

AL-KHAWARIJ

REALITY OR LEGEND

ARGUMENTS AND PROOFS
BETWEEN ALI, IBN ABAS
AND THE NAHRAWANEES

Pamphlet no. 3

Juma Muhammad Al-Mazrui

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ وَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَفِيَّهُ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ وَخَلِيلُهُ بَلَّغَ الرِّسَالَةَ وَأَدَّى الْأَمَانَةَ وَنَصَحَ الْأُمَّةَ وَكَشَفَ اللَّهُ بِهِ الْغُمَّةَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.....وبعد: قال الله تعالى:

(١) إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ..

(٢) وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ ...

(٣) إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ (١٠) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا يَسْخَرُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ..

..

(٤) قال رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - : مثل المؤمنين في توادهم وتراحمهم وتعاطفهم كمثل الجسد الواحد إذا اشتكى منه عضو تداعى له سائر الجسد بالحمى والسهر

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is a translation of my book originally written in Kiswahili, my mother tongue, the language that is widely spoken in East Africa and now fast growing in Central Africa. The title for the original work was *Makhamarij Baina Ya Ukweli Na Visa Vya Kutunga*. Usually, translation loses the genius of the original language as every language bears its own logic. Obviously, any incoherence found in the flow of the prose results from the fact that the booklet has been rendered into English from Kiswahili.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go to my brother Shaikh Ali Muhammad Al-Mazrui. He has been the first to go through this booklet, suggest some important ideas and make some corrections which have improved the booklet.

My friend Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdullah Al-Awfi has made very constructive corrections to the booklet. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to him. I am equally indebted to others, ladies and gentlemen who would like to remain anonymous, for their financial contribution without which it would be impossible to print the booklet at present. I am also grateful to Shaikh Said Al-Awfi for his indefatigable efforts to arrange the booklet, make the cover and spend his valuable time to search for a printing press. My gratitude is also due to my friend Shaikh Salim bin Humaid Al-Harmali. He printed this work when it was at its final stage to facilitate my proofreading.

Finally, I wish to emphasize that I am solely responsible for any error found herein, as I had to make choices when they presented their ideas. Indeed, I had to adhere to my own idea sometimes.

Juma Mazrui

PREFACE

Throughout its history, Islamic literature has never experienced a catastrophe as devastating as the one it has undergone pertaining to its history, narratives, and creedal issues. Who is responsible for that? This is perhaps the question that baffles most of the ordinary Muslims.

The story of how and who began the task of forging accounts and interpolating historical writings, began with the story of a tragedy that befell the forebears of the Islamic Nation. The story, briefly, goes that. In the year 23 A.H., Othman bin Affan was appointed Caliph of the Muslims, on the death of Omar. The second half of his tenure was characterized by a tension between him and other Companions of the Prophet; most of the Muslims disagreed with his administration, due to the way he ran politico-economic affairs. Eventually, Othman was killed, and Ali bin Abi Talib was selected new leader of the Muslim. He equally encountered challenges from some Companions of the Prophet which culminated in two sanguinary battles namely the *Battle of Camel* and the *Battle of Siffin*. The *Battle of Siffin* ended in the formation of another politico-military faction – the Nahrawanees. This included almost all the discontent among the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH). In the year 37 A.H., Ali confronted with them and most of them were killed; few survived.

Hence the Islamic Ummah was ideologically and politically divided into three major groups:

- 1) Those who remained under Ali's leadership. These later formed the Shiite school.¹

¹ - But care should be taken not to think that the early Shiites held the like creeds which the contemporary Shiites hold. The difference between the early Shiites and the followers of other schools was strictly confined in the political issues especially the issue of who is rightful to

- 2) Those who were loyal to Mu'awiya and so hostile to Ali and his followers. From them, originated the four Sunni schools of thought, which prefer to restrict to themselves the term: 'Four canonical schools, or four orthodox denominations'.
- 3) Those who sided with the Nahrawanees, notably the Ibadhis who regard the Nahrawanees to be their forerunners particularly in the political concepts.

The time came when everyone wanted to crystallize one's ideas with the aid of the Qur-an and the Prophetic traditions. Definitely, that was impossible: no one could produce such evidence; the clear-cut evidence in the form of Quranic verse or Prophetic tradition that mentioned one particular faction by name as being right. So began two dangerous, destructive tasks. One was to fabricate as many traditions as possible with two major aims: to exonerate and praise the friend in order to have the mass lean towards him, and, simultaneously, to stigmatize the foe and isolate him from the social body and general public.

In this ideo-psychological race, the Shiite school emerged as a leading contender or preferably came up as a winner. There has been no sect, in history, attributing itself to Islam which has forged as many narratives and traditions as the Shiite school has. In Sunni schools, there are also many false accounts, but they are less in quantity and importance than those found in the Shiite school.

On the other hand, there has been almost a general consensus that the third faction, which was composed of all groups of the so-called Khawarij, including Ibadhi school, has never, throughout its history, been engaged in the obscenity of inventing lies against anyone.

lead the Islamic State. The early Shiites believed that Ali was better and more worthy of Islamic leadership than other Sahabas. That was all that made them different from others. Indeed, there were some of them even gave first precedence to Abu Bakr and Omar over Ali. They strictly limited their being malcontent to Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyaan.

Another dangerous task undertaken in the process of exonerating the friend and stigmatizing the foe was the task of purposely misinterpreting the Quranic verses and the Prophetic traditions. Also notable with this blemish, as their authorship is self-evident, has been the Shiite school. It is because of this phenomenon, plus their engagement in the business of fabricating traditions and accounts that early as well as contemporary Muslim scholars have vigorously warned of depending on Shiites' narratives and interpretations. In his *Al-Sunna Wa Makanatuba*, for example, Dr. Mustafa Al-Sibai has this statement to tell us:

Political factions sunk in the quagmire of lie – in considerable and inconsiderable amounts – to invent lies against the Prophet. The Rafidha (Shiites) have been the greatest liars of all.²

Imamu Malik, one of the greatest personalities of Islam, said about the Shiites: “Never narrate anything from them, verily the tell lie”.³ Sharik Al-Qadhi was among the early Shiites but was said to be moderate. In this regard, he says: “Receive narratives from anyone that you meet, except the Rafidha (Shiites), for they fabricate traditions and have them for religion”.⁴ Imamu Al-Shafi states: “I have never seen people whose lie is open as the Rafidha (Shiites)”.⁵ Yazid bin Harun says: “The traditions narrated by all heretics, are to be written (are acceptable), except Rafidha (Shiites), for they lie”.⁶ Dr. Mustafa Al-Sibai, whose words have been previously quoted, says:

² - Dr. Mustafa Al-Sibai *Al-Sunna Wa Makanatuba* p. 96.

³ - Ibn Hajar *Lisanu Al-Mizan* Vol 1, p.10. Al-Dhahabi *Al-Mizan* Vol. 1, p.27, biography no. 73.

⁴ - Op. cit.

⁵ - Op. cit.

⁶ - Op. cit..

As they invented false narratives to show the merits of the Ahlu-Bait, they have also invented other narratives to stigmatize the great Companions of the Prophet, especially the two Sheikhs (Abu Bakr and Omar).⁷

He adds:

Such was how the Rafidha (Shiites) went to extremes in forging narratives which were conformable to their desire. Indeed they (the forged traditions) reached – in quantity – frightening amount to the extent that Al-Khalili⁸ says in his *Al-Irshad*: ‘The Rafidha (Shiites) have fabricated about three hundred thousand traditions concerning the merits of Ahlul-Bait’.⁹

This accusation of the Shiites by the Sunni scholars and researchers is finally confirmed by one of the Shiite Scholars, namely Dr. Musa Al-Musawi. In his *Al-Tashih*, he says the following:

Although we believe that most of the forged narratives from the Imams, were forged after *al-ghiba al-kubra* (the disappearance of Al-Mahdi Al-Muntadhar).....but any impartial researcher will necessarily conclude that even during the time of the Shiite Imams, many narratives were fabricated and ascribed to the Imams, in the like manner as they were fabricated and attributed to the Prophet.¹⁰

He adds:

⁷ - Ibid .p.97.

⁸ - Not the Grand Mufti of Oman. He was one of the specialists in the prophetic traditions.

⁹ - Ibid. p.98

¹⁰ - That is: the accounts were fabricated and then attributed to the Imams and other to the Prophet. Refer to Al-Musawi *Al-Tas-hihu* p.135.

