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### Research Article

## Contextualizing the Conflict between Amīr Mu‘āwiyah (d. 680 AD) and ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (d. 661 AD): A Historical Reassessment

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**Abstract.** The historical narrative surrounding the conflict between Amīr Mu‘āwiyah (d. 680 AD) and ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (d. 661 AD) has long been cloaked in controversial debate. The former’s refusal to pledge allegiance to the latter stemmed from his demand for *Qisās* (Retribution) following the assassination of ‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān (d. 656 AD). Believing that Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s ascension to the *Khilāfah* (Caliphate) did not adequately address the grievances, Amīr Mu‘āwiyah withheld his adherence, viewing it as a means to accentuate for *Qisās*. This denial inflamed tensions and fueled the broader dispute between them, underscoring an intense impact on the political landscape of the Muslims in the early decades. Drawing upon a range of sources, while employing critical textual analysis, this paper attempts to offer a broader understanding of the events that occurred during this crucial period with their deeper historical context. Through scrupulous revision of the authentic historical accounts, this study, primarily, aims to scrutinize the growing accusation labeling Amīr Mu‘āwiyah as a rebel owing to his stand against Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, and seeks to evaluate the validity of such a budding narrative about his intentions. Moreover, it shall endeavor to shed light on Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s role and

motivations, ultimately contributing to a historically exact portrayal of his position. It shall also enrich scholarly discourse and foster a more nuanced understanding of early Muslim history.

**Keywords:** Amīr Mu‘āwiyah, ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, Qīṣāṣ, Khilāfah, Ibn Sabā, Sabā’īs, Jamal, Ṣiffīn, Al-Fi’ah al Bāghiyah, Ijtihād.

## INTRODUCTION

The assassination of the third *Khalīfah* (Caliph), ‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān, in 656 AD - owing to a notorious rebellion impelled by ‘Abdullah bin Sabā, a controversial convert from Judaism - marks a chaotic chapter in early days of Muslim history. Among the different narratives, there are few references claiming the Jewish involvement in the conspiracy that led to this deplorable incident, reflecting a period of tragic turmoil in Madīnah. The subsequent succession of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī as the fourth *Khalīfah* immediately met with resistance from prominent figures, including Ṭalhāh bin ‘Ubaydullāh (d. 656 AD), Zubayr bin Al-‘Awwām (d. 656 AD), ‘Ā’ishah bint Abī Bakr (d. 678 AD) and most notably Amīr Mu‘āwiyah (d. 680 AD); the governor of Syria since the reign of ‘Umar bin Khaṭṭāb (d. 644 AD). Their demand for *Qīṣāṣ* became a central concern, leading them into direct conflict with Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī; marking the first major civil war within the Muslim *Ummah*. However, the historical account of Amīr Mu‘āwiyah, the founder of the Umayyads (661-750 AD), has long been the subject of controversial debate involving several allegations. His political position revolves around many hot-button debates including, his reaction to the assassination of Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān and the immediate succession of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, refusal to pledge allegiance to Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and his ardent demand for *Qīṣāṣ*. This study aspires to explore into these complicated debates by thoroughly evaluating the narrations that record such critical events. Moreover, the essential part of this paper focuses on whether Amīr Mu‘āwiyah was genuinely a rebel or if this characterization is an unsubstantiated charge stemming from a misunderstanding of a Prophetic tradition, *Al-Fi’ah al-Bāghiyah*; mentioning the assassins of ‘Ammār bin Yāsir (d. 657 AD) as the rebel group. By engaging with the critical analysis of the source material, this paper aims to provide a balanced perspective of the situation clarifying the events and also shall make an effort to come up with a fair approach to figure out different narratives that shall continue to shape an impartial understanding of Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s position.

### ‘Abdullāh Ibn Sabā: *The Man behind the Curtain*

As a result of the plots of ‘Abdullāh bin Sabā, a Yemenite Jew who had apparently converted to Islam,<sup>1</sup> and the other alike hypocrites, a large group of people

<sup>1</sup> Dr. ‘Alī Muḥammad Al-Ṣallābī, *Sīrat-i-‘Uthmān Dhu al-Nurayn*, Ur. Tr. (Riyāḍ: Darussalam, 1431 AH), 619. Also see: Maulānā Abū Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwī, *Al-Murtaḍā*, (Lakhnow: Majlis Tahqeeqaat Wa Nashriyaat, 2013), 261.

Along with the *Sunnī* school of thought, the Shī‘ah scholars too believe in Ibn Sabā’s controversial character. For instance, Muḥammad bin ‘Umar Al-Kashshī, a fourth century scholar of the Shī‘ah scholarship, commented upon Ibn Sabā as: “*‘Abd al-Allāh bin Sabā, a convert from Judaism,*

including neo-Muslims ferociously assassinated Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān at his home in Madīnah in 656 AD.<sup>2</sup> Dr. ‘Alī Muḥammad Al-Ṣallābī, a renowned contemporary Libyan scholar cum historian, cites a consensus among early scholars, including Imam Sha‘bī (d. 723 CE), Abu ‘Āṣim (d. 867 CE), Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 965 CE), Ibn Taymiyah (d. 1328 CE), Dhahabī (d. 1348 CE), Shāṭibī (d. 1388 CE), Maqrīzī (d. 1442), and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 1449 CE), regarding Ibn Sabā’s status as a radical heretic. His extremist ideas included the deification of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī. According to historical records, Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī ultimately took decisive action against him and his followers, and burnt them in the fire, underscoring the extremity of his deviance.<sup>3</sup> The extremist beliefs of Ibn Sabā and his adherents regarding Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, were marked by bizarre exaggeration. At the outset, they elevated him to the prophetic status, afterwards took an even more radical stance, declaring him God. In Kūfah, they publicly propagated their beliefs. Upon becoming cognizant of this, Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī took serious action against their heresy and ordered their execution by burning, highlighting the seriousness of their mischievousness.<sup>4</sup> According to Dr. Al-Ṣallābī, renowned earlier scholars and historians unanimously agree that Ibn Sabā played a pivotal role in propagating self-fabricated beliefs and ideas among Muslims,<sup>5</sup> cultivating a *Sabā’ī* mindset. His primary purpose was to divert Muslims from their faith and allegiance to the *Khalīfah*, sowing discord and chaos. Such malicious agenda attracted like-minded elements, giving rise to the *Sabā’ī* sect. This group significantly contributed to the tragic martyrdom of Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān.<sup>6</sup> Maulānā Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Rayḥān, a contemporary scholar of History, teaching the subject at *Jāmi‘ah al-Rashīd* Karachi, summed up the plot of Ibn Sabā and the results of his conspiracies on the people in the following words:

“Following Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s *Khilāfah*, ‘Abdullāh bin Sabā, a black Jew from Ṣan‘ā, Yemen, publicized his conversion to Islam. Without spending time with any Ṣaḥābī, Ibn Sabā initiated a malevolent campaign, spreading his influence across

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accepted Islam and affirmed devotion to Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī. Formerly, as a Jew, he considered in Yūsha‘ bin Nūn as the rightful heir to Prophet Mūsā. After embracing Islam, Ibn Sabā introduced this identical succession idea to Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī following the Prophet (ﷺ)’s demise. He was the first person who propounded the concept of Imāmah for Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and believed those opposing this belief as infidels”. See: Muḥammad bin ‘Umar Al-Kashī, *Rijāl Kashshī*, 108-109, on the authority of Maulānā Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Rayḥān, *Tārīkh-i-Ummat-i-Muslimah*, (MP, India: Al-Manhal Publishers, NA), 2/153.

