

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Letters of Ali Addressed to Muawiyah

Ali and his predecessors

In the letter, Muawiyah took the stand that Ali did not offer whole-hearted support to the previous three Caliphs, namely Abu Bakr, Umar, and Othman. The game of Muawiyah was the Ali should say something against his predecessors which Muawiyah could exploit for the purpose of the propaganda. Ali replied to this letter in the following terms: "You have told me that God chose the Holy prophet for delivering his message, and the companions accepted the message. To tell this to me who belong to household of the Holy prophet is like the carrying of the dates to Hijr which is known for the abundance of its dates. You have claimed that in Islam such and such person have precedence. This assertion is such that if it is correct you are not even remotely connected therewith, if it is not correct that would not harm you in any way. How are you concerned with the matter as to who is superior or otherwise in the matter of Islam. Your sponsoring this issue is like making the criminal the judge.

Muawiyah you are fast speeding on the road to perdition. You have transgressed all limits. Desist from your ignominy. Remember that we are the household of the Holy prophet and whom God has already tested. Have you ever thought that our clan is to supervise your clan but nevertheless the Holy prophet contracted some marital relation with household to save you from any feeling of inferiority complex. We claim precedence in Islam because we belong to the household of the Holy Prophet, and we were most devoted to him. You have alleged that I was jealous of all the caliphs preceding me, and was hostile to them. If what you say is for the sake of argument correct, I have not committed any fault for which I owe an explanation to you. You said that in making me take the oath of allegiance to the previous Caliphs I was dragged as a camel with the bridle in its nose. You have thus presented me as a person who is deprived of his right and is oppressed. By your misguided criticism you have in fact praised me. You have referred to my attitude to Othman. I must reply to this part of your letter for you are related to him. Please peep into your heart and say who set the net for his murder, you or I. Is it not a fact that you remained indifferent to his protection, while I tried my best to the last to avert the crisis. I owe you no apology when I admit that I did differ from him in the matter of his policies, and I always tried to offer him sound advice, which he did not or could not accept. You have written that for me you have nothing but sword. That has made me laugh. When did you find the descendants of Abdul Muttalib fear the sword or shrank from war when it was forced on them. Do not worry. I will soon bring my troops to face you in battle."

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