

Khalifa Uthman bin Affan - Governors of Uthman

Deposition of Saeed b Al'Aas

In Syria, Amir Muawiyah tried to deal with these conspirators diplomatically. He provided them with various facilities, and conferred many favors on them. He held several sittings with them, and tried to make them see reasons. The conspirators continued their campaign of vilification against the Quraish, and even demanded the deposition of Amir Muawiyah. Amir Muawiyah reported the matter to Uthman and he directed that these men be sent to Jazira where the ruler was Abdur Rahman.

Abdur Rahman was the son of the famous General Khalid b Walid. He treated with these conspirators harshly. The strong measures adopted by Abdur Rahman had a salutary effect, and the conspirators offered repentance. Abdur Rahman sent one of these conspirators Ashtar to Madina, and sent a message to Uthman through him that as they had repented they might be allowed to return to Kufa.

In Madina, Ashtar saw Uthman, and offered repentance on his own behalf, and on behalf of the other conspirators. At that time Saeed b Al 'Aas was also in Madina. Uthman accepted the repentance of Ashtar and the other conspirators, and allowed them to return to Kufa.

Ashtar and the other conspirators returned to Kufa, while Saeed was still in Madina. Back in Kufa, the conspirators violated their pledge, and once again resorted to a campaign of vilification. This time Saeed b Al'Aas was the main target of criticism. Addressing the people at the gate of the main mosque in Kufa, Ashtar said that he had been to Madina, where he had come to know that Saeed b Al 'Aas had recommended to Uthman that strong measures should be taken against the people of Kufa. They were to be enslaved and deported and their properties were to be confiscated.

The deputy that Saeed b Al 'Aas had left at Kufa tried to explain to the people that all this talk of enslavement and confiscation of properties was false, and there was no such move in any quarter. The people paid no heed to him and raised slogans demanding the deposition of Saeed b Al 'Aas . The persons who were pro-Government had to remain confined to their houses, while the streets of Kufa came to be flocked by agitators vociferous in their demand for the deposition of Saeed b Al'Aas .

Over one thousand persons from Kufa decided to go to Madina to place their demand before Uthman. Uthman listened to them at Madina. He tried to explain to them that all their grievances were imaginary, and Saeed b Al 'Aas had made no recommendation to which they were objecting. They, however, stuck test to their demand for the deposition of Saeed b Al 'Aas . Uthman felt that argument with the rebels was of no avail. In order to pacify them he said, "If you do not want Saeed as your Governor, whom do you want?" They said, "Abu Musa Ashari may be appointed as our Governor." Uthman said, "All right, I accept your demand in the interests of peace although I know that no blame rests on Saeed b Al 'Aas . I depose him and appoint Abu Musa Ashari as your Governor. Now go back and be at peace. Now that I have given you the Governor of your own choice, obey him, and let there be no more of unnecessary agitation".

This action of Uthman has been made the subject of criticism in some quarters. There is one school of thought which is critical of Uthman for making a wrong choice in the appointment of Governors. As a matter of fact there was nothing wrong with the appointment of Saeed b Al 'Aas . He was a talented young man whose talents had been acknowledged by Umar. Saeed won brilliant victories in Tabaristan, and that was a feather in his cap.

The other school of thought criticizes Uthman for deposing Saeed when he was not at fault. Although Saeed was not at fault there was nevertheless strong agitation against him, right or wrong. In such circumstances if Saeed was to continue in office, it meant the imposition of a Governor on the people

whom they did not want. In the circumstances, in the interests of public administration, the only course open to Uthman was to recall Saeed from Kufa and appoint in his stead the man they wanted. Uthman hoped that by such action he would take the wind out of the sails of the rebels

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