

IRANIAN RESISTANCE AGAINST CONVERSION TO ISLAM

Dr. Kersey Antia, Mar 6, 2019; updated Apr 30, 2019

As Richard Frye quotes Narshakhi in *The History of Bukhara* (Markus Weiner Publishers, Princeton, N.J., pp. 64-68): “The inhabitants of Bukhara became Muslims, but each time after the Muslims withdrew they apostatized. Qutaiba ibn Muslim converted them to Islam three times, but they (repeatedly) apostatized and became infidels. The fourth time he made war he seized the city and established Islam there after much difficulty. He instilled Islam in their hearts, and made (their religion) difficult for them in every way. They accepted Islam in appearance but in secret, they continued to adhere to their ancestral faith.” “The residents, however, threw stones at them from the roofs of the villas. They fought and the Muslims were victorious. The latter took down the gates of the villas and bore them away. On each gate a person had made the figure of his idol. When the grand mosque was enlarged those gates were used on the mosque.” They erected them with the faces of the figures erased but with the rest intact. Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Nasr says that in his time one of those gates remained in that place where you descend from the roofs to the door of the grand mosque. “If anyone wishes (to see such a door) go to the court of the amir of Khurasan by the first door, and the second door is what is left of those gates. The traces of the effacement on it are still visible.”

When Samarkand was invaded, many prisoners were taken to Medina and put in bondage; they became very sick at heart and said, “What meanness remains which he has not inflicted upon us? He has put us in bondage and ordered us to do heavy work,” which seems to have been an obvious result of their refusal to accept Islam even though accepting it would free them from the bondage of slavery and persecution. Frye also narrates that a certain Sa'id invaded Samarkand and took 30,000 prisoners from there to Medina. When “put in bondage and ordered to do heavy work, they resolved: “If we must perish in indignity, then we should do so with one useful act.” They entered the house of Sa'id, barred the doors, and killed him. Then they committed suicide.” (p. 58). This does not show readiness by the Iranians to welcome the Arab invaders, rather they seemed intent on defying them even if it meant death.