COVER NOTE

Throughout ideo-political history, negative and positive terminologies have been contributing much to disguise the reality and hide the truth. Terms such as "reactionary" and "progressive," for example, were the opera of the socialist East. The objectives behind them were to indoctrinate modern man with the idea that the constructive mechanisms and the solvent dynamics capable of ensuring economic prosperity, political morality and social unity were to be found exclusively in socialism. The natural consequence, therefore, was to inspire the followers with the antagonistic attitudes against the non-socialist camp.

In the West, on the other hand, democracy and its pillars – freedom of speech, human rights, pluralism, etc. – have always been the pretexts for the capitalist West to justify her exploitation of the poor and oppression of the weak while the virtual goal has been the achievement of world ideological hegemony. With the decline of the socialist East, the Cold War between East and West ended and was supplanted by a war between Islam and the West.

The Western ideo-politico-cultural war against Islam has arrived and new terminologies, as part of this wide range psycho-military war, have been born. Now the terms "terrorism" and "fundametalism" serve very well in the legitimization of Western policies towards Muslim lands, while the term "democracy" legalizes her political supremacy – positive and negative terminologies make legitimate and illegitimate world ideologies.

This example has been given to make the picture clearer in mind because the same is true in the history of Islam. When the early

divisions occurred among the Muslims, many good and bad titles were invented. Names such as *"Ahlu Al-Sunna wa Al-Jama'a," "Ahlu Al-haqqi Wal Istiqama," and "Ahlu Al-Bait School"* have been taken to claim the orthodoxy of the respective sects, while negative terms such as *"Al-Nawasib," "Al-Rawafidh"* and *"Al-Khawarij"* have been used with the object of stigmatizing others as heretics. As a result, people have had good and bad names as the only criteria by which to distinguish the orthodox sects from the heretical ones. Eventually, because Islamic sects have not been studied in terms of their own logics and entities, a scientific search for the truth and reality has been lacking and a long-standing intellectual call for sectarian tolerance has encountered no practical response.

Because many people tend to blindly follow their forefathers, good and bad names have played important roles and have had very far-reaching effects in the overall history of Islam. This series of pamphlets traces the history of the so-called "*Khawarij"* and in the long run shows how power-hungry politicians took the opportunity of the negative term *"Khawarij"* to mislead the unthinking minds from the Right Path.

AL-KHAWARIJ

REALITY OR LEGEND!

Pamphlet No. 1.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DEFINITIONS OF THE WORD "KHAWARIJ".

By:
Juma Muhammad Rashid Al-Mazrui

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الْحَمْدُ لِلهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ وَلاَ عُدْوَانَ إِلاَ عَلَى الظَّالِمِيْنَ, وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لا إله إلا الله وَحْدَهُ لا شَرِكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ وَصَفِيُّهُ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ وَخَلِيْلُهُ بَلَّغَ الرِّسَالَةَ وَأَدَّى الأَمَانَةَ وَنَصَحَ الأُمَّةَ وَكَشَفَ اللهُ بِهِ الْغُمَّةَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.....وبعد: قال الله تعالى:

1) إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ..

2) وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ ...

3) إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ (10) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْراً مِنْهُمْ وَلا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْراً مِنْهُنَّ وَلا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلا تَنَابَزُوا بِالأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الِاسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمْ الظَّالِمُونَ..

وقال 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 (أو كما قال عليه الصلاة والسلام).

PREFACE

When the Prophet (pbuh) died, there were no sects[1] at all. Disagreements on some questions that occurred among the Prophet's companions were treated as minor differences which did not reach the stage of forming separate sects. Following the death of the Prophet (pbuh), the first difference with historical importance to emerge was in the question of who would rightfully succeed the Prophet (pbuh). Eventually, however, the Muslims agreed on appointing Abu Bakr as successor to him.

Abu Bakr led the Muslims for a period of two years. His tenure was marked by a high standard

[1] - Note that the concept of the term *sect* in Islam, differs from its concept in the western world. We, in Islam, use the term *sect* to mean different schools of thought whose differences are strictly limited to some minor and subsidiary matters, while basic fundamentals are the same. Islamic sect, therefore, can be defined as a set of subsidiary ideas held in common by a group of Muslims.

of morality and justice. In the year 13 A.H, he died and was succeeded by 'Umar bin Al-Khattab whose reign is also remembered as a heyday of justice and morality. In the year 23 A.H., 'Umar died, and the Muslims appointed 'Uthman to take over the Islamic leadership. 'Uthman led the Islamic state for a period of twelve years; six of which were a period of justice very much like that of his predecessors.[2] Ufortunately, the other six years of his rule became a landmark of socio-politico-economic problems.[3] This gave rise to a new atmosphere of disputes and misunderstandings between him and other companions of the Prophet (pbuh); cries from the social body were heard, and so he encountered very strong opposition from a wide spectrum of the Prophetic companionship. Very serious disputes developed, and a new politico-military manoeuvre was born, in that the companions demanded from him to either follow the footsteps

[2] - Al-suyuti *Taarikh Al-Khulafaa* p. 141.
[3] - Op. cit..

of his predecessors or step down. All diplomatic efforts in the form of talks and discussions bore no fruit in the real world; no mutual understanding was achieved. After a tug-of-war of words with no agreement at all, 'Uthman, eventually, lost his life at the hands of the discontented among the Prophet's companions and their followers.[4]

'Ali bin Abi Talib, following the murder of 'Uthman, was appointed the fourth Caliph. He also proved himself to be a leader of justice. But during his rule, political affairs were worse than ever: ideas diverged, differences became more intense and so he faced more political difficulties

[4] - The idea that 'Uthman was killed by the Bedouins or the followers of a Jew named Abdullah bin Saba-a who pretended to be a Muslim, is a fabrication. All books on history state that it was the Sahaba themselves who killed him. Among those who participated in killing him were Ammaar bin Yasir and Muhammad bin Abi Bakr. We shall explain more on this subject in other parts of this series.

and military hardship than the other three Caliphs.

Following the murder of 'Uthman, some Sahaba who had taken part in appointing him Caliph, rose in rebellion against him, claiming that they wanted to avenge the death of 'Uthman. This rebellious movement was led by two of the Prophet's companions namely Talha and Zubair. Thus began the Battle of the Camel which ended in the victory of 'Ali and the deaths of both Talha and Zubair.[5]

[5] - Zubair did not die on the spot, on the contrary, history shows that 'Ali reminded him that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Zubair would fight 'Ali unjustly". Having remembered this, Zubair left the battlefield for Madina. On his way, a man named Amru bin Jurmuz (or 'Umair bin Jurmuz according to another version) killed him. Refer to Al-Baladhuri *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 50. Ibn Hajar *Tahdhibu Al-Tahdhib"* Vol. 3, p. 274-275, biography no. 592. Some researchers classify the tradition of 'Ali reminding Zubair the words of the Prophet that "He would fight 'Ali unjustly" as an inauthentic one. Refer to the footnotes by

The Battle of the Camel over, another man named Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyan followed the move and launched another rebellion against Caliph 'Ali too. Hence began the Battle of Siffin between 'Ali with his Iraqi army on one side; and Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyaan with his Syrian army on the other. This war lasted for a period of about four months or so. When Mu'awiya was about to lose the war, he thought of the tactics that would save him from the surrounding danger. His close friend, Amru bin Al-aas, advised him that: "Let us raise copies of the Holy Qur-an on the spearheads and then let us say that what is inside these (copies) is the judgement between you and us. If some of them refuse, you will have others who will say: 'Yes: we are obliged to agree'. Hence there will happen disunity among them.

Muhammad Buyumi and the collaborators in *Al-Bidaya Wa Al-Nihaya* by Ibn Kathir, Vol. 7, p. 239.

And in case all of them say: 'Yes', we shall keep this war away from us for a while."[6]
Mu'awiya agreed with this idea and so ordered that copies of the Holy Qur-an should be raised on the spearheads. The copies of the Qur-an raised, Al-Imamu 'Ali wanted to know the reason as to why Mu'awiya did so. He sent a man named Al-ash'ath bin Qais Al-Kindi to Mu'awiya to ask him why he raised the Holy Qur-an. In response, Mu'awiya said: "So that we may refer to it. You send a man from among you and we send a man from among us, then let the two men judge between us according to what the Qur-an says, and we are to accept their judgement".[7]

When Al-ash'ath bin Qais Al-Kindi came back with this report, 'Ali's soldiers were divided in opinions. While some found this idea very Qur-

[6] - Al-tabari *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 5, p. 329-330. Ibn Al-Athir *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 667.
[7] - Al-Tabari *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 4. Al-Mas'udi *Al-Muruj* Vol. 2, p. 525. Ibn A'atham *Al-Futuh* Vol. 3, p. 325. Ibn Al-Athir *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 669.

anic or Islamic, others found it to be contrary to the Qur-anic verse which had given 'Ali the right to fight a war against Mu'awiya. 'Ali himself did not – at first – lean towards the idea of ceasing the war or making a truce. Finally, seeing that the majority of his troops held an idea contrary to his, he decided to agree with them and so yield to what Mu'awiya suggested. The *Qurraa* (the learned ones) among 'Ali's soldiers who numbered about four thousand people – all or most of them were the companions of the Prophet – strongly objected to the idea and rose in opposition against it, arguing that to stop the war was very much against the verse that legitimated it. This argument was founded on the Qur-anic verse that: ***"..If one (party) transgresses beyond the bounds against another, then fight against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah".***[8] The *Qurraa* said to

[8] - *The Qur-an:* 49-9. The beginning of this verse requires us to make reconciliation between the two quarrelling parties and then, if that fails to solve the problem, the next and final step would be the use of force against the

'Ali: "Our obligation, therefore, is to comply with what the verse says, and so fight the war against the rebellious group (Mu'awiya and his Syrian forces) until they surrender or we eradicate it". The *Qurraa* repeatedly went to 'Ali to beseech him not to agree with what Mu'awiya demanded, but 'Ali gave a deaf ear to their advice. Finally, seeing that 'Ali was reluctant to agree with them, the four thousand *Qurraa* (the learned ones) decided to abandon him and set out for a village of Al-Harauraa[9] near Al-Kufa in Iraq where they

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transgressing party. Prior to the outbreak of the war between Ali and Mu'awiya, Ali had already sent several envoys to Mu'awiya. Typically, many peacemakers were involved in order to solve the problem peacefully. But none of these efforts succeeded.

