Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

23. The Battle of Basra

The period at which the Qureshite community was overwhelmed and lost the political control had elapsed. Quraish woke up after the Brother of the Messenger was elected. Now this community went on gathering its forces determined not to let ‘Ali enjoy his leadership and to demolish that leadership regardless of what it may cost the Muslims in blood unity and religion.

The Qureshite parties (though neither of them had good intentions towards the other) agreed to wage war against ‘Ali the Imam of the truth. One of the two parties was led by three leaders who had a high religious position:

Ayeshah the politically-minded wife of the Holy Prophet Talhah and Al-Zubayr who were among the early Muslims with a brilliant record in their endeavor during the days of the prophethood along with a long companionship of the Holy Prophet.

The other party was the Umayyads led by Muawiya (governor of Syria). The Umayyads were known (with the exception of a few) to be less religious than other Muslims as they were known for their long and strong hostility towards the Prophet.

That hositility continued for most of the years of the prophethood and the signs of it did not disappear except during the last two years of the life of the Messenger.[1] In spite of that this party had a tremendous material power which made it the more dangerous of the two parties.

A Third Party Governor of Kufa Both parties declared their open defiance to the Caliph. Both parties made out ot the revenge for the death of Uthman a slogan with which they were trying to deceive millions of ignorant Muslims.

The two parties were joined by Abu Musa Al-Ashari in a covered and camouflaged way. As the Imam's appointed governor of Kufa Abu Musa was able through his malicious method to offer to the two parties tremendous assistance.

However the three leaders of the first Qureshite party were faster than the second party in their violent

hostility.They took the strategy of offense while Muawiya took the strategy of disobedience and defiance.

The three leaders took the law in their hands and appointed themselves as the high magistrates of the nation and the administrators of its affairs. They went on shedding the blood of the Muslims[2] though they were neither heirs nor relatives of the assassinated Caliph. Nor were they elected by the nation.

History recorded the names of the killers of Uthman and their number did not exceed five: Soudan Ibn Hamran Al-Ghafiqi Qutairah Kinanah Ibn Bishr Al- Tajeebi and Amr Ibn Al-Hamiq.[3] History records that three of them: Kinanah Ibn Bish Al-Tajeebi Soudan Ibn Hamran and Qutairah were killed at the same time Uthman was murdered.[4] Thus only two of them survived Uthman. But the three leaders did not go after these two.

They considered all who attended the besiegement of the Third Caliph from Basra Kufa and Egypt to be of his killers. Yet most of these came asking the Caliph to make changes and did not come to kill him.

They came only to pressure him to change his policy towards handling the public funds and towards his relatives. The few who killed him made their attack on him while the majority of the rebels were unaware of what the few did. His death probably was a shocking surprise to most of those who besieged him.

The three leaders considered all who attended the besiegement partners in his assassination because their presence was an assistance to the murderers. If this logic is sound then it would have been the duty of the three leaders to go to the Imam and ask him to give them what they deserved of punishment because they were among the biggest agitators against the Caliph.[5]

A Sweeping Condemnation

The three leaders were not satisfied to kill only the ones who besieged Uthman whose number did not exceed twelve hundred from Egypt Kufa and Basra. Evidently the three leaders considered every loyal person to the Imam a partner in the murder of Uthman.

They went to Basra and turned thousands of its inhabitants against the Imam then used them to fight whomever they could reach of the Imam's followers in Basra or Kufa. The participants in the siege of Uthman from the people of Basra did not exceed two hundred persons and none of them participated directly in killing the Caliph.

The Qureshite war followed a pre-Islamic method. Its purpose was not to kill the killers of Uthman but to destroy the caliphate of the Imam. How would they avenge the blood of Uthman when they were the ones who urged people to kill him?

A Warning Prophecy Not Heeded

The three leaders went to Basra accompanying three thousand persons including a thousand Meccans. Uthman's former appointed governors supplied them with funds and means of transportation through what they stole from the public funds before they left their posts.

Their procession arrived to a water where dogs at that water barked at them. Mother of the Believers Ayeshah asked about the name of the place. When they told her it was the water of Al-Hou-ab she realized that she was deviating from the right road and the prophecy of the great Messenger had been fulfilled.

She said "Return me return me (to Mecca)."[6] Al-Zubayr and his oldest son Abdullah confused her by bringing witnesses testifying falsely that the water is not the water of Al-Hou-ab.

It is also reported that she was told that 'Ali is about to overtake them and they ought to hurry out. Thus she continued her journey to Basra.[7] Yet she knew that the Imam does not fight anyone that does not fight him. She was too intelligent to believe in the testimony of witnesses who were brought to her by people who justified every means for reaching their end.

The voice of the Messenger was still ringing in her ears: "I wish I knew which one of you will be the rider of the huge camel to be barked at by the dogs of Al-Hou-ab and she would be deviating from the right road." (He was addressing Ayeshah and Om Selema) and he turned to Ayeshah saying: "Humairah I have warned you." [8]

Dividing Killing and Truce

Finally the procession arrived in Basra and the wife of the Messenger was able (through her position with the Messenger of God and her father being the First Caliph) to divide the people of Basra after they had given their allegiance to the Imam. The three leaders' party and the party of the governor of Basra Uthman Ibn Hunayf fought each other then agreed on a temporary truce.

This truce was violated by the three leaders when they attacked the followers of Ibn Hunayf then forced him out of the leadership of the prayer at the Mosque and slaughtered many of his guards then occupied the governor's office and massacred their opponents.[9] Their opponents were not the killers of the Caliph Uthman but they were loyal to the Imam.

The Contents of the Truce Agreement

Al-Tabari in his History reported that the truce pact which was made between Ibn Hunayf on one hand and Talhah and Al-Zubayr on the other hand contained the agreement to send a messenger from Basra to Medina seeking information from its inhabitants whether Talhah and Al-Zubayr elected 'Ali voluntarily

or by force. If people of Medina testified that the two companions were forced to elect ‘Ali the city of Basra shall be under control of the two companions and Ibn Hunayf should leave his post.

If people of Medina testify that the two companions elected the Imam voluntarily the governor Ibn Hunayf would stay in his post and Talhah and Al-Zubayr could stay in Basra under the control of the Imam if they want and if they choose to leave Basra they could.[10]

The messenger of the two parties to Medina was Kaab Ibn Soor a former judge of Basra. When he asked people of Medina about the two companions' election of the

Imam people did not answer his question except Osamah Ibn Zayd Ibn Harithah. He stated that they elected ‘Ali unwillingly and under coercion. Sahl Ibn Hunayf (brother of Uthman Ibn Hunayf governor of Basra) and others attacked Osamah Ibn Zayd but Osamah was defended by a few people who were from the opposition of the Imam and Osamah was taken to his home without being hurt. [11]

Al-Tabari recorded that when the Imam knew about what took place in Medina he sent to Uthman Ibn Hunayf a message in which he blamed him for his inefficiency and told him in the message: "By God they were not forced for a division. They were forced for unity and good. If they want to declare their disobedience they have no excuse; and if they want something else we may consider the matter."[12]

When the message of the Imam came to Uthman Ibn Hunayf and Ibn Soor came with his news from Medina Talhah and Al-Zubayr sent to Uthman Ibn Hunayf to leave his post and his office. Uthman refused to do so saying that what the Imam brought up is different from what they had agreed upon. Upon this Talhah and Al-Zubayr and their supporters made their attack at the Mosque then they attacked the governor and prevailed against him.

They occupied his office and the city of Basra then took over the treasury. This was followed by a massacre.[13] The three leaders aimed at liquidating their opponents. Ibn Hunayf was taken prisoner. They tortured him and pulled the hair off his beard and wanted to kill him.

Al-Tabari in reporting these events relied on the narration of Seif Ibn ‘Umar who alleged to have taken his information from Muhammad (Ibn Oun) and Talhah.

Knowing the Imam's method of conducting himself we ought to discredit this report. The Imam was not a man who would take a pledge of loyalty from a person who was forced to give it.

We have already substantiated that the claim of coercion by Talhah and Al-Zubayr was unfounded. The reporter of this story was Seif Ibn ‘Umar who was discredited by many historians and hadith recorders and some of them declared him as one of the forgers of the history and some of them accused him of being a heretic.[14] We shall deal with this in the following chapter.

Forcing Two Persons Does Not Nullify the Election

Assuming that the two companions were forced to elect the Imam this would allow them only to withhold from the Imam their assistance if he seeks it. It would not allow them to hinder the Imam from exercising his rule as the administrator of the affairs of the nation after he was elected by the overwhelming majority from the companions of the Prophet.

Forcing two persons to elect an Imam does not cancel the whole election or the legitimacy of his caliphate. Al- Zubayr was forced to give his allegiance to Abu Bakr when Abu Bakr was elected. Historians reported that Al-Zubayr came out from the house of ‘Ali drawing his sword in the faces of the attackers saying. "‘Ali has the right more than anyone to the caliphate."

The attackers took the sword from his hand and led him to Abu Bakr and made him give his allegiance to him by force.[15] Forcing Al-Zubayr at that time did not cancel the legitimacy of Abu Bakr's election in spite of the fact that his election was a "Faltah" (an incident that came without preparation or planning) according to the testimony of ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattab.[16]

Would it have been legitimate at that time for Al-Zubayr to go to Mecca for example and occupy it and drive Abu Bakr's appointed governor from Mecca by force? I do not believe that Al-Zubayr could claim that this was legal for him to do. I do not think that anyone from the companions would agree with him if he had claimed the right to do that.

