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the Battles of
Jamal and Siffin**

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The Teleguided Battles of Jamal and Siffin

Neither in Mecca, birth place of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) of Islam, nor in Madinah, his adopted country, were there states or kingdoms. Born in 569, and appointed by God in 609 to preach Islam, Muhammad (ﷺ) of revered memory was to all appearance “forced” by circumstances to found a State. Persecuted by his co-citizens of Mecca, he came to Madinah as a “refugee”. The perspectives were far from bright. The pagan Meccans, frustrated in the plot to assassinate the Prophet (ﷺ) and finding him escaping them and reaching safe and sound to Madinah, would not leave him quiet even in exile; they sent ultimatum after ultimatum to inhabitants of Madinah either to kill him or expulse him. otherwise they would take necessary measures. (Cf *Sunan of Abu Da’ud*, 19/23, *Banu al-Nadir*; *Ki tab al-Muhabbar* of Ibn Habib, p. 271-4).

One who had been sent by God as “a fine model to imitate” (*Qur'an* 33/21), had to react. So he first paid attention to rehabilitate hundreds of Meccan Muslims, who came as himself to Madinah as refugees with generally nothing with them except their dress on their bodies, The problem was disposed of in no time, and once for all, through the well-known Fraternization, each Meccan family became full member of a well-to-do Madinan family (Cf *Ibn Hisham, Sirah*, p. 344-5, ed. Europe.)

Next step: He convened a meeting of the representatives of all the tribes inhabiting the region of Madinah: Meccan refugees, Madinan Muslims, and non-Muslim Arabs, Christians and Jews of the place. (According to *al-Bukhari* 96/16/18, they met in the house of Anas Ibn Malik's parents). He proposed to establish a central organism, a confederal City-State. Most of those present agreed, including the Jews. For various reasons even non-Muslims consented that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) should be the head of this State. The rights and obligations, or powers were defined and distributed among the centre and the confederal units, and all put to writing. (Cf my book *The First Written Constitution in the World*).

Encouraged by these happy developments, the Prophet (ﷺ) then began to make excursions in the tribal settlements around Madinah. and proposed to them a military alliance: if anybody

attacks you, we shall run to your help, and if anyone attacks us and if we ask you, you shall also come to our help; religious conflicts excluded. The text of several of these pacts has come down to us (Cf *Ibn Sa'd*, I /ii, p. 24, 26, 27 etc) and concern tribes living in the North, South-West and West of Madinah.

When this *mandala* — as the old Hindu political philosophers have suggested as ideal, that is to say create between oneself and the enemy a chain of friendly peoples — become a reality, the time came to avenge and punish Meccan pagans, who had murdered many Muslims, men and even women, just for having embraced Islam, and also done them material and economic damage. But the Prophet (ﷺ) preferred a peaceful method, an economic pressure: caravans of the Quraysh, going to the North (Egypt, Syria and Iraq) should no more pass through the Islamic zone of Madinah and the territory of allies. The Meccans would not agree, and wanted to force through. This resulted in the battles of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq (Cf my book *Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad*). When the Meccans lost all hope, the Prophet (ﷺ) launched a peaceful counter-offensive. There was famine in Mecca region, and the Prophet (ﷺ) suppressed the ban on export of victuals from Muslim Najd to Mecca, and sent the handsome amount of 500 gold coins as a contribution to help the poor in Mecca. Cut off from the northern countries, the merchandises of Meccan traders

were rotting in their depot. The Prophet (ﷺ) offered to purchase those of Abu Sufyan, virtual king of Mecca, against the date fruits of Madinah (Cf for all these incidents Sarakhsi's *al-Mabsut* X, 91-92 and *Sharah al Siyar al -Kabir*, 1,70; Abu 'Ubayd, *Kitab al-Amwal*, para 631). Then he went to Mecca (Hudaybiyah) during the months of the Truce of God, with the determination to conclude a treaty of peace. There is reason to believe that the Prophet (ﷺ) had even allowed Abu Sufyan secretly to traverse Islamic territory and go to Syria for trade, since he was not in Mecca during the peace negotiations at Hudaybiyah. In spite of great Jewish help in the battle of Khandaq, the Meccans accepted in Hudaybiyah to remain neutral in case of Muslim war with third parties (which made possible the invasion and liquidation of Khaybar, the Jewish stronghold).