[9] - Al-Tabari *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 12. Some books refer to the place where the Al-Nahrawanees had for their whereabouts to turn as *Al-Haruraa* as found in *Al-Taarikh* by Al-Tabari, *Sharhu Al-Nayl* by Al-Shaukani and *Sharhu Nahji A-Blagha* by Ibn Abi Al-hadid. Other books, such as *Al-Tabaqat* by Ibn Sa'ad and *Mu'ujamu Al-Buldan* by Yaqut Al-rumi, refer to the place as *Al-Harauraa*. I have depended on the latter simply because Yaqut Al-rumi has

appointed their new Imam with the object of – in the common Islamic phrase – enjoining what is just and forbidding what is evil. Their decision to disconnect themselves from the central leadership came as a result of 'Ali's position towards this crisis; for they found that what he did was contrary to the Qur-anic verse, while the conditions and terms on which they had agreed at the time of his appointment, provided that 'Ali would act in accordance with the Qur-an and the Prophetic traditions. In case of doing any thing contrary to either of the two, they would not be obliged to be obedient to him any more. This is because the Prophet (pbuh) said: "There is no

been more reliable in this field. Refer to Yaqut Al-rumi *Mu'ujamu Al-Buldan* Vol. 3, p. 138. Finally, however, the four thousand *Qurraa* assenbled themselves at a place called Nahrawaan. That was why they were named the Nahrawanees or the people of Nahrawaan (may Allah be pleased with them).

obedience to the created in the disobedience of the Creator".[10]

So if you have ever heard of or read about the word *Khawarij* with a sort of obscure picture or ambiguous nature, let it be clear to you that the people who are primarily referred to as *Khawarij* are these: a splinter group that involved all people who were discontent with the act of 'Ali to accept the idea of ceasing the war and making a truce with Mu'awiya in the Battle of Siffin. By the word *Khawarij* it is meant that they have gone out of the Islamic religion.

This series of pamphlets is aimed at disclosing the reality of this matter, showing what is true and what is false and unfolding the genuiness of the people of Nahrawan against whom the partial history has slandered a great deal.

[10] - Ahmad *Al-Musnad* Vol. 1, p. 366, tradition no. 1065, p. 372-373, tradition no. 1095. Al-nnasai *Al-Kubra* Vol. 8, p. 71, traditions no. 8667-8668.

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ABOUT THE BOOKLET

This booklet – as almost all my other published works – was originally a series of articles written for the Zanzinet (a Zanzibaris' Internet Forum). The original work was in my mother tongue of Kiswahili, the language widely spoken in East Africa where I was born and bred. Then came to me the idea of translating it into the English language so that the non-Kiswahili speakers may also benefit thereby. The decision of rendering it into the English language has come as a result of seeing the Ibadhi library suffer from the poverty of Ibadhi literature written in English. Even so, in this translation, there are many things which have been omitted. This has been done with the object of avoiding the approach of prolonging

the booklet with matters of less importance. The original Kiswahili work consists of nine chapters with two hundred and fifty pages. Some of those who have gone through it, have suggested that the better way of translating it, is to divide the book into small booklets so as to save time for the readers and to facilitate the task in general. Unhesitatingly, I accepted their advice and so decided to divide the book into nine parts; each chapter making one part.[11]

This pamphlet, part one of the nine, deals exclusively with the different definitions that have been put forward with the aim of showing who and what the *Khawarij* are. It discusses them, crushes all weak points and finally demonstrates that not a single of the suggested definitions has been able to give a clear picture and draw a sharp distinction of who the *Khawarij*

[11] - Meaning each chapter of the original Kiswahili work, making one part of this series.

are. The reason behind that, as expressed in the passage of this work, is that all qualities which have been taken to show that a particular person or sect is the *Khawarij*, are equally applicable to all other factions and sects.

We shall begin our work by briefly surveying the morphology and the literal meaning of the word *Khawarij*, then, we shall finally examine its technical meaning where all important definitions of the word will be extensively discussed. In doing so, other minor points will arise, which will be systematically dealt with.

The Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To undertake the task of writing a book single-handedly is difficult. If done, then at least brief comments on things such as the method of presentation and the clarification of sentences are needed. This brief work, though it is merely a translation of my Kiswahili work, underwent revision by the following before going to press:

1) Sh. Khamis bin Amour Al-Busaidi.
2) Sh. Munir bin Sulaiman Al-Masruri.
3) Sh. Muhammad bin Salim Al-Busaidi.
4) Sh. Sa'ud bin Hamed Al-Ma'awali.
6) Sh. Majid bin Sa'id bin Nasser Al-Sulaimani.
7) Sh. Rashid bin 'Ali Al-Khambshi.

8) Sh. Hakim bin Majid bin Saud Al-Ma'amari.
9) Sh. Khamis bin Muhammad bin Juma Al-Miskiri.

I am greatly indebted to all these gentlemen for revising this booklet and for the constructive ideas they have suggested. Indeed, each one of them has given one idea or another which has made my work look better.

My friend Sh. Salim bin Humaid Al-Harmali undertook the task of printing this work when it was still a sketchy draft and reprinting it when it reached its final stage. He also worked on correcting some of the typographical mistakes the draft contained. To him, I express my sincere gratitude.

Finally, I should like to apologize to my critics and editors for the few proposed ideas which have not been incorporated into the booklet. Choices must be made where ideas diverge, for

regarding all of them is logically or practically impossible. For this reason, I am solely responsible for all errors found therein.

The Author.

THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE WORD *"KHAWARIJ"* AND ITS LITERAL MEANING.

The word *Khawarij* is a plural form of the word *"Kharijah"*. Such is the correct form according to the science of morphology of the Arabic language. Nevertheless, it has been common among almost all people to refer to one as *Kharijiy* and many as *Khawarij*, which is quite different from its correct form according to the morphological rules of the Arabic language. The correct forms, therefore, are:

Singular Dual Plural

Kharijiy[12] *....Kharijiyyaani…….. Kharijiyuun.*
Kharijatun[13] *....Kharijataani....Khawarij.*

It is clear, therefore, that the word *Khawarij* is a plural form of the word *Kharijah,* which literally means a group that has come out or has gone out.[14]

In his *"Al-Khawarij Wa Al-Haqiqatu Al-ghaiba,"* Sheikh Nasir Al-Sabi'i says: "(The word) *Khawarij* is derived from the (word) *Al-khuruj* (which is in turn) the derivation of the (word) *kharaja.* This root falls into various inflections. Ibn Al-Faris has referred them to two meanings: one is to pass through a thing; another is to differ in colours".[15]

[12] - Meaning one individual of the *Khawarij*.
[13] - Meaning one group of the *Khawarij.*
[14] - Even so, in this work, the word *Khawarij* has been Anglicized and so used to denote singular, dual and plural alike.
[15] - Sheikh Nasir Al-sabi'i *Al-Khawarij Wa Al-Haqiqatu Al-Ghaiba* p. 151.

It will be seen that, though this explanation by Al-Sabi'i can be taken to show the morphological origin of the word *"Khawarij"*, yet an ordinary English reader may still be confused, for what he needs, is to know the literal meaning of the word *Khawarij*. In a nutshell, the word *Khawarij* if spoken of literally, means "The ones that have gone out or have come out". This is the basic and literal meaning of the word. But *what is really meant by going out or coming out* is still another question that everyone will necessarily ask oneself. To understand this properly, therefore, we need to understand:

1) The technical meaning of the word *Khawarij*.
2) How and why the so-called *Khawarij* came into existence.
3) To know their arguments and those of their opponents.
4) To make a thorough and extensive research into all traditions narrated on the subject.

This booklet deals exclusively with the first point and therefore discusses various definitions suggested by different scholars on the subject. As for the rest of the points, the hope is to discuss them in the other upcomimg booklets.

THE TECHNICAL MEANING OF THE WORD *"KHAWARIJ"*.