Had he done this he would have been fought and considered to be a divider of the Muslim community. Why should it be legitimate for him and Talhah to fight the Imam and drive his appointed governor out of Basra and occupy a city whose people pledged their allegiance to him?

Illegal Agreement

If Ibn Hunayf had agreed with the two companions voluntarily on the contents of the alleged pact of the temporary truce he would have committed a grave mistake.

This is because his agreement with the two companions represents a negligence of the trust which the Imam put in the hand of Ibn Hunayf and because it is an agreement on dividing the nation. This is abhorable to God and His Messenger.

Granted that Ibn Hunayf agreed on that. This could not make it legitimate for the two companions and for the Mother of the Believers to implement the contents of the agreement because it contained a pledge to commit a major sin.

If Ibn Hunayf had breached the pact between him and the two companions after the Imam reprimanded him he would have only fulfilled his duty. This is because the contents of the pact are unjustifiable in Islam.

If the two companions wanted out of their occupation of Basra to make one of them a caliph the Faith of Islam does not allow them to do so. Muslim reported in his Sahih that Abu Sa-eed Al-Khidri said that the Messenger of God said: "If two caliphs are elected kill the latter of the two."[17] Muslim reported also that the Messenger said: "Whoever stood in open disobedience and parted with the bulk of the community then dies he would die d pre-Islamic death."[18]

The Imam's Journey

Muawiya declared his open defiance to the Imam and the Imam found his confrontation with Muawiya inevitable. Therefore he went on trying to mobilize an army in order to subdue this dangerous rebellion. While he was dealing with this crisis he received the news of the journey of the three leaders to Iraq.He changed his plan.

The Imam found it necessary to give priority to the crisis of the three leaders. The providence of Iraq was the most important among the Islamic provinces for the caliphate. Should the three leaders occupy Iraq while the Syrian province is controlled by Muawiya the Imam would have lost most of the moral material and military forces in the Muslim World.

The Imam facing this crisis was fifty-eight years old. His relatively old age did not diminish his determination bravery and his fast response to the big problems and facing them with proper solutions.

During the days of the Messenger he was his right arm the one who solved his probelms and subdued his enemies. Now after twenty-five years during which he was in actual retirement he returns with his well-known capabilities to face crises but on a larger scale. The forces he had to face at this period were uncomparably greater than what he used to face in the days of the Prophet.

Unprecedented Test

The struggle between right and wrong was and still is difficult for the followers of the truth. People of the right camp are usually in the minority. The wrong side has its own attraction as it has fruits which the people of its camp can pick quickly. The truth is not tempting and the strength of its followers springs from their belief in God the Day of Judgment and their determination to sacrifice.

The difficulties which the camp of truth faces increase greatly when people are confounded unable to distinguish between right and wrong. Under such circumstances the truth loses the assistance of people with good intention who would be helpful if the right road were clear to them.

On the other hand the wrong camp wins certain forces which could have been antagonistic to it if they had known that it is the wrong camp. People of good intention may stay neutral because they do not know which side is right.

Their neutrality decreases the number of the supporters of truth and the wrong party would be relieved of

the burden of combating these good people due to their neutrality.

This is what happened to the camp of truth which the Imam was leading. It was the first time it took place in the Islamic history. It never happened during the days of the Prophethood nor did it happen during the days of the Three Caliphs who preceded the Imam.

The Holy Prophet faced many enemies but the separation between him and his enemies was as clear as the separation between day and night. He is the Messenger and his followers are the believers in his message and his enemies are the pagans and the rest of the unbelievers who declared their disbelief in his message. There was no possibility to lose the distinction between right and wrong.

Abu Bakr faced at the beginning of his reign forces that declared their desertion of the Faith of Islam. Thus there was no room for any confusion between right and wrong. When the war of desertion ended the First Caliph had to face forces that did not believe in Islam and declared their animosity towards its message. And so was the situation during the days of ‘Umar and Uthman. Right and wrong distinguished from each other like day and night.

The Imam ‘Ali on the contrary had to face hostile forces which belonged to the Faith of Islam and declared their belief in its Book and offered the five prayers and paid Zakat. Furthermore one of the camps of those forces was led by three people whom tne Muslims highly respected because of their companionship to the Prophet or for being related to him by marriage.

Thus it became difficult for the masses of the people and even for some of the knowledgeable people to distinguish between the camp of the truth and that of falsehood. The history of the three leaders attracted tens of thousands of people and made them side with them against the well-guided Imam while they were thinking that they were right and that he was wrong.

Had ‘Ali come to power immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet his confrontation with Talhah Al-Zubayr and Ayeshah could have been easier than his confrontation with them twenty-five years later.

During the early years after the Prophet people still remembered the distinctions of ‘Ali his great endeavor in the way of God and his position with the Holy Prophet and the Prophet's declarations about him. By the passage of more than two decades after the death of the Prophet people had forgotten ‘Ali's distinctions. He was away from the political arena and in actual retirement.

People of Basra and Kufa probably knew about Talhah and Al-Zubayr more than they did about the Imam ‘Ali. Talhah and Al-Zubayr had many properties and big investments in both cities. Even Al-Zubayr forgot that the Holy Prophet had told him that he will fight ‘Ali while unjust to him. This explains the word of the Imam which he uttered before he was elected: "... For we are facing a crisis with many faces and colors.

The hearts do not stand to it and the minds do not rest with it." As the crisis which was precipitated by

the movement of the three leaders had such great dimensions it was the duty of the Imam to face it with all his forces. Therefore he left Medina with a few hundred volunteers hoping that he will overtake the leaders and their followers before reaching Iraq and prevent them from implementing their plan.

When he arrived to Rabatha he realized that they had already passed it and gone towards Basra. However he believed that their invasion of Basra was less harmful than invading Kufa where the most important Arab forces were settled.

He went on until he arrived to Thee Qar. He sojourned there after he sent a message to the people of Kufa urging them to join him for the sake of bringing peace preventing evil and supporting truth. The three leaders were already in control of Basra.

They drove Uthman Ibn Hunayf out of his office. Uthman came to Thee Qar. When he met the Imam he told him:"Ameer Al-Mumineen when you sent me to Basra I was bearded but I returned to you without a beard."

The Imam said to him: "May God reward you for what you have suffered. Two persons before me ruled the people and both followed the Book; then the third one followed them. People spoke about him and dealt with him the way they did. Then they elected me. Talhah and Al-Zubayr elected me then they breached their covenant with me and instigated people against me. It is one of the wonders that they obeyed Abu Bakr and 'Umar and now they antagonize me. By God they know that I am not less than any of those who passed away. God I ask Thee to untie what they knotted and abort what they plotted and make them meet the evil consequences of what they have done."[19]

Abu Musa Al-Ashari

After the three leaders' party occupied the City of Basra Ayeshah Mother of believers took a further step. She wrote to the leaders of Kufa informing them that her party had already occupied Basra urging them to avenge the blood of Uthman and discouraging them from supporting the Imam.[20]

Of course she wrote to Abu Musa (the Imam's appointed governor of the city) and asked him to use his influence in preventing the Kufites from sending any recruits to the army of the Imam. Abu) Musa did not need anyone to urge him to do that. He was not loyal to the Imam; nor was he a believer in his right.

The messages of the Mother of Believers to the Kufites had their effects. It divided them. Some of them called for the support of the Imam and some of them called for staying out of the dispute or for supporting the three leaders. Abu Musa spoke to the people repeatedly warning them and advising them not to enter into any battle for the support of the Imam. He reported to them that he heard the Messenger of God saying:

"There shall be a faith-testing crisis in which the less participation the better." Then he told them: "Sheath the swords give refuge to the oppressed until people are united and the cloud of crisis clears

up."[21]

Had the Kufites obeyed Abu Musa the Imam could not have faced the crisis with any considerable strength.

He had only a small army when he arrived to the area of Thee-Qar. It is amazing that history did not record that Abu Musa ever criticized the three leaders for invading and occupying Basra and pushing people to the Faithtesting crisis which he used to mention so often.

Evidently. Abu Musa shared with the three leaders their opinion and he wanted the Muslims to approve their usurping the authority from the Imam and breaching their covenant with him after they pledged their allegiance to him.

Abu Musa used to report the hadith of the crisis as if he had a special knowledge of it. Yet the Holy Qur'an declared the following:

"Do the people think that they will be left alone when they say: 'We have believed' without being tested? Certainly We have tested generations before them. Thus God would know the people of truth and the untrue ones." The Holy Qur'an chapter 29 verses 2-3.

Abu Musa Misinterpreted His Own Report

It seems that Abu Musa reported a statement he attributed to the Prophet but he did not understand what it meant. If the Messenger had uttered the words which Abu Musa reported the Prophet had meant that there will be a devious and confusing movement in the Muslim society and that the duty of the Muslims will be to discourage its people and to let the people of that innovation down by denying them any support.

