

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - The Battle of the Camel

Negotiations for peace

When Ali came to know of the success of the Mission of his emissary Qa'aqa to Ayesha, Talha and Zubair, he felt very happy. The two armies encamped in the "Wadi-us-Saba" (Valley of the Lion) near the village of Khuraiba outside Basra, facing each other. It was decided that the following day when the two armies assembled in the valley, the terms of peace would be negotiated, and the proclamation of peace would be issued.

The following day as the two forces assembled, Ali posted a man in the center carrying a copy of the Holy Quran on his head. This was indicative of the desire on the part of Ali to decide the dispute peacefully in the light of the teachings of the Holy Quran.

Ali rode to the center of the valley, and called upon Talha and Zubair to step forward to meet him. When Talha and Zubair came forward he asked them why they had rebelled against his authority when they had taken the oath of allegiance to him. They said that they had taken the oath under duress and it was not binding. He asked them, after all, what did they want. They said that they wanted "Qasas" for the assassination of Othman. Ali said that this matter could be considered under conditions of peace. Talha and Zubair said that if Ali was prepared to take "Qasas" from the murderers of Othman, they were prepared to make peace and acknowledge Ali as the Caliph. Ali said that he would consider their demand favorably.

Turning to Zubair, Ali said: "Have you forgotten that you are my cousin, being a son of my paternal aunt? Can you not recall that at one of our sittings with the Holy Prophet, he commended me to you? The Holy Prophet at that time predicted that I was to suffer harm at your hands, and you undertook to safeguard my interests and not to forsake me," At these words, Zubair shuddered and said "All of you have spoken the truth. I had forgotten the interview with the Holy Prophet. Now that you have reminded me of that, I will not harm your interests and would be prepared to make peace with you."

The meeting ended in an atmosphere of goodwill from both the sides. Thereafter the two armies retired to their camps, and the general impression was that peace would be made, and war would be avoided. Emissaries were exchanged between the two sides, and by the evening the general impression was that the terms of peace had been mutually agreed upon, and that the necessary peace treaty would be executed the following day.

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