

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

Abu Dhar Ghifari

Othman known by the epithet of "Ghani" was a rich man. Umar had placed restrictions on the purchase of lands by the Arabs in conquered territories. Othman removed these restrictions, with the result that the Arabs became big landlords. Islam stood for an egalitarian society wherein all people were equal politically as well as economically. On account of the liberal policies adopted by Othman, a moneyed class sprang up which took to a luxurious way of life. Men of this class built palatial buildings in Madina. In Syria the Governor Muswiyah a cousin of Othman adopted a princely way of life. In Damascus Abu Dhar Ghifan an eminent Companion vehemently criticized the luxurious way of life of Muawiyah and the men around him. Muawiya complained to Othman, and Othman asked Muawiyah to send Abu Dhar Ghifari to Madina. In Madina Abu Dhar Ghifari criticized Othman for his economic policies. Othman shifted Abu Dhar Ghifari to the interior of the desert at some distance from Madina. When Abu Dhar Ghifari left Madina, Ali addressed him in the following terms: "Abu Dhar, you have suffered because of your good will for God. Therefore you should hope for His mercy. Those people are afraid of you because of their love for the world, You are afraid of these people because of your faith. Give the world to the people for which they are afraid of you, Escape from them with the thing of which you are afraid of them. Withhold your faith from them, and do not covet what is dear to them as compared with faith. In the Hereafter, verily you will stand to profit while they will be at loss. O Abu Dhar bear in mind that the people may or may not like you, but you should not abandon what you deem to be the Truth. These people will befriend you only when you befriend their world. That will be a great price for you to pay. Therefore there should be no regret when they turn you out of their world. A better Hereafter awaits you."

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