

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Ali, The Father of Sufism

Doctrine of preference

Ali also enunciated the doctrine of preference. He stood for preferring the claims of others to one's own claims. He gave an outstanding demonstration of this doctrine when he slept on the bed of the Holy Prophet on the night of the Holy Prophet's migration from Makkah, when the infidels were seeking to slay him. Ali risked his life for the sake of the Holy Prophet, because of the preference that Ali gave to the life of the Holy Prophet as compared with his own life. After the death of the Holy Prophet, Ali considered that he was the most deserving person to be elected as the Caliph. When his claims were overlooked and other persons were elected as the Caliph, he offered them allegiance in pursuance of the doctrine of preference. It was this spirit of preference that motivated Ali to plunge on the thick of the battle to meet the challenge of the enemy regardless of his own personal safety. It is related that after the ascension, the Holy Prophet gave Ali a mantle, he asked him as to the use that he would make of the mantle. Ali said that he would use it to cover the faults of others. The true Sufi way lies in covering the faults of others.

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