Having seen the literal meaning of the term *Khawarij*, we are now coming to the core of the subject by examining the technical meaning of the word. Muslim Scholars have offered different expressions in their attempts to define the real concept of the term *Khawarij*, though all of those expressions denote one reality. Ironically, not a single of them establishes norms which specify *who* and *what* the *Khawarij* are! Al-Shahrastani, for example, defines the *Khawarij* as: "Anyone that goes against a right leader upon whom a majority has agreed (to have him for a leader), is called a *Khawarij*; be it

against the Rightly-Guided Caliphs[16] during the time of the Prophet's companions or against the followers of the Prophet's companions as well as against leaders at any time".[17]

What Al-Shahrastani really means by the words "a right leader", is perhaps the first and natural question that everyone will ask oneself. Does he mean the one that:

a) Has been appointed in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur-an and the Prophetic traditions, and so:
b) He leads in accordance with them.
c) He never goes contrary to either of them.
d) He has not stepped down nor has he been deposed.

[16] - By *the Rightly-Guided Caliphs* he means the four Caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali. Some classify 'Umar bin Abdul-Aziz as the fifth of *the Rightly-Guided Caliphs*, and others say that a rightly-guided Caliph is any just and pious Muslim leader that leads the Islamic state in conformity with the Islamic law.

[17] - Al-Shahrastani *Al-Milalu Wa Al-Nihal* Vol. 1, p. 129.

If that is the meaning intended by him, then primarily there will be no objection to his definition. However, it will contradict one of his basic fundamentals of beliefs as it will put a number of Prophet's companions – who in his sight are not *Khawarij* – in the term of the *Khawarij* too.

Two eminent examples, are the advents of the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin. The former took place in the year 36 A.H.[18] at a place called Al-Khuraiba in Iraq.[19] This was fought between Caliph 'Ali and those who supported him on one side; and Talha and Zubair along with those who sided with them on the other side. The latter was also fought between Caliph 'Ali with his Iraqi army, but this time it was against power-hungry Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyaan with his Syrian Army. In both events, 'Ali was fought against by his fellow Prophet's

[18] - Al- Bukhari *Al-Taarikh Al-Awsat* Vol. 1, p. 175, biography no. 263.
[19] - Al-Ya'aqubi *Taarikh Al-Yaaqubi* Vol. 2, p. 182.

companions after he had been already appointed leader of the Islamic state. That is to say that Talha, Zubair and Mu'awiya, all – according to Al-shaharastani's definition – fought "A right leader upon whom a majority has agreed (to have him for a leader)". The question that arises here is: does Al-Shahrastani regard Talha, Zubair and Mu'awiya to be *Khawarij* so that his definition and conclusion may co-exist? We know for sure that the definition put forward by Al-Shahrastani, is fully applicable to them, yet surprisingly, Al-sharastani – as well as others who belong to his school of thought – does not put them in the term of the *Khawarij*!

Again, on the basis of that definition, the people of Nahrawaan – and so the Ibadhis – who have always been the first target and victims for those partial, historical writings, will be unintentionally excluded from being the *Khawarij* as by the time they splintered from 'Ali's leadership, 'Ali had been no longer a legal

Islamic Caliph.[20] In this sense, the said definition applies exclusively to Talha, Zubair, Mu'awiya and their followers.

Another implication or probability held by the words *"a right leader,"* as suggested by Al-Shahrastani, is that the words should be taken to mean a Muslim leader regardless of the means by which he has come to power or the legitimacy and legality of his political existence according to Islamic law.

If this is what Al-Shahrastani means by the words *"a right leader,"* then the result we come up with will put every Muslim into the term of the *Khawarij*! The Sunnis will – according to that definition – qualify to be the *Khawarij* simply because during those early divisions which occurred among the Sahaba, they sided with Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyaan who rose in

[20] - As their arguments on that raised in other parts of this series.

revolt against 'Ali.[21] The Ibadhis will equally qualify to be the *Khawarij* since they supported and justified the Nahrawanees' course, who also splintered from 'Ali's political movement. Finally, the Shi'as will also qualify to be the *Khawarij* because their leader Al-Hasan bin 'Ali

[21] - Ibn A'atham *Al -Futuh* Vol. 4, p. 153-157. The Sunni political thought came from Mu'awiya and his successors. The Umayyad rulers used to call themselves *"Ahlu As-sunna Wal Jama'a"* meaning the people who follow the way of life of the Prophet and who preserve the unity of the Muslims. Refer to Ibn A'atham *Al –Futuh* Vol. 5, p. 108. This was meant to show that the followers of the rest of the sects were heretics who innovated things once not present. Such was how politics contributed in the formation of the Islamic sects. Surprisingly, those sects referred to as heretical – such as the Ibadhi school – existed long before any sect was in existence. The founder of the Ibadhi school lived at the time of the companions of the Prophet, whereas other schools emerged relatively later, in spite of the fact that they adopted their political ideology from Mu'awiya and his descendants. Also surprising, is the act of the Umayyad rulers to call themselves *"Ahlu As-sunna Wal Jama'a"* while how they behaved and treated the Muslims was quite anti-Islamic.

revolted against Mu'awiya;[22] and Al-Husain, another of their leaders, rose in opposition against the Umayyad rulers and – on his order – a man named Muslim bin 'Aqil went to Iraq to organize public opinion against them, mobilise the mass and launch a campaign for Al-Husain.[23]

It is clear hitherto, that Al-Shahrastani's outlook on the overall question of the so-called *Khawarij* is technically wanting. A new or, preferably, a more normative definition is needed: a definition that will enable us to draw a sharp distinction between what *Khawarij* is and what *Khawarij* is not.

[22] - However, Al-Hasan in this event changed his mind when on his way to Mu'awiya for a military confrontation. This provoked the wrath of his followers to the extent that they injured him at his thigh and robbed his belongings. Refer to Ibn A'atham *Al -Futuh* Vol. 4, p. 155. Al-Ya'aqubi *Taarikh Al-Yaaqubi* Vol. 2, p. 215. Al-Tabari *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 73.

[23] - Ibn A'atham *Al -Futuh* Vol. 5, p. 26-222.

Considering the weak points discussed in Al-Shahrastani's definition of the word *Khawarij* as well as other facts discovered, as explained later on, other Muslim scholars prefer to go straight to the idea of merely giving reasons as to why the so-called *Khawarij* have been so-labelled.[24] Ibn Hajar, for instance, in his *Al-Fat-hu*[25] – followed by Al-shawkani in his *Sharhu Al-Nayl*[26] – says: "The (word) *Khawarij* is a plural form of the (word) Kharijah, which means a group. They

[24] - We have seen the weakness that Al-Shahrastani's definition contains, just as we shall see the weakness in the explanation that will come later on. Considering these weak points contained in Al-Shahrastani's definition as well as the said explanation, some scholars have found that the better way of showing who the *Khawarij* are is not to define them but, on the contrary, to point to them directly and identify them by name. In so doing, those scholars were forced to give reasons as to why the so-called *Khawarij* were liable to be branded with that name.

[25] - Ibn Hajar *Al-Fat-hu* Vol. 14, p. 8524, in his elaboration of the traditions no. 6930-6931-6932.

[26] - Al-Shawkani *Sharhu Al-Nayl* Vol. 7, p. 164, in his elaboration of the traditions no. 3186-3187.

have been so-called because they have gone out of the religion[27] and (also) because they have innovated (matters once not existed)".

This definition is equally not normative as it includes anyone that has gone contrary to the Islamic religion, be one a Christian, a Jew a Pagan or, in the memorable, revolutionary term used in particularly our once-peaceful Zanzibar – a Comrade. Indeed, this is not the meaning intended by anyone that writes or utters the word *Khawarij*. It is clear, therefore, that we still fail to find a philosophically and logically acceptable definition of the word *Khawarij*: a definition that will have beginnings and ends; extents and parameters, rules and laws, whereby the once-ignorant of the subject will now be able to know who the *Khawarij* are. The reason for the lack of such a definition stems from the fact that all qualities which have been supposed to serve as specificities with which to show who the

[27] - Meaning the Islamic religion.

Khawarij are, do not specify them for they have been typically found existing in all other Islamic sects. As a result, in most – if not all – ancient and modern works written on the subject, there has never been consistent cohesion between the definition and the conclusion. Sheikh Al-sabi'i in his *Al-Khawarij Wa Al-Haqiqatu Al-Ghaiba*, explains that:

> Seldom there has been anyone that has been able to define the word Khawarij; (the definition) through which it is possible to identify a particular idea as being the idea (held in common) by the Khawarij. The problem that exists in this matter, is the relation existing between the Khawarij – by considering them as a (particular) group – and the traditions with which they have been associated, for qualities and criteria which have been regarded to be distinguishing elements of the Khawarij, are not confined to

them: but we find that others are also qualified therewith or with some of them".[28]

Because of the absence of a single definition that denotes a particular idea of the so-called *Khawarij*, most of those who have spoken of or written on this subject, have, rightly or wrongly, jumped to the conclusion that a particular group or sect is of the *Khawarij*. Typically, they have reached that decision on the basis of the traditions attributed to the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions. More pathetic than that – as shown before – is to learn that the reasons that have been taken to support their decision are the same reasons found existing in all other sects, but unfortunately the former are considered to be the *Khawarij*; the latter are not – Alas: the same cases but different rulings!