Certainly, the researcher into accounts that the Shiites collected in their books which they authored between the fourth and fifth centuries A.H., will reach the extremely saddening results. For the efforts that were made by some of the Shiite narrators to undermine Islam were equal to the heavens and the Earth in gravity. And I suppose that those Shiite narrators did not merely intend to implant the Shiite beliefs in the hearts (of their followers), but they did also intend to destroy Islam and everything connected to it.¹¹

Few examples of the traditions forged by the Shiites out of uncountable quantity are traditions such as: “(The Prophet said): Ali and I were created from the same clay”..... “To look at Ali is an act of worship”..... “I am like a tree, I am the stem; Ali is the branch; Hasan and Husain are the fruits, and the Shiites are the leaves. Nothing will come from the good except good”.¹²

But the problem of forging narratives was not strictly limited to the Shiites; there has been a lot of fabricated traditions and narratives in the Sunni literature too. Ibn Al-Jawzi, a prominent Sunni scholar, has collected a lot of them in his *Al-Mandhuqat*. Many of these narratives were forged to show the merits of some Sahabas, to defend and exonerate them from mass condemnation as there had been many others who found guilt with them.

One example is the man named Abu Al-'Izz Ibn Kaadish Al-'Ukbarawi. This was one of the Sunni fabricators who, surprisingly, was often proud of his profession of fabricating false traditions! Ibrahim bin Sulaiman, obviously one of the Sunni authorities, says: “I heard Abu Al-'Izz bin Kaadish say: ‘I have fabricated a tradition for the Prophet’”.¹³

¹¹ - Ibid. p.15.

¹² - Dr. Muhammad 'Ajaj Al-Khatib *Al-Sunna Qabla Al-Tashri'i* p. 131.

¹³ - Al-Dhahabi *Al-Siyar* Vol. 14, p. 455-456, biography no. 4723.

Ibn Hajar, in his *Lisanu Al-Mizāan*¹⁴ and Al-Dhahabi, in his *Al-Siyar*¹⁵ quote from Ibn Assakir¹⁶ the following words:

Abu Al-‘Izz Ibn Kaadish told me that he heard someone that had forged a narrative to praise Ali (bin Abi Tali), so I also fabricated mine to praise Abu Bakr.

Surprisingly, yet fortunately, the so-called Khawarij as hinted before, throughout their history, have had their hands clean and free of this evil act – the act of forging false traditions and accounts. Even those who are very much against the so-called Khawarij, have admitted that the Khawarij were never engaged in the business of inventing false accounts. Few instances of their quotations, are as follows:

In his *Al-Mizān*, Al-Dhahabi quotes Abu Daud, one of the most reliable collectors of the Prophetic traditions, as saying: “Among all people who follow their desire,¹⁷ there have been no men whose traditions are authentic as the Khawarij”.¹⁸ This statement was typically quoted by Ibn Hajar in his *Hadyu Al-Sari*¹⁹ and Al-Suyuti in his *Tadribu Al-Rawi*.²⁰

¹⁴ - Vol. 1, p. 218, biography no. 677.

¹⁵- Op. cit.

¹⁶ - In fact, Ibn ‘Asaakir knew Ibn Kaadish very well, because he was his teacher.

¹⁷ - Abu Daud, followed by Ibn Taymiyya, says about the so-called Khawarij: “Among all people who follow their desire”. But then he says: “There have been no men whose traditions are authentic as the Khawarij”. This is one of the most ridiculous statements. How can one follow his own desire, then one strictly commits oneself to narrate only authentic traditions; discarding all fabricated accounts? On the other hands, how can one be a Sunni (follower of the Prophetic traditions) or a follower of Ahlu-Bait while one has sunk in the terrible quagmire of inventing lies and attributing them to the Prophet?

¹⁸ - Al-Dhahabi *Mizanu Al-Itidal* Vol. 4 p. 156 in the biography of (عمران بن حطان) Imran bin Hittan.

¹⁹ - Ibn Hajar *Hadyu Al-Sari: Muqaddimatu Alaa Fat-hi Albari* p.611.

²⁰ - Al-Suyuti: *Tadribu Al-Rawi* p.285..

Another Sunni scholar named Ibn Taymiyya, says in his *Minhaj Al-Sunna*:

No one among the people who follow their desire, the more truthful and more just than the Khawarij.....they do not intend to invent lies, indeed they are very famous for truthfulness to the extent that it has been said that the traditions narrated by them are the most authentic of all.²¹.....No one of them has ever been known for lying.²²..... Their religion is more correct because they do not say lie²³.....The Khawarij never say lie, indeed they are more truthful, braver, and more promise-keeping than they (the Shiites)²⁴The Khawarij are truthful, so their accounts are among the most correct ones²⁵.

In his extensive research, Dr. Mustafa Al-Siba'i concluded:

I have never discovered any narrative that has been fabricated by the Khawarij; I have made an extensive research in books specially authored on fabricated traditions and narratives, I have never found any man among the Khawarij who has been regarded to be among the liars and fabricators of false traditions.²⁶.....And I have searched for evidence which could have supported the allegation of ascribing to the

²¹ - Ibn Taymiyya *Minhaj Al-Sunnah* Vol. 3, p.3. Dr. Al-Siba'i *Al-Sunna Wa Makanatuha Fii Al-Tashrii Al-Islami* p.99- 101.

²² - Ibn Taymiyya *Al-Tafsiru Al-Kabir* Vol. 1, p. 124.

²³ - Ibn Taymiyya *Mukhtasar Minhaji Al-Sunna* Vol. 2, p. 197.

²⁴ - *Ibid* Vol. 1, p. 393.

²⁵ - Ibn Taymiyya *Al-Furqan* p. 227.

²⁶ - Dr. Al-Siba'i *Al-Sunna Wa Makanatuha Fii Al-Tashrii Al-Islami* p.99.

Khawarij the act of forging traditions, but I have found that the evidence is contrary to that...²⁷

Al-Mubarrid, another Muslim scholar of high eminence, says the following about the so-called Khawarij: “All factions of the Khawarij avoid every liar and everyone that commits open sins”.²⁸

Dr. Muhammad ‘Ajaj Al-Khatib, a contemporary researcher and expert at the Prophetic traditions, says:

We have not detected, from the references that are close to us, anything indicating that the Khawarij have ever forged traditions, or even that they have depended upon them (upon forged traditions) in supporting their position and proving their claim.²⁹

Misinterpreting the Quranic verses

As for the issue of misinterpreting the Quranic verses, the Shiites have also been in the front line. Few examples of how they deviated the Quran, can be represented by the verses as: **وَاللّٰهُ الْاَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنٰى** “**And the most beautiful Names belong to Allah....**”³⁰ about whose interpretation the Shiites, in their most authentic book on traditions entitled *Al-Kafi*, quote one of their Imams named Abu Abdillah (Ja'afar Al-Sadiq) as saying: “We (the Imams of the *Ahlu Al-Bait*) are the most beautiful names themselves without which Allah accepts no deed!”³¹.

²⁷ - Op. cit.

²⁸ - Al-Mubarrid *Al-Kamil Fii Al-Lugha Wa Al-Adab* Vol. 2, p.106.

²⁹ - Dr. Muhammad Ajaj Al-Khatib *Al-Sunna Qabla Al-Tadwin* p.204 – 205.

³⁰ - *The Qur-an*: 7, 80.

³¹ - Al-Kuleini *Al-Kafi* Vol. 1, p. 192, *hadith* no. 4, *babu Al-Nawadir*.

“Guide us to the الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ Another example is the verse: **Right Path**”,³³ about which the Shiites say that the Right Paths are two: one in this world; another in the next world. In this world, the Right Path is the (Shiite) Imam.³⁴ Yet there is an account which insists that the Right Path meant in the verse is Imam Ali.³⁵ Concerning parts of two verses **“The guidance (of the Qur-an) is هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ (٢) الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ** thus: **but for those who fear Allah...Those who believe in the unseen**”,³⁶ the Shiites tell an account from their Imam that the meaning of *Those who fear Allah* are the Shiites of Ali, and the meaning of the *unseen* in the verse: *Those who believe in the unseen*, is Al-Hujja Al-the last of the Shiite Imam!³⁷ meaning Al-Mahdi Al-Muntadhar, Ghaib

These few verses, offer themselves for examples of many thousands of other Quranic verses that have undergone distortion and misinterpretation at the hands of the Shiites.

- The Qur-an, Chapter 1, Verse 6.³³

³³ - Muhammad Al-Salihi *Al-Qur-an Wa Fadhaailu Ahlil-Bait* p. 1. More references from which he has quoted the account, are: *Ma'ani Al-Akhbar* p. 32, narrative no. 1, *Kanzu Al-Daqaiq* Vol. 1, p. 60. *Al-Burhan* Vol. 1, p. 118, narrative no. 20.

³⁴ - Muhammad Al-Salihi *Al-Qur-an Wa Fadhaailu Ahlil-Bait* p. 1. More references from which he has quoted the account, are: *Ma'ani Al-Akhbar* p. 32, narrative no. 2, *Nuru Al-Thaqalain* Vol. 1, p. 21, narrative no. 90,94. *Al-Swafi* Vol. 1, p. 126. *Tafsirul Qummi* Vol. 1, p. 41. *Al-Burhan* Vol. 1, p. 118, narrative no. 21. *Tafsirul 'Ayyash* Vol. 1, p. 38, narrative no. 25, *Al-Manaqib* by Ibn Shahr Ashub Vol. 3, p. 89.