The Messenger did not mean that the good believers should not resist the people of innovation when their movement becomes dangerous to the unity of the nation and when they shed the blood of the Muslims. Otherwise the Prophet would be calling upon the nation to approve the devious movement and let them succeed in reaching their goal and usurping the power and administering the affairs of the Muslims after they acquire what they seek of power.

Abu Musa Disagreed with the Qur'an

Had Abu Musa understood the words of the Messenger he would have known that those who entered Basra and usurped from the Imam his authority and drove his appointed governor out of Basra are the people of the devious movement who should be denied all support.

He should have known that when those people divided the Muslims the duty of the Muslims was to fight them because they are people of invitation to an un-Islamic movement and to a rebellion against the legitimate Imam in whose name Abu Musa was ruling Kufa.

Abu Musa reported the hadith which he claimed to have heard from the Prophet and forgot what the Holy Qur'an clearly declared that the nation is dutybound to fight a Muslim party that commits an aggression against another Islamic party:

"If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel make ye peace between them; but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other then fight the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of God. But if it complies then make peace between them with justice and be fair. For God loves those who are fair and just." The Holy Qur'an chapter 49 verse 9.

Abu Musa also forgot another verse which makes it mandatory to obey the Imam and support him:

"O ye who believe obey God and obey His Apostle and the people of authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves refer it to God and His Apostle if ye do believe in God and the last Day. That is best and most suitable for finer determination." The Holy Qur'an chapter 4 verse 58.

This verse makes it mandatory for Abu Musa and every Muslim to obey the Imam.

Obedience of the leader of the believers is mandatory to every Muslim unless the leader calls upon people to disobey God. The verse also commands that a matter of dispute should be referred to the Book of God and the instruction of the Messenger. The Imam ‘Ali was the leader of the Muslim nation and he did not invite people to disobey God. He rather called upon them to obey Him.

His aim was to unite the Muslims and the aim of his opponents was to turn people against him and to divide the nation.

Which Faith-testing Crisis?

However there were many confounding crises that took place in the history of Islam before the election of the Imam and after his departure from this world. The Prophet in the statement which Abu Musa attributed to him did not name that crisis. How did Abu Musa know that the crisis which the Prophet meant was the crisis which took place during the days of the Imam's reign?

It is not reported that the Prophet ordered ‘Ali to be in active in the face of confounding crises which were to take place during the days of his reign. On the contrary he commanded him to fight and commanded the believers to follow him. Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak (part 3 page 139) recorded that Abu Ayyoub Al-Ansari reported during the days of ‘Umar that the Messenger ordered ‘Ali to fight the breachers (of the pact of allegiance) the Unjust party and the Seceders' party; and that Abu Ayyoub asked the Messenger saying: "With whom shall we fight these parties?"

The Messenger replied: "With ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib." Al-Hakim recorded also that Abu Sa-eed Al-Khidri

reported that the Messenger of God said that ‘Ali shall fight for the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an as I fought for its revelation.

Abu Musa Appointed Himself a Counselor to the Nation and the Imam

His words indicate clearly that he accused the Imam of being a partner in the confounding crisis about which he spoke. His words indicate also that he accused the Imam with either the lack of knowledge of the instructions of the Messenger or disobedience of the Prophet's instructions or with both lack of knowledge and disobedience. Yet the Messenger said: "I am the city of knowledge and ‘Ali is the gate of that city; whoever wishes to enter the city should come through its gate."22

Abu Musa Persisted in His Error

It may be said that Abu Musa was following Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar whom he used to love and whom he recommended for leadership. Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar stood neutral in the dispute between ‘Ali and his opponents. He did not support the truth. Nor did he fight the untruth. But then he found himself failing to follow the Book of God.

Therefore he repented and changed his attitude towards ‘Ali. Al-Hakim recorded in his Al-Mustadrak through his channel to Al-Zuhri who reported that Hamzah said the following:

"While he (Hamzah) was sitting with Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar a man from Iraq came to Ibn ‘Umar. He said: Abu Abdul-Rahman (a code name of Ibn ‘Umar) by God I have been seriously trying to follow you and take an attitude similar to yours towards the division of the nation and be neutral as far as I could.

Yet I have read a verse from the Holy Qur'an which occupied my mind and I would like you to inform me about it. I mean the Word of God: 'If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel make ye peace between them; if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other then fight ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of God. But if it complies then make peace between them with justice and be fair. For God loves those who are fair and just.'

"Please inform me how to comply with this verse. Abdullah said: 'You have nothing to do with this. Go away.' The man left and when he disappeared Abdullah turned to us saying: 'I never found in my heart something as I felt about this verse that I did not fight the aggressor party as God commanded me to do.' "23

Al-Hakim commented on this report saying: "This is an important hadith reported by many outstanding tabi-is (good religious scholars who did not witness the Prophet and took their knowledge from his companions). I have chosen the channel of Shu-aib Ibn Abu Hamzah to Al- Zuhri because the two Sheikhs (Al Bukhari and Muslim) used this channel which indicated that this is truly authentic."

Thus Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar repented for his wrong stand in the quarrel between ‘Ali and his opponents but

Abu Musa did not repent.

Abu Musa Did Not Distinguish Between Hadith and Qur'an

However I am not confident that Abu Musa conveyed the statement of the Messenger as the Messenger pronounced it. And we find that Abu Musa reported to the people of Basra when he was their governor something contrary to the truth and denied by all Muslims. Muslim in his Sahih reported the following:

"Abu Musa Al-Ashari summoned the readers of Basra. Three hundred readers of the Holy Qur'an came to him. He said to them: "You are the righteous men of Basra and the readers of the Qur'an. Let not the passage of time make you forget the truth. Thus your hearts will be hardened. We used to read a chapter similar to the chapter of Bara-ah in length and seriousness and I have forgotten it. However I remember of that chapter only the following verse:

'Should Ibn Adam acquire two valleys full of money he would seek a third valley. And the abdomen of Ibn Adam would not be filled but by soil.' "And we used to read a chapter which was similar to the chapters which are begun with the word: "Sabbaha " and I have forgotten it. I remember of it only the following: 'O you who believe why do you say what you do not do? Testimony will be written on your necks then you would be questioned about it on the Day of Judgement."[24]

The words which Abu Musa reported are certainly not from the Holy Qur'an; nor do they resemble the Qur'anic words in the least. The best guess is that Abu Musa was disturbed in his thinking unable sometimes to distinguish between the Qur'an and the hadith. And when he reported a hadith he was not accurate nor could he understand it.

I believe that Abu Musa was a part of the conspiracy of Talhah Al-Zubayr Ayeshah and Muawiya Ibn Abu Sufyan. He was trying his best to destroy the caliphate of the Imam. Had he succeeded in convincing the Kufites to sit and refrain from supporting the Imam the reign of the Imam would have ended in the first year after his election.

It is obvious that the Imam did not trust Abu Musa and that he knew his negative attitude towards the members of the House of the Prophet in general and towards him in particular.

When the Imam was elected he sent Imarah Ibn Shihab one of the companions as a governor of Kufa to replace Abu Musa. But Imarah came back to Medina after Tulaihah Ibn Khuwailid threatened him before his arrival to Kufa...[25]

(During the short period that took place after the death of Uthman there was no security for people.) The Imam then kept Abu Musa upon the request of Al-Ashtar. Abu Musa was a Yemenite and most of the Kufites were Yemenites.

The Imam sent Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr and Muhammad Ibn Jaafar to the Kufites asking them to join

him in his journey to Basra and to be supporters and helpers to the religion of God. He told them also that he wanted to bring peace and reunite the nation. The two messengers did not succeed and the attitude of Abu Musa was the biggest obstacle in the way of their mission.

When they challenged him he spoke his mind saying: By God your man and I still owe allegiance to Uthman. If fighting is inevitable then we should not fight anyone until we finish the killers of Uthman wherever they may be. 26

Thus Abu Musa believed that he owed allegiance to Uthman even after Uthman died but he did not believe that he owed any loyalty or obedience to the living Imam and that he did not have to respond to his call.

He believed that if the fight is necessary they had to fight the killers of Uthman. But the three leaders who were the first to call for the murder of Uthman should not be fought even if they usurp the authority of the Imam in Basra and people should not challenge them.

Abu Musa spoke his mind also on another occasion when Abd Kheir Al-Haiwani said to him: "Did Talhah and Al-Zubayr not give ‘Ali a pledge of Allegiance?" When Abu Musa replied in the affirmative Abd Kheir asked him: "Did ‘Ali commit any wrong-doing which allows the two companions to breach their covenant with him?" Abu Musa replied: "I do not know." Abd Kheir said: "We leave you until you know."27

He took this attitude in order to preserve for the three leaders their gains against the Imam. Had he spoken the truth he would have admitted that the two companions had breached their covenant with the Imam without any justification.

But this would damage his interest and their interest. It is also reported that the two messengers sent Hashim Ibn Utbah Ibn Abu Waqass to the Imam to inform him of what took place. The messenger returned to Thee Qar where the Imam was and informed him of what had taken place.

The Key to the Solution

It became clear to the Imam that Abu Musa was the biggest obstacle and that his dismissal is the key to the solution of the problem. The Imam could not lead a respectable army as long as the Kufites listened to Abu Musa. Therefore he sent to him a letter with Hashim Ibn Utbah saying to him: "Send people to me. I did not appoint you governor except to have you as my assistant for establishing the truth."

