

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Defection of Talha and Zubair

Ali's address about the defection of Talha and Zubair

In an address to the people of Madina in the prophet's mosque Ali commented on the defection of Talha and Zubair in the following terms: You know I had refused to accept the caliphate. It was only because of your insistence that I reluctantly agreed to accept the office. I was moved to do so, because the interests of Islam demanded that some one should head the State. You all took the oath of allegiance to me. In accepting the office I had laid down the condition that I expected your unstinted loyalty and support. The oath of alliance is a sacred pact between you and the person you have elected as the Caliph. Once the oath has been taken it is irrevocable. Like all of you Talha and Zubair took the oath of allegiance to me. Now they have repudiated the oath, and taken to the wrong way. They have given no reason for this change of face. They are eminent companions of the Holy Prophet and they fully know that the oath of allegiance once taken cannot be repudiated. I was no stranger to them. They are fully aware of my antecedents, my relationship with the Holy Prophet and my services to the cause of Islam. They are Quraish and I am also a Quraish. Zubair is in fact my cousin. By rebelling against my authority, they have created dissensions among the Muslims which is a definite disservice to Islam. They have raised the cry for vengeance for the blood of Othman. The implication of this cry is that they accuse me of the murder of Othman or my involvement. The assassination of Othman is deplorable, but the imputation of any blame on me in this respect is most unjust and unfair. All that took place happened before your eyes. I was neither concerned with the administration of law and order, nor did I command any influence with the rebels. Indeed I took all measures, that I could, to protect the person of Othman. It is an undeniable fact that my sons were wounded while guarding the house of Othman. On the other hand it is well known that Talha was present among the rebels, and he did not respond to the call of Othman when he called him. It is surprising, and sheer perversion of truth that they should levy the charge of the murder of Othman against me when they themselves were the murderers. It is not merely uncharitable, it is criminal in character. As Talha and Zubair have assumed the role of rebels, they will have to be treated as such. If they do not repent, I will have no option but to take punitive action against them. I cannot allow the rebels to gather force, and create mischief. I am not like a bear which is lulled to sleep, and the hunter hunts it while it is asleep. I will lead a force against the rebels and destroy them, howsoever painful the act might be."

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