- The Qur-an, Chapter 2, Verses no. 2-3.³⁵

³⁶ - Muhammad Al-Salihi *Al-Qur-an Wa Fadhaailu Ahlil-Bait* p. 2. More references from which he has quoted the account, are: *Ikmalu Al-Din Wa Itmamu Al-Ni'ima* Vol. 2, p. 340, narrative no. 20. *Tafsirul 'Ayyash* Vol. 1, p. 44, narrative no. 1. *Taawilu Al-Yati Al-Dhahira* Vol. 1, p. 32, narrative no. 2. *Al-Burhan* Vol. 1, p. 125, narrative no. 5. *Nuru Al-Thaqalain* Vol. 1, p. 31, narrative no. 12. *Kanzu Al-Daqaiq* Vol. 1, p. 86. *Al-Bihar* Vol. 51, p. 29, Vol. 52, p. 124, narrative no. 10.

Because of this abominable culture of lies, the voice of reason has been repeatedly heard from the thinking even among the Shiites themselves calling for reviewing the whole Shiite creed. Also heard, have been cries from the wide spectrum of Islamic intellectualism, suggesting the urgent necessity for overhauling the Shiite narrations.

Finally, considering the fact that there have been many fabricated accounts particularly those which concern the disputes which broke out among the Sahabas, and those which openly justify one school against another, we hereby suggest the importance of studying the history of the Nahrawanees anew, especially when we take into consideration the fact that a great deal of their history was narrated by men such as Abu Mikhnaf – and those of his calibre– who is an unreliable Shiite narrator. Accordingly, in this booklet, you will find a serious contradiction of accounts concerning the same topic, which has been an unavoidable, natural outcome of forging accounts in order to hide the truth.

Juma Mazrui

INTRODUCTION

The issue of the Nahrawanees has always been misconceived, thanks totally to the false propoganda by early Shiites and Umayyad rulers. As a result, many have confused the Khawarij with the Nahrawanees. The former were heretics; the latter were the true followers of the footsteps of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.).

This booklet – the third in series – has been designed with the object of not merely spotlighting the genuineness of the Nahrawanees, but also with the aim of enriching our insight into past events and expanding the horizons of knowledge by analytically studying one of the most important phases in Islamic history – the phase whose political scenario gave rise to three major Islamic schools and several smaller ones. It is an attempt to disillusion the credulous stereotypes, and arouse the enthusiasm of those who are interested in knowing the origins of the Islamic denominations and the bases of their arguments. It has also been designed to demonstrate the arguments and the counter-arguments put forwards by all three factions which emerged as a result of the political division that swept over the body politic. It also shows logically and methodologically which of the arguments is worthy as evidence and so can be taken as proof.

Two of the factions – the Sunnis and the Shiites – were firstly represented by Ibn Abas and subsequently by Ali himself in the discussions they held with the Nahrawanees. Nevertheless, finally Ibn Abas was fully convinced by the evidence of the Nahrawanees and so decided to give up his early ideas and undertake almost the same course the Nahrawanees had undertaken. Yet his participation in the discussion with them could reveal to us what he had when he first justified Ali's course.

Juma Mazrui

SECTION ONE

ARGUMENTS AND PROOFS

IBN ABAS VS THE NAHRAWANEES

We have read in the second volume of this book that, after Imam Ali accepted the truce and returned to the city of Al-Kufa (Iraq), some members of his army splintered. It was this splinter group that came to be known as the people of Nahrawan and later the Khawarij.

If we recall, in the second volume of this work, we gave a brief account of the story in which Imam Ali sent Ibn Abas to talk to the people of Nahrawan. The goal of this meeting was to persuade the splinter group (The Nahrawanees) to rejoin Ali's army against the Syrian army led by Mu'awiya; and if that was not achievable, it was equally important to find out why they separated themselves from Ali's leadership. But what we have not yet revealed, are the Quranic verse on which Ibn Abas³⁷ based his argument; and the counter-argument from the people of Nahrawaan—what did Ibn Abas postulate as his evidence and what did they say to disprove him?

When Ibn Abas went to have a dialogue with the people of Nahrawan, he held the belief that accepting the truce was the right thing to do; therefore, Imam Ali was not wrong in doing so. It is believed that, in expressing his opinion on the issue, Ibn Abas used the following verses:

وَالصَّلْحُ خَيْرٌ

³⁷ - In the second volume, we mentioned the debate held between Ibn Abas and the people of Nahrawan. This, as we said therein, was based upon the account told by Ibn A'atham, the account which is not acceptable to neither Suni nor Ibadhi or Shia! As such, that debate resulted from a fabricated account. Such narration cannot be reliable due to its lack of tangible, scientific proofs.

And the settlement is best...³⁸

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا

But if they (the enemies) incline towards peace, you are also to incline towards peace....³⁹

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ

The Believers are but a single brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between two (contending) brothers...⁴⁰

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّي اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا

If you fear a breach between them, appoint two arbiters: one from his family and another from hers, if they seek to set things aright, Allah will cause their conciliation....⁴¹

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاءٌ مِثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ هَدْيًا بَالِغَ الْكَعْبَةِ

O you who believe! Do not kill game animal while in the Sacred Precincts or in the state of pilgrimage, if any of you does so intentionally, the compensation, following decision made by two just men, will be a domestic animal equivalent

³⁸ - Chapter 4, Verse 128.

³⁹ - Chapter 8, Verse 61.

⁴⁰ - Chapter 49, Verse 9.

⁴¹ - Chapter 4, Verse 35.

**to the one killed, being an offering brought to the
Ka'aba...⁴²**

The evidence drawn by Ibn Abas from these verses is that these verses require us to make peace and reconciliation between quarreling groups or individuals. We find that this same opinion and reasoning held by Ibn Abas, was also shared among the supporters of Imam Ali. Because the dispute between Ali and Mu'awiyahad the potential to undermine the unity and security of the Muslim Nation if left unsolved or unsettled, it was seen by the supporters of Ali that, Ali was not wrong in accepting the idea of making arbitration with Mu'awiya.

It is believed that, in his understanding, Ibn Abas relied on those verses in his attempt to bring peaceful solution among Muslims. But, when we examine the whole story carefully and fairly, we find that the opponents of the People of Nahrawan, blinded by their bias, have been living in the world full of contradictions and they have been holding to it with conviction. It is clear that those who maintain that the People of Nahrawan were guilty have elicited their conclusion from historical sources which suggest that it was the people of Nahrawan who hatched the idea of arbitration and that they were so persuasive in achieving it, that they forced Ali into accepting the arbitration. These historical records also suggest that the Nahrawanees later turned around and blamed Ali for entering arbitration with Mu'awiya. Thus, the Nahrawanees were blamed not only for their act to secede from the Central Command under Ali's Leadership but were also condemned for suggesting the idea of arbitration and forcing Ali into accepting it.

One should be amazed to learn that, while on one hand, some historical sources blamed the People of Nahrawan for engineering arbitration to

⁴² - Chapter 5, Verse 95. I have never come across any book on history which states that Ibn Abas proved his case depending on the first three verses. It is only some articles I have gone through, which attribute these verses to Ibn Abas as being among his proofs. But again, care should be taken not to confuse between my statement thus: "I have never come across any book on history..." with the statement such as: "there is no book on history...."

settle the dispute, on the other hand, Ibn Abas is said to have acknowledged that the Nahrawanees strongly rejected the idea of arbitration proposed by the Syrians. So it was evident up to this moment that, Ibn Abas was the one very much in favour of arbitration. That was why, to prove his case, he pointed out verses which show that reconciliation is compatible with the Quranic teachings. Therefore, it is illogical for any rational minded person to conclude that those who were supposed to be bad and evil for putting forward the arbitration idea (The Nahrawanees) were the same people who strongly rejected their own idea! Strangely, Ibn Abas was praised as a good man for suggesting and working in favor of the arbitration.

Surely, we can all agree that it is good to be fair; so let us put the blame where it belongs. The bad and evil are those who fabricated the narratives with the aim of hiding the truth and beautifying the lies to mislead people. The ignorant is a close-minded person who sees no fault in his champions. Such person uses two different standards to measure two identical things. And so, in one narrative the Nahrawanees have been portrayed as monsters for supporting the idea of arbitration; in another narrative, Ibn Abas has been highly commended as a good man for supporting the same idea! Such is the direct and natural outcome of the fabricated narratives – the contradictions found in this historic event.

NAHRAWANEES' RESPONSE

In response to what Ibn Abas had presented, the people of Nahrawaan argued that there was a significant difference between the verses Ibn Abas referred to and the verse which was taken to justify Ali's war against Mu'awiya and his Syrian army. In the verses Ibn Abas referred to, Allah did not mention any ruling nor did He make any decision between contending parties, instead, He assigned the task of making the decision

to men.⁴³Whereas, in the verse which gave Ali the right to fight a war against Mu'awiya, Allah Himself has mentioned step by step the measures that should be taken and decided on what should be done at each step. Thus, Allah lies down the ruling in this case. The verse states that:

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى
فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ..

