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Ibn Hanbal says:

Waki'has related to us from Fitr from Isma'il bin Raja' from his father from Abi Sa'id who narrates that the Messenger of Allah (S) said (addressing his companions):

"Inna minkum man yuqatilu 'ala ta'wilih kama qataltu 'ala tanzilih" (Who among you will fight for the interpretation [of the Qur'an] as I fought on its revelation)?

Abi Sa'id says:

At this Abu Bakr and 'Umar got up but the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"la, wa lakin khasif al-na'l (No [not you] but the one who is busy mending the shoe)."

(Abi Sa'id adds):

Wa 'Aliyun yakhsifu na'lahu (And [Imam] 'Ali ('a) was mending his shoes. 1

It is recorded that during the Battle of Siffin the Prophet's loyal companion 'Ammar bin Yasir who was on the side of Imam 'Ali ('a), referred to this famous hadith of the Prophet in favour of Imam 'Ali ('a) while facing the Syrian army of the rebel Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan, and recited the following epic verses (rajaz):

Nahnu darabnakum 'ala tanzilih

Wa al-yawm nadribukum 'ala ta'wilih

(We had fought you on the revelation [of the Qur'an] and today we are fighting you on its correct interpretation).2

- 1. Al-Musnad, Matbaʻah al-Maymaniyyah, vol. 3, pp. 31 & 33; also refer to p. 82 of the same volume where the hadith says Imam 'Ali ('a) was mending the Prophet's shoes.
- 2. Taha Husayn, al-Fitnah al-Kubra ('Ali and Prophethood), vol. 2, p. 77, 6th edition, Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt, 1969.

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