

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Ali During the Caliphate of Othman

The Revolt

During the first six years of the caliphate of Othman, the process of foreign conquests went apace, and the people were satisfied. During the later part of the caliphate of Othman, the process of foreign conquests came to a grinding halt and discontentment began to mount among the people. The government of Othman was accused of nepotism, corruption and inefficiency. A crisis was reached in 656 C.E. when the malcontents from Egypt, Kufa, and Basra marched to Madina to demand the redress of their grievances. A body of the mal-contents approached Ali and requested him to bring their grievances to the notice of the Caliph. Ali visited Othman and said: "O Caliph, the people bid me expostulate with you, yet what can I say to you, son-in-law as you were of the Holy Prophet and his bosom friend, and you already know what I know. The way lies plain and wide before you, but perhaps your eyes are closed and you cannot see it. If blood is once shed it will not cease to flow till the Day of Judgment. The right will be blotted, and treason would rage like the foaming waves of the sea."

Ali observed that the complaint of the people was that the Caliph had appointed his close relatives to the highest offices under the State. Othman stated that if he had appointed some of his relatives they were competent people who had delivered goods. He added that Muawiyah had been appointed as the Governor of Syria by Umar and not by him. Ali said that Umar kept the Governors under strict control but under him the Governors had become independent and they were doing what pleased them. Othman promised that he would make the necessary amends.

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