

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Ayesha

Ayesha in Makkah

When Othman was assassinated, Ayesha was not in Madina. She had gone to Makkah a few weeks earlier for performing the pilgrimage. She came to know of the assassination of Othman and the election of Ali as the Caliph when she was on the way back to Madina. She was much shocked at the murder of Othman. She felt unhappy at the election of Ali, with whom she had outstanding differences. On hearing of the news instead of proceeding to Madina, she retraced her steps, and returned to Makkah. Othman had been a popular figure among the Quraish of Makkah. When in Syria, Muawiyah raised the cry for the vengeance of the blood of Othman, the cry was echoed in Makkah as well. The people of Makkah temporized in taking the oath of allegiance to Ali. The tendency of the people of Makkah was to wait and watch further developments. The people of Makkah had at that stage no leader with them under whose direction they could take a specific course of action.

The return of Ayesha to Makkah changed the situation. In view of the great prestige and respect that she commanded as the "Mother of the Faithful," she soon assumed the role of a leader, and the people assembled around her in large number. During the lifetime of Othman she had been critical of his policies, but after his death she decided to espouse his cause, and join in the cry seeking vengeance for his blood. Her address to the people of Makkah is on record. She said: "O ye people! The rebels from different provinces have murdered the innocent Othman. These people levied some allegation against the Caliph at the outset, and when they could not establish the charges against him, they rebelled against him. What had been ordained as unlawful by Allah was made lawful by the regicides. They violated the sanctity of the city of the Holy Prophet in the sacred month of "Haj" when the shedding of blood is prohibited. They plundered and looted the citizens of Madina. By God, a single finger of Othman was more precious than the lives of all the regicides. The mischief has not been crushed, and the murderers of Othman have not been brought to book. It befits you now to seek satisfaction on these murderers. It is vengeance alone for the blood of Othman that can vindicate the honor of Islam. "

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