If two parties among the believers fall into a fight, make peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against another, then (all of you) fight against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah....⁴⁴

It will be seen that the above verse holds different meaning and conveys a different message from the verses put forward by Ibn Abas as his evidence. The verses Ibn Abas came up with, neither ordain us to take any particular decision when reconciling between disputing or contending parties nor do they direct us into issuing any particular ruling against those who have killed game animals while in the Sacred Precincts or in the state of pilgrimage. While the verse upon which Ali and his Iraki army depended on as their proof to justify their war against Mu'awiya and his Syrian troops, gives the clear decision of what should be done against a rebellious group.

Let us examine, for instance, this verse which Ibn Abas presented as his evidence. The verse says:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا

⁴³ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 12. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 679. Al-Baladhuri, *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 122.

⁴⁴ - Chapter 49, Verse 9.

إِصْلَاحاً يُوقِّعُ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا

If you fear a breach between them, appoint two arbiters: one from his family and another from hers, if they seek to set things aright, Allah will cause their conciliation....⁴⁵

This verse basically orders us to reconcile between man and his wife in case of misunderstanding or breach. But the steps that ought to be taken when resolving such domestic disputes, have not been mentioned. The arbiters are generally required to do their best, in being fair and just, to reach a peaceful, acceptable resolution for the concerned parties. When you compare and contrast the two mentioned verses you will notice that they are intended for different purposes. In the verse which gave Ali the right to wage war against Mu'awiya and his Syrian troops, Allah delegated no one to rule and decide on the issue. But He rather ordered the believers to abide by what He had ruled. On the other hand, what Ibn Abas armed himself with, was the verse that Allah granted deciding role to two fair and just arbiters. That is a clear and grave difference of the two verses. So we can say with confidence that Ibn Abas's analogy of linking this verse with the conflict of war between Ali and Mu'awiya is debatable.

⁴⁵ - Chapter 4, Verse 35.

THE ACCURATE ANALOGY

To clarify their position, the Nahrawanees said to Ibn Abas that Allah says :

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا...

...

As to the thief male or female, cut off his or her hands.....⁴⁶

In another verse, He says :

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ

The woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each of them with hundred stripes.....⁴⁷

The Nahrawanees asked Ibn Abas : ‘If a man and a woman are caught in fornication or adultery; likewise if all legal procedures prove that a man is guilty of the crime of theft, will it be Islamically permissible that we make reconciliation for them? In reply, Ibn Abas said : ‘But Allah says : **‘As adjudged by two just men among you’.**⁴⁸

⁴⁶ - Chapter 5, Verse 38. Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 12-13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 679. Al-Baladhuri, *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 122.

⁴⁷ - Chapter 64, Verse 2. Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 12-13. Al-Baladhuri, *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 122.

⁴⁸ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 679. Ibn Abi Shaiba, *Al-Musannaf* Vol. 8, p. 727-728, narrative no. 37.

The verse Ibn Abas points out to support his idea, is part of the verse we quoted before concerning what verdicts are to be issued against the act of killing game animals while in the Sacred Area or while in pilgrimage. In its complete quotation, the verse says :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَدًّا
فَجَزَاءٌ مِثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ هَدْيًا بَالِغَ الْكَعْبَةِ

O you who believe! Do not kill game animal while in the Sacred Precincts or in the state of pilgrimage, if any of you does so intentionally, the compensation, following decision made by two just men, will be a domestic animal equivalent to the one killed, being an offering brought to the Ka'aba...

Again the Nahrawanees asked Ibn Abas : ‘Are you comparing the law relating to the killing of game animal on the sacred land or the law that is intended to resolve the misunderstandings that occur between man and his wife, with the law that is intended to govern the matters of greater magnitude such as the act of shedding of Muslims’ blood?’⁴⁹ Then they went on to say:

⁴⁹ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13. It seems that the logic of Ibn Abas, lies in the analogy between two things:

- 1) Since the Muslims are required to settle domestic disputes taking place between man and his wife, on the same basis, it is right for the dispute, whose impact on the Muslim society as a whole is so far-reaching to the point that it has already led to the bloodshed, to be settled.
- 2) Equally, it is logical to reason that, as long as those who are in the Sacred Precincts or in the State of Pilgrimage, if they kill a game animal, are ordered to compensate following the adjudgement by two just men, no doubt the shedding of Muslims’ blood has a better claim to be dealt with diplomatically and so must be stopped through talks and negotiation. These two were the observations of Ibn Abas as pertaining to the conflict of the war.

In their opinion, the Nahrawanees regarded Ibn Abas’s analogical inference to be irrelevant on the grounds that it was contradictory to the fundamentals of Islamic law. It has been shown that the analogy made by Ibn Abas has been founded upon two different concepts (*Al-Qiyasu*

Let us, for example, review the meaning of the verse concerning the one that has killed a game animal which you have put forward as your evidence. The requirement stated in this verse is that : **‘As adjudged by two just men among you’**. Are you saying that Amru bin Al-As is a man of justice when it was he who spilt our blood yesterday ?⁵⁰ If you believe that he is just, then we (including you and Ali) are not just because we all fought the war against Mu’awiya and Amru bin Al-’As.⁵¹ Worse than that, was

ma’u al-faariq). Worse still, this analogy if not refuted, it will inevitably override the Quranic verse that was perfectly appropriate to the situation. Despite of what has been said, One should not classify Ibn Abas’s suggestions as the *Qiyas Al-Awla*. This has been shown to be erroneous as well. That is because Allah assigns men to make decision on minor issues and those of less importance; while He Himself takes charge of major issues of great importance. It is clear, therefore, that the Nahrawanees were very far-sighted on the subject.

⁵⁰ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13.

⁵¹ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 679. Al-Baladhuri *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 122. But one may argue that the words: “Do you have faith in Amru bin Al-As to be a man of justice when it was he who spilt our blood yesterday ?⁵¹ If you believe that he is just, then we (with you, who sided with Ali in his war against Mu’awiya and Amru bin Al-’As) are not just because we fought war against him (Amru bin Al-’As)”, are disputable. For the fact that one man is just does not necessarily entail that his opponents are unjust, since there are moments when man is sincere in what he does even if, in reality, he is wrong, but he thinks himself to be right and frank. In this state, it is not fair to disqualify him from being among the just.

In response to the above probable and reasonable explanation, it is important to differentiate between *ilmu al-dhahir* (the knowledge of the *seen*) and *ilmu al-ghaib* (the knowledge of the *unseen*). The former is where we, the human beings, are required to base our judgement on, whereas the later is exclusively attributed to Allah. On this basis, if a man committed any wrong but his intention was good, then we – the people, having merely the knowledge which never goes beyond the limits of the visible world, are ordered to judge him for his deeds regardless of whether his intention was good or bad. Allah alone will judge his intention. Indeed, Mu’awiya and Amru bin Al-’As committed many crimes openly and publically; which explained why they were renounced by most of the Muslims of their time. Moreover, the Prophet had predicted their rebellion many years before the events of the battle of *Siffin* and its aftermath. The Prophet said to Amar bin Yasir: “You will be killed by a bellious group”. In fact, what the Prophet predicted came to pass when Amar bin Yasir was killed by Mu’awiya’s soldiers. But it is also possible for others to argue that prior to the killing of Ammar, Mu’awiya and his followers did not know who would kill him. The answer to that

your act of authorizing men to make arbitration in a matter that had been already decided by Allah Himself in His Book.⁵² For Allah has already made His decision against rebellious groups, like that of Mu'awiya, that they are to be fought until they surrender and return to the Right Path. Otherwise, they are to be eradicated. Indeed, before we waged war against them we had called them to the Book of Allah several times.....⁵³

Such was the response of the People of Nahrawaan to Ibn Abas. But, in retrospect to the Nahrawanees' words when they asked Ibn Abas to consider the following:

Let us, for example, review the meaning of the verse concerning the one that has killed game animal which you have put forward as your evidence. The verse says : **'As adjudged by two just men among you'**. Do you have faith in Amru bin Al-As to be a man of justice when it was he who spilled our blood yesterday ?

we read in Ibn A'atham's *Al-Futuh* the answer of Ibn Abas to the above question. Ibn Abas was quoted by Ibn A'atham as saying: "O men! Amru bin Al-'As was not an arbiter, why then oppose us because of him? He was but an arbiter representing Mu'awiya".⁵⁴

This was Ibn Abas' statement according to the account narrated by Ibn A'atham. Certainly, for those endowed with analytical and critical minds, it is very difficult to agree with Ibn A'atham that a man of profound knowledge like Ibn Abas could discuss intellectual issues that way!

can be expressed in two simple questions: did they cease the war after Amar was killed? Did they confess that they were wrong and repent of their sins?