[28] - Sh. Nassir Al-sabi'i *Al-Khawarij Wa Al-Haqiqatu Al-Ghaiba* p. 152.

One example of those Muslim scholars who have made a horse-like jump; omitting all scientifically acceptable statements; leaving the whole subject undefined and so unclear and directly issuing a ruling on who the *Khawarij* are, is His Eminence Ibn Taymiyyah Al-harrani. In his *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir,* Ibn Taymiyyah has a few words to say about the so-called *Khawarij*. "*Khawarij* are the first callers of disunity in Islam". So Ibn Taymiyya writes his heading. Then he goes on to explain that: "The first disunity in Islam after the murder of 'Uthman and the division of the Muslims, (and) when 'Ali and Mu'awiya agreed on making arbitration, the *Khawarij* opposed and proclaimed that: 'There is no judgement except that of Allah and they disassociated themselves from the mainstream".[29]

[29] - Al-Imamu Ibn Taymiyya *Al-Tafsiru Al-Kabir* Vol. 2, p. 8.

It will be seen that Ibn Taymiyya's words give a direct ruling on who the *Khawarij* are. This has been basically founded on the observation that, the *Khawarij*, according to the words of Ibn Taymiyya, are those who have opposed the arbitration which has taken place between 'Ali and Mu'awiya, hence meaning the people of Nahrawaan as it is they who have been historically known to be the opponents of the said arbitration. But the clause: "And they disassociated themselves from the mainstream", which has been written by Ibn Taymiyya with the aim of criticizing the position of those people (of Nahrawaan), inevitably includes others like Ibn Abbaas in being among the *Khawarij*, for Ibn Abbaas – a genealogically close relative to 'Ali – was also one of those who did not justify 'Ali's war against the so-called *Khawarij*, and so left him and set out for Makka[30] - hence disassociating himself from the mainstream too.

[30] - Though he did not join the splinter group of the Nahrawanees, yet he admitted that it was they who were right as we shall explain it afterwards *inshaa Allah*.

But Dr. Ahmad Subhi views that "A mere act of splintering from 'Ali is not enough to lable one with the name of *Khawarij*; except if the said splintering has been coupled with the act of waging war against Al-Imam 'Ali".[31] Nevertheless, this view is strongly crushed by the actual fact of Talha-Zubair joint operation of splintering from 'Ali and fighting war against him. Yet Dr. Subhi does not regard them to be the *Khawarij* – a kind of disharmony between the definition and the defined!

We also find the claim of Ibn Taymiyya that the "*Khawarij"* are the first callers of disunity in Islam," to be historically debatable. Every Muslim who has even a slight knowledge of history – he does not need to be an erudite scholar – knows very well that the first to create disunity among the Muslims, were Talha and

[31] - Dr. Ahmad Subhi as quoted by Sh. 'Ali Yahya Ma'amar in his *Al-Ibadhiyya Baina Al-Firaq* Vol. 2, p. 213.

Zubair who rebelled against 'Ali and waged a bloody war against him two years before the advent of 'Ali's war against the so-called *Khawarij*.[32] Then, backed by 'Amru bin Al-aas and also by his Syrian army, Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufiyaan followed the same course, fighting a severe, internecine war against him: a war in which thousands of lives – Prophet's companions and their followers – were lost! This proves that the idea of the so-called *Khawarij* being the first ones to create disunity among the Muslims – as advocated by Ibn Taymiyya – is a serious historical error.

Certainly, Ibn Taymiyya's error of historical analysis, stems from his well known attitude towards Mu'awiya. In almost all of his books

[32] - The Battle of the Camel, which involved 'Ali and his opponents, Talha and Zubair, was fought in the year 36 A.H; 'Ali's war against Mu'awiya at Siffin was fought in the year 37 A.H., whereas 'Ali's war against the so-called *Khawarij* was fought in the year 38 A.H.

which deal with or hint at that evil history, Ibn Taymiyya strives as strongly as he can to defend Mu'awiya even if such defence has been incompatible with every scientifically and logically acceptable evidence. This may be taken to explain why Ibn Taymiyya has been seeking for every way to refute or at least to create an atmosphere of doubt about the authenticity of the tradition that quotes the Prophet (pbuh) as saying: "Ammaar (bin Yaasir) will be killed by a rebellious group".[33] When Mu'awiya-'Ali war broke out at Siffin, 'Ammaar fought on the side of 'Ali; during the fight Mu'awiya's troops killed him, something that offered itself for a clear-cut evidence that Mu'awiya was wrong in that war.

[33] - Ibn A'atham *Al -Futuh* Vol. 3, p. 119. Ibn Abdi Rabih *Al-Iqdu Al-Farid* Vol. 4, p. 317-418. Ibn Al-Athir *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 663-677. Ibn Abi Shaiba *Al-Musannaf* Vol. 8, p. 723, narrative no. 15, p. 728, narrative no. 39-40. Muslim *Sahihu Muslim* Vol. 9 of *Sharhu Al-Nawawi* by Al-Nawawi p. 172-173, traditions no: 70_2915-72_2916-73_2916. Al-Bukhari *Sahihu Al-Bukhari* tradition no. 447. Al-Baladhuri *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 93.

Surprisingly, Ibn Taymiya, seeking excuses for Mu'awiya, says about the above quoted tradition that: "Some[34] have said that it is not authentic, and others have interpreted it".[35] He adds: "People have had different statements on the tradition of 'Ammaar; of them are those who have criticized it."[36] He goes on: "But the people who have knowledge of this tradition have had three different statements. One group of them regards it to be inauthentic because to them, it

[34] - Al-Imamu Al-Qannubi says: **"We do not know whom Ibn Taymiyya means by his claim "Some (have said that it is not authentic)…." There will come explanation that many have classified this tradition as authentic…."** Al-Qannubi *Al-Tufan Al-Jarif* Vol. 3, section two, p. 625.

[35] - Ibn Taymiyya *Minhaju Al-Sunna* Vol. 2, p. 208. Ibn Taymiyya's words that: "And others have interpreted it," refer to the interpretation by Mu'awiya that the killers of 'Ammaar were those who brought him to the war. Ibn Taymiyya *Minhaju Al-Sunna* Vol. 2, p. 208-209. But this interpretation has been objected to by even Ibn Taymiyya himself. Ibn Taymiyya *Minhaju Al-Sunna* Vol. 2, p. 210-211.

[36] - *Ibid* Vol. 2, p. 204.

has been narrated through a weak chain of transmitters!"[37] But – all of a sudden – we,

[37] - *Ibid* Vol. 2, p. 212. But, surprisingly, no reference to anyone that has refuted the tradition has ever been given by Ibn Taymiyya. I am afraid that his statement here might be as untrue as his claim that:

"وأما أكثر أهل الحديث ومن وافقهم فإنهم لا يجعلون النوع حادثا بل قديما ويفرقون بين حدوث النوع وحدوث الفرد من أفراده"

"As for the scholars in Prophetic traditions and those agreeing with them, most of them do not regard a kind (of primeval matter) to be new but on the contrary they regard it to be pre-existent, and they differentiate between the coming into existence of a kind and that of one of its elements." Ibn Taymiyya *Bayanu Muwafaqati Sarihi Al-Maaqul Lisahihi Al-Manquul* published in the form of marginal notes with his another work entitled *Minhaju Al-Sunna* Vol. 2, p. 75. These words of Ibn Taymiyya mean that there existed with God a substance from which the whole creation of the universe began. When I discussed the matter with one of his followers, he said: "That is true because from nothing comes nothing!" I am afraid that this "Taymiyyaism" (the philosophy of Ibn Taymiyya), if meets such advocates, will eventually lead people to the belief in more than One God. In his *Al-Saif Al-Had* p. 200, Al-Qannubi, a contemporary Ibadhi scholar of the highest eminence, has challenged the followers of Ibn Taymiyya to

finally, find Ibn Taymiyya himself turns around to clearly state that the said tradition is authentic. "The tradition is proved and it is authentic, being from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)".[38] Yet, surprisingly, he has misinterpreted it saying: "His killers were those who held weapons and killed him":[39] not Mu'awiya!!! He says again: "The word "killer" if loosely or absolutely used, means the one that has killed: not the one that has issued the order (of killing)". [40] This philosophy of Ibn Taymiyya

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mention the names of those scholars who have gone to the idea that a kind of the world *(primeval matter)* has been pre-existent.

[38] - Ibn Taymiyya *Ibid* Vol. 2, p. 211.

[39] - Op. cit.