Before completing the story of Mecca, a few words to explain why Jews became enemies of the Prophet (ﷺ). In spite of all good will and gestures of friendliness, the Jewish tribe of Banu al-Nadir plotted to assassinate the prophet (ﷺ); they invited him by saying: come along with three persons and discuss with our rabbis, and if they are convinced, we all shall embrace Islam. An Arab wife of a Jew disclosed it to the Prophet (ﷺ) in time, and the Nadirites were expelled from Madinah (Cf *Musannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzaq, No. 7933; Samhudi, p. 298). It were they who, from

Khaybar, organized the Meccan invasion of Khandaq. With the capture of Khaybar, the military and political danger was liquidated but not the hate of the Jews, which continued from generation to generation.

The truce of Hudaibiyyah lasted for two years. Then the Meccans violated it, and the Prophet (ﷺ) showed his military genius by occupying Mecca without bloodshed. The general amnesty proclaimed there by the Prophet (ﷺ) was so unexpected and at such a right movement that the pagans of Mecca were very much touched, and over right practically all of them embraced Islam most sincerely. This demolished the prejudices of the idolaters all over Arabia, and they rallied to Islam.

Begun with only a part of the small town of Madinah, in only ten years the Islamic State extended to the confines of Arabia and southern parts of Palestine and Iraq, and when the Prophet (ﷺ) breathed his last, he was governing over 3 million square kilometers of territory, and some half a million persons had then embraced Islam. It is to recall that in the midst of political preoccupation, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) never forgot his spiritual mission, he wrote letters to different rulers inviting them to embrace his religion. One of these emissaries was put to death in

the Byzantine territory, and when the emperor refused to amend, the war began with Byzantium.

At the sad demise of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), Muslims in the “capital” of Madinah were unanimous to preserve the State so painfully established, but not so as to the individual who should succeed as caliph. There were three tendencies: (I) The Ansar of Madinah wanted that the caliph should be from the Khazraj group, but therein they were opposed by the Aws group. (II) The family of the Prophet (ﷺ), the Banu Hashim inclined to a dynastic rule, so that a near relative of the Prophet (ﷺ) was to be elected. (III) The generality of the Muslims who preferred the election of the most competent person. In the elegy of Hassan ibn Thabit, at the death of the Prophet, there is clear reference to foreign intrigues also:

The Christians and Jews of Yathrib (Madinah) have rejoiced when was laid in the grave the Buried One.

(Ansab of al-Baladhuri, I, 593)

And also in the elegy composed by Abu'l-Haytham Ibn al-Taiyihan:

The Christians are speaking ill, the hypocrites too,

They are all parts of the same rope; the Jews also.

All these three groups of men

Are marching against us with lances and transgression.

(*Kitab ar Riddah* of al-Waqidi, para 3).

An obiter dictum of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), **الائمة من قريش** (Rulers are to be from among the Quraysh) was recalled at the right moment by an Ansarite, and at once recognized by others, and the Ansarites withdrew gracefully their candidature, and all present imposed on the unwilling Abu Bakr the burden of the caliphate. (Cf *the same book of al-Waqidi*). But nevertheless he left his mark: for three days continuously his heralds cried in the streets of Madinah “Abu Bakr discharges you of the oath of allegiance, and demands of you to elect someone else (*Ansab of al-Baladhuri*, I, 587). Who would deserve caliphate more than such a selfless person? There is a well-known fact, accepted both by the Sunnites and Shi'ites, but nobody seems to have so far meditated on its implications. It is reported that on Abu Bakr's election to caliphate lady Fatimah, accompanied by her grand uncle 'Abbas went to see Abu Bakr, and asked him not only to distribute the property left by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) among his heirs, but also to give the region of Fadak exclusively to her, etc. Can she go

without the consent and even direction of her husband ‘Ali? Why did she go to him, if not because she and her husband and her grand uncle, all recognized in him a lawful incumbent of the caliphate? For if that was not so she had to tell Abu Bakr to quit the office in favour of her husband the so-called heir-presumptive of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

Abu Bakr’s short tenure of office was filled with tremendously difficult problems, such as the war of apostates, codification of the Holy Qur'an in book form, and defensive wars with the Byzantium and the Sassanids. On his death bed he nominated a successor and recommended his name to the public in the following manner:

He asked ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan to serve as secretary, and dictated to him his testament, saying : “I, Abu Bakr, in the last moments of his this-worldly life and first moments of his that worldly life, when even a miscreant begins to believe, an agnostic impious gets the certitude, and the doubting and refusing person begins to confirm, nominate for you after me as successor....” At that movement he fainted with fatigue and exertion; fearing the worse, ‘Uthman completed the phrase on his own initiative. But Abu Bakr soon recovered, and asked where he was in the testament. ‘Uthman read the last phrase: “I nominate for you after me as successor “Umar ibn al-Khattab”. Abu Bakr said: But I had not mentioned any name; you could have written your own name,

and you merit it; anyhow God bless you for your piety and well-wishing honesty. Then he completed the dictation (see for full text, *Sunnan of al Bayhaqi*. VIII, 149, *Ansab of al-Baladhuri*, II, 486, MS of Istanbul, my own *al-Watha'iq as-Siyasiyah*. No. 302/D). Then he asked the “police commissioner” to take it out, assemble the public and tell them: Here is the testament of your caliph, he asks you to pay homage to his successor whose name is mentioned in this sealed envelop. The confidence in Abu Bakr was so great, that they unhesitatingly accepted it.

After the death of Abu Bakr, the letter of testament was opened and the oath of allegiance for ‘Umar was renewed unanimously. A dozen of years later, he was assassinated under a misunderstanding, and before breathing his last, he nominated a commission to select some one from among themselves as caliph. They were the ‘*Ashrah Mubashsharah*, (ten persons about whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had given the good tiding that they would go to paradise). Two of them had died and ‘Umar was dying. Of the remaining seven, the over-scrupulous ‘Umar excluded one who was his near relative. Since the six could create a tie when voting he added a seventh member with restricted powers, to vote only when there was a tie, and even in that case to vote for the side in which ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn ‘Awf should be found. This exceptional confidence in ‘Abd al-Rahman was probably for the

fact that when wounded, he was brought to his house, and then he desired to see ‘Abd al-Rahman. “Fearing” that he was lining to be nominated: as successor, as soon as he entered and saluted, said: “No, no, do not nominate me, I do not want caliphate”.

When ‘Umar died, the commission met, and ‘Abd al-Rahman suggested: Those who are not candidates, let them declare. With this elimination, there remained only ‘Uthman and ‘Ali. Thereupon, ‘Abd al-Rahman suggested that they should agree to some one to select the caliph. Both agreed to the arbitration of ‘Abd al-Rahman. Instead of making his personal choice, he consulted the public. In the words of Ibn Kathir (*Bidayah*, VII, 146) “he began consulting people individually and collectively, secretly and openly, he went even in houses and asked the opinion of women, he asked the opinion of even students in schools, even the travellers in transit in Madinah, not sparing even the Bedouins in the town. Two persons alone, viz ‘Ammar and Miqdah were for ‘Ali, all others for ‘Uthman”. After three days and nights of this incessant consultations, he convoked the general assembly to announce his “award”. He first asked ‘Ali and ‘Uthman individually, one after the other: If I do not select you, do you promise to obey the other? They said: Yes. Then he asked them publicly: If I select you, do you promise to follow the Qur’an, the Hadith and the precedents of your predecessors, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar? ‘Uthman said: yes; ‘Ali said: Qur’an and Sunnah, yes, but

the precedents of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, not necessarily; I can deduce myself the law. Thereupon ‘Abd al-Rahman raised his head towards the sky, and said: O God, Thou knowest that I have no interest except the well-being of the community and the Islam; and then he paid homage to ‘Uthman. Others followed suit.

‘Uthman’s was a period of extra-ordinary prosperity for Islam and Muslims. In the year 27 H., his armies entered on the one hand in Spain and on the other to Transoxiana (Cf **Tabari and Baladhuri**). He was so pious that he would not accept the salary of the caliphate, thinking that he was rich enough and had no need of public money. His leniency was manifest all around, his generosity also. In the events of the years 30-35 H., Tabari relates that during the caliphate of ‘Uthman a certain Yemenite Jew, named ‘Abd Allah Ibn Saba, alias Ibn as-Sauda’ declared his conversion to Islam, ostentatious in piety, first to be in the mosque for morning prayer, last to leave the mosque after ‘Isha’ prayer, always indulged in supererogatory prayers, fasting, *tasbih*, etc. Then he began travelling in the vast Islamic empire to publicize his piety, Hijaz, Basrah, Kufah, Syria, Egypt. Everywhere he searched people who like him had declared Islam for opportunism yet in reality desiring to undermine it. When he found such persons, he confided to them his plan, simple and efficacious, and asked them to wait until they received his signal. There was a model letter, going from everywhere to trusted agents everywhere, purporting:

Dear brother, you have a happy lot. Islam is alive in your region, governor is honest, administration is just, whereas in my region Islam is dead, nobody practices it, the governor is a drunkard and runs after girls, the administration is corrupt and no prospect of betterment. Thus repeated letters came from Madinah in every town, and were read by the agents in the mosques after prayers, and also letters came from everywhere to Madinah. At first people did not heed, but when the “situation” was confirmed by repeated and varied “testimonies”, public began to get angry. Some of them brought the news to the caliph. As usual, he acted promptly, and consulted people what to do. It was decided to send from Madinah people of confidence and impartiality to tour and inquire in the regions said to have deviated from the path of Islam. Apparently they did not go in group but each to a definite region. According to Tabari, all the commissioners returned in due course to Madinah and reported that the accusations on the part of unknown persons had absolutely no basis, and that everything was good and normal,¹ except that one of the commissioners, ‘Ammar ibn Yasir was belated and he remained in Egypt. Soon the governor of Egypt alerted the caliph: “Some persons in Egypt have lured ‘Ammar and have grouped themselves around him. Among them ‘Abd Allah Ibn al-Sauda’.....” the caliph commanded leniency. Tabari

¹ Unfortunatly nothing was done in the provinces where many people continued to believe in ani- ‘Uthrnian stories.

continues: “In the month of *Shanwal* 35 H. Ibn Saba (*alias* Ibn as-Sauda’) left Egypt for Madinah accompanied by six hundred of his friends. Not to arouse suspicion, they announced that they Were going to Mecca for pilgrimage. At the same moment others Sabaite groups also left Basrah and Kufah for Madinah. Certainly not all them were of Jewish origin, and there were also some good Intentioned Muslims lacking intelligence. The Sabaite propaganda had won them to the basic demand to depose the caliph ‘Uthman, root of all evil, but there was no agreement among them as to who should be installed instead; the Egyptians wanted ‘Ali, the Basrans desired Talhah and the kufans al-Zubayr Ibn al-‘Awwam. Ground was carefully prepared to win Muslim masses. In fact letters had gone from Madinah for instance to Egypt, signed by no less a personality than ‘Ali himself, asking Egyptians to come to Madinah to help him chase out ‘Uthman from the caliphate (Cf **Tabari**). Other letters signed by lady ‘Aishah inviting people of provinces to rebell against ‘Uthman (Cf **Ibn Sa’d**, III/i, p. 574) yet others signed by Talhah and Zubayr (Cf **Ibn Kathir** III, 175). We shall revert to the point presently.

When Mu’awiyah, governor of Syria-Palestine heard the march of suspicious people from different provinces to Madinah, he wrote to the caliph, please permit me to send a contingent of trusted soldiers from Syria to the capital. The caliph declined the offer.

When the rebels of Egypt, Basrah and Kufah reached Madinah they went first to their “beloved” leaders, ‘Ali, Talhah, Zubayr and the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), Who all inquired Why they had become so popular with these groups, they naturally refused the offer of the caliphate and chased them out of their houses. Then the Egyptians went directly to the caliph and complained about the behaviour of their governor, ‘Uthman asked; Whom do you want in his place? They said: Abu Bakr’s son, Muhammad! — It is to be recalled that ha was known in Madinah as *fasiq*, pervert; and his sister lady ‘Aishah detested him openly. — ‘Uthman unhesitatingly and at once accepted the demand, wrote the letter of investiture, gave it to Muhammad and asked him to proceed to Egypt. The rebels did not at all expect that they would get their demand fulfilled so easily, they were nonplussed and had no other possibility except to return to Egypt, in the company of Muhammad, governor-designate. Then began notorious episode of ‘Uthman’s secretly sending word to the governor in place, to kill Muhammad when he comes to Egypt. Let the readers judge from the facts mentioned by Tabari, Ibn Hajar, *Zawa’id Musnad al-Bazaar*, MS of Pir Jhandoo/ Pakistan; the same, *al-Matalib al-Aliyah*, ed. Kuwait, para 4438: Ibn al-‘Arabi, *al-‘Awasim min al-Qawasim*, p. 96 among others:

The Egyptian contingent returned satisfied, and while they were along with Muhammad enroute, a man on fast dromedary crossed them and went towards Egypt, soon he returned towards Madinah and crossed them, then again he returned to go to Egypt, and each time he crossed them and passed near by them, and Muhammad did not take notice of him. Once one crossing them, he insulted them, cursed them and abused them. They asked: Who are you and what do you want? He proudly said: I am the postman of the caliph and am carrying a letter to the governor of Egypt, and showed it to them. Intrigued thereby, Muhammad opened the letter, and found that the caliph had ordered the Governor in place in Egypt to put to death Muhammad when he comes there, and other punishments to his companions. — Is there any need to say that letter was also forged and sent by Ibn Saba? — Naturally Muhammad was enraged, he returned to Madinah and created scandal, and would not believe ‘Uthman when he assured on oath that he had not written that.

The Egyptian rebels then went to ‘Ali and said: “Stand up and come with us to kill the caliph who has ordered without any reason to put us to death. ‘Ali naturally refused. The Egyptians said: How can you now refuse, since it was you who wrote to us to come to Madinah? He said: By God, I never wrote any thing to you! They looked in astonishment on each other”. In another narration, ‘Ali said: “You have returned from enroute to Egypt on account of the

pretended letter of ‘Uthman; but the contingents of Basrah and Kufah, which had also returned to their countries, have returned at the same moment as you to Madinah; how did they know what had happened to you? Surely the plot has been hatched in Madinah”. (Cf **Tabari**).

The season of the Haj approaching, the caliph ‘Uthman gave leave to the soldiers of Madinah garrison to go to Mecca, and the capital was depleted of the forces of order. The rebels besieged the house of ‘Uthman and would not allow him to lead the prayers in the Mosque. A certain Yemenite, al-Ghafiqi, the second of Ibn Saba, apparently a Jew like him — since after killing ‘Uthman, he gave a kick to the Qur’an that ‘Uthman was reading, and turned it down and it fell on the knees of the caliph, as is reported by Tabari — began leading the prayers. They burned the gate of caliph’s house but could not penetrate it. So they along with Muhammad went to the other street and climbed the back-wall, and murdered the caliph who was reciting the Qur’an and injured his wife, cutting her fingers, and looting all that was in the house. First Muhammad wanted to assault, by catching hold the beard of the caliph, but when the aged ‘Uthman mildly remarked: “Were your father (Abu Bakr al-Siddiq) alive and present here...” he felt ashamed and returned. Others finished it and the irony of the fate they prevented. ‘Uthman to be buried in the Muslim grave yard of al-Baqi’, affirming that ‘Uthman was a Jew! In fact he was buried

in a piece of land belonging to a Jew, and later when Mu'awiyah became caliph, he purchased that ground, along with the grave of the innocent martyr 'Uthman, and included it in the space of the grave-yard of al-Baqi'.

It was easy to win the "War" and kill the non-resisting, non-violent caliph, but how to win the peace? They wanted to legalize their crime in order to escape the justice. They first went to 'Ali, and offered him the caliphate. He chased them out. They went to Talhah, then to Zubayr, but they would not receive them much less their caliphate. Then they found the solution; they announced in the streets of Madinah: People, compel 'Ali to accept the caliphate, and if you do not do that, we shall begin massacring you. That had the desired effect. People went to 'Ali, weeping and crying, and adjuring to save them from the unprincipled rebels. 'Ali had pity, but said: Caliphate is a public affair, I can accept it neither from you nor from them, people are to be consulted, and of course we require a caliph. So tomorrow, after morning prayer, I shall ask the people. He mounted the minbar, lamented on the innocent murder and asked people to select someone to become caliph. May be the first to cry were the agents of Ibn Saba: You alone deserve it, the best of Muslims, may be sincere Muslims said that. There were no other names advanced for the post, and people began taking oath of allegiance. The rebels noticed that some of the most eminent persons kept aloof and neutral, like Zayd ibn Thabit, Ibn 'Umar,

Talhah, Zubayr, Usamah, Suhayb etc. They feared most Talhah and Zubayr, so they brought them to the Mosque under their bayonets, and threatened to kill them if they refused to pay homage to 'Ali, they found others as inoffensive and disinterested, and thought they would take oath of allegiance later. So Talhah and Zubayr paid homage under duress and compulsion.