⁵² - This is the truth to which every believer in Allah and the last day, has to surrender.

⁵³ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13.

⁵⁴ - Ibn A'atham, *Al-Futuh* Vol. 4, p. 94.

To understand better the Nahrawanees objection, consider the fact that Ibn Abas had founded his argument on the verse thus: **‘As adjudged by two just men among you’**.⁵⁵ It is clear, therefore, according to this verse, that the number of arbiters required to pursue the issue and render a decision thereon is two arbitrators. In the case of Ali and Mu’awiya, the two men who were entrusted with the responsibility of making peace between them, were Abu Musa and Amru bin Al-’As. As for Amru bin Al-’As, Ibn Abas says: ‘He was not an arbiter’. So the natural question that arises is: if ‘Amru bin Al-’As was not an arbiter, where were those two arbiters whom the Qur-an obliged to undertake the task of judgment? You have seen that the verse which Ibn Abas has relied on to defend Ali’s position on the crisis has suggested that the decision must be made by two just men among Muslims. Is it imaginable that Ibn Abas wanted to substantiate his position with the verse which strongly opposed him?

In case, one claims that Amru bin Al-’As was also regarded to be a lawful arbiter, then the question the Nahrawanees asked Ibn Abas: ‘Do you have faith in Amru bin Al-’As to be a man of justice’ will be a logically acceptable question. This question is a double edged sword for the people of Nahrawan. On one side, the verse Ibn Abas has used for his evidence is not worthy as evidence; for if Amru bin Al-’As was not an arbiter as Ibn Abas puts it, then it means that the case whose verdict must necessarily be issued by two arbiters, was adjudged by one man. On the other side, if Amru bin Al-’As was regarded to be a legal arbiter as the Syrians might claim, he did not deserve to be entrusted with the responsibility of making decision particularly on such great issues underlying the core of the Muslims’ unity; because he lacked the quality of being just.

⁵⁵ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 679.

IBN ABAS CHANGES HIS STANCE AFTER HE KNEW THE ARGUMENTS OF THE NAHRAWANEES

After having heard the air-tight proofs from the Nahrawanees, Ibn Abas unhesitatingly decided to change his position as he realized where the truth was. Books written on history and narratives state that, after his debate with the Nahrawanees, Ibn Abas said: “(The People of Nahrawan) have been on the Right Path”.⁵⁶ Another account – elaborating the debate – says that Ibn Abas: “Could not crush their proofs”⁵⁷. Another narrative says that Ibn Abas went back “Without being able to do anything”.⁵⁸ Another account reports that: “He could prove nothing to them”.⁵⁹ Yet another account bears witness that: “The Nahrawanees established their proofs to him”.⁶⁰

These are accounts narrated by different Muslim scholars. Although they have used different wordings, but they hold similar implication that Ib Abas could not prove them wrong. Reversely, as the accounts state, the people of Nahrawan emerged from the debate very victorious. This can be taken to explain why Ibn Abas refused to take part in Ali’s war against the Nahrawanees. Actually, after he verbally clashed with Imam Ali, Ibn Abas said:

والله لأن ألقى الله بما في بطن هذه الأرض من عقيانها ولجينها وبطلاع ما على ظهرها
أحب إلي من أن ألقاه وقد سفكت دماء هذه الأمة لأنال بذلك الملك والإمارة

⁵⁶- Al-Shammakhi, *Al-Siyar* Vol. 1, p. 72, or as the English put it: “they have hit the nail on the head”.

⁵⁷ - Abu Qahtaan, *Al-Siyar* p. 107.

⁵⁸ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 18, Al-Barrad *Al-Jawaahir* p. 122.

⁵⁹ - Ibn Abi Shaibah, *Al-Musannaf* Vol. 15, p. 312.

⁶⁰ - Al-Ya’aqubi, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 2, p. 191.

I swear by Allah, it is better for me that I meet Allah with all that are beneath the Earth, starting with its gold and silver, and all that its surface is full with than meeting Him with my hands having spilt blood of this umma (Islamic Nation) so that I may attain a kingship or leadership.⁶¹

Another account quotes Ibn Abas as saying:

ولو كان أخذي المال باطلاً كان أهون من أن أشرك في دم مؤمن.

If my act of taking money was wrong, that could be easier to me than taking part in shedding the blood of a believer.⁶²

We can learn from these statements that, at this point, Ibn Abas had developed a disapproving attitude towards the war fought against the People of Nahrawan. This was a complete change of heart from how he felt about Ali's war against Talha and Zubair at Basra, and subsequently, Ali's war against Mu'awiya at Siffin where he was in front-line in both wars. It is clear that, in this war against the Nahrawanees, Ibn Abas found fault with Ali and condemned him for his unjustifiably wrong act of fighting those fellow Sahabas⁶³ of Nahrawan, for after he had the dialogue with them, Ibn Abas realized where the truth laid. He accepted

⁶¹ - Al-Baladhuri, *Al-Ansab* Vol. 2, p. 398. Ibn Abd Rabbi, *Al-'Iqdu Al-Farid* Vol. 4, p. 326. Similar to it, can also be found in *Al-Futuh* by Ibn A'atham Vol. 4, p. 75.

⁶² - Al-Qalhati, *Al-Kashf* Vol. 2, p. 251. IbnAbdiRabih, *Al-'Iqdu Al-Farid* Vol. 4, p. 331. Both narratives have been quoted from Al-Sabi'i's *Al-Khawarij Wa Al-Haqiqatul Ghaiba*, even so I have referred to the original sources for more investigation, with the exception of one book – *Al-Kashf* by Al-Qalhati, which I could not find.

⁶³ - Many, if not most, of the People of Nahrawan – who were the origin of the Ibadhi political ideology – were Sahaba. Indeed – as hinted in other parts of this book – the Nahrawanees were the most knowledgeable scholars of the Sahabas as we shall prove it in other volumes of the book *Inshaa Allah*.

that he was wrong and the Nahrawanees were right. Certainly, there is a lesson to be learnt in this experience that the accurate criterion with which to draw a distinction between right and wrong is not a coin-flip, but rather the Qur'an and the authentic Prophetic traditions.

IBN ABAS DETACHES HIMSELF FROM ALI

Having been fully convinced by the position of the Nahrawanees and the evidence they had for their secession from Ali's leadership, Ibn Abas also detached himself from Ali and set out for Mecca.⁶⁴ In spite of the fact that the basic reason for Ibn Abas to leave Ali and go to Mecca, emanated from their differences in *bait al-mal*⁶⁵ from which Ibn Abas took what he regarded to be his lawful portion of the money, their differences were not exclusively restricted to that issue. Their misunderstanding was compounded by the fact that they were on opposing sides of the issue of the Nahrawanees particularly after the emergence of their new political movement.

To appreciate this better, consider the accounts we have previously quoted. You will find that they clearly testify that the clash between Ali and Ibn Abas was basically sparked by the issue of *bait al-mal*. However, consider Ibn Abas's statement thus:

If my act of taking money was wrong, that could be easier to me than taking part in shedding the blood of a believer.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 20.

⁶⁵ - Literally means *House of money* or *House of properties*. It is where the Muslims – on the order of the Imam – pay their alms and charities and then, following the direction of the Imam, they are distributed among the poor and the needy.

⁶⁶ - Al-Qalhati, *Al-Kashf* Vol. 2, p. 251. IbnAbdiRabih, *Al-'Iqdu Al-Farid* Vol. 4, p. 331.

In this statement, what precisely Ibn Abas meant to say to Ali was that: if I disagree with you on the issue of *bait al-mal*, then I am strongly opposing you on the issue of the People of Nahrawan. It was about this time in history that Ibn Abas detached himself from Ali's leadership with almost the same reasons as those of the Nahrawanees. Naturally, one would expect those followers of Ali and of Mu'awiya who harshly judged the people of Nahrawan, would have judged Ibn Abas using the same standards since what they viewed to be a crime was shared in common between Ibn Abas and the Nahrawanees. Ibn Abas abandoned Ali, so did the People of Nahrawan. Unfortunately, you have never heard, and will perhaps never hear anyone – be he a Shi'ite or Sunni – call Ibn Abas Khawarij, nor will you hear that Talha and Zubair are called Khawarij though Ibn Abas shared almost the same position with Nahrawanees on this issue, and Talha and Zubair fought severe, illegal, internecine wars against the rightful and lawful Imam – alas! Crimes are the same, but verdicts are different!⁶⁷

Thus Ibn Abas, having seen the accuracy of the proofs advanced by the Nahrawanees, decided to abandon Ali as the Nahrawanees did, for what he sought was the evidence; not the other way round. Indeed, verses – on this subject – are self-evident for those on whom Allah has bestowed the faculty of understanding. Consider the verse:

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى
فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ..

...