<sup>2</sup> Maulānā Shāh Ma‘īn al-Dīn Nadwī, *Tārīkh-i-Islām*, (Sahāranpur UP: Maktabah Imdadiya, 2003), 1/239-240.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ṣallābī, *Sīrat-i-‘Uthmān*, 617- 619.

<sup>4</sup> Nadwī, *Al-Murtaḍā*, 262-263.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Sabā’s teachings propagated contentious ideas, portraying parallels between Jesus’ prophesied return in the end times and Prophet Muḥammad’s supposed return, implying the latter’s superiority. Further, he wrongly promoted the concept of *Wilāyat* (Succession), propounding that each prophet had a designated *Waṣī* (Heir). Specifically, he asserted that Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī was the *Waṣī* of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), suggesting that ‘Alī held a distinctive status as the last of the successors. Ibn Sabā further asserted that ‘Alī was more deserving to the *Khilāfah* than ‘Uthmān, characterizing ‘Uthmān’s ascension to the *Khilāfah* as unfair and dictatorial. He further argued that those who failed to realize ‘Alī’s *Khilāfah*, allegedly ordained by the Prophet, acted unjustly. See: Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl bin Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, Ur. Tr. (Deoband: Maktabah Danish, 2000), 7/321.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Ṣallābī, *Sīrat-i-‘Uthmān*, p. 627.

Yemen, Ḥijāz, Kūfā, Baṣrah, and Syria. He cunningly cloaked himself as a devout character, gaining regard among the common masses as a self-proclaimed reformer. Similar to Saint Paul’s strategy in Christianity, Ibn Sabā exploited overstated expressions of devotion to achieve status of religious leadership. Many immature people (Neo-Muslims) regarded him as greatest teacher and mentor of Islam. Recognizing the unity of Muslims as the key to their success, this Jewish agent sought to weaken this progress. He aimed to sow discord by eroding trust in the Ṣaḥābah and started questioning the authority of the Islamic *Khilāfah*.<sup>7</sup>

Ibn Sabā’s ultimate objective was to disintegrate the Muslim community, exploiting vulnerabilities for the benefit of his Jewish patrons. Some modern authors are convinced of Jewish and Christian involvement in the conspiracy against Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān, with some even indicating Ka‘ab al-Aḥbār’s involvement as well. In support of his argument, Maulānā Abū Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwī (d. 1999) refers to Dr. Jamīl ‘Abdullāh Miṣrī work, *‘Athar Ahl al-Kitāb* (p. 247), which states: “*The trials faced by the Ummah during Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s Khilāfah resulted from various tribulations and conspiracies, planned by Jews, Christians, and other enemies of the Islamic Khilāfah*.”<sup>8</sup> Further, rioters also succeeded in misleading few notable persons, including Muḥammad bin Abū Bakr (d. 659 AD),<sup>9</sup> who charged the *Khalīfah* with incompetence and for carrying nepotism in electing his relatives on administrative offices.<sup>10</sup> Some narrations report that he desired a high-ranking position in the administration, but when he could not get that, he became a bitter opponent of Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān.<sup>11</sup>

### The Context of *Jamal* and *Ṣiffin*

Amīr Mu‘āwiyah (d. 680 AD), the governor of Syria at the time, rejected to pledge allegiance to Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī who took oath as the fourth *Khalīfah*, and demanded that the assassins of Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān be executed or handed over to him in *Qīṣāṣ*.

<sup>7</sup> Rayḥān, *Tārīkh*, 2/101. The foreword of this encyclopedic work, covering around 5000 pages in five voluminous volumes, has been written by Mufti Taqī ‘Uthmānī, who has eulogized the author for his extensive study and fair analysis of the historical narrations, and commented that the author has been successful to establish the moderate understanding of the early Muslim history with special reference to the *Mushājrāt-i-Ṣaḥābah*. However, the author of this paper disagree with his understanding of the famous Prophetic Tradition, *Al-Fi’ah al-Bāghiyah*, and remain restricted to come in terms with his perspective on Amīr Mu‘awiyah’s stand against Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī.

<sup>8</sup> Nadwī, *Al-Murtaḍā*, 223. Nadwī’s reference to the aforementioned author brings out the alleged broader involvement of Jews in Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s assassination plan.

<sup>9</sup> Some reports mention that Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr was the first person among the rioters to infiltrate Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s compartment by climbing through the roof. He physically attacked the *Khalīfah*, grabbing his beard and uttering derogatory words. See: Muḥammad bin Sa‘ad, *Ṭabaqāt*, Ur. Tr. (Deoband: Hafzi Book Depot, NA), 3/157. But, when the Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān responded, he departed and did not take part in his eventual martyrdom, as verified by Nā’ilah, Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s wife. See: Maulānā Akbar Shah Najībābādī, *Tārīkh-i-Islām*, (New-Delhi: Aetiqaad Publishing House, 2007), 1/414. However, after narrating the said tradition, Ibn Kathīr evaluating its authenticity, concluding that it is a highly unreliable narration. See: Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 7/356. Later, Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr regretted on his involvement and expressed his repentance from such condemnable act. See: Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā*, Ur. Tr. (New-Delhi: Farid Book Depot, NA), 204.

<sup>10</sup> Najībābādī, *Tārīkh*, 1/407.

<sup>11</sup> Maulānā Shāh Ma‘īn al-Dīn Nadwī, *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, (Deoband: Naimia Book Depot, NA), 6/220.

