to be exempted from destroying the idols with their own hands. This was granted. The Prophet selected Abu Sufyan and Mughira to destroy the idols of Ta'if, the chief of which was the notorious idol of Al-Lat. This was carried out amidst cries of despair and grief from the women of Ta'if.

The conversion of this tribe of Ta'if is worthy of notice. This tribe, which hitherto had proved hostile to the new faith, was noted among the Arabs for its idolatrous priesthood. A small detachment under Ali was sent to reduce them to obedience and to destroy their idols. The prince of the tribe was Adi, the son of the famous Hatim, whose generosity was spoken of all over Arabia. On the approach of the Muslim force, Adi fled to Syria, leaving his sister with his principal clansmen, to fall into the hands of the Muslims. These were conducted by Ali with every sign of respect and sympathy to Medina. When the daughter of Hatim came before the Prophet, she addressed him in the following words: "Messenger of Allah, my father is dead; my brother, my only relation fled into the mountains on the approach of the Muslims. I cannot ransom myself; I count on your generosity for my deliverance. My father was an illustrious man, the prince of his tribe, a man who ransomed prisoners, protected the honor of women, fed the poor, consoled the afflicted, and was deaf to no appeal."

The Prophet replied: "Your father had the virtues of a true Muslim; if it were permitted to invoke the mercy of Allah on any whose life was passed in idolatry, I would pray to Allah for mercy for the soul of Hatim." Then, addressing the Muslims around him, he said: "The daughter of Hatim is free, her father was a generous and humane man; Allah loves and rewards the merciful." With the daughter of Hatim, all her people were set at liberty. She proceeded to Syria and related to her brother the generosity of Muhammad. Adi, touched by gratitude, hastened to Medina, where he was kindly received by the Prophet. He professed Islam and returned to his people and persuaded them to abandon idolatry. They all submitted and became devoted Muslims.

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