[40] - *Ibid*. Vol. 2, p. 212. But here is a tradition that contradicts that idea. The tradition says: "He who assists with a half-uttered word in the killing of a Muslim, he will come on the day of judgment between his two eyes there has been written "He has despaired of the Mercy of Allah." Al-Rabi'u bin Habib *Al-Jami'u Al-Sahih* p. 368, tradition no. 960. Ibn Majah *Al-Sunan* p. 444, tradition no. 2620. How does it come, then, that Ibn Taymiyya excludes the one from whose order the killing is carried out from being responsible for it?!

indicates that if he were to live in the present age, he would – of course – agree with the claim that presidents are not responsible for the crime of the illegal, haphazard bloodshed committed by their armies in different Muslim and non-Muslim countries, but rather their troops are the ones responsible for that! Indeed, while Ibn Taymiyya defends Mu'awiya in that way, we find that Mu'awiya himself proves him wrong as he says: "Ali had two right hands (two strong assistants and supporters), one of which I cut on the day of Siffin, meaning 'Ammaar bin Yasir; and the other I cut today, meaning Al-ashtar".[41]

Here seen is the presence of this incompatibility between the defender and the defended! In fact, even some companions of the Prophet (pbuh) who participated in the Battle of Siffin, in the beginning, held a neutral stance. It was not until the death of 'Ammaar that they were able to draw

[41] - Al-Tabari *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 3, p. 133. Ibn Al-Athir *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 705.

a distinction between who was right and who was wrong. Khuzaima bin Thabit, [42] for example, did not, at first, join either of the two rival camps. When 'Ammaar was killed, he joined 'Ali's camp and said: "Now the wrong has reached him."[43] Another version of the same

[42] - There is a disagreement in the person of this Khuzaima bin Thabit: some are inclined to believe that this was not the one nicknamed *"Dhu Shahadatain"* meaning "Owning the dual evidence," they believe that *"Dhu Shahadatain"* died during the reign of 'Uthman. Ibn Al-Athir *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 582. Ibn Hajar *Al-Isaba* Vol. 2, p. 279-280, biography no. 2254.

[43] - Al-Hakim *Al-Mustadrak* Vol. 3, p. 435, tradition no. 5657. Note that the words "Now the wrong has reached him" is a literal translation of the Arabic words, and the meaning intended will either be: *by killing Ammaar, Mu'awiya has committed wrong. In this sense, the pronoun (him) refers to Mu'awiya. Or the meaning is: Ammaar, by being killed by the rebellious party, has been wronged. In this sense, the pronoun (him) refers to Ammaar. In both interpratations, however, the meaning is the same – Ammaar has been killed unjustly by a rebellious group.*

narrative quotes him as saying: "Now the wrong has become clear to me."[44]

Knowing this fact, one is now not surprised to learn that Ibn Taymiyya has omitted Talha, Zubair and Mu'awiya, and instead has directly jumped onto the so-called *Khawarij*, putting them on the list of the first disunionists among the Muslims – the impartial analysis in Islamic literature, is still suffering a great setback.

Another debatable clause in the words of Ibn Taymiyya, is his statement that: "The *Khawarij* opposed and proclaimed that: 'There is no judgement except that of Allah." Certainly, one will not be surprised at these words if one holds them as part of the recorded history aimed at bringing to our knowledge what went by in the past. But perhaps one will be surprised at seeing a scholar like Ibn Taymiyya quote these words

[44] - Ibn Hajar *Al-Isaba* Vol. 2, p. 278-279, biography no. 2253.

with the object of criticizing them! *What is wrong with the words: **'There is no judgement except that of Allah'** in the overall Islamic outlook?* This is, of course, the question whose answer must baffle anyone endowed with an analytical, thinking mind! Do Ibn Taymiyya and others of the like school think that there is in traditional Islam a valid judgement other than that legislated or legitimated by Allah Himself?! If the answer is "No" – and as a matter of fact the answer *will be* "No" – then there will arise a question as to why blame those who have adhered to the words ***'There is no judgement except that of Allah'*** as their motto after the emergence of that tragedy borne of the evil history of division!

Another account narrated from Al-Imamu 'Ali is that when he heard the Nahrawanees' Qur'anic-inspired motto: ***'There is no judgement except that of Allah',*** he said: "That is the word of truth

behind which wrong is intended."[45] In response to that, Al-Imamu Abu 'Ubaida, the second Ibadhi leader, said: "Those people have uttered those words with their mouths, what did make 'Ali know what was confined in their hearts?" Abu 'Ubaida's response has been grounded on the fact that Islamic judgement is exclusively concerned with the obvious deeds and clear statements of the people, hence leaving the intention of the heart and anything unseen to the knowledge of Allah alone. As such, neither 'Ali nor any other person has the right to accuse others of what their hearts conceal, except if he knows that in the medium of their own deeds or statements. Indeed, even the Prophet (pbuh)

[45] - Al-Ya'aqubi *Taarikh Al-Yaaqubi* Vol. 2, p. 191. Al-Shahrastani *Al-Milalu Wa Al-Nihal* Vol. 1, p. 133. Al-Tabari *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 17. Ibn Al-Athir *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 685. Al-Mubarrid *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 603. Al-Baladhuri *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 126,129,135. Abdul-Razzaaq *Al-Musannaf* Vol. 9, p. 448, narrative no. 18926. Ibn Abi Shaibah *Al-Musannaf* Vol. 8, p. 741, narrative no. 50. Al-Bayhaqi *Al-Kubra* Vol. 12, p. 325, narrative no. 17168.

himself, who was the first and ultimate criterion and pattern, did not judge any case on the basis of what one's heart confined or what one's mind thought unless he had a revelation from The Supreme Being. That was why he blamed a Sahabi who killed a man after he had borne witness that: "There is no god worthy of worship except Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." When asked why he killed him? The Sahabi answered: "He did not do so except in fear of a sword." The Prophet (pbuh) angrily asked him: "Have you split his heart to see what exists therein?." If the Prophet (pbuh) himself depended entirely on the Divine Revelation in judging what is not physically seen, then we must logically conclude that by criticizing the people for something that was beyond human knowledge, 'Ali was incorrect since he did not receive divine revelation.

Another refutable idea incorporated into Ibn Taymiyya's words is his claim that ." When 'Ali and Mu'awiya agreed on making arbitration, the

Khawarij opposed..."[46] A close following up of historical events, however, reveals that Mu'awiya was not sincere on the subject; contrarily, he was forced to that agreement by the socio-politico-military circumstances under which he found

[46] - Also refutable in this regard, are the words of brother Dr. Abu Amina, Bilal Philips that "When arbitrations were held between two sides to stop the bloodshed…" Refer to *The Evolution of Fiqh* third edition Riyadh Saud Arabia, p. 186. It is true that Ali did not like the bloodshed, but:
a) Did the act of stopping the war come from Ali's heartfelt demand, or he was rather forced to accept the proposal of arbitration by some of his troops?!
b) Did Mu'awiya really stop the war in order to avoid the bloodshed or he did so because he was about to lose the war?! To have an answer to these questions is very important in understanding the whole question of the so-called *Khawarij*. We all know for sure that Mu'awiya proposed the idea of ceasing the war as a trick to avoid defeat by Ali and create disunity among his forces. I shall explain more on this subject in pamphlet no. 2 of this series. Equally, there are other debatable points found in brother Dr. Abu Amina's book which I should like to discuss in other parts of this work *inshaa Allah.*

himself: he was thrown on the horns of a dilemma and reached a deadlock. One piece of evidence which maintains this counter-idea may be taken from Mu'awiya's own actions, symbolized in his stance after the war between him and 'Ali became fierce. Having been sure that he was now about to lose the war, Mu'awiya sought advice from 'Amru bin Al-'Aas. 'Amru advised him: "Let us raise copies of the Holy Qur'an on the spearheads and then let us say that what is inside these (copies) is the judgement between you and us. If some of them refuse, you will have others who will say: 'Yes: we are obliged to agree'. Hence there will happen disunity among them. And in case all of them say: 'Yes', we shall keep this war away from us for a while."[47] Ibn A'atham, another historian, reports the same event in the words thus: "Let us raise the copies of the Holy Qur'an"[48] on the

[47] - Al-Tabari *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 5, p. 329-330. Ibn Al-Athir *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 667.

[48] - Ibn A'atham *Al -Futuh* Vol. 3, p. 305-306. Al-Ya'aqubi *Taarikh Al-Yaaqubi* Vol. 2, p. 188.

spearheads as a sign of wishing to cease the war "So that we may stop 'Ali's forces and weaken their strength." [49] Al-Baladhiri has also spoken on the subject, quoting 'Amru bin Al-'Aas as giving Mu'awiya the same advice, in which he ended with the words: "Verily, verily, if you do so, they will fall into disagreement."[50] Mu'awiya justified this advice and he unhesitatingly acted upon it. It is clear, therefore, that Mu'awiya did not enter into the said agreement for the interest of the Islamic nation but, on the contrary, he did so after his plans unexpectedly back-fired. This historical fact, as seen, proves Ibn Taymiyya's words: ."When 'Ali and Mu'awiya agreed on making arbitration…", as wrong and null. Indeed, as history shows, all subsequent events were self-evident that the agreement on stopping the war and making a truce was merely a military strategy of Mu'awiya. Conversely and finally, this proves that the persistent refusal of the so-

[49] - Al-Ya'aqubi *Taarikh Al-Yaaqubi* Vol. 2, p. 188.
[50] - Al-Baladhuri *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 103.

called *Khawarij* of that agreement stemmed from the combination of their profound knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and their far-sighted minds. For, in the end, the agreement culminated in deposing 'Ali from his office while Mu'awiya's tyrannical rule grew stronger and stronger!