Abu Musa refused to do so and Hashim wrote to the Imam the following: "I have come to a man who is a radical disputer open in hatred." The Imam sent Al-Hassan and Ammar Ibn Yasir to urge people to join the Imam.

He wrote to Abu Musa: "I have sent Qurthah Ibn Kaab as governor of Kufa. Leave your post blamed and defeated. If you defy him and he prevails against you I commanded him to execute you. Abu Musa left

his post and Al-Hassan and Ammar went on in their mission and people of Kufa responded to their call.[28]

It is reported also that Abu Musa did not leave his post and persisted in his defiance until Al-Ashtar joined Al- Hassan and Ammar because he felt that he was responsible for keeping Abu Musa in his post when he requested the Imam to keep him in that post. When Abu Musa unveiled his malicious intentions Al-Ashtar said to the Imam: "Ameer Al-Mumineen may God honor you With your permission I would like to join them (Al-Hassan and Ammar); I believe that the Kufites are very obedient to me.

If I go there I hope that none of them will disagree with me." The Imam honored his request. He went there and called upon everyone he met to join him in his march on the mansion of the governor. He entered the mansion with a large group while Abu Musa was standing at the main mosque speaking to his audience discouraging them from supporting the Imam and reporting to them what he claimed to have heard from the Prophet concerning the confounding crisis and that the one who does not participate is better than the one who does.

Ammar Ibn Yasir was responding to him by saying: The Messenger of God told only you that not taking part in it is better than your participation. Then Ammar said: God prevails against those who try to fight Him.

The servants of Abu Musa came running to the mosque saying: Abu Musa Al-Ashtar entered the mansion beat us up and drove us out. When Abu Musa came down and entered the mansion Al-Ashtar shouted: "Get out of our mansion. May God get your soul out of your body. By God you are of the early hypocrites." Abu Musa said: Give me a respite only this evening. Al-Ashtar granted him that saying: You will not stay tonight at the mansion.

People entered into the mansion trying to loot Abu Musa's belongings but Al-Ashtar prevented them saying: I granted him my protection.[29] Thus the Imam needed to use force in order to remove Abu Musa from his post because Abu Musa was not like the rest of the appointed officials. He was a conspirator against the Imam disguised as his appointed governor.

Had he been really scrupulous about war and blood shedding he should have sided with the Imam because the Imam was still far from entering a battle. He was seeking peace and unity while the three leaders had already shed a great deal of blood.

Abu Musa approved what the three leaders did and tried anxiously to preserve for them their bloody gains by urging people of Kufa not to join the Imam. Yet the Imam was asking people to come to him in order to assist him if he is right and to correct him if he is wrong.

Thus we can easily conclude that Abu Musa was not a man of peace or against war. He was rather against the Imam collaborating with his enemies. The Imam was trying to prevent war while the three whom Abu Musa was trying to protect had already started their bloody battle before the Imam's arrival to

Thee Qar. Of the words which the Imam said to the people of Kufa when they met him at Thee Qar are the following:

"I have invited you to witness with us the behavior of our brothers in Basra. If they change their attitude this is what we want. If they persist in their wrong way we shall not agree with them but we shall try peaceful avenues prefering them to the avenue of war (unless they force it upon us). There is no power but that of God."30

I have given Abu Musa this lengthy discussion because his hostile stand toward the Imam was a factor in shaping the events of that period. He performed a very dangerous role whose consequences were detrimental to the Muslim World.

Finally a group of Kufites (numbering twelve thousand) came to join the Imam. Al-Tabari Ibn Al-Athir and other historians along with a number of hadith recorders reported that the Imam said before the arrival of the Kufites:" Twelve thousand and one men will come to you from Kufa." Abu Al-Tufail a companion who reported this hadity said: "I stood at Thee Qar counting those men. I found them to be twelve thousand and one men.31

Kufa was able to send to the Imam tens of thousands of its men if it were not for the stand of Abu Musa and the messages of Ayeshah. Her religious place and the place of Talhah and Al-Zubayr in the minds of the Muslims were factors in discouraging the Kufites from joining the camp of the Imam. When the Imam neared Basra a group from Abdul Qeise joined him.32 And after all that the Imam's army did not exceed twenty thousand while the three leaders' army according to estimates was a minimum of thirty thousand.33

The Imam's Effort for Peace

As expected the Imam did not start a battle against his opponents in Basra. All legitimate avenues of peace must be explored although his opponents had shed enough blood to justify fighting them. He wanted to confine the crisis and bring it to an end.

Thousands of Muslims were confounded and confused because of the religious position of his opponents; therefore he wanted to leave no excuse for his opponents and to make the right path clear to the masses of the Muslims.

Historians recorded that the Imam sent Al-Qaaqaa Ibn Amr as his special envoy to the three leaders to speak to them and offer them peace. Al-Qaaqaa was a man of wisdom and prestige and he was not accused of anything concerning Uthman.

He went on his mission and it appeared to him that he convinced the three leaders to accept peace and give the Imam a pledge of allegiance and reunite the Muslims after the death of Uthman and the events of Basra had divided them. As for what the three leaders spoke of concerning the killers of Uthman the

Imam was supposed to consider it at a later stage.[34]

The ambassador came back to the Imam and informed him of the result of his negotiations with the three leaders and the Imam hoped that some good will come out of the negotiations. Thus he went to Basra. To his disappointment he found his opponents closer to war than to peace and that their military preparation was bigger than his.

They had already gathered an army of thirty thousand fighters. [35]

Al-Zubayr Lost Determination

The determination of Al-Zubayr to fight was shaken up when he learned that Ammar Ibn Yasir was with the Imam's army. When a man informed him that he saw Ammar Ibn Yasir with the Imam's army and that he spoke to him Al- Zubayr refused to believe that. But the man assured him time after time that Ammar was there. Al- Zubayr sent a member of his family to see whether this was true. When his messenger came back confirming the truth of the information Al-Zubayr said: "This broke my back."

He lost his nerve and a tremor violently shook his body. Even the weapons which he was carrying started to shake. It was well known to Al-Zubayr and the rest of the companions that the Prophet said to Ammar: "Ammar be cheerful. The aggressor party will kill you and your last drink from this world is a drink of milk." Realizing that Ammar was with the army of the Imam Al-Zubayr became frightened.[36]

The Imam in Dialogue with His Opponents

In spite of this Al-Zubayr stayed with his party. The Imam wanted to make it clear to him and to his colleague Talhah that they were wrong. He met them between the two camps while each of them was riding his horse and people were looking at them. The Imam was completely unarmed and Al-Zubayr was fully armed.

The Imam wanted to show people that his goal is peace rather than war. His opponents declared their rebellion against him under the pretext of avenge for Uthman for the sake of God. The Imam tried to remind them of God and the following dialogue occurred:

The Imam: "Certainly you have prepared arms horses and men " he said to the two companions while he and they were on their horses. "I do not know whether you have prepared an excuse when you meet your Lord on the Day of Judgment. Fear God and be not like a woman who unspun her strands after she had strongly spun it.

Was I not your brother and you used to believe in the sanctity of my blood and I believed in the sanctity of your blood? Did I do anything that makes it legitimate for you to shed my blood?"[37]

Then he said to Al-Zubayr: What brought you here? Al-Zubayr: You have brought me here and I do not

believe that you are qualified to be caliph. You have no more right than we have to be caliphs. And you killed Uthman.

Reminiscence of a Prophecy

The Imam: "You believe that Uthman was more qualified than I? We used to count you from the children of Abdul-Muttalib (Al-Zubayr was the son of Safeyah daughter of Abdul Muttalib) until your son Abdullah the evil son separated you from us. Zubayr do you hold me responsible for the blood of Uthman while you were his killer? May God punish today our harshest to Uthman."

Then the Imam said to him: "Do you remember the day when you were with the Messenger of God passing through the area of Banu Ghunam and he smiled at me and I smiled at him then you said to him: 'Ibn Abu Talib is always conceited.' The Messenger of God said: 'He is not conceited and you shall fight him unjustly.'"[38]

Al-Zubayr: By God yes I remember that now and had I remembered that before I would not have come here. By God I will never fight you.

Talhah was expected to take the same attitude as Al- Zubayr. The Messenger foretold Al-Zubayr that he will fight ‘Ali while he is unjust and that certainly goes to Talhah whose stand towards the Imam was like that of Al- Zubayr but more violent and unjust. But Talhah was not affected by all that. He stuck to his hard line.[39]

The Basra camp began to shoot and kill men from ‘Ali's camp. The followers of the Imam began to ask and beg him to permit them to fight and the Imam refused time after time.

The Imam Offered the Arbitration of the Qur'an

Finally the Imam held a copy of the Holy Qur'an and asked: Who is willing to hold this Qur'an and invite the other camp to follow what is in it and he should know that he will be killed? A young man from Kufa volunteered to take the mission and the Imam turned his back to him. He repeated his question and no one was willing to take that mission except the young man. The Imam gave him the Qur'an and commanded him to tell the opposite camp:

This is the Book of God between us and you from its beginning to its end. Fear God for our blood and your blood. The Kufan youth did what the Imam told him to do and the Bassrites shot and killed him. With this flagrant aggression the Imam declared: "Now it is legal for us to fight them."[40]

The Beginning of The Battle

"By God I did not commit any sin for which they could criticize me; nor did they put between them and

me a fair judge. They are seeking a right which they have neglected and trying to avenge a blood which they have shed. Certainly they are the aggressor party which was predicted by the Prophet to include a man and woman who are related to each other through marriage.