⁶⁷ - Partiality and prejudice are among the basic problems that have led many to going astray! For example, if an ordinary man is found guilty, he will be condemned or even called infidel! But when the similar crime is committed by a Sahaba, it will be said that he has tried his best but has mistaken! Mu'awiya seceded from the Central Government led by Ali and fought him a fierce, bloody war which cost thousands of innocent lives of the Sahabas and their followers without any logically acceptable reason, yet he is praised as being a man of high morality. The Nahrawanees separated themselves from Ali on the grounds which even Ibn Abas himself agreed with; but they were branded as heretics, khawarija and so on.

If two parties among the believers fall into a fight, make peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against another, then (all of you) fight against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah...⁶⁸

Then in many of its verses, the Qur-an emphasizes that any decision made in Islam should never contradict Allah's decision, and if it does then it is regarded to be null and void. Read, for example, the following verses:

إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ

The command (decision) is for no one but Allah.⁶⁹

فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ

So judge between them by what Allah has revealed (to you).⁷⁰

Then describing the consequences of those who fail to judge in accordance with the Revelation sent down to the Prophet, Allah says :

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ.....فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ...
... فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

⁶⁸ - Chapter 49, Verse 9.

⁶⁹ - Chapter 12, Verse 40-67.

⁷⁰ - Chapter 5, Verse 48.

If any does not judge by what Allah has revealed, they are unbelievers ⁷¹they are wrong-doers ⁷²those are rebels⁷³

Three extremely unpleasant terminologies are simultaneously applicable to anyone whose verdict or judgement contradicts the judgement of Allah. In this sense, when Allah said: **“If one of them transgresses beyond bounds against another, then (all of you) fight against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah...”**no one has the authority to decide otherwise since Allah Himself has taken the charge of making decision. It is clear, hitherto, that the Nahrawanees’ stance was supported by rigid Qur-anic evidence as strong as any rock mountain in Southern Arabia.

⁷¹ - Chapter 5, Verse 44.

⁷² - Chapter 5, Verse 45.

⁷³ - Chapter 5, Verse 47.

SECTION TWO

DISCUSSION BETWEEN IMAM ALI AND THE NAHRAWANEES

The previous section has been written with the object of analytically surveying the discussion that was held between Ibn Abas and the Nahrawanees. It was also about the result of the discussion, as it culminated in the detachment of Ibn Abas from Ali's leadership and in the justification of the Nahrawanees' position. In this section, we shall have a look at the discussion held between Imam Ali and the Nahrawanees. We shall also quote and discuss the statements by two eminent Muslim scholars, Al-Mubarrid and Al-Shahrastani, who had also something to say on this subject; yet their arguments have been found to be as erroneous as those put forwards by Ali and Ibn Abas.

Ali's Debate with the Nahrawanees

There is another account which states that subsequently Imam Ali in person went to the town of Nahrawan in order to hold talk with the Nahrawanees. Whether Ali defeated them in this debate and managed to convince them to return to his movement or he was defeated by them; is once again where the accounts contradict one another. The account narrated by Al-Tabari in his *Al-Taarikh*, followed by Ibn Al-Athir in his *Al-Kamil*, for example, states that: "All (the Nahrawanees) returned (to rejoin Ali)."⁷⁴ But according to Ibn A'atham in his *Al-Futub*, those who rejoined Ali among the Nahrawanees as a result of the discussion, numbered eight thousand, while few others stuck to their stance. He says:

⁷⁴ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 679.

“He exempted eight thousand of them, and four thousand persisted in fighting a war against him”.⁷⁵

Points to consider

No extensive survey or profound knowledge is needed in order to detect the fabrication of these accounts. The very debate itself which was held between Ali and the Nahrawanees is self-evident on that. Consider carefully the following parts of the debate and the points found therein:

Having gone to Nahrawan in order to discuss with the Nahrawanees, Ali – according to the narrative by Al-Tabari – said to them:

Why detach yourselves from me? They replied: ‘because of your acceptance of reconciliation on the day of the *Siffin* battle’. (Ali) said to them: ‘By Allah! I ask you: ‘do you remember when they⁷⁶ raised the copies of the Qur-an (as a sign of wishing peace), you said: ‘let us respond to the Book of Allah’. I told you: ‘I know these men better, they are neither religious nor are they the men who follow the guidance of the Qur-an.....but you opposed my idea.⁷⁷

This was one of the points raised by Imam Ali against the People of Nahrawaan. Unfortunately, no response at all to this point was quoted from the Nahrawanees. Adversely, the narrative has gone further even to show that the Nahrawanees surrendered to this statement and agreed with Imam Ali! But the first and basic question to ask ourselves, is that: is this account authentic or not? To provide an answer to this question is very important in appreciating the reality of this account. When you look at it carefully and analytically, you will find that there is a lot of signs

⁷⁵ - Ibn A’atham, *Al-Futuh* Vol. 2, p. 125.

⁷⁸ - Muawiya’s rebellious troops.

⁷⁷ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 679-680.

showing that the account has been fabricated. Take into consideration the following points:

- 1) All other accounts suggest one idea in common that the Nahrawanees rejected the proposal for arbitration right away at Nahrawan after a man named Al-Ash'ath bin Qais Al-Kindi had read to them the terms of the agreement reached by the two sides – Muawiya's and Ali's. It is well known by everyone that the Nahrawanees rose in objection to the idea of making arbitration on the spot, repeating what came later on to be their political motto: *La hukma illa li-Labi* "No judgment except the one revealed by Allah".⁷⁸ The claim that they yielded to the Syrians' proposal for truce and arbitration, goes contrary to this generally accepted account.
- 2) After the *Siffin* agreement, between Ali and Mu'awiya, was signed, Ali went back to Al-Kufa. The members of his army quarreled all the way to the point that they bit one another with whips. In this quarreling, the so-called Khawarij told those who were still loyal to Ali: "O the enemies of Allah! You have deceived in the matter of Allah".⁷⁹ Another narration quotes them as saying:

You have deceived in the matter of Allah; you have had men adjudge the case which has already been decided by Allah Himself in his book and disagreed with our group.⁸⁰

On their part, those who were loyal to Ali, told the Nahrawanees: "You have abandoned our Imam and divided us".⁸¹

⁷⁸ - This has been extensively explained elsewhere, no need to repeat it here in details; we hint at it so that the subject may be coherent.

⁷⁹ - *Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 673.

⁸⁰ - *Al-Baladhuri, Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 114.

⁸¹ - *Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 673.

It is clear, therefore, that it was those who remained loyal to Ali who yielded to the proposal of ceasing the war and making arbitration, otherwise the Nahrawanees would not have said to Ali's supporters: "...You have had men adjudge the case which has already been decided by Allah Himself in his book".

- 3) The existence of contradiction among these accounts, which explains that they resulted from either interpolation or utter fabrication or both. For instance, the account that quotes the Nahrawanees as saying to Ali about his acceptance of the truce and later the arbitration: "That was a sin of which you have to repent".⁸² Ali – according to this account – replied: "That was not a sin at all".⁸³ Certainly, if you examine these words and compare them with other words found in the account quoted before, you will see how contradictory they are! In the account previously quoted, we see that Ali reminded the Nahrawanees that it was they who insisted on the idea of accepting the conciliation, which was taken to blame them that to do so was an unforgivable offense! Surprisingly, in this narrative, when Ali was asked to repent of his act of yielding to the Syrians' demand for stopping the war and making peace with them, he replied: "That was not a sin at all". Now arises a question here: if that was not a sin worthy of repentance, then why blame them for insisting on the arbitration in case it was they who responded positively thereto.
- 4) All efforts which have been made by Ali's supporters since the day of the *Siffin* war until right today will be meaningless. This is because those who have been defending Ali that he was not wrong for accepting the idea of the arbitration, justify their position by the verses such as: **"And the settlement is best"**, meaning reconciliation and peace-making are regarded to be

⁸² - *Al-Tabari, Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 18.

⁸³ - *Al-Tabari, Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 18.

good things to do in Islam. Ali – according to this account – believes that *settlement is best* but he – says that it was not he who wanted to settle the dispute which broke out between him and Mu’awiya. Inversely, it was the Nahrawanees who wanted the settlement. This means that the Nahrawanees wanted a good thing; Ali did not!

Back to Ali-Nahrawanees discussion

After that analysis of a part of Ali’s account as narrated by Al-Tabari, let us now go back to the same account to see how the discussion between Ali and the Nahrawanees went on. The discussion goes on, and Ali says to the Nahrawanees:

When you refused everything except making an arbitration, I conditioned that the two arbiters must follow the decision of the Qur-an – they should kill what the Qur-an has killed; and enliven what the Qur-an has enlivened. If they adjudge in accordance with the Qur-an, it will be not suitable for us to show any objection to their adjudgement; if they refuse (to adjudge in accordance with the Qur-an), we are free from their decision.⁸⁴

The Nahrawanees – according to this narrative – responded to Ali that: “Is it lawful to make men arbiters in a matter of bloodshed?”⁸⁵

This answer sounds insignificant and is unlikely to emanate from men like the Nahrawanees who were known as being the most knowledgeable of all three politico-religious factions of their time. The answer would have been attributable to them only if all of them were illiterate. Whatever the case may be, the correct response to those words which has been quoted from Ali, is the one with which they responded to Ibn Abas that:

⁸⁴ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 680.

