

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Election of Ali as the Caliph

The Dissidents

Although Ali was elected by an overwhelming majority there were some persons who abstained from offering him their allegiance. The Umayyads by and large abstained from participating in the process of election. After the assassination of Othman most of them had escaped to Syria. The few Umayyads who were still in Madina remained in their homes. Saad b Abi Waqas did not offer any allegiance, but he assured Ali that he had no ill will against him, and his failure to take the oath of allegiance should not be construed as an act of any disloyalty to him. Abdullah b Umar abstained from offering allegiance, but he assured Ali that no harm could be expected from him. The men of "Ahl-i-Safa" of the Sufi bent of mind abstained from offering allegiance as they were not interested in politics. Talha and Zubair remained absent. There is some difference in the account pertaining to the allegiance of these two companions. According to one account they did not offer any allegiance to Ali, and slipped away from the city at the time when the other people had gathered in the mosque. According to another account, the rebels fetched Talha and Zubair to the mosque, and made them offer allegiance to Ali. According to one account the hand that Talha offered in allegiance to Ali was maimed and disfigured because of wounds received in the various wars. This was regarded as a bad augury by some of the persons assembled in the mosque.

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