Amīr Mu'āwiyah was not alone in this demand, rather many reputed Ṣaḥābah including; Ḥaḍrat Ṭalḥah, Ḥaḍrat Zubayr, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and others held the same opinion. Shinqītī, a contemporary Mauritanian -ār alMukht-Dr. Muhammad al<sup>12</sup> scholar, referring to Ibn Taymiyah elucidated that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah did not actively take part in the war, nor did she aim to engage in the battle of *Jamal*. Rather, her objective was to establish peace among Muslims. Initially, she thought her travel to Baṣrah would benefit the Muslims. Nevertheless, after the Battle of *Jamal* occurred - fueled by *Sabā'ī* handling - she rued leaving Madīnah, constantly weeping in retrospect over her move.<sup>13</sup> Anyway, the *Sabā'īs* left no stone unturned to carry this difference to combat. Consequently, in the battle of *Jamal* (fought between Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and 'Alī outside Baṣrah in 656 AD), the two parties, as they were approaching to an agreement, had to fight reluctantly owing to the vicious scheme of *Sabā'īs*.<sup>14</sup> The complicated situation has been covered by the historians, as:

"The peace terms were tied up on the third day of negotiations, with plans to formalize the agreement in writing the following morning. Nevertheless, with hidden motives, Ibn Sabā's group and *Balwā'īs* (Rioters); aligned with Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's army, had other plans. With the agreement about to happen, they became worried and set up an urgent meeting through the night. At dawn, they launched a surprise attack on Ṭalḥah and Zubayr's forces - the *Aṣḥāb al-Jamal*. The under-attacked forces defended themselves, prompting a complete combat between the two armies. Leaders on both sides misread the sudden fighting, assuming the other party had broken the peace agreement. Each commander believed the opposing side was guilty, oblivious of the true instigators. The fragile peace was shattered, and conflict ensued."<sup>15</sup>

The battle ended up with the defeat of *Aṣḥāb al-Jamal*; leading to the martyrdom of Ḥaḍrat Ṭalḥah and Ḥaḍrat Zubayr. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī held the view that the *Khilāfah* has not yet stabilized and unless the rule is consolidated, it is not possible for him to bring the assassins to book. The scholars examined the intricacies surrounding Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān's assassination, reporting that the culprits remained mostly unidentified. This impeded the issuance of *Qīṣāṣ* as far as Shari'ah law is concerned. Particularly, even Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān's wife, Nā'ilah, was unable to recognize the culprits with assurance.<sup>16</sup> Maulānā Abū Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī underscores the complications of the situation by referring to a renowned Egyptian writer, 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād (d. 1964) that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī once talked about avenging Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān's martyrdom, but observed an unexpected reaction from the army. Ten thousand soldiers stood united, lances raised, and candidly proclaimed, '*We are all 'Uthmān's assassins*'. They dared anyone seeking *Qīṣāṣ* to take it from the whole

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 7/438. Also see: Nadwī, *Al-Murtaḍā*, 237. Also see: Nadwī, *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, 6/270.

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Muhammad al-Mukhtār al-Shinqītī, *Ṣaḥābah-i-Kirām Kei Siyāsī Ikhtilāfāt*, Ur. Tr. (New-Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 2020), 165.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 7/460. Also, see: Rayḥān, *Tārīkh*, 2/202. Also see: Maulānā 'Atīq al-Raḥmān Sambhalī, *Wāq'ah-i-Karbālā Aur Uskā Pas-i-Manẓar: Aik Na'ay Muṭala'ah Kī Roshnī Mei*, (Lakhnow: AL-Furqan Book Depot, 2013), 46. Also see: Nadwī, *Tārīkh*, 1/285.

<sup>15</sup> Najībābādī, *Tārīkh*, 1/454-455. Also see: Al-Shinqītī, *Ṣaḥābah-i-Kirām*, 166-167.

<sup>16</sup> Nadwī, *Tārīkh*, 1/273.

group.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Dr. Muḥammad Ḥamīdullāh (d. 2002 AD), a distinguished modern Sīrah scholar, recorded that when ‘Alī turned towards them, and said: Who are the murderers of ‘Uthmān? Twelve thousand persons rose up and each one of them shouted: I am that!<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, both Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and Amīr Mu‘āwiyah on the basis of their *Ijtihād*, fought in the battle of *Ṣiffīn* in 657 AD. Dr. Ḥamīdullāh has written a specific paper on this subject titled, ‘*The Teleguided Battles of Jamal and Ṣiffīn*’. At the end of which the author concluded:

“After years of research, and without least preconceived notions, I have reached to the conclusion that the murder of ‘Uthmān and the wars of succession were a teleguided affair, and that ‘Alī, Mu‘āwiyah, ‘Ā’ishah etc. all fought in good faith and had absolutely no personal ambitions.”<sup>19</sup>

### Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s *Ijtihād* and the Mainstream Stance

The *Jumhūr ‘Ulamā* (Mainstream Scholars) held the view that Amīr Mu‘āwiyah was on *Khaṭā’* (Mistake) in his *Ijtihād*; nevertheless, neither he carried aggressive approach against Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī nor fighting began from his side. In fact, he, in the battle of *Ṣiffīn*, came out in self-defense. Ibn Taymiyah (d. 1328) stated: “Amīr Mu‘āwiyah was not the initiator of the combat, rather he was most keen that there should be no war among the Muslims.”<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the call for ceasefire was initiated by him on the suggestion of ‘Amar bin Āṣ (d. 664 AD). When many people were martyred, Amīr Mu‘āwiyah is reported to have said: “If the people perish like this, who will protect the borders and who will fight the polytheists and the disbelievers?”<sup>21</sup> Ahl al-Sunnah believed in the precision of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s *Ijtihād*; evaluating that although the *Ijtihād* of Amīr Mu‘āwiyah and the *Aṣḥāb al-Jamal* carried *Khaṭā’*, but all of them were *Mujtahidūn* (Sing. *Mujtahid*; one who performs *Ijtihād*). The Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said: “When a *Mujtahid* makes a decision, having tried his best to decide correctly and is right, there are two rewards for him; and if he made a judgment after having tried his best (to arrive at a correct decision) but erred, there is one reward for him.”<sup>22</sup> Since, their disagreement was not for any worldly purpose, so they shall not be criticized or accused for their stance. On such grounds, Ibn khaldūn (d. 1405 AD), came up with his decisive opinion:

“The conflict between ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib and Amīr Mu‘āwiyah stimulated the Ṣaḥābah to exercise *Ijtihād*. Contrary to secular perspectives, their disagreement was not driven by material gains or enmity. Rather, it derived from divergent *Ijtihād* on the subject. Each one, convinced of his understanding, deemed the other to be in error. Particularly, Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s assertion and engagement, in conflict with

<sup>17</sup> Nadwī, *Al-Murtaḍā*, 234-235.

<sup>18</sup> Dr. Ḥamīdullāh, *The Prophet’s Establishing A State and His Succession*, (Hyderabad: Habib & Co, 1986), 110.

<sup>19</sup> Ḥamīdullāh, *The Prophet’s Establishing A State*, 113.

<sup>20</sup> Taqī al-Dīn bin Taymiyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, 2/219, on the authority of Muḥammad Zafar Iqbal, *Ḥaḍrat Amīr Mu‘āwiyah: Ghumrahkun Ghalat Fahmiyūn Kā Izālah*, (New-Delhi: Areeb Publications, 2018), 147.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 7/523.

<sup>22</sup> Muslim bin Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, (*Kitāb al-Aqḍiyah*, Chapter: *Bāyānu Ajr al-Ḥākim*), Ḥaḍīth Number: 1716.

Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, was motivated by a genuine claim, rather than deceptive intents. This phenomenon was distinctive of the Ṣaḥābah, who unpretentiously believed in their own positions, devoid of any vicious objective. The difference arose from varying *Ijtihād*, with one stance being accurate and the other inaccurate. Moreover, it is important to distinguish that, in Islamic scholarship; a *Mujtahid* is rewarded for his effort, even if his deduction concludes in error.”<sup>23</sup>

The conflict between the two groups has been subject to various understandings. Nevertheless, sound Prophetic traditions and authentic historical narratives contextualize this conflict as an intra-faith disagreement rather than a legal division between *Ḥaqq* and *Bāṭil*. This distinction is essential, as it differentiates their dispute from the voracious political struggles of modern politicians. Both Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and Amīr Mu‘āwiyah were revered companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), sharing the same faith and commitment to Islam. The Prophet’s own words, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Aḥādīth, substantiate their mutual belief, underscoring that their *Da‘wah* was based on a common religious framework. Additionally, the Prophet (ﷺ) openly denounced the *Khawārij*, an extremist group that emerged during this period, for their radical tenets and violent strategies. This denunciation serves as a crucial distinction, emphasizing that the conflict between the two groups was not driven by the fundamental religious differences or personal grudges, but rather by different understandings of political leadership of *Ummah*. Therefore, figuring out the historical context becomes imperative to take hold of the intricacies of early Muslim history and avoiding misconceptions that come from applying modern politics to past affairs. For instance, *Al-Bukhārī* reports a tradition narrated by Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said that the Day of Judgment will not come till two great groups fight each other; whereupon, there will be a great number of casualties on both sides. However, the *Daw‘ah* of both shall be the same.<sup>24</sup> Another tradition of *Al-Muslim*, narrated by Abū Sa‘īd Khudrī, mentions that during the time (of *Fitnah*), a group (*Khawārij*) shall emerge from the groups (of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and Amīr Mu‘āwiyah). The group more nearer to the truth from the two said groups would exterminate them.<sup>25</sup> After reporting the aforementioned traditions,<sup>26</sup> Ibn Kathīr explicitly represented the stand of *Ahl al-Sunnah*:

“This ḥadīth, about the *Khawārij*, serves as a sign to the Prophet’s *Nabawwah*, as prophecies mentioned in it have been fulfilled. It unequivocally reveals that both Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s and Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s group were true believers, rebutting unsubstantiated *Takfīr* by some misguided groups against the later group. Additionally, it clearly illustrates that Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s group was closer to the truth; thus, highlights the validity of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s standpoint, aligning with the doctrine of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah*. Amīr Mu‘āwiyah, a respected *Mujtahid*, will also attain a reward for his efforts. Nonetheless, being *Imām*, Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s stand deserves double

<sup>23</sup> ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, Ur. Tr. (New-Delhi: Ateqad Publishing House, 2010), 1/479.

<sup>24</sup> *Al-Bukhārī*, *Al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ḥadīth Number: 7121.

<sup>25</sup> *Al-Muslim*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth Number, 1065e.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Kathīr mentioned these traditions from different chains. See: Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 7/528.

rewards, as reported in *Al-Bukhārī*: *When a ruler exerts Ijtihād and is correct, he obtains two rewards; if reaches at incorrect conclusion, still he shall get one reward.*<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, when reviewing the conflict between Amīr Mu‘āwiyah and Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, it is indispensable to approach the subject comparatively, avoiding simplistic attributions of censure to anyone. Rather than exclusively focusing on Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s flaws, extensive comprehension requires assessing the intricacies and multiple viewpoints encompassing the conflict. For that reason, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1405 AD) stated, “*Highlighting Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s faults alone is unfair when discussing his conflict with Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī*”.<sup>28</sup>

### The Nature of the Conflict

Post Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom, the situation grew complicated, making it challenging to distinguish right from the wrong. In this situation, the Ṣaḥābah acted according to their own *Ijtihād* of what was right. Some sided with Amīr Mu‘āwiyah, others supported Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, while many remained neutral. Each person followed the path of truth as they understood it through their *Ijtihād*, so it is not allowed to disparage or ridicule any of them. They all acted with sincerity and integrity.<sup>29</sup> Allāh has shed light on their honesty and genuine faith at numerous places in the Qur’ān. When both the parties considered themselves to be true, it is not right to make the *Mushājarāt-i-Ṣaḥābah* (Conflicts of the Companions) the subject of debate or to make negative remarks on those among them who got martyred in these mutual wars. Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, about the slain fell on both sides in the battle *Ṣiffīn*, is reported to have said, “*Both our martyrs and theirs will be rewarded with Jannah*”.<sup>30</sup> It is narrated by Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) that Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī was asked about the martyrs of *Jamal* and *Ṣiffīn*, he said: “*By Allah, those who martyred in Jamal and Ṣiffīn, provided their hearts are clean, they will surely go to Jannah.*” Ibn Khaldūn after narrating this narration, expressed that there is no doubt in the ‘*Adālah*’ (Judiciousness) of any of them and there is no scope for criticism on their actions. For, they are the noble men of the best of times. Their words and actions are considered standard in the *Shari‘ah*. According to *Ahl al-Sunnah*, their ‘*Adālah*’ is well acknowledged.<sup>31</sup> During these mutual conflicts, the King of Rome tried to take its advantage and thereby, gathered a strong army to attack the Muslims. When Amīr Mu‘āwiyah came to know about this, he wrote a letter to the Roman King:

“O Cursed! If you do not turn away from your intention and return to your cities, then by God! I and my cousin (‘Alī) will make peace against you and drive you out of your country. And we will narrow the earth upon you in spite of its vastness. The Roman King was afraid of this letter and turned away from his arms.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 7/536.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, 2/30.

<sup>29</sup> Maulānā Abū Bakr Ghāzīpūrī, *Maqām-i-Ṣaḥābah: Kitāb wa Sunnat Kī Rōshnī Mei*, (Ghazipur UP: Maktaba Asaria: 1431 AH), 101.

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf*, Ḥadīth Number: 37880. Also See: Rayḥān, *Tārīkh*, 2/289.

<sup>31</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, 2/27.

<sup>32</sup> Najībābādī, *Tārīkh*, 2/46. Also see: Rayḥān, *Tārīkh*, 2/269-270.



At another place, the letter has been reported like this: “O Roman dog! You cannot take advantage of our conflict. The moment you turn to Madīnah, by God! The name of the first soldier who shall come out of ‘Alī’s army to fight with you shall be Mu‘āwiyah bin Abī Sufyān.”<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the historians have recorded numerous reports which illustrate that Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s intent had been to avenge the Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s assassins who had shrewdly joined Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s army. For instance, Ibn Kathīr narrates an event mentioning that during the battle of Ṣiffīn, Abū Dardā’ and Abū Umāmah came upon Amīr Mu‘āwiyah and asked, “O Mu‘āwiyah, why do you fight with ‘Alī? By God, he embraced Islam prior to you and your father, and his blood relation to the Prophet (ﷺ) surpasses yours. Further, he is more deserving of the *Khilāfah*.” Amīr Mu‘āwiyah replied, “I am fighting ‘Alī owing to the issue of ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom, as he has given shelter to his assassins. Go; tell him to bring the culprits to justice. If he accepts, I will be the first among Syrians to offer my allegiance.” Abū Dardā’ and Abū Umāmah communicated his message to Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, who replied to them, “The true culprits stand before you in the soldiers.” Thousands stood up, declaring openly, “We are all ‘Uthmān’s murderers; take vengeance from all of us if you dare.” Abū Dardā’ and Abū Umāmah returned, refusing to take part in the battle.<sup>34</sup> Amīr Mu‘āwiyah affirmed, “I opposed ‘Alī only on the issue of Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom and strived to establish justice by avenging his killers.”<sup>35</sup> This elucidates that the clash between him and ‘Alī was not a struggle for power.

