

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - In Quest of Peace with Muawiyah

The task before Ali

After Ali had established his capital at Kufa, the task before him was to tackle the problem of Syria through peaceful means, if possible, and through the use of sword, if otherwise. Muawiyah had defied the authority of Ali and in the interests of the solidarity of Islam. It was necessary that Muawiyah should be persuaded to submit to the authority of Ali, and if he was not inclined to listen to reason, action should be taken against him as any government would take an action against a rebel.

As a matter of fact, Ali planned an action against Syria immediately after his election. The expedition against Syria had to be deferred as the response of the people of Madina for a war against Syria was poor. Later, complications arose when Talha and Zubair defected, and under the leadership of Ayesha the confederates occupied Basra. In the circumstances, Ali was forced to march to Basra instead of Syria. Ali won the victory at Basra, and the revolt of the confederates was successfully suppressed, though with considerable loss.

Ali had a plan to march against Syria just after his victory of Basra. The expedition had however to be deferred. Ali needed some time to consolidate his rule at Kufa. Adequate response from the people of Kufa to undertake an expedition against Syria was not forthcoming. Further complications arose when a revolt broke out in Seestan. This revolt was suppressed with some difficulty.

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