THE CONCEPT OF THE *KHAWARIJ* ACCORDING TO SHEIKH MUHAMMAD 'ABDUH

Another Muslim scholar who has attempted to define who and what the *Khawarij* are, is Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh. In his comments on *Nahju Al-Balagha*, a Shi'a book on the speeches of Al-Imamu 'Ali, he writes an explanation which consists of two major points: one gives us a clue to the concept of the Khawarij; another identifies who the *Khawarij* are. He states: "And the *Mariqun* (*Khawarij*) are those who have gone

out of the religion, who have doubt and who are not sure, and he ('Ali) crushed them with arguments and defeated them!"[51]

Though Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh has been known to have the habit of refraining from blind following of the ideas suggested by other scholars, his definition here has not come from his common stance of examining different ideas and interpretations and then accepting or refuting them on the basis of methodoligically acceptable criteria. Actually, the Sheikh – in this regard – followed and repeated what he had inherited from previous scholars without placing it under his examining microscope. The definition he has suggested consists of two important points:

1) The *Khawarij* have gone out of the religion by having doubt and being unsure.

[51] - Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh *Shar-hu Nahji Al-Balagha* Vol. 1, p. 78, comments on speech no. 81.

2) The people to whom this definition is applicable are those referred to in history as the people of Nahrawaan, against whom 'Ali has fought the war at Nahrawaan. That is why Sheikh 'Abduh says: "And he ('Ali) crushed them with arguments and defeated them."

As for the idea demonstrated in the former clause, we find it unexplainable since it has not been and cannot be substantiated with any concrete and tangible evidence that puts the so-called *Khawarij* out of Islam or even out of the canonical and orthodox circle. In a nutshell, I am sure that even Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh himself, if asked for an explanation on the implication held by his words, would have no correct or convincing answer. Indeed, as shown before, what remains as a major problem in this definition – and almost all other definitions – is the fact that what has been taken to stigmatize the so-called *Khawarij* has been also committed by other Sahaba, particularly Talha, Zubair and Mu'awiya.

Similarly, the same obscenity – if it is right to call it so – has been committed by the followers of all other Islamic schools which emerged later. What is perhaps of a greater magnitude in the spectrum of a relative study of this subject, is to learn that even 'Ali's own outlook on the so-called *Khawarij* was often better than his outlook on the other politico-religious movements of his time. Indeed, it was because of his more positive outlook on the so-called *Khawarij* that he prohibited his followers from referring to them as infidels or hypocrites: "From infidelity they have already fled; and a hypocrite seldom remembers Allah."[52] When asked: "What are they then?" He replied: "They are the people who have rebelled against us, and we have been

[52] - Note that everyone – 'Ali and the Nahrawanees – regarded another as good-hearted, but everyone of them found fault in another not on the basis of any of the two involved parties being evil-hearted but, contrarily, on the basis of error-making that stems from common human nature of weakness.

given victory over them."[53] Again, he said comparatively: "Do not kill the *Khawarij* after me, for he who seeks the truth but mistakes is unlike he who seeks misguidance intentionally."[54] The words "He who seeks the truth but mistakes" – as 'Ali himself says – is an allusion to the Nahrawanees who are otherwise known as the *Khawarij*. The words "Unlike he who seeks misguidance intentionally" refer to Mu'awiya and his Syrian forces. The existence of such historical evidence makes us surprised at the attitudes of some scholars who claim to be the defenders of Al-Imamu 'Ali; while 'Ali regarded the Nahrawanees as being often better than Mu'awiya and his Syrian forces; those scholars hold views contrary to those held by 'Ali; and so justify or at least seek to justify Mu'awiya's rebellion and reversely find fault with the so-called Khawarij!

[53] - Al-Baihaqi *Al-Kubra* Vol. p. 334, narrative no. 17189.

[54] - *Nahju Al-Balagha* Vol. 1, p. 67, speech no. 56. The word "intentionally" is not a literal translation of the Arabic word.

Another refutable claim, in Sheikh 'Abduh's words, is that the so-called *Khawarij* were doubt-stricken and unsure. An obvious significance held by the words "Doubt-stricken and unsure" is to mean that those people's belief in God and in the hereafter was weak. If this is the correct meaning borne by those words, then the resultant idea will be contrary to what all historians unanimously agree upon for there is a considerable historical consensus on the extreme religiousity and spirituality of the so-called *Khawarij*. Ibn 'Abbaas' narration – as quoted in other parts of this work – mentioned them as being the *first tooth* and the most knowledgeable ones of the Prophet's companions. The words "first tooth" figuratively mean that those people were the first companions of the Prophet (pbuh) to embrace Islam: they have here been likened to the teeth which grow for the first time during one's childhood. Ibn 'Abdi Rabbih also commends them as: "None of all heretical

groups[55] is farther-sighted than the *Khawarij"*.[56] Al-Baladhari – in his turn – eulogizes them as:

[55] - One of the most surprising things I have ever come across in my reading of different books on sectarian questions, is the language used by many historians and many of those who have been engaged in writing sectarian articles of beliefs. Such a language as "There are no people of *bida'a* (heretics), the people with farther-sight than the *Khawarij*" is very common among all historians and jurists. The example of this is like what I have written in my Kiswahili work entitled *Mezani Ya Haki* that Abu Dawud, one of the sixth reliable Sunni collectors of the Prophet's traditions, says: "There are no people who follow their prejudices, the people whose traditions are more authentic than the Khawarij." Refer to *Mizan Al-Itidal* by Al-Dhahabi Vol. 4 p. 156 in the biography of Imran bin Hittan. Ibn Taymiyya says: "There are no people who follow their prejudices, the most truthful people like the *Khawarij*…on the contrary, they are well known for speaking the truth to the extent that it is said that the traditions narrated by them are the most authentic of all." Ibn Taymiyya *Minhaj Al-Sunnah* Vol. 3, p. 3. Dr. Al-Sibai has also quoted these words in his *Al-Sunna Wa Makanatuha Fii Al-Tashri'i Al-Islami* p. 99-101. It is surprising to note that these and other scholars commend the so-called *Khawarij* as "truth-speaking, far-sighted,

"….Those who had vision and efforts in worship."[57] As such, the idea that those people were "Doubt-stricken and unsure" – if meant thereby a weak faith in Allah – is historically unacceptable.

Back to the last part of Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh's definition: "And he ('Ali) crushed them with arguments and defeated them." This claim is typically incompatible with all verified historical data. Reversely, as it may be observed through a brief research into this history, the so-called *Khawarij* could easily crush 'Ali's arguments as well as those postulated by Ibn

God-fearing, much-worshiping, etc.," then they turn around and say: "They have gone out of the religion." Reversely, they say about the Umayyad rulers: "They were despots and tyrants; they killed many innocent people; they killed the grandsons of the Prophet (pbuh); they did a lot of unlawful things" but they are the *Ahlu Al-Sunna* (the followers of the path and footsteps of the Prophet (pbuh)! What injustice this is!

[56] - Ibn Abdi-Rabbih *Al-Iqdu Al-Farid* Vol. 1, p. 179.

[57] - Al-Baladhuri *Al-Ansab* Vol. 3, p. 112.

'Abbaas, which explains why Ibn 'Abbaas eventually justified their position. This will be discussed in greater detail in another part specifically set for that.

Such are the various definitions suggested by different Muslim scholars concerning the meaning of the word *"Khawarij."* Unfortunately – as seen – not a single of them is normative and capable of drawing a sharp distinction that will enable us to know who the *Khawarij* are and who are not.

THE HISTORICAL USE OF THE WORD *"KHAWARIJ"*.

Before the 60's A.H., the word *"Khawarij"* was used mainly or totally to refer to those who went out for a military defence of Islam. His Eminence Al-Imamu Al-Salimi, a prominent Ibadhi scholar in the late thirteenth and early

fourteenth centuries A.H., says: "It should be known that the name *"Khawarij"* was at first a good attribute; for it is a plural form of the word "*Kharija*" which is a group that comes out for Jihad (Holy war)[58] for the sake of Allah…….Then it became a bad attribute because of many opponents' interpretations of the traditions that bear bad attributes (which they associated with those who) had the habit (of going out for Jihad)."[59]

As such, Sheikh 'Ali Yahya Ma'amar has mentioned three different uses of the word *"Khawarij:"*

[58] - Note that the basic meaning of the word *Jihad* is to strive, to sruggle or to make efforts. To refer to the war fought to defend Islam as *Jihad*, is simply because war is also part of striving, sruggling and making efforts.

[59] - This gives a clear picture of how and why the modern Muslim liberation fighters are branded as terrorists. Politicians and media have always been misguiding the general public. For the words quoted from Al-Salimi refer to his *Sharhu Jami'i Al-Sahih* Vol. 1, p. 59.

One is the meaning used by historians holding that the *"Khawarij* **"** are those who disassociated themselves from *Amir-Al-Mu-uminin* (the Leader of the Muslims), 'Ali bin Abi Talib, when he yielded to the (idea of) making arbitration and was content with it, for – according to the view held by these (historians…those people by so-doing) broke their promise of allegiance they had shouldered and went out of the legal Imamate (leadership)."[60]

Another is the meaning: "Used by the people who write on matters concerning doctrines and creeds in the religion. These (by the word *Khawarij*) mean to go out of the religion basing (their arguments on the) Prophetic tradition that: 'Verily, there will come people in my *Umma* who will go out of the religion as an arrow passes through a game animal."[61]

[60] - 'Ali Yahya Muammar *Al-Ibadhiyya Fii Mawkibi Al-Taarikh* p.19.
[61] - Op. cit.