"By God I shall prepare for them a basin which I will fill. They will drink out of it without quenching their thirst and it will be their last drink. God the two men (Talhah and Al-Zubayr) have faced me with open hostility dealt with me unjustly breached their pledge of allegiance to me and instigated people against me. God I ask Thee to untie what they knotted and invalidate what they plotted and make them meet disappointment in their expectation and action. I have tried to secure their repentance to prevent hostility and gave them a respite before the battle began. They ignored the gracious overture and rejected peace."[41]

The Imam was not a man to be intimidated by warnor frightened by the quantity of enemies. Talhah and Al-Zubayr and their thirty thousand soldiers would not terrify him. He was still the same hero who brought the Arabs to their knees during the days of the Holy Prophet and the years did not increase in him but bravery and determination.

He had known through information from the Messenger that this battle was coming and that his enemies were the aggressor party which the Prophet described to include the man and the woman who are related to each other through marriage rather than birth (Al-Zubayr was married to Asma sister of Ayeshah)

The Imam Knew His Killer's Description

When he faced Al-Zubayr unarmed the Imam was asked: How did you face Al-Zubayr unarmed and he was well armed knowing his bravery? "Al-Zubayr is not my killer " he replied. "My killer is obscure from a low family. He will kill me but not on a battlefield. Woe to his mother.

He will wish that his mother had been bereaved by his death. Certainly he is as wicked as the killer of the Female Camel of the Prophet Salih." (The Camel of Salih was created miraculously and was killed by one of the most wicked men in history.)

Although he knew that his opponents shall fight him he offered them peace and called upon them to change their attitude. He was determined to use all means available to him in order to prevent bloodshed.

Should they refuse his peaceful proposal and persist in their hostile way he was determined to prepare for them a deadly basin which he will fill. He would be the one to fill it and they would come out of it without quenching their thirst. Then he asked the Almighty to untie what they knotted and to show them the evil consequences of their deed and the disappointment in what they expected; and God responded to his prayer.

Historians disagree about the duration of the Battle of Basra whether it was one day or more. Whatever the time of its duration it was one of the ugliest and most violent battles. It was unique in its effect in dividing the Muslims. For the first time history witnessed the Muslims standing in two camps fighting each other and thousands of them fell by the swords of each other.

The battle started and appeared to be short and the losses seemed to be light. The general offense which the army of the Imam started was stormy. It shook the Bass-rite camp and compelled the thousands of the soldiers of the three leaders to run away before the middle of the day.

Talhah was shot by a deadly arrow which made him bleed to death. It is reported that Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam killed him.42

Talhah's Death

Jundab Ibn Abdullah Al-Azdi reported that he witnessed Talhah accompanied by a band of fighters and many of them were wounded and they were overwhelmed by people. Talhah himself was wounded. He was holding a sword and his followers were leaving him one after another and he was saying. "Servants of God patience there is only victory and reward after patience."

I told him: "May your mother be bereaved by your death. Go away to safety. By God you would not be victorious nor would you have any reward. You have only sinned and lost." Then I shouted at his followers and they were surprised and left him. Then I told him: By God if I want to I can kill you here.

He replied: By God if you do that you would perish in this world and in the Hereafter. I said: By God your blood has become legal to us and you are of the regretters. Then he left accompanied only by three people and I do not know what happened to him after that except that I know he perished.43

Al-Qaaqaa Ibn Amr witnessed Talhah urging people to fight even though he was bleeding from a wound. He told him: Abu Muhammad you are wounded and you are too sick to continue your way. Enter these houses.44

The Killer of Talhah

Historians reported that Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam is the one who shot him with a deadly arrow. Yet Talhah was his commander. Marwan and the rest of the Umayyads believed that Talhah and Al-Zubayr were two of the main agitators against Uthman but they were delaying their avenge of the two men until they obtain victory against the Imam.

When Marwan witnessed that the battle was lost he did not want Talhah to escape death because he was to the Umayyads the actual killer of Uthman. Thus the Umayyad strategy was to use the three leaders as a means to retrieve the authority which they lost by the death of Uthman.

They were ready to sacrifice the three leaders as easily as one would spend a dirham. But the three leaders did not know what they were doing. Had Al-Zubayr not been killed after his departure from Basra he would not have escaped the avenge of the Umayyads.

Al-Zubayr Left the Battlefield

The Imam as we mentioned above reminded Al- Zubayr of the word of the Messenger when he told him that he will fight ‘Ali while he is unjust to him. Upon that Al- Zubayr promised not to fight the Imam.

His determination to fight was already weakened when he knew that Ammar Ibn Yasir is within the army of the Imam. In spite of this he remained at the camp and participated in the battle for a short time. He did so because his son Abdullah accused him of being a coward filled with fear when he witnessed the flags of ‘Ali carried by brave men. When Al-Zubayr informed his son that he took an oath not to fight ‘Ali his son counseled him to break his oath and make an atonement for that by liberating one of his servants. He did that and fought.[45]

Al-Zubayr Freed a Slave in Order to Fight the Imam's Camp

It is amazing that Al-Zubayr was too scrupulous to break his oath without an atonement but he was not too scrupulous after the atonement to participate in a battle in which he may kill whomever he faces of the Muslims. Yet he knew that killing a believer deliberately would bring eternity in Hell.[46]

Finally Al-Zubayr left the battlefield and he did not leave until Ammar Ibn Yasir met him and started driving him out of the battlefield by his spear. Afraid to kill Ammar or to be killed by him Al-Zubayr asked him repeatedly: "Abu Al-Yaqthan (Ammar's code name) do you want to kill me?" Ammar repeatedly answered him: "No Abu Abdullah (Al-Zubayr's code name) but you have to leave.[47] It was known to the companions that the Messenger said that the aggressor party shall kill Ammar.

Al-Zubayr was expected to fear a fight against the Imam more than a fight against Ammar. For fighting ‘Ali according to the testimony of the Messenger is like fighting the Messenger himself. The Prophet said to ‘Ali Fatima Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein: "I am at peace with whomever you are at peace and I am at war with whomever you are at war."[48]

Al-Zubayr met his death after leaving Basra. Amr Ibn Jurmooz killed him while he was on his way to Medina.[49]

Under the Leadership of Ayeshah

The camp of the three leaders was shaken up. Talhah died and Al-Zubayr left the battlefield; but Mother of the Believers took over after the two and proved that she was a braver leader and more capable of commanding the masses. She was more hostile than the two companions to the Imam. She had through

her relationship to the Messenger and to her father Abu Bakr a halo of holiness in the eyes of the masses of the Muslims.

She was placed in an armored canopy on the back of her camel (Askar). She called upon the people to come and fight and they came back to her with great zeal. They probably felt that to let the wife of the Messenger down is to let the Messenger himself down.

They decided to offer their sacrifices for her. They attacked the right and left wings of the Imam's army and forced the two wings to retreat. The two wings joined the heart of the army where the Imam was standing. At that moment the Imam showed a bravery unparalleled in the history of wars.[50]

The Unique Courage

The Imam personally moved towards the camel leading what was called the "Green Division" which consisted of the Migrant and Medinite companions. He was surrounded by his children Al-Hassan Al-Hussein and Muhammad. He gave the banner to Muhammad and Muhammad told his soldiers to slow down until the rain of the arrows stopped.

The Imam sent word to Muhammad urging him to advance and commanding him to start the decisive battle. When Muhammad hesitated the Imam came from behind and put his left hand on the right shoulder of his son. He reprimanded him and commanded him to advance.[51]

The Imam then compassionately took the banner from him and carried it in his left hand while his sword was drawn in his right hand. Then he charged the opposite camp hitting them with his sword then came back when his sword was twisted. He straightened it with his knee.

His children and companions including Ammar and Al- Ashtar surrounded him and tried to prevent him from repeating his action but he kept looking at the opposite camp. Then he returned the banner to his son Muhammad and charged again entering into the midst of the hostile camp hitting them with his sword.

Witnessing people falling by his sword men started to run away from him to the right and to the left. He returned after he moistened the soil with their blood and his sword was twisted; so he again had to straighten it with his knee.[52]

His companions surrounded him and asked him in the name of God not to continue reminding him that it was their duty to protect him and do what he was doing. He said: By God I do not want out of what you are witnessing (of his action) anything except to please God. Then he said to Muhammad : "Son of Al-Hanafeyah (his mother): This is the way you should fight."

Ta-if's Honey

A man brought him honey. When he tasted it he said to the man who brought it: "Certainly your honey is from Al-Ta-if " (a city in Hijaz) and the man said: Yes it is.

But "Ameer Al-Mumineen" by God I am amazed how could you distinguish the honey of Al-Ta-if from others today when the hearts are jumping to the throats?" The Imam replied: "Son of my brother by God no fear touched the heart of your uncle nor is he concerned with anything (but the truth).[53]

The Imam's Thrust Changed the Battle

The two charges of the Imam had their expected effect.