Similarly, during the battles of *Jamal* and Ṣiffīn, Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī overheard a man speaking violent comments against the opposing army. He interfered, warning: “Speak not ill of them but instead deliver benevolent words. For they assume we have rebelled against them, just as we hold that they have rebelled against us, and thus we reached at the battlefield.”<sup>36</sup> Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s aforementioned testimonials candidly reveal that his disagreement with Amīr Mu‘āwiyah and Ṭalhāh, Zubayr and ‘Ā’ishah was based on *Ijtihād* – a legal disagreement based on individual interpretations. Significantly, he neither considered them transgressors nor allowed uttering derogatory remarks about them.<sup>37</sup>

### Neutral Stand of Numerous Ṣaḥābah

During this period, the situation was so ambiguous and vague that a significant number of Ṣaḥābah were unable to make a decisive decision on the matter, choosing instead to remain nonaligned and not participated in the dispute.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, during the battle of Ṣiffīn, many Ṣaḥābah including Sa‘ad bin Abī Waqqāṣ, Sa‘īd bin Zayd, ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar, Abū Sa‘īd Khudrī, ‘Abdullāh bin Salām, Qudāmah bin

<sup>33</sup> Maulānā ‘Abd al-Shakūr Fārūqī, *Sīrah Khulafā al-Rāshidīn*, (Deoband: Dār al-Kitāb, 1998), 193.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 7/499.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf*, Ḥadīth Number: 31175. Also see: [کیا حضرت امیر معاویہ رضی اللہ عنہ](#)  
[؟ – Asre Hazir](#) – باغی تہ؟

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, 3/61, on the authority of Muftī Taqī ‘Uthmānī, *Ḥaḍrat Amīr Mu‘āwiyah Aur Tārikhī Ḥaqā’iq*, (Deoband: Naimia Book Depot, NA), 241. Also see: Rayḥān, *Tārikh*, 2/236.

<sup>37</sup> ‘Uthmānī, *Ḥaḍrat Amīr Mu‘āwiyah*, 242.

<sup>38</sup> Imam Al-Nawawī, *Sharh Muslim*, 2/390, on the authority of ‘Uthmānī, *Ḥaḍrat Amīr Mu‘āwiyah*, 246.

Maz‘ūn, Ka‘ab bin Mālik, Nu‘mān bin Bashīr, Usāmah bin Zayd, Ḥassān bin Thābit, Abū Dardah, Abū Umāmah Bāhilī, Maslamah bin Mukhallad, Fuḍālah bin ‘Ubayd and others, stayed entirely neutral; in fact, the majority did not take sides. Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 855 AD) narrates from Ibn Sīrīn (d. 729 AD) that although thousands of Ṣaḥābah were present at the time, fewer than a hundred were involved in the conflict between the two groups, with the number of taking part Ṣaḥābah not even reaching thirty. In his *‘Minhāj al-Sunnah’* (3/186), Ibn Taymiyah (d. 1328 AD) confirms to the authenticity of this *Sanad*, calling it “*The most authentic on earth*”.<sup>39</sup> This raises an undeniable question: if Amīr Mu‘āwiyah held a dishonest stance as the leader of the rebel group, why did such a significant number of Ṣaḥābah refrain from openly supporting Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and from fulfilling the Qur’ānic directive that instructs Muslims to fight against a rebellious section? For Allāh, in the Qur’ān, says:

“And if two parties or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both, but if one of them rebels against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that which rebels till it complies with the Command of Allah..”<sup>40</sup>

### **Ḥadīth-i-‘Ammār and Its Exact Connotation**

*Ḥadīth-i-‘Ammār* is a Prophetic tradition recorded by reliable *Muḥaddithīn* including Imām Bukhārī which seemingly exhibits Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s group as a rebel one. Besides citing it, a few other related traditions shall also be brought in to find out its accurate connotation. The Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

وَيَحْ عَمَّارٌ، تَقْتُلُهُ الْفِئَةُ الْبَاغِيَّةُ، عَمَّارٌ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَدْعُونَهُ إِلَى النَّارِ<sup>41</sup>

“May Allah be merciful on ‘Ammār. He will be killed by a rebellious group. ‘Ammār will invite them to (obey) Allah and they will invite him to the (Hell) fire.”

In his demand for *Qīṣāṣ*, Amīr Mu‘āwiyah was accompanied by many elder Ṣaḥābah. Moreover, it was in a way a Qur’ānic demand as mentioned in *Sūrah Baqarah*, 178. The scholars argue that if Amīr Mu‘āwiyah and his group were assumed rebels according to this ḥadīth, it would signify that he, along with other senior Ṣaḥābah, was calling people to Hell rather than guiding them to *Jannah* or Allah. Nevertheless, this is unimaginable regarding the Ṣaḥābah. In contrast, the group of Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s assassins, infiltrated ‘Alī’s army with hypocrisy, sowed seeds of chaos and anarchy within the community especially, the neo-Muslims, effectively inviting people to Hell. Thus, the designation of *‘Al-Fi’ah al-Bāghiyah’* pointed out in the aforementioned ḥadīth is supposed to apply to the group responsible for Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom, inciting the battle of *Jamal*, leading to the battle of *Ṣiffīn*, and eventually guilty for the martyrdom of Ḥaḍrat ‘Ammār in the same battle.<sup>42</sup> This is further corroborated by another narration of *Al-Bukhārī*, recording the Prophet (ﷺ)’s saying:

<sup>39</sup> ‘Uthmānī, *Ḥaḍrat Amīr Mu‘āwiyah*, 245.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Qur’ān: 49:09.

<sup>41</sup> *Al-Bukhārī*, (*Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Siyar*, *Bāb Maṣḥ al-Ghubārī ‘An al-Ra’s Fī Sabilillāh*), Ḥadīth Number: 2812.

<sup>42</sup> Ḥāfiẓ Ṣalāh al-Dīn Yūsuf, *Khilāfat wa Mulūkiyat Kī Tārīkhī aur Shar‘ī Ḥaythiyat*, (New-Delhi: Maktabah Tarjumān, 1991), 362.

لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تَقْتُلَ فِئَتَانِ عَظِيمَتَانِ، يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُمَا مَقْتَلَةٌ عَظِيمَةٌ، دَعْوَتُهُمَا

وَاحِدَةٌ...<sup>43</sup>

“The Hour (of Judgment) will not be established till two great armies fight each other, whereupon there will be a great number of casualties on both sides and they will be following one and the same religious doctrine...”