Yet another meaning is: "A group which uses that word to mean going out for Jihad (The Holy War) for the sake of Allah."[62]

But a survey of ancient and modern historical writings as well as speeches delivered on the subject, reveals clearly that the meaning intended by almost all people when loosely using the word *"Khawarij"* combines the first and the second meanings. The combination of the first and the second meanings makes one whole idea that the word *"Khawarij,"* in its real concept, means *the ones that have gone out of the Islamic religion and that the people to whom this meaning is applicable are those who splintered from 'Ali*.

As for the third meaning, it will be found that a loose use thereof is seldom and sporadic, in spite of the fact that it is historically the original one. It is because of the idea that "To splinter from 'Ali is tantamount to going out of the religion and

[62] - Op. cit.

finally it is the *Khawarijness* itself that almost all of those who delve into or hint at this subject, whether in the form of written works or delivered speeches, quite often prove their case with the tradition that: "Verily, there will come people in my *Umma* (Nation) who will go out of the religion as an arrow passes through a game animal." Had it not been for the combination of the two above-quoted definitions, the opponents of the Nahrawanees would not have taken this tradition as their evidence for that; for the tradition – as seen – clearly states that the people whose coming is predicted therein will go out of the religion whereas a biased history provides the evidence that the tradition is to be associated with the Nahrawanees. Unfortunately, this combination of two definitions, as repeatedly shown, comes into a strong clash with one important article of belief held in common by the so-called four canonical schools, as it inevitably and unavoidably includes personalities such as Talha, Zubair and Mu'awiya, who – in their

outlook are not *Khawarij* – in being among the *Khawarij* too.

Another important point to note in Sheikh 'Ali's quotations is the claim that, by splintering from 'Ali, the so-called *Khawarij* "Broke their promise of allegiance they had shouldered and they went out of the legal Imamate (leadership)." But one thing to bear in mind is the fact that as subjects are responsible for being obedient and loyal to their ruler, a ruler is simultaneously and equally responsible for complying with the conditions and terms which he and his subjects agree upon particularly at the time of appointment, selection or election as long as the said terms and conditions are Islamically lawful. Moreover, a leader – whatever the case may be – has no right to act contrarily to the Qur'an or the Prophetic traditions. In Islam, as is commonly known, no one is above the law; no one has an absolute authority by being free from the limitation of law: anyone whose idea goes contrary to what Allah or the Prophet (pbuh) says, has his idea

disregarded and discarded irrespective of the class or caste to which one belongs. The so-called *Khawarij* claimed that 'Ali – by yielding to the idea of ceasing the war and accepting the idea of truce suggested in the Battle of Siffin – went contrary to the Qur'anic verse which legitimated that war. In conclusion, therefore, we may say that the question of subjects' responsibity for being loyal to a ruler should not be taken as a pretext for the justification of the wrong a leader has committed or for the accusation of the innocent of the sins they have not committed; conversely, the actions of both a leader and a subject are to be exposed to the law, and the law alone is to be a criterion by which to decide who is right and who is wrong. On this basis, and also by taking into consideration the fact that the decision of the so-called *Khawarij* to disassociate themselves from 'Ali came as a result of 'Ali's own act of not complying with the Qur'anic verse, we come up with the result that the so-called *Khawarij* were scapegoats of the other culprits; their genuiness was disguised and

their realty became – in the memorable words of Sheikh Saud – a *Cinderella of Islam*.[63]

BACK TO AL-SHAHRASTANI'S WORDS.

Back again to Al-Shahrastani's words that: "Anyone that goes against a right leader upon whom a majority has agreed (to have him for a leader), is called a *Khawarij*:" we find them to be a mere theoretical approximation with no potential to materialize in the world of reality, for all ancient and contemporary Muslims have been making revolutionary attempts when they

[63] - Though this language sounds strange to many who have always been indoctrinated with the philosophy of *Al Arba'a Al-Khulafaau Al-Rashidun* "the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs," or the creed of infallible 'Ali, yet the existence of such and many other irrefutable clear-cut evidences, cuts off the roots of the fabricated creed and philosophy. Clearly, that does not mean that they had no special position in Islam, yet the idea of taking their opinions for granted is genarally refuted on the grounds that they are as fallible as all other human beings. Indeed, this is the position held in common by almost all Muslims.

feel that the status quo is not just or at least they keep themselves away from the existing socio-political order if they find it immoral. We have been sporadically hinting at the act of the Nahrawanees to splinter from 'Ali. But was it the Nahrawanees alone who had the inspiration of the politics of revolution? Of course, other phenomena of the revolutionary-oriented ideo-politics were symbolized in Mu'awiya, Talha and Zubair who did the same or worse than that. Al-Imam Al-Husain bin 'Ali – the third Shi'a Imam – waged war against the Umayyad rulers. In our modern age the followers of Usama bin Laden are believed to make different coup attempts against the leaders of the Muslim countries; many so-called terrorist attacks have been made in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan; the followers of the politico-religious FIS in Algeria have been in conflict with government forces; in Somalia an Islamic military coup led to the toppling of the ruling president;[64] in Egypt *Al-Ikhwan Al-*

[64] - Then he came back again to power with American-

Muslimin (The Muslim Brotherhood) has carried out many anti-government attacks; in Iran Ayatullah Khomeni ousted the Shah; in Yemen the Shi'a military movement recently launched a war against the government; in Zanzibar, Kenya and Tanganyika, there has often been an open opposition against the regional governments. Certainly, all these opposition parties or groups demand either reforms, changes or a complete doing away with the ruling political systems and the establishment of the systems which they believe to be compatible with Islam. In other words, they hold competing ideologies which openly challenge the ideologies rationalized by the existing political order. Surprisingly, all these malcontents – with the exception of the Nahrawanees' opposition to 'Ali – are from the four Sunni schools and one Shi'a school. The question that everyone asks oneself here is: what is the difference between the ideology held by these radical opposition parties or groups and the

Ethiopian aid.

one advocated by the so-called *Khawarij*? If all in this regard are the same, why then stigmatize the Nahrawanees as the *Khawarij*, heretics or even apostates while others are held in great honour as canonical and orthodox schools?!

This makes us ask ourselves the following questions:

1) Are the illegitimacy and the illegality of opposing the ruling system strictly limited to the so-called *Khawarij* alone whereas others have the right to oppose or support?[65]

2) Are there Islamically lawful reasons for which the Muslims have had the right to rise in opposition against a leader even if he is a companion of the Prophet (pbuh) or is a companion priviledged to do whatever he wants

[65] - It should be borne in mind that when the Nahrawanees splintered from 'Ali he was not an Islamic Caliph anymore.

and the law does not catch him but catches the people of lower standard alone?

3) A tradition which has been taken to show the evil of the so-called *Khawarij* and which requires us to be obedient to the Muslim rulers even if they are tyrants and despots as long as they do not deprive us of our ritual right of saying prayer has now become a theory that contradicts practice. It will be remembered that in countries like Zanzibar, Pakistan, Kenya, etc., what is claimed to be the evil of the existing governments has never reached the stage of preventing any Muslim from saying his prayer. The question that we ask ourselves, therefore, is: has this tradition now become a theory that is practically unverifiable?!

The existence of such contradictions between theory and practice is supposed to give an impetus towards studying afresh the history of the so-called *Khawarij* and inevitably suggest modification of the interpretation of historical

events. Reseachers and scholars are, therefore, still faced with the difficulty of delving into history in search of real factors which have led the men of every group or sect to make an attempt at disassociating themselves from a ruler or an attempt at rising in revolt. Thus the subsequent step would be to weigh the discovered factors on the scale of the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions.

In so doing, we shall be able to know the *Khawarij* referred to in the tradition: "There will come – out of you – people whom you will belittle your prayer in contrast to theirs; your fast in contrast to theirs and (all) your deeds in contrast to theirs; (but) they will go out of the religion as an arrow passes through a game animal." Otherwise the claim that so-and- so a man has gone astray is a language that can be used by anyone that holds a different idea from yours or that opposes you, even if logical and scientific proofs are against him.

THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME *"KHAWARIJ"*

We have previously seen that a literal meaning of the word *"Khawarij"* is "the ones that have come out or gone out" regardless of the cause and reason for which they have come or gone out: is it Islamically right or wrong? Equally, we have seen the explanation by Al-Imamu Al-Salimi that the word was at first used only in a good sense, meaning a group of people who came out for a military defence of Islam. With the passage of

time, the word underwent dramatic and drastic changes; it came to mean those who came out in revolt against rulers. The word underwent more changes in use and eventually was used with a particular reference to some political groups, especially the people of Nahrawan who splintered from 'Ali after his acceptance of the idea to enter arbitration and reach a truce with Mu'awiya.

But – of course – one thing that everyone will still need to know is the question of: *where has the word Khawarij been taken from?* It should be understood, therefore, that the evidence of the word *Khawarij* is often drawn from the tradition that "There will come – out of you – people whom you will belittle your prayer in contrast to theirs; your fast in contrast to theirs and (all) your deeds in contrast to theirs; (but) they will go out of the religion as an arrow passes through a game animal."