They represented a thrust in the camp of the enemy and raised the morale of the Imam's army. He ordered Al-Ashtar to attack with his division the left wing of the Bassrite army and he did and killed Hilal Ibn Wakee-a who was the commander of the left wing. The fight was fierce and Al-Ashtar forced the left wing to retreat towards Ayeshah.

They formed a circle around her and most of them were from Banu Dhubbah Banu Uday Banu Asad Banu Najiah and Banu Bahilah. All these surrounded the camel and started to compete with each other by holding the rein of the camel one after another.

The camel became the banner of the Bassrites and Mother of the Believers was urging her sons to fight and her hope of victory did not diminish.

Abdullah Ibn Khalaf Al-Khuza-i chief of the people of Basra and their wealthiest came and asked for a duel saying that no one should meet him but 'Ali and the Imam came to him and immediately hit him with his sword and split his head.

Abdullah Ibn Abza held the rein of the camel then attacked the army of the Imam saying: "I hit them but I do not see Abu Hassan ('Ali). This certainly is saddening." The Imam met him and struck him with his spear and left the spear in him saying: "You have seen Abu Hassan. How did you see him?"

About seventy warriors from Quraish were killed while they were holding the rein of the camel and many non-Qureshites also died.[54] Abdul-Rahman Ibn Attab Ibn Oseid from Umayyad was from the top of the Qureshites.

Al-Ashtar attacked him and killed him. Al-Ashtar also attacked and killed Khabbar Ibn Amr Al-Rasibi when he heard him challenging the Imam.

Ammar the Ninety- Year-Old

Ammar Ibn Yasir who was ninety years old fought like a lion. It is reported that he had a duel with Amr Ibn Yathri who was the bravest one among the Bassrites. Amr Ibn Yathri killed a number of companions of the Imam.

Ammar challenged him saying: Certainly you have taken refuge in a safe place. Leave your place and come to me. People worried about Ammar because of his old age and because of the reputation of Amr as a warrior. But Ammar prevailed against him and dragged him by his feet to the camp of the Imam.[55]

A man said to the Imam: "Ameer Al-Mumineen " what a great "Fitnah" (faith-testing trial)!! The Badrians (companions who attended the Battle of Badr with the Holy Prophet) are attacking each other with swords. The Imam replied: "Woe to you; Would this be a "Fitnah" when I am its leader? By the One Who sent Muhammad with the truth and honored his face I never lied; nor was I devious from the right road and no one ever was deviated from the right road through me. I am on a clear evidence from my Lord who made it clear to His Messenger and His Messenger made it clear to me. I shall be summoned on the Day of Judgment and I will be guiltless. And if I had sinned what I am doing now would be an atonement for my sin."[56]

Hamstringing the Camel

Beholding that death is around the camel and realizing that the war will not come to an end as long as that camel was standing the Imam drew his sword and advanced towards the camel while the rein of the camel was in the hands of the Dhubbites. The killing continued and many of them fell down. The Imam reached the camel with a group from Nukhaa and Hamdan.

He said to one of his companions (named Bujair): Hit the camel. Bujair hit the back of the camel with his sword. The camel fell down on his side and roared terribly. As soon as the animal fell the army of Basra ran away as if they were locusts in a strong wind.

The Imam Spoke

Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr and Ammar Ibn Yasir carried the canopy of Ayeshah and put her aside. The Imam came towards her while he was angry but holding himself.

He hit the canopy with his spear and said to her: Sister of Aram (likening her to a woman that ruled the country of Yemen before Islam). "You have brought people back to fight after they ran away and instigated them and made them kill each other... " She said: Ibn Abu Talib you have won be forebearant... Then she was taken to the mansion of Abdullah Ibn Khalaf Al-Khuza-i. She stayed days there then the Imam sent her back to Medina in a very dignified way accompanied by women and men.[57]

Ammar came to her when she was about to leave. He asked her: "Mother where does this journey fit with what God had commanded you to do?" She said: "I testify that you were always telling the truth." He said: "Praise be to God the One Who put for me these words on your tongue."[58]

The Imam remained three days in his camp then he entered Basra. He followed the "Sunnah" of the Prophet in his treatment of the people of Mecca. He forgave their guilty and prevented his followers from taking anything from the properties of the Bassrites.

He divided what he found in the treasury of Basra among the winners and the vanquished equally. He prayed over the dead of the two parties. People of Basra re-elected him and re-pledged to him allegiance. He received that pledge from them while they were under their banners. He received it from the healthy and the wounded.

He addressed his vanquished opponents saying: "You were the army of the woman and the followers of the animal. When it roared you responded and when it was hamstrung you ran away... Whoever lives with you would be bound by his sin and the one who leaves you receives the mercy of his Lord! By God your city shall be drowned and I visualize its mosque looking like a front of a ship or a sitting giraffe."[59]

His prophecy was fulfilled years later when Basra was drowned and covered by water and nothing of its buildings remained visible except its mosque.[60]

One of his companions told him after God gave him the victory: I wish my brother was present here to see how God gave you victory over your enemies. The Imam replied: "Is the sympathy of your brother with us?" He said: Yes.

The Imam said: "Then he was present with us and others were present who have not been conceived yet whom time shall bring infrequently and through whom the faith will be strengthened."[61]

The Responsibility of The Three Leaders

As we look back at this war retrospectively we find that thousands from the Bassrites met their death believing that they were on the right side. They were confounded and it was difficult for them to believe that a wife of the Messenger and two of his outstanding companions had parted with the truth.

People were and still are trying to know the truth through their Leaders rather than to try to know the Leaders through the truth. I do not believe that the people of Basra were aware of the brilliant history of the Imam ‘Ali and the declarations of the Messenger concerning him.

The three leaders who led the Bassrites were fully aware of ‘Ali's history and the testimonies of the Prophet for him but they concealed what they knew about him.

They did not want the Bassrites to know it. They tried with all their power to minimize his right and merit

and accused him of what they themselves committed the murder of Uthman knowing that ‘Ali was innocent of their accusation. They added to what they had done to Uthman the blood of thousands of victims who died in that battle from both sides.62

The Umayyads Were Less Blamable than the Three Leaders

The responsibility of the three leaders in fighting the Imam and accusing him of the murder of Uthman was bigger than the responsibilities of Muawiya and the rest of the Umayyads.

The attempt of the Umayyads to avenge the blood of Uthman by killing his killers did not have an Islamic justification but it had a pre-Islamic tribal-justification.

They were from the members of the clan of the assassinated Caliph. They did not play a big part in turning people against him. The three leaders of the Bassrite party did not have any justification in avenging the blood of Uthman because they were the first to seek his blood.

In addition to this they were not from his relatives and they knew that ‘Ali was the most protective of Uthman and opposed to his assassination. He offered Uthman his help and Uthman rejected his offer;63 and in spite of this he sent his two sons to do their share in his protection.

Talhah's Responsibility

Al-Balatheri reported that Talhah blamed ‘Ali when he hit Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein for their unintended failure in protecting Uthman and that ‘Ali cursed Talhah because he insisted to do what ‘Ali disliked (conspiring against Uthman).

Talhah replied saying: Had Uthman handed Marwan to the rebels he would not have been killed." ‘Ali disagreed with Talhah saying: "If Uthman were to deliver Marwan to you Marwan would have been killed before he was tried."64

Al-Tabari reported in his History about the events of the year 36 after the Hijrah that ‘Ali said to Al-Zubayr at Basra "Do you want to avenge from me the blood of Uthman while you were his killer? May God make our harshest to Uthman meet what he dislikes today."65

Muawiya the head of the Umayyad party was not from those who pledged allegiance to the Imam. On the contrary he refused to give such a pledge. It is true that the election of the Imam by the people of Medina and the majority of the Muslim nation made it mandatory for Muawiya to follow the Imam and obey him but he technically is not a breacher of covenant with the Imam as Al- Zubayr and Talhah.

The two companions Pledged their allegiance to the Imam then led a devastating war against him. They were duty-bound to obey him as long as he followed the Book of God and the instructions of His Prophet. ‘Ali was the most adherent to the Book of God and the teaching of the Holy Prophet. God ordered the believers to fulfill their covenant in which they give allegiance to a righteous ruler. The Holy

Qur'an declared:

"And whoever breaches he breaches against himself and whoever fulfills what he pledges to God God will give him a great reward." The Holy Qur'an Chapter 48 verse 10.

The Messenger of God ordered the nation to kill the breachers of the pledge of allegiance. Muslim reported in his Sahih that the Holy Prophet said: "There shall be events and events. Whoever tries to divide this nation while it is united hit his head with the sword whoever he may be.66

It is reported also that the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever takes a rebellious stand (against a righteous Imam) and parts with the united community then he dies he would die a pre-Islamic death. And whoever fights blindly under a banner unknown to be a banner of truth siding with a wrong party selfishly then he is killed he dies a pre-Islamic death. And whoever parts with my nation and carries a sword indiscriminately hitting its righteous and transgressor... and refusing to fulfill a covenant he made he is not from me and I am not from him."67

Much more was expected from Ayeshah Talhah and Al-Zubayr than from Muawiya who never had a brilliant past in religion; nor was he counted from among the righteous. The three leaders heard from the Messenger of God about ‘Ali what Muawiya did not hear. Even if the Umayyad Muawiya had heard what the three leaders heard from the Messenger about ‘Ali it would have been expected from them rather than Muawiya the opportunist to listen to the words of the Messenger and obey him.