While elaborating this ḥadīth, Ḥāfiẓ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsūf (d. 2020), a distinguished Salafī scholar, discussed that the fight between the two armies mentioned in this ḥadīth refers to the groups of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and Amīr Mu‘āwiyah. From this, it gets ascertained that *Al-Fi’ah al-Aẓimah* (The Great Group) and *Al-Fi’ah al-Bāghiyah* are two different groups. At one point, the Prophet (ﷺ) referred to *Al-Fi’ah al-Bāghiyah* as opposed to the Muslim community. The attribute of which he mentioned that they will call people to Hell and the Muslims will call to *Jannah* and Allah. In the second ḥadīth, he referred to both the parties as the *Al-Fi’ah al-Aẓimah* and described the call of both as the same. Thus, groups of both Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and Amīr Mu‘āwiyah come under *Al-Fi’ah al-Aẓimah*. In addition to these two great groups, a third group, *Al-Fi’ah al-Bāghiyah* existed during the time. That group succeeded in mixing with both the above mentioned groups which, of course, was completely different from the two.<sup>44</sup> And the same rebel group (*Sabā’īs*) joined both groups deceitfully and thus martyred Ḥaḍrat ‘Ammār. When Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, in the battle of *Shiffin*, accepted the offer of *Ṣulāḥ* (Reconciliation), these people, around 12000 in number, deserted from his army, later unanimously called as the *Khawārij*. They afterwards opposed Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī for his consent to reconcile the issue with Amīr Mu‘āwiyah on *Tahkīm* (Arbitration).<sup>45</sup> Thus settled down on the eastern provinces of Muslim empire and caused trouble to common masses for not accepting their extreme ideas. After much persuasion, when they did not bring to a halt to their condemnable activities, Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī subdued them in the battle of *Nahrawān* In 658 AD.<sup>46</sup> The remaining fellows decided to take revenge against him, Amīr Mu‘āwiyah and ‘Amr bin ‘Āṣ, and accordingly, martyred Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī at *Kūfah* in 659 AD.<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, if the martyrdom of Ḥaḍrat ‘Ammār signified that the group of Amīr Mu‘āwiyah was rebellious and leading to hellfire (as suggested in the ḥadīth of *Al-Fi’ah al-Bāghiyah* regarding the rebel group), this ‘unambiguous note’ would undoubtedly have clarified who was associated with truth and who stuck to falsehood. So, why did Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī agree to arbitration and a ceasefire, given that the Qur’ān directs that war against a rebel group should continue until it surrenders? Arbitration usually occurs when both parties have arguments that may hold some justification. Yet, if the martyrdom of Ḥaḍrat ‘Ammār identified that Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s group was rebellious, why did Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and the senior Ṣaḥābah accept *Tahkīm* (Arbitration)? Additionally, in 41 AH, Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan later abdicated the *Khilāfah*, transferring

<sup>43</sup> *Al-Bukhārī*, (*Kitāb al-Fitan*, *Bāb Khurūj al-Nār*), Ḥadīth Number: 7121.

<sup>44</sup> Yūsūf, *Khilāfat*, 363.

<sup>45</sup> Nadwī, *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, 6/289.

<sup>46</sup> Najībābādī, *Tārīkh*, 1/498-501.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 7/630. Also see: Nadwī, *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, 6/297-298.

complete leadership to Amīr Mu‘āwiyah - a decision welcomed by the entire Ummah, marking the year as *‘Ām al-Jamā‘ah* (Year of Unity). This noble achievement of Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan had already been prophesied and admired by the Prophet (ﷺ) in his words.

ابنی هذا سید ولعل الله أن يصلح به بين فئتين من المسلمين<sup>48</sup>

This son of mine is a *Sayyid* (i.e. leader) and I hope that Allah will help him bring about reconciliation between two Muslim groups.

If Amīr Mu‘āwiyah were indeed a rebel, why would the Prophet (ﷺ) commend Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan’s decision, and why did the Prophet (ﷺ) not affirm in this ḥadīth (in which he referred to both parties as Muslims) that Ḥasan, would make peace between a Muslim and a rebel group? Thus, it becomes comprehensible that the group identified by the Prophet (ﷺ) as a Muslim group cannot be considered as rebellious or as one inviting to hell. For this reason, it is incompatible to declare that one group was rebellious. In view of that, Ibn Khaldūn remarked:

“Maligning Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s intention while discussing the conflict between him and Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī is wide of the mark. Because the consensus determining that *Ijtihād* has the possibility of both right and wrong conclusions does not stand in the case of attributing error.”<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, it gets explicit that the murderer of Ḥaḍrat ‘Ammār belonged to the same rebel group that first martyred Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān. Later, this group cunningly joined Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s. By joining the group of Amīr Mu‘āwiyah, they perpetuated Ḥaḍrat ‘Ammār murder and tried to make Amīr Mu‘āwiyah’s group notorious as a rebel group with the intent to continue the conflict among the Muslims, so that they themselves could get protected from *Qisās*. Shāh Waliullāh Muḥaddith Dehlawī (d. 1762) interpreted:

وقاتلان بجز آنکه پناهی بحضرت مرتضیٰ یرندوبا او بیعت کنند علاجے نیا فتند پس در باب عقد خلافت او از هم بیشتر سعی کرد ندوم موافقت اوز دند<sup>50</sup>

“Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s assassins had no choice but to seek Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s (political) refuge and pledge allegiance to him. That is why; they made great efforts to organize his allegiance and took part in his support.”

Similarly, during the battle of Jamal, Ibn Jarmūz, fighting on Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī’s side, martyred Ḥaḍrat Zubayr. Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī responded to him when he came seeking a reward, saying, ‘I grant you the bad news of Hell’. In a disheartened manner, Ibn Jarmūz asked, ‘Such a great reward?’ Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī replied, ‘What should I do? The Prophet (ﷺ) had already told me: ‘O ‘Alī! Convey the news of Hell to the murderer of Zubayr, the son of my aunt Ṣafīyyah.’<sup>51</sup> On hearing this, Ibn Jarmūz committed suicide. Observing this, Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī recited *Takbīr* aloud and remarked, “See, how true it turned

<sup>48</sup> *Al-Bukhārī, (Kitāb al-Manāqib, Bāb ‘Alāmāt al-Nabuwwah Fī al-Islām)*, Ḥadīth Number: 3629.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 2/30.

<sup>50</sup> Shāh Waliullāh, *Qurrah al-Aynayn Fī Tafḍīl al-Shaykhayn*, Marifat.com, Collection of Prof. Muhammad Iqbal Mujadidi, Manuscript preserved in University of Punjab Library. Link: [WQB.pdf\(online-home.ca\)](http://WQB.pdf(online-home.ca)) Visited: 28-10-2024.