The Arabic phrase used in this tradition to mean "going out of the religion" is: ***"Yamruqun min ad-din."*** It can be seen in this tradition that there is one thing which is clearly understood and another which is intricate and obscure. What is clearly understood in this tradition is the presence of the prophecy about the people who will come in the future time and who will come out of the religion, meaning that they will innovate things by which they will be not Muslims anymore. But the baffling intricacy still remains in the question of who or which sect or group is meant in this tradition? Most of the people have associated this tradition with the people of Nahrawaan who splintered from 'Ali. But the problem – as explained more than once – is the fact that what has been taken rightly or wrongly as a reason for pointing this tradition towards those people has also been found present in all other Islamic sects. Possibly, this sharing of the same things in common by all sects,[66] is the

[66] - Yet other things propagated against the Nahrawanees

reason as to why others – Sahaba and non-Sahaba – have regarded Mu'awiya and his followers to be the *Khawarij*. Al-Hakim in his *Al-Mustadrak*[67] narrates on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri that when asked about the Khawarij, Abu Said's answer pointed to Mu'awiya and his Syrian followers as being the *Khawarij*. That was why, in his answer, he quoted the Prophet (pbuh) as saying: "Ammaar (bin Yasir) would be killed by a rebellious group" and he was, as a matter of fact, killed by the Syrian forces who were under the leadership of Mu'awiya. This can be taken to show that the *Khawarij*, in the view of Abu Sa'id, were Mu'awiya and his followers otherwise he would need not to have mentioned them as his answer to the question of *"Who were the Khawarij?"*

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were untrue and other were true but misinterpreted as we shall clarify in this series, *in shaa' Allah.*

[67] - Refer to Al-Hakim *Al-Mustadrak* Vol. 2, p. 162-163. tradition no. 2653. Ibn Abdi Rabih *Al-Iqdu Al-Farid* Vol. 4, p. 318-319. Ibn Al-Athir *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 663.

Al-Sayyid Al-Husain bin 'Ali bin Abi Talib was another man who regarded Mu'awiya to be a *Khawarij*. It was for this reason that when 'Ubaidullah bin 'Umar bin Al-Khattab advised Al-Husain to depose his father, 'Ali, he called him a follower of the *Mariq*, meaning a follower of one that has gone out of the religion, otherwise known as *Khawarij*.[68]

Likewise, when Mu'awiya bin Hudaij Al-Sukuni revolted – on the order of Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyaan[69] – against Muhammad bin Abi Bakr, a governor of 'Ali in Egypt, 'Ali told one of his followers named Al-Ashtar: "I told you that I assigned to Muhammad bin Abi Bakr the governorship (of Egypt); (but) these *Khawarij* have revolted against him."[70] Thus, according to 'Ali, Mu'awiya and his followers were the *Khawarij*.

[68] - Ibn A'atham *Al -Futuh* Vol. 3, p. 57.
[69] - Al-Tabari *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 34. Ibn Al-Athir *Al-Kamil* Vol. 2, p. 707.
[70] - Al-Tabari *Al-Taarikh* Vol. 6, p. 31.

During the Battle of Siffin, a man named Hammam bin Al-Aghfal, one of the followers of 'Ali, said: " إذ ظفرت كتائب العراق*** نحن قتلنا صاحب المُرّاق" (Remember when the Iraqi detachments attained victory**It was we who killed the friend[71] of the *Murraq (Al-Khawarij).*[72] The *Murraq* (*Al-Khawarij*) intended here are Mu'awiya and his Syrian forces for – as known – this was a war between 'Ali and Mu'awiya.

In conclusion, therefore, let us say that the tradition: "There will come – out of you – people whom you will belittle your prayer in contrast to theirs…" is not worthy as evidence that the people of Nahrawaan – who have always been referred to as the *Khawarij* – were really the *Khawarij*, though it has been generally agreed upon that the tradition gives the evidence for the origin of that name and for the presence of a

[71] - The friend of the *Khawarij* whom they killed was 'Uthman bin Affan, the third Caliph.
[72] - Ibn A'atham *Al -Futuh* Vol. 3, p. 218.

prophecy for the upcoming people who will *go out of the religion* (*Khawarij*). Yet who are really meant thereby is still a question that has long remained unanswered.

SUMMARY AND MAIN POINTS

1) Our concern in this booklet is a discussion of different definitions which have been put forward to show the real concept of the word *Khawarij*.

2) We have seen that all definitions suggested have been unable to give a clear meaning of the word simply because all the qualities which have been supposed to serve as specificities with which to identify who the *Khawarij* are do not identify them, for they have been also found existing in all other Islamic sects. Consider – for example – the following definitions:

a) "Anyone that goes against a right leader upon whom a majority has agreed (to have him for a

leader), is called a *Khawarij*; be it against the Rightly-Guided Caliphs during the time of the Prophet's companions or against the followers of the Prophet's companions as well as against leaders at any time."[73] Yet we have seen that this definition gives no objective parameters as it includes among the *Khawarij* persons like Mu'awiya, Zubair and Talha who, according to the advocates of this definition, were not *Khawarij*. Typically, this definition includes all or most of the contemporary and the ancient Muslim activists who have risen in opposition against Muslim rulers or who have been struggling for the liberation of the Muslims.

b) Another indirect definition has been offered in the suggestion that "The *Khawarij* are the first callers of disunity in Islam…the first disunity in Islam after the murder of 'Uthman and the division of the Muslims, (and) when 'Ali and Mu'awiya agreed on making arbitration, the

[73] - Al-Shahrastani *Al-Milalu Wa Al-Nihal* Vol. 1, p. 129.

Khawarij opposed and proclaimed that: ***'There is no judgement except that of Allah,'*** and they disassociated themselves from the mainstream."[74] We have equally found in this definition a number of things which are historically unacceptable: 1) The first to create disunity among the Muslims were Talha and Zubair and then they were followed by Mu'awiya with his Syrian forces. 2) The claim that Mu'awiya was really candid and sincere on the question of making an agreement with 'Ali is a serious historical error: all books on history agree that Mu'awiya did so to avoid defeat by 'Ali and to create disunity among the followers of 'Ali, not the other way round. 3) The condemnation of the Nahrawanees for their stance characterized by the words: ***"There is no judgement except that of Allah"*** has not been based on any logical or scientific ground, for it is true that in Islam ***"There is no judgement except***

[74] - Al-Imamu Ibn Taymiyya *Al-Tafsiru Al-Kabir* Vol. 2, p. 8.

that of Allah" as many Qur'anic verses clearly state.

c) Another definition suggests: "And the *Mariqun* (*Khawarij*) are those who have gone out of the religion,[75] who have doubt and who are not sure, and he ('Ali) crushed them with arguments and defeated them![76] However, history, contrary to what this definition states, shows that the so-called *Khawarij* were the most knowledgeable, most pious, most brave and most clever of all the people. Likewise, the claim that 'Ali crushed their arguments, is another serious historical misconception. Indeed, all written

[75] - This definition contains the similar elements that are found in the definition by Ibn Hajar and Al-Shawkani that: "The (word) *Khawarij* is a plural form of the (word) *Kharijah*, which means a group. They have been so-called because they have gone out of the religion and (also) because they have innovated (matters once not existed)." As such we need not repeat the answer to it – the question is the same and the answer is the same.

[76] - Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh *Shar-Hu Nahji Al-Balagha* p. 78, comments on speech no. 81.

records show that 'Ali could not crush their arguments with any scientifically acceptable proof. On the contrary, it was they who easily crushed *his* arguments.[77]

3) Every definition has in it a number of points – besides those expressed above – which are either historically or logically refutable.
4) This contradiction can be taken to show that:

a) Muslim reseachers and scholars have – in their studies on the subject – been biased.

b) What has long been claimed against the so-called *Khawarij*, is merely a result of politics of lies. Otherwise, the words of truth never contradict themselves.

5) While most of the people call the Nahrawanees *Khawarij,* Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri –

[77] - This subject will be discussed in greater detail in other parts of this series, *in shaa' Allah.*

as seen above – views Mu'awiya to be a *Khawarij*. Also viewing him to be a *Khawarij*, were 'Ali himself and his son, Al-Hasan, as well as others who lived at that time.

In conclusion, therefore, we dare say that there is no correct or normative definition of who the *Khawarji* are, though people have mistakenly or wrongly associated that name with the Nahrawanees. The reason for the absence of such a definition stems from the fact that all early as well as modern Islamic factions or sects share the common ideas and politics of disassociating themselves from the central leadership if they find fault with it. Indeed, that has been done by every sect, as history bears witness. So the definitions postulated on this subject give no hand of support to their advocates and the failure of substantiating them with accurate evidence can be further taken to explain that the idea of classifying the Nahrawanees with the *Khawarij* is incorrect. It remains to be seen, therefore, whether historical events will provide the

opponents of the people of Nahrawaan with enough evidence for associating that name with them or all involved factions and sects are – in the scale of those historical events – bound by a common cord in terms of what they did. To understand this, we must make a relative study of those historical events, placing them on the scale of the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions when necessary, just as we need to analyse all traditions narrated on this subject in order to know the reality and reach the truth.

To be continued in Pamphlet No. 2.

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