⁸⁵ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 680.

What Qur-anic decision did you stipulate to the two arbiters to follow, while by your act of accepting the arbitration you had already left the Qur-anic guidance aside? The Qur-an says:

وَأِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى
فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ..

If two parties among the believers fall into a fight, make peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against another, then (all of you) fight against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah....⁸⁶

The Nahrawanees said that the logic of this verse is very much like the logic of verse thus: **وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا**.....As to the thief male or female, cut off his or her hands.....⁸⁷ and the verse thus : **الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ** The woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each of them with hundred stripes.....⁸⁸ In all three verses, we are commanded to act upon divine orders of Allah; not to invent our own decisions. The Nahrawanees asked: “Is it permissible to make decisions to a thief, a fornicator or an adulterer other than the one stated in these verses?”

This is to say that our authority to make a judgment of our own, and so arbitration or settlement, is strictly limited to the cases whose provisions have not been clearly stated in either the Qur-an or the Prophetic traditions nor has there been a general consensus of all Islamic

⁸⁶ - Chapter 49, Verse 9.

⁸⁷ - Chapter 5, Verse 38. Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 12-13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 679. Al-Baladhuri, *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 122.

⁸⁸ - Chapter 64, Verse 2. Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 12-13. Al-Baladhuri, *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 122.

denominations on one particular decision. The case of Ali and Muawiya falls into the former category where Allah Himself – rather than man – has taken the charge of being a legislator.

You will remember, in the second volume of this work, we quoted some words from Ali's letter to Mu'awiya, in which he wrote:

Bismi Allabi Al-Rrahmani Al-Rrahim (In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious Most Merciful). From the servant of Allah, 'Ali, leader of the Muslims, to Mu'awiya bin Sakhr! Oh Mu'awiya! You know very well that the *Shura* (to hold a consultative council on who should be a leader) is the privilege of the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansaar* alone. If they agree on a person and appoint him to be an Imam (leader), Allah is content with that. If anyone goes outside their agreement by criticizing or by heretical innovations, they will have to take him back to the (Right Path from which) he has gone out. If he refuses, they will have to kill him because of his act to follow the way different from that of the Muslims.⁸⁹

Also in some of the Shiite books, there is an account narrated from Imam Ali that he said to his followers:

If anyone wants to disunite you and one wants to take this matter (of Islamic leadership) without *Shura* (holding a consultative council on who should be a leader), kill him. Verily, Allah The Most Exalted has ordered so.⁹⁰

The existence of such evidence categorically gives no room for any compromise or concision between legal leadership and renegades. According to the guidance of the Qur-an, the renegades against lawful

⁸⁹ - Ibn A'atham *Al-Futuh* Vol. 2, p. 374. Ibn Abdi Rabih *Al-'Iqdu Al-Farid* Vol. 4, p. 309. Al-Musawi in his *Al-Tas-hihu* p. 20, has also quoted it from *Nahju Al-Balagha* Vol. 3, p. 7.

⁹⁰ - Ahmad Al-Katib, *Tatawuru Al-Fikri Al-Siyasi Al-Shi'i* p. 444, quoting it from Al-Sadduq's *Uyuni Al-Akhbaari*, Vol. 2, p. 62.

leaders must return to the legitimate leadership by any means, diplomatically or forcibly until their rebellion is put to an end even if that will lead to exterminating all of them. And the letter from Ali to Mu'awiya as well as the narration by the Shiites themselves, as previously seen, confirm this fact.

MORE POINTS IN THE NARRATIVE BY AL-TABARI

Another point which can be taken to show the inaccuracy of the *Tabarian* narrative concerning the discussion between Ali and the Nahrawanees is the claim that: “all (the Nahrawanees) returned (to rejoin Ali),⁹¹ meaning all of them rejoined Ali as a result of this discussion. But this allegation is in incompatible with the basic aim for Ali to go in person to meet the Nahrawanees. All narratives – including this one whose texts we are now analyzing – agree that Ali went there to ask the Nahrawanees to submit to him those who killed a man named Abdullahi bin Khabab. Surprisingly, according to the same accounts, Ali did not even mention the issue of Abdullahi bin Khabab; instead, he asked them to rejoin him – the *Tabarian* account presents itself as another example of contradiction with other accounts narrated on the same subject.⁹²

Typically, the claim that: “all (the Nahrawanees) returned (to rejoin Ali)”, comes into a strong clash with all historically verified data on the incident of the *battle of Nahrawan* which took place between Ali and the Nahrawanees. Had all of them really rejoined him, Ali would have no one to fight with there – another point of contradiction in these narratives upon which Ali's supporters have been depending in an attempt to justify his position.

⁹¹ - Al-Tabari *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 679.

⁹² - In a nutshell, every account on this subject either contradicts itself or it contradicts with another account, which explains that they have been forged.

Chain of transmitters

The methodology of analysis and criticism in the science of the Prophetic traditions and other accounts found in authoritative works in the Islamic literature is not strictly confined to the analysis and criticism of the wordings and texts of accounts. In order to be able to distinguish the accurate and the inaccurate accounts, it is equally important to know whether the narrators themselves of a respective account are reliable or not. If one narrator or more in the *sanad* (chain of narrators or of transmitters) is either a liar or suffers from a poor memory, then the account narrated by him is classified as inauthentic.

The previous critical analysis has been concerning the contradiction found in the very texts of the account, which is one way of detecting the inauthenticity of an account.

Another traditional method of analyzing accounts in order to know the authentic and the inauthentic is to study what is technically referred to as the *sanad* (chain of narrators or of transmitters) of the account. By using this method, we have also been able to prove that the *Tabarian* account is not acceptable because one of its transmitters is a man named Abu Mikhnaf, Lut bin Yahya. This is not a reliable narrator – he was either a liar and fabricator of false accounts, or he used to narrate them from liars.⁹³ In this sense, the account narrated by Al-Tabari, followed by Ibn

⁹³ - Ibn Hajar in his *Lisanu Al-Mizan*, Al-Dhahabi in his *Mizan Al-I'tidaal*, Ibn Abi Hatim in his *Al-Jarhu Wa Al-Tta'adil* and others, have vigorously renounced his narratives. Read, for example, what both Ibn Hajar and Al-Dhahabi write about Abu Mikhnaf. They say: "He is an evil and unreliable reporter. He has been abandoned by Abu Hatim and his counterparts. Al-Daraqutni says: 'He is weak.'⁹³ Yahya bin Ma'in says: 'He is not reliable.' Al-'Uqaili has mentioned him in his *Al-Dhu'afaa* (a book on weak narrators of traditions). Al-Dhahabi added: 'He is a professional Shi'a narrator who narrates their accounts (on their creeds)'. Refer to Ibn Hajar *Lisanu Al-Mizan* Vol. 4, p. 492, biography no. 1568. More details about him can be found in *Mizan Al-I'tidaal* by Al-Dhahabi, Vol. 4, p. 340, biography no. 6992. Also refer to *Al-Jarh Wa Al-Tta'adil* by Ibn Abi Hatim Vol. 7, p. 182, biography no. 1030.

Al-Athir in their books on history, about Ali's discussion with the Nahrawanees is not acceptable on all bases and criteria – its texts contradict themselves and its *sanad* (chain of narrators or of transmitters) is shared by an unreliable narrator.

THE NARRATION BY AL-MUBARRID

Al-Mubarrid is one of the most eminent scholars in the world of Islam. He has been well known for his expertise at the Arabic language and history. In his *Al-Kamil*, he has written about the issue of the discussion held between Ali and the Nahrawanees. Yet his explanation has been found to be as debatable as that of Imam Al-Tabari and others. Any truth seeker, if analytically reads his words, he must necessarily disagree with him simply because the beginning of his explanation contradicts the end thereof.⁹⁴ He says:

(Ali) told (the Nahrawanees): ‘Do you not know that when these people (Mu’awiya and his followers) raised the copies of the Qur-an, I told you that this was a weakness and trick and that if they were really after the decision of the Qur-an, they would not come to ask me for making arbitration? Do you know anyone that was

⁹⁴ - I have gone through all books on history which I have, I have never seen deception and interpolation as I have seen in this subject.

against the idea of arbitration more than I? ⁹⁵ They (the Nahrawanees) said: 'Yes'.⁹⁶

(Ali went on): 'Do you know that it was you who forced me to (accepting) that (arbitration) till I yielded to your demand. Hence I conditioned that: 'Their decision will be complied with only if it goes parallel with the decision of Allah; if they go against it, then you and I will have nothing in common with them; and you know for sure that I never miss the decision of Allah? They (the Nahrawanees again) said: 'Yes'. (Then) they said to Ali: 'Have you authorized men to make a decision in the matter concerning the religion of Allah because of human opinions? So, we are now confessing that we have done wrong and we repent (of our sin); therefore, confess as we have done and repent as we have done so that we leave together for Sham (Syria, to fight Mu'awiya again)'. (Ali) said to them: 'Do you not know that Allah, the Most Exalted, has ordered men to make a decision on the disputes that occur between a man and his wife. He says: **'Appoint two arbiters: one from his family and another from hers'**⁹⁷, and regarding the issue of game animals hit in the Sacred Area

⁹⁵ - The narrative in this place of *Al-Kamil* by Al-Mubarrid can be literally translated as: "You know that there was one of you that hated that (matter) more than I", which is an error either by transmitters or publishers. The correct words if translated literally is: "Do you know that there was **not** anyone of you that hated that (matter) more than I", as Al-Mubarrid himself puts it in another place of his book *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 605, also as it is found in Al-Baladhuri's *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 122. As such my translation in the texts is not literal.