<sup>51</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 7/481. Also see: Nadwī, *Al-Murtaḍā*, 242-243.

out to be what the Prophet (ﷺ) had said.”<sup>52</sup> Similarly, contrary to the expectations, Amīr Mu'āwiyah showed his condemnation over Ḥaḍrat 'Ammār's martyrdom. Instead, he endorsed the statement of 'Amar bin 'Ās condemning the murderer to hell. Ibn Kathīr reports that in the battle of *Ṣiffīn*, Ḥaḍrat 'Ammār's murderer sought permission from Amīr Mu'āwiyah, who was accompanied by 'Amar bin 'Ās. He ('Amar) remarked, “Grant him permission, but at the same time, give him news of Hellfire as well”. The man questioned Amīr Mu'āwiyah, “Are you hearing what 'Amar is speaking out?” Amīr Mu'āwiyah responded, “In fact, 'Amar conveyed the truth.”<sup>53</sup> Therefore, those who argue from the ḥadīth of *Al-Fi'ah al-Bāghiyah* that since Ḥaḍrat 'Ammār was martyred by one of the army of Amīr Mu'āwiyah, his group proved to be rebel according to this tradition. The other person can charge Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's group with the same accusation keeping in view the abovementioned narration in which the killer of Ḥaḍrat Zubayr was given news of hell, even though he was fighting on Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's side. Also, this event confirms the author's claim that the mischievous group that spread the *fitnah* had mixed itself in both the groups. Therefore, to present the position of the *Ṣaḥābah* in such a way that their personalities are tarnished, while insisting only on a vague and inexact connotation of a tradition, is tantamount to weakening the '*Adālah* of the *Ṣaḥābah*; an imperative prerequisite of the authenticity of sources. Hence, *Ahl al-Sunnah* are of the opinion that caution should be taken regarding the *Ṣaḥābah* who are the sole link between the Prophet and the *Ummah*, and should refrain from blaming them by taking the wrong meaning of a tradition. Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī (d. 1566), a Sunni Egyptian Shāfi'ī jurist, stating the stance of *Ahl al-Sunnah*:

“And whoever hears something about the mistakes of the *Ṣaḥābah*; it is obligatory on him to do make inquiries in this matter. And do not attribute any error to any of them just because of seeing that in a book or hearing from any person. Rather, it is inevitable that he investigates it thoroughly, until it is proven correct on his part, at this stage it is obligatory to find clarifications for them.”<sup>54</sup>

In order to arrive at the correction picture of *Mushājarāt-i-Ṣaḥābah*, there is no room for oblivion to principles established by the predecessors and rightful understanding of the religion. In fact, 'Aqīl bin Abī Ṭālib, the brother of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, was a close courtier of Amīr Mu'āwiyah; and similarly, Ziyād bin Abī Sufyān, the brother of Amīr Mu'āwiyah, was appointed as the governor of Persia by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī. Just as Ḥaḍrat 'Alī fully trusted Ziyād, 'Aqīl enjoyed favors under Amīr Mu'āwiyah although, he used to admonish the later in the open court.<sup>55</sup>

### Some Important Reflections

Although the *Ṣaḥābah* are not *Ma'ṣūm* (Infallible), none can be considered *Fāsiq* (Transgressor), as the Qur'ān affirms that Allah pardoned their errors and

<sup>52</sup> Maulānā 'Abd al-Shakūr Farūqī, *Sīrah Khulafā al-Rāshidīn*, (Deoband: Darul Kitab, 1998), 193.

<sup>53</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 7/517.

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī, *Al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥarraqaḥ Fī Raddi 'Ālā Ahl al-Bid'ah wa al-Zindaqaḥ*, on the authority of 'Uthmānī, *Ḥaḍrat Amīr Mu'āwiyah*, 137.

<sup>55</sup> Najībābādī, *Tarīkh*, 2/46.

promised them glad tidings of *Jannah*, regardless of their reversion timing.<sup>56</sup> Through them, we received the Qur'ān and Sunnah. So, each one of them are worthy to be held Ṣaḥābī above criticism. Opening the door to critique shall challenge the foundation of the religion. For instance, criticizing Amīr Mu'āwiyah does not limit it to his personality only; rather, leads to questioning Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan's decision to abdicate the *Khilāfah* and even Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's peace agreement with Amīr Mu'āwiyah, despite the Qur'ān's command to fight rebels until bringing them to submission.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, 'Umar bin Khaṭṭāb's appointment of Amīr Mu'āwiyah to the governorship of an important province like Syria and Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr's nomination of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar to *Khilāfah* could also be questioned. Censuring one Ṣaḥābī can ripple to others, endangering faith. Rabī' bin Nāfi' rightly said: "*Amīr Mu'āwiyah is the veil of the Ṣaḥābah. Lifting this veil emboldens one to criticize the rest*".<sup>58</sup> The *Jumhūr 'Ulamā* held the opinion that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī was right in his *Ijtihād*; but Amīr Mu'āwiyah, though *Mukhtā* (Mistaken), was neither a traitor nor a malevolent. Ibn 'Abbās considered him a *Faqīh*.<sup>59</sup> A *Mujtahid* earns reward, even if mistaken. Ibn Taymiyah recapitulated his opinion:

"According to the Quran, Sunnah, and consensus of the *Salaf*, all of them (Ṣaḥābah) were unanimously believers. However, regarding the conflict between Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and his opponents (*Aṣḥāb al-Jamal wa Ṣiffīn*), the weight of arguments substantiates that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and his followers held the more rightful position."<sup>60</sup>

In addition, it is not illegal for a *Khalīfah* to appoint his son as the successor. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, on his deathbed, did not go against Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan's nomination as *Khalīfah* after him. The validity of Amīr Mu'āwiyah's *Khilāfah* and nomination of Yazīd is supported by many prominent Ṣaḥābah's acceptance, including Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās and others. While Yazīd's subsequent actions are reprehensible, Amīr Mu'āwiyah cannot be held accountable for his crimes committed afterwards during his rule. Thus, disparaging Amīr Mu'āwiyah has far-reaching implications, affecting the *'Adālah* of multiple Ṣaḥābah and the religious framework of early era. Ibn Khaldūn, in his *Muqaddimah*, summed up the debate under the sub-title, '*Reason for nominating Yazīd as the successor*', in the following words:

"Amīr Mu'āwiyah nominated Yazīd as successor to stave off conflict among Muslims, as Banū Umayyah would not have accepted an outsider's *Khilāfah*. This ensured unity, upheld since Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's martyrdom. Amīr Mu'āwiyah had reasonable conviction in Yazīd's qualifications before appointing him. It is logical to presume he acted in good faith, without precognition of Yazīd's future reproachable acts. To suggest otherwise would be unsubstantiated suspicion about a revered Ṣaḥābī of the Prophet (ﷺ)." <sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Al-Qur'ān*, 57:10.

<sup>57</sup> *Al-Qur'ān*, 49:09.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, (Chapter: Mu'āwiyah bin Abī Sufyān), 1/223, on the authority of Iqbal, *Ḥaḍrat Amīr Mu'awiyah*, 306.