Ayeshah Al-Zubayr and Talhah knew that the Messenger said on the day of Ghadir Khum about ‘Ali: "God love whoever loves him and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him."68

And the Messenger also said to ‘Ali Fatima Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein "I am at peace with whomever you are at peace and I am at war with whomever you are at war."69

These statements indicate clearly that whoever fights ‘Ali fights the Messenger of God and that the enemy of ‘Ali is the enemy of God and His Messenger. Thus the stand of the three nghteous leaders with their hostilities towards ‘Ali was an amazing event for which there is no justification.

Al-Zubayr's Responsibility

Al-Zubayr should be particularly blamed. He is the one who stood up when Abu Bakr was elected drawing his sword and saying "I shall not sheathe my sword until ‘Ali is elected." ‘Umar said to companions who were with him:

Take his sword and hit the rock with it.70 Had ‘Ali wanted to fight for the caliphate on that day Al-Zubayr was ready to fight and be killed for the sake of ‘Ali's leadership. How did he after 25 years fight the Imam after the Imam was elected by the companions and he was one of the electors?

Al-Zubayr particularly was to be blamed also because he heard from the Messenger of God that he shall

fight ‘Ali unjustly. This was reported by Ibn Al-Athir in his Al- Kamil and Al-Tabari in his History and a number of historians.

Al-Hakim reported in his Mustadrak through four channels that ‘Ali reminded Al-Zubayr on the day of the Battle of Basra that the Prophet said to Al-Zubayr that he shall fight ‘Ali while he is unjust to him. And Al- Zubayr acknowledged that and said he had forgotten it.[71]

Ayeshah's Responsibility

Ayeshah particularly was to be blamed much more than the others because she was one of the wives of the Prophet and she knew the extent of the love of the Messenger for ‘Ali. She received from the Messenger warning and reprimand when she displayed resentment towards the presence of ‘Ali with the Messenger.

Dialogue of Om Selemah and Ayeshah

Ibn Abu Al-Hadid in his commentary on Nahjul- Balaghah recorded that Abu Makhnaf reported a dialogue between Om Selemah (another wife of the Messenger) and Ayeshah when the latter decided to go to Basra and invited Om Selemah to accompany her. Om Selemah reminded her of things which Ayeshah did not deny: She reminded her of what took place when both of them were with the Messenger of God and ‘Ali sat privately with the Prophet and his session with him was long.

Ayeshah wanted to enter and Om Selemah advised her not to do that and she did not listen to Om Selemah. Then she came back crying. Ayeshah at that time informed Om Selemah that she said to ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib: "I have only one out of every nine days with the Messenger; why don't you leave me alone with my day?"

The Messenger turned to her angrily and his face was reddened saying to her: "Go away! By God whoever hates ‘Ali from the members of my family or from other families would be out of the Faith."[72]

The Lady of Al-Hau-ab

She reminded her also that they both were with the Messenger of God on a journey and Ayeshah was washing the head of the Messenger and Om Selemah was preparing food for him. Suddenly he raised his head saying:

"I wish I knew which one of you will be the rider of the huge camel. The dogs of Al-Hau-ab will bark at her while she is deviating from the right road." Om Selemah said:

"I freed my hand from the food and said 'I seek refuge in God and His Messenger from this.' Then he slapped your back and said: 'Beware not to be that lady.' Then he said to me: 'Daughter of Abu Omayah be not that lady.' Then he turned to Ayeshah saying: 'Humaira (red faced) I have already warned you.' "

73

The Patcher of the Sole

And the third item of which Om Selemah reminded Ayeshah was that they were with the Messenger on a journey. ‘Ali used to mend the shoes of the Holy Prophet and wash his garments. The shoes of the Holy Prophet during that journey needed to be mended. He took them and started to patch them and sat in the shade of a tree.

Abu Bakr and ‘Umar asked permission to see the Prophet.

Om Selemah said: Ayeshah and I left and sat behind the curtain. The two men entered and chatted with the Prophet for a while. Then they said: Messenger of God we do not know how long you will be with us. We wish that you would inform us of a person whom you want as your successor.

He said to the two men: "I see his place. And if I inform you of him you shall part with him as the children of Israel parted with Aaron son of Imran." When the two men heard these words they left without comment.

When we came out to the Messenger you said to him (and you were our most courageous to ask him): Whom would you choose as your successor to lead them? He said: "The patcher of the sole." Then you and I went to see who was the patcher of the sole and we found ‘Ali patching the sole of the Prophet. You said to the Messenger of God: I do not see but ‘Ali and he said: "He is the one." Ayeshah acknowledged all of what Om Selemah reminded her of. Then Om Selemah told her: I am Om Selemah. Yesterday you were agitating against Uthman and saying about him the worst words. You named him Naathal (a name of a heavily bearded Arab Jew). And you know the place of ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib from the Messenger of God.[74]

A number of historians including Ibn Al-Athir and Al-Tabari reported the warning of the Messenger to Ayeshah and his prediction that she would be barked at by the dogs of Al-Hau-ab.[75]

A number of the recorders of the hadith including Al- Hakim also reported that. Al-Hakim reported in his Mustadrak the following:

When Ayeshah reached the area of Banu Amir dogs barked at her. She asked: Which water is this? They said: Al-Hau-ab. She said: I think I am going back. Al-Zubayr said: No you should continue your journey and let people see you and you will bring about peace. She said: I guess that I am returning. I heard the Messenger of God saying: What would one of you do when the dogs of Al-Hau-ab bark at her?[76]

Al-Hakim also reported that Om Selemah said: The Prophet one time mentioned the travels of some of the mothers of the believers and Ayeshah laughed and he looked at her and said: Humaira you should

not be that lady. Then he turned to ‘Ali saying: "If you have to deal with her be kind to her."[77]

Om Selemah portrayed to Ayeshah her deeds and she excelled in her presentation. She said:... "What would you say if the Messenger of God faces you while you are in these deserts riding the camel from one water to another water? Certainly God witnesses your travel and you shall meet His Messenger (on the Day of Judgment)." If I were in your place and I am told: Enter Paradise I would be ashamed to meet Muhammad after I tore up the screen with which he had hidden me. Make your house your fortress and the screen (of your room) your grave until you meet him while you are in your best obedience to God and help to religion..."[78]

This sound advice was lost on Ayeshah. She said: "I accept your preaching. The matter is not what you think.

It is a good journey which is requested by two parties fighting each other. If I stay I would not be sinning and if I leave it would be for something I have to escalate."[79] It is amazing that Ayeshah claimed that she was taking the journey because two parties fighting each other resorted to her. Yet one of the two parties (the party of the Imam) not only did not request her to take it but vehemently opposed it.

On the other hand the other party would not have stood up to the Imam without Ayeshah's help and instigation. This shows us that when a person determines to do something he would not lack an excuse with which to justify his action.

Ayeshah did all that while she knew that the Holy Qur'an commands the wives of the Messenger to stay in their houses:

"And stay in your houses and bedizen not yourselves with the bedizenment of the pre-Islamic State... " The Holy Quran Chapter 33 verse 34

All this shows that the three leaders were more responsilbe than Muawiya in destroying the unity of the Muslims by what they did under the pretext of avenging the blood of Uthman while their aim was the destruction of the Imam's caliphate.

Conclusion

In spite of all this we are not allowed to say about the three leaders but good and ask God to forgive them and say: "Our Lord forgive us and our brethren who preceded us in Faith." What they had done is for God to judge.

But there are certain conclusions which we may draw from these events:

Should We Accept Their Hadiths?

Since these three distinguished leaders had legalized for themselves to shed so much blood in order to achieve their ends it would not be logical to take what they had reported of statements and deeds of the Prophet to be authentic.

When a person breaches a legitimate covenant divides the Muslims into two camps leads one of the two camps to start a bloody war he would not be righteous and reliable reporter. When a Muslim has the courage to shed the blood of thousands of innocent Muslims in order to serve his own interest he would not lack the courage to tell the untruth.

Criticism is Much Smaller Sin Than Fighting

If the Muslims are not allowed to say but good about Ayeshah Talhah and Al–Zubayr in spite of their war against "Ameer Al–Mumineen" (the Leader of the believers) and the Brother of the Messenger it would not be permissible to say but good about the Muslims who take a critical or an unfriendly attitude towards some outstanding companions. For fighting an outstanding companion is much more abhorable to God than an unfriendly attitude towards him.

The Islamic law does not discriminate among Muslims.What would be applicable to the three leaders should be applicable to the rest of the Muslims.

The criticism of any companion was never forbidden to people. The Muslims who criticize some of the caliphs do not do that because they deliberately want to defame them. They do that because they have a negative opinion of them. They sincerely believe in what they say.

The three leaders on the other hand had fought the Imam while they knew that they were wrong. If we have to respect these leaders and say only good about them it would not be right for us to be hostile to the millions of Muslims for what is much less than killing and fighting.

Critics of the companions are not necessarily devious or transgressors. It is neither logical nor fair for the Muslims to condemn each other because of their opinions pertaining to the events and personalities of the Islamic history as long as those opinions do not contradict the Holy Qur'an or the well known instructions of the Holy Prophet. Nor is there anything in the known instructions of the Holy Prophet that prevents the Muslims from criticizing companions whose deeds or words disagree with the Qur'an or the Prophet in word or deed.