⁹⁶ - "Yes" in this Nahrawanees' response, means: "You are right".

⁹⁷ - Chapter 4, Verse 35. For the words quoted from Al-Mubarrid, refer to his book, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 588. Then Al-Mubarrid has narrated this account again in another place of his book, but his narration there is different from this narration, which can be taken also to show a serious contradiction between these accounts. Refer to Al-Mubarrid, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 605.

which worth quarter dinar,⁹⁸ Allah, the Most Exalted, says: ‘**As adjudged by two just men among you**’.⁹⁹

Points to consider

Ali, according to this narration, blamed the Nahrawanees that it was they who forced him into arbitration and that he disliked it. But when it was said to him:

Have you authorized men to make a decision in the matter concerning the religion of Allah because of human opinions? So, we are now confessing that we have done wrong and we repent (of our sin); therefore, confess as we have done and repent as we have done so that we leave together for Sham (Syria, to fight Mu’awiya again),

He produced his evidence from the Qur-an (which we have quoted before) that to make arbitration on that issue was not wrong; on the contrary, it was a good thing which the Qur-an required us to do! The question that arises here is: why did he first blame the Nahrawanees that it was they who compelled him to accept the arbitration, and that he hated the whole idea of arbitration; while at the end of the same narration, he defended the same idea of arbitration as being good and constructive. If it was a good thing which had been ordered by the Qur-an, and it was the so-called Khawarij who suggested the urgent necessity to accept it, why then did he blame them for that? It is clear, so far, that all these narratives resulted from fabrication by some sectarian fanatics or by hypocrites who pretended to be Muslims in order to disunite the Islamic Nation.

- Arabian currency. ⁹⁸

⁹⁹ - Al-Tabari, *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 13. Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 679. Ibn Abi Shaiba, *Al-Musannaf* Vol. 8, p. 727-728, narrative no. 37.

More contradiction can be manifested in his another narration in the words thus:

Liar is he who alleges that I have withdrawn myself from the peace treaty (arbitration). Let me tell you: whosoever regards the arbitration to be a straying (from the Right Path), it is he who has gone astray.¹⁰⁰

When you attach this narrative to the former narrative told by Al-Mubarrid, you will undoubtedly learn how this narration contradicts the act of Ali to blame the Nahrawanees for accepting the arbitration. Because in the latter narrative, Ali says: “Whosoever regards the arbitration to be a straying (from the Right Path), it is he who has gone astray”, which means that it was he who wanted the arbitration to be made; whereas in the former narrative it was they who wanted the arbitration to be made. Yet another narration states that it was said to Ali that Al-Ashtar was not content with the peace treaty, Ali replied: “Even I was not, but it is not expedient to withdraw after agreement”.¹⁰¹ If you study these accounts carefully, you will find very serious contradictions among themselves, which explains that all or most of them were fabricated.

THE ACCURATE WORDINGS OF THE ACCOUNT NARRATED FROM ALI

By looking at those accounts, the way the events occurred, and how people took different positions on this crisis generally, it will be obvious to you that the accurate wordings of the account narrated from Ali when he discussed with the Nahrawanees, are as follows:

¹⁰⁰ - Al-Mubarrid, *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 605.

¹⁰¹ - Al-Baladhuri, *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 110.

Do you know that it was I who disliked more (than anyone) the idea of ceasing the war and making peace? (I disliked to stop the war and make arbitration) between us and those people, and I told you that they raised the copies of the Qur-an, only as tactics and tricks, ***but my idea was opposed.***¹⁰²

By surveying all events and linking every one event with another, it is possible to say that these are the correct wordings of the account narrated from Ali. Those who were against the Nahrawanees, changed the words: ***“Was opposed”***, which meant that the opposers to that idea were not the Nahrawanees; and instead, they replaced them with the words: ***“You opposed me”***, so that it might be shown that it was the Nahrawanees who opposed his idea. But, since all accounts agree that:

- a) It was the majority which was against Ali’s idea of continuing the war.
- b) The Nahrawanees declared their opposition right away at *Siffin* to the idea of ceasing the war and making arbitration.

Then we know for sure that the words ***“But my idea was opposed”*** are the correct words uttered by Ali himself; and the words ***“You opposed me”***, or ***“You opposed my idea”*** have either been unwittingly misquoted by the narrators of this account, or they have been purposely forged in order to hide the truth.

THE EXPLANATION BY AL-SHAHRASTANI

In his attempt to defend the position of Ali on the issue of authorizing men to make arbitration on his dispute with Mu’awiya, Al-Shahrastani has these words to tell us: “Secondly, to make men arbiters is permissible because it is men who make a decision on these issues”.¹⁰³ But this explanation is categorically refutable because the Nahrawanees basically did not blame Ali for making men arbiters, but they blamed him for

¹⁰² - Al-Baladhuri, *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 122.

¹⁰³ - Al-Shahrastani, *Al-Milalu Wa Al-Nihal* Vol. 1, p. 132.

making men arbiters in a matter which Allah Himself had already decided. And they gave him the examples of a thief and a fornicator or an adulterer whose decisions have been mentioned by Allah Himself that no one could make arbitration on their cases.

In a nutshell, Ali's arguments in his debate with the Nahrawanees are very weak, plus the existence of a wide spectrum of contradiction of the texts of every one account separately and the contradictions of every one account with another collectively. In case we agree that all that has been said in the accounts on Ali's discussion with the Nahrawanees is true, then this will necessarily mean that Ali could not prove anything worthy of being taken as evidence in the form of the Qur-an or the Prophetic traditions. He could not produce any evidence to show that he was right and the Nahrawanees were wrong. Reversely, it was the Nahrawanees who could produce strong evidence from the Qur-an to prove that they were right.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Finally, we can say that by virtue of all the verses which Ibn Abas and Ali produced as their evidence in their debates with the Nahrawanees, which are the verses that insist on making arbitration; and the verses used by the Nahrawanees to respond to Ali-Ibn Abas arguments, we may conclude and summarize them in the following points:

- 1) Arbitration is a good thing to do but only where Allah has not mentioned any decision on a respective case.
- 2) Where He has mentioned His decision, the arbitration is disregarded – null and void.
- 3) The verses on which the supporters¹⁰⁴ of Ali have been depending to show that Ali was right and the Nahrawanees were wrong are not worthy as evidence on the subject because:
 - a) No particular decision has ever been mentioned therein. All that is found therein, is that Allah has assigned the responsibility of making the decision to men to choose whatever they think may bring about peace and harmony.
 - b) In the verse advanced by the Nahrawanees as their proof against Ali, Allah has clearly stated what decision to be made.
 - c) Unfortunately, Ali did not comply with Allah decision which is in the verse. Instead, he allowed men to make another decision on the issue that Allah Himself had already decided in His book.
 - d) And so the truth seekers decided to separate themselves from Ali because they found that he went

¹⁰⁴ - All of us are the supporters of Ali generally, but we must be just and fair, and so give everyone one's right.

contrary to the Qur-an.¹⁰⁵ The Qur-an says: **“...Then (all of you) fight against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah...”**¹⁰⁶ The question that you ought to ask yourself if you are frank and honest, is that: did Ali do so?

It is my hope, after this display of arguments and proofs, that you are now well aware of the reasons as to why the Nahrawanees took the decision of disconnecting themselves from being under the leadership of Ali and launched their own. It is also my hope that, by virtue of this clarification, the rational rather than the emotional; the analytical minds rather than the credulous ones; the just rather than the unjust; the impartial rather than the biased; will begin to realize that the arguments postulated by the Nahrawanees sounded clear voice of reason and their stance was strongly supported by the Qur-an.

To be continued in Pamphlet No. 4.

¹⁰⁵ - Not because he was an evil man; but because he mistook as any other human being could do.

¹⁰⁶ - Chapter 49, Verse 9.