

## **Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Assessment of Ali by Western Scholars**

***Professor Nicholson***

In his book, A Literary History of the Arabs, Nicholson remarks as follows: "Ali was a gallant warrior, a wise counselor, a true friend and a generous foe. He excelled in piety and in eloquence, his verses and sayings are famous throughout the Muhammadan east, though few of them can be considered authentic. He can be compared with Montrose and Bayard in the fineness of spirit. He had no talent for the stern realities of statecraft and was overmatched by unscrupulous rivals who knew that war is a game of deceit. Thus his career was in one sense a failure; his authority as Caliph was never admitted while he lived by the whole community. On the other hand he has exerted down to the present day a posthumous influence only second to that of Muhammad himself. Within a century of his death he came to be regarded as the Prophet's successor jure divine; as a blessed martyr, sinless and infallible; and by some even as incarnation of God. The Ali of Shiite legend is not a historical figure glorified, rather does he symbolize in pure ethical fashion the religious aspirations and political aims of a large section of the Muslim world".

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*Source : Alim.org-Ali bin Abu Talib History*