<sup>59</sup> *Al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth Number: 3765.

<sup>60</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmū'ah Fatāwah*, 4/433, on the authority of Nadwī, *Al-Murtaḍā*, 252.

<sup>61</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 1/481.

Moreover, citing historical narrations alone is inadequate for assessing the Ṣaḥābah’s ‘*Adālah*’: an important cornerstone of Islamic scholarship. Relying exclusively on the historical literature can lead to conclusions that challenge principles established through the Qur’ān and Sunnah. There are certain historical narrations that, if accepted without strict examination, shall challenge our belief in the infallibility of the Prophets. For instance, Al-Tabarī (d. 310) on the authority of Al-Wāqidī (d. 823), recorded an absurd narration that, if deemed authentic, could be misused to question the Prophet’s (ﷺ) intentions regarding his *Nikāḥ* with Zaynab bint Jaḥash.<sup>62</sup> The Orientalists have colored this and similar narrations to level unfounded accusations against the Prophet (ﷺ).<sup>63</sup> However, all such narrations are scrutinized through the lens of the Qur’ān, authentic Ḥadīth corpus, historical context and the understanding of the *Aslāf* (Predecessors). Similarly, the Ṣaḥābah could not be censured, especially, Amīr Mu‘āwiyah, based on some controversial historical accounts; highlighting the importance of contextual understanding and critical evaluation. Blind trust on citations can lead to misguided conclusions, undermining the foundations of our faith. It demands a nuanced understanding of Islam passed through generations. Therefore, a meticulous approach should be carried while discussing the internal conflicts among the Ṣaḥābah.

## CONCLUSION

Ibn Sabā strategically positioned agents in different regions of the Muslim empire, instigating severe opposition against the Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān. Some opinions exhibit that he was the exact culprit who martyred the *Khalīfah*.<sup>64</sup> Following this heartbreaking episode, *Aṣḥāb-i-Jamal* strongly insisted Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, to bring the culprits to justice. Nonetheless, amidst the turmoil fueled by the *Sabā’īs* in different parts of the empire and the unknown identities of the assassins, Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī had no option other than to unwillingly defer the *Qīṣāṣ*. He inferred that consolidating his *Khilāfah* on firm grounds was indispensable before pursuing any legal sentence to the criminals. In Baṣrah, when both parties, engaged in prolonged discussions, were near the agreement; nonetheless, *Sabā’īs* undermined the peace dialogues by penetrating both armies under the cover of night and launching mutual attacks. Each side believed the opposing party had perpetrated betrayal, thus culminating in the battle of *Jamal*; leading to the Martyrdom of Ṭalḥah and Zubayr. Meanwhile, the *Sabā’ī* agents carried Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān’s bloodied shirt and his wife’s mutilated fingers, and

<sup>62</sup> ‘Allāmah Shibli Nu‘mānī, *Sīrah al-Nabī* (Azamgarh: Dār al-Muṣannifin Shibli Academy, 2019), 1/315.

<sup>63</sup> Sir William Muir, *The Life of Muhammed*. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1923), 290. Also see: Montgomery Watt, *Muḥammad: Prophet and Statesman*, (Oxford University Press, 1961), 233. Also, a contemporary American anti-Muslim author, Robert Spencer carried the similar view followed by a narration of Al-Tabarī. See: Robert Spencer, *The Truth about Muḥammad: Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion* (USA: Regnery Publishing, INC, 2006), 59-60. The bigoted accusations charged on Prophet Muḥammad in the said book have been refuted, and the rebuttal entitled, ‘*The Lies About Muḥammad*’, to R. Spencer’s book has been prepared by Moustafa Zayed, an Egyptian Scholar and member of the Scientific Board of Quran and Sunnah Research Cairo.

<sup>64</sup> Some scholars analyze that he concealed himself under the alias *Al-Maut al-Al-Aswad* or *Ibn al-Sawdā*. See: Rayḥān, *Tārīkh*, 2/145.

falsified the affairs to *Ahl-i-Shām*; leading them to mistakenly believe that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī too was involved in the crime.<sup>65</sup> Since Ḥaḍrat 'Alī had been appointed as *Khalīfah* in Madīnah, Amīr Mu'āwiyah was supposed to offer his allegiance. Instead, he too exercised his own *Ijtihād*, and also being Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān's kinsman; accordingly, pressed Ḥaḍrat 'Alī for *Qīṣāṣ*.

The study uncovered a different perspective that challenges the superficial labeling of Amīr Mu'āwiyah's group as rebel - seemingly depicted in the Prophetic Tradition of *Al-Fi'ah al-Bāghiyah*. Nevertheless, the evaluation of the entire text and the proper contextualization of the related traditions – including the *ḥadīth-i-Ḥasan*, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) specified both parties as Muslim groups – exemplified a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, it pointed out that the rioters were not confined to a single group rather, cunningly scattered across both groups: underlining a wider period of chaos that spread through the era. Although Amīr Mu'āwiyah slipped up in his *Ijtihād*, his intents were embedded in a fair call, aiming *Qīṣāṣ* for Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān's assassins rather than navigated by vicious intentions. However, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī held a more valid position in his *Ijtihād*; thus, will receive a double reward. Meanwhile, Amīr Mu'āwiyah, also deserves a reward rather than censure, as supported by the related *ḥadīth*. Similarly, this study highlighted the ambiguity encompassing the events, aggravated by factors such as *Sabā'ī* propaganda. This intricacy led to limited participation from Ṣaḥābah in these mutual conflicts, with hundreds deciding on to remain neutral.

Our modern era shows off incredible technological capabilities, yet we still scuffle with figuring out the nuances of many crucial events. It is therefore a matter-of-fact to realize the immense difficulty in unfolding the unambiguous context of such critical events that occurred centuries ago. Therefore, this study underscored the importance of a critical and balanced approach to historical narratives, recognizing the impending biases and limitations inherent in them. It also highlights the necessity for contemporary scholarship to unearth the complex dynamics that twisted the narratives and events of that era. This study contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of Amīr Mu'āwiyah's role in early Islamic history, advocating for a viewpoint that moves beyond binary judgments of rebellion and loyalty. It calls for a deeper deliberation on the factors that gave birth to conflicts within Muslim *Ummah* and the ways in which these events have been interpreted over the centuries. This understanding encourages a re-evaluation of the historical narratives and accentuates the value placed on sincere academic endeavor and the intricacies of interpretive disagreement. It also underlined that portraying Amīr Mu'āwiyah as a rebel would implicitly criticize the thousands of Ṣaḥābah who abstained from showing full support to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī by participating in *Jamal* and *Ṣiffīn* on his side. Such identification would sabotage the principle of *Adālah* bound to the entire group of Ṣaḥābah, a corner stone of the authenticity of Quran and Sunnah.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, *Minhāj*, 4/406, on the authority of Rayḥān, *Tārīkh*, 2/216.



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