The Three Leaders Open the Door of Wars Among Muslims

The three leaders are the ones who opened on the Muslim society the doors of the civil wars. They started the first bloody battle in which thousands from both sides fell and through which the unity of the

Muslims was destroyed and never restored. It is difficult for our minds to understand how these righteous leaders have the courage to shed so much blood while the Holy Qur'an declares that killing one believer would bring an eternal Divine punishment to the killer:

"And whosoever slays a believer deliberately his reward is Hell forever. God's wrath is against him. He has cursed him and prepared for him an awful doom." The Holy Quran Chapter 4 verse 93

The Battle of Siffin with all its violence and ugliness was only a consequence of the Battle of Basra. Had Mother of Believers Ayeshah Talhah and Al-Zubayr assisted the Imam and gone throughout the Islamic provinces urging people to obey the Imam and to walk under his banner Muawiya would not have dared to fight him.

Had these leaders done that Muawiya would have realized that if he fights the Imam he would be waging a losing battle that will end with his destruction and the destruction of his camp and he would have humbly surrendered to the Imam.

But when he witnessed a portion of the people of Iraq sharing with him his opinion and taking an attitude similar to his and that leaders from the outstanding companions preceded him in combating the Imam his hope of a victory against the Imam was heightened.

The Battle of Basra was in fact a main factor in Muawiya's continued defiance of the Imam and his victory at the end. It is true that the Imam obtained a clear victory against his opponents at the Battle of Basra but the losses which both camps suffered had weakened the Imam's camp a great deal. The tribes of the defeated camp remained unfriendly to the Imam carrying grudges against him because of the thousands of men whom they lost in that battle.

The tribes of the Imam's camp also were weakened and lost a great deal of determination to wage a decisive campaign against Muawiya because of their losses in the battle of Basra. Muawiya remained outside the battle waiting and increasing in material and manpower.

Probably the Qureshites had forgotten through the passage of time what they had suffered of losses at the hand of the Imam in the battles of Badr Uhud and Moat.

However the Battle of Basra in which the Qureshites lost seventy of their chiefs had not only revived but also increased their rancor and hatred. It is an understatement to say that the action of the three rebellious leaders had led to the transformation of the Righteous Caliphate into the despotic rule of the Umayyad dynasty.

Had these three leaders not waged that sinister war the Imam could have uprooted the Umayyad plantation from the Syrian land and the Righteous Caliphate could have continued for generations. Having internal peace the Imam could have faced the external adversaries of the Muslim World with his unusual bravery.

The three leaders waged their campaign against Uthman because they feared that the caliphate would be transferred from him to one of his relatives and that would mean the caliphate will rest with the Umayyads. By this a rule of dynasty would be established and Talhah and Al-Zubayr would be deprived of the caliphate. To prevent this they managed to kill Uthman.

But the death of Uthman did not make them closer to their goal. So they waged their bloody campaign to destroy the Imam's caliphate. This also brought them no closer to their goal. They destroyed themselves and the caliphate of the Imam and transformed the caliphate to a rule of Umayyad dynasty the least religious tribe rather than the close relatives of Muhammad whom God purified of all sins.

1. Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 2 pp. 165-166.
2. Dr. Taha Hissein Al-Fitnat Al-Kubra part 2 p. 39 Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 p. 111.
3. Al-Tabari his History part 4 p. 391-and pp. 393-394.
4. Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 pp. 89-90 Al-Tabari in his History part 4 p. 431 Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 p. 102 Ibn Abu-Al-Radeed Commentary on Nahjul-Balaghah vol.2 p. 506.
5. Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 p. 506 Al-Tabari his History part 4 p. 431.
6. Taha Hussein Al-Fitnat Al-Kubra part 2 p. 34 Al-Tabari his History part 4 p. 407 Al-Hakim in his Al-Mustadrak part 3 pp. 119-120 Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 p. 39.
7. Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 p. 107.
8. Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak part 3 p. 120.
9. Al-Fitnat Al-Kubra part 2 p. 39 Al-Tabari his History part 4 p. 468 Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 p. 111.
10. Al-Tabari his History part 4 p. 467.
11. Al Tabari, his History, part 4, p.468
12. Al Tabari, his History, part 4, p.468-69
13. Taha Hussein, al Fitnat al Kubra, part 2 p. 36
14. Sayed Murtadah Al-Askari Abdullah Ibn Saba second edition p. 26.
15. Ibn Abu Al-Hadid his Commentary on Nahjul-Balaghah part 6 p. 11 (printed in 1965 by the House of Resurrection of the Arabic Books.
16. Al-Bukhari his Sahih part 6 p. 195 Imam Ahmad his Musnad part 1 p. 17.
17. Muslim his Sahih part 6 p. 195.
18. Muslim his Sahih part 6 p. 195.
19. Al-Tabari his History part 4 p.480.
20. Al-Tabari his History part 4 p.480.
21. Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 p.116.
22. Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak part 3 p.127.
23. Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak part 3 p.115.
24. Muslim Sahih Muslim part7 (Book of Zakat) p.139-140.
25. Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 p.103.
26. Al-Tabari his History part 4 p.482.
27. Al-Tabari his History part 4 p.486.
28. Al-Tabari his History part 4 pp.499-500.
29. Al-Tabari his History part 4 pp.486-487.
30. Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 p.118.
31. Al-Tabari his History part 4 p.500 and p.501 and p.505 in sequel.
32. Al-Tabari his History part 4 pp.500-501 and p.505 in sequel.
33. Al-Tabari his History part 4 pp.500-501 and p.505 in sequel.
34. Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil part 3 pp.119-120 Al-Tabari his History part 4 pp.488-489.

35. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p.501.
36. Al–Tabari his History part 4 pp.510–511.
37. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p.501.
38. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p.511.
39. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p.509.
40. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p. 511.
41. The Imam ‘Ali Nahjul–Balaghah part 2 page 19
42. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p. 509 Abdul Fatah Abdul–Maqsud Al–Imam ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib part 3 p. 222.
43. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid Commentary on Nahjul Balaghah part2 p. 431.
44. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p. 513.
45. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p. 509 Taha Hussein Al–Fitnat Al–Kubra part 2 pp. 48–49.
46. The Holy Qur'an chapter 4 verse 94.
47. Ibn Al–Athir Al–Kamil part 3 p. 124.
48. Ibn Majah his authentic Sunan part 1 p. 143.
49. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p. 510–511.
50. Abdul–Fattah Abdul–Maqsud Al–Imam ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib part 3 pp. 214–216.
51. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid Commentary on Nahjul–Balaghah 1 p. 86.
52. Abdul Fattah Abdul–Maqsud Al–Imam ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib part 3 p. 219.
53. Ibn Al–Athir Al–Kamil part 3 p. 127.
54. Ibn Al–Athir Al–Kamil part 3 p. 126–127.
55. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p. 519.
56. Taha Hussein Al Fitna tul Kubra part 2 p. 53.
57. Al–Tabari his History part 4 pp. 547–548.
58. The Imam ‘Ali Nahjul–Balaghah part 1 p. 44–45.
59. The Imam ‘Ali Nahjul–Balaghah part 1 pp. 44–45.
60. Sheikh Muhammad Abdoh his Commentary on Nahjul– Balaghah part 1 p. 45.
61. The Imam ‘Ali Nahjul–Balaghah part 1 p. 45.
62. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p. 539 mentioned that ten thousand Muslims died at the battle of Bassrah Taha Hussein in his Al–Fitna tul–Kubra part 2 p. 51 men– tioned this estimate and other estimates came to twenty thousand.
63. Ibn Al–Athir Al–Kamil part 3 p. 82 reported that the Imam mediated between Othman and his opponents and both sides agreed that Othman removed his bad relatives from their offices and stopped giving them and others the public funds. Then Marwan disuaded Othman from fulfilling his promise.
64. Al–BaladhuriAnsab Al–Ashraf part 4 p. 70.
65. Al–Tabari his History part 4 p. 509.
66. Muslim his Sahih part 12 p. 241.
67. Muslim his Sahih part 12 p. 239.
68. Ibn Majah his Authentic Sunan part 1 hadith no. 145.
69. Ibn Al–Athir Al–Kamil part 2 p. 220.
70. Ibn Al–Athir Al–Kamil part 3 p. 120.
71. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid Commentary on Nahjul–Balaghah part 2 p. 78.
72. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid Commentary on Nahjul– Balaghah part 2 p. 78.
73. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid Commentary on Nahjul– Balaghah part 2 p. 78.
74. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid Commentary on Nahjul– Balaghah part 2 p. 78.
75. Al–Hakim Al–Mustadrak part 3 pp. 119–120.
76. Al–Hakim Al–Mustadrak part 3 pp. 119–120.
77. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid his Commentary on Nahjul–Balaghah part 2 p. 79.
78. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid his Commentary on Nahjul–Balaghah part 2 p. 79.
79. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid his Commentary on Nahjul–Balaghah part 2 p. 79.

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/brother-prophet-muhammad-imam-ali-shaykh-muhammad-jawad-chirri/23-battle-basra#comment-0