People expected that 'Ali would begin by arresting the assassins of 'Uthman. Days and week passed, ([Madinah was under the control of the rebels](#)) and 'Ali was unable to do anything without their consent.

Now another letter went from Madinah all over the Muslim empire: 'Ali has killed 'Uthman to become caliph, and that is why the criminals are not harassed. Slowly people began to believe that. More than anybody else the widow of the caliph 'Uthman and his children were interested in the march of the machinery of the justice. Despiting of that, she sent the blood-stained dress of 'Uthman, and her own fingers cut by the rebels during the assault, to Mu'awiya, governor of Syria and a near relative of 'Uthman, charging him to avenge the murder. I personally suppose that Sabaite letters came from Syria to 'Ali to poison him against Mu'awiyah, saying for instance that he was against 'Ali and not only planning for his own caliphate, but was also a deviationist and

a bad Muslim. Similar letters from different quarters must not fail to have the adverse effect when continued on a long-planned basis.

Anyhow, against the counsel of his best friends, ‘Ali committed a political mistake: He not only informed the governors, including Mu’awiyah of the death of ‘Uthman and his own election to caliphate, and demanded them to pay homage to the new caliph and take oath of allegiance from the public in their respective provinces, but also telling Mu’awiyah that he is removed from the governorship and that he should hand over the charge to a person sent by him (‘Ali) from Madinah.

Certainly the Sabaites tried to poison Mu’awiyah against ‘Ali, but he was not so easy to be swept away by them. In fact Mu’awiyah replied politely, and said that he would pay homage when the murderers of ‘Uthman would be arrested and punished. We shall return to the subject again.

Letters (of Sabaites) went to ‘Aishah, Hafsa and other wives of the Prophet to Mecca, telling them that ‘Ali is refusing to punish the criminals, and that as Mothers of the Faithful, it was their duty and privilege to demand the head of the murderer of their child ‘Uthman. Letters from Basrah seem to have come to them offering their help if the wives of the prophet would go to Basrah.

Soon Talhah and Zubayr left Madinah, and via Mecca wanted to go to Basrah. According to our historians, ‘Ali was alarmed, and feared that if they captured the treasury of Basrah and if the army of the military garrison rallied to them, they would become a danger to the regime. So he also hastened to Iraq. Hafsa was dissuaded by her brother Ibn ‘Umar to take active part in politics; Aishah went along with her near relatives to Iraq. Her men and the army of ‘Ali came face to face near Basrah, for the battle of Jamal.

There was misunderstanding created by the War of correspondence of the Sabaïtes. Some disinterested persons from among the Muslims served as intermediaries for negotiating peace, and in fact soon all was clarified, neither ‘Ali was against punishing the murderers of ‘Uthman, nor ‘Aishah, Talhah or Zubayr had any personal ambitions. Peace was concluded, and people in both the camps slept for the first time in tranquility. The game was lost for Ibn Saba who was there, but he did not get disheartened: Very early in the morning, he and a group of his men entered in the camp of ‘Aishah, and from there launched a night attack on the camp of ‘Ali, who naturally thought that ‘Aishah had treacherously violated the peace. Soon his men controlled the situation and now ‘Aishah thought ‘Ali had violated the pact. She bravely faced the situation, and remained seated on her camel till the last, whence the name of Battle of the Camel (*Jamal*) to this episode of the teleguided War. ‘Aishah was surrounded and

“captured” and her men fled. Naturally the situation was clarified, but too late. ‘Aishah offered to ‘Ali that hence forward she would help ‘Ali against his “rival” Mu’awiyah. ‘Ali thanked, and said he had no need of her, and persuaded her to return home to Madinah, and arranged for her transport with all the honour due to her.

Historians have reported a little incident which may be placed at this moment, before or soon after the battle of Jamal. One day some good Muslims reproached ‘Ali that the assassins of ‘Uthman were free in his army, and he is taking no action against them. ‘Ali turned to his men, and said: Who are the murderers of ‘Uthman? Twelve thousand persons rose up and each one of them shouted: I am that! It must be admitted that in spite of all his good will, ‘Ali was not able to have a real freedom required of a ruler.

The victory of the battle of Jamal enhanced the prestige of ‘Ali, but big provinces, like Syria etc. still escaped his control. The correspondence with Mu’awiyah continued. It has been preserved in the *Nahj al-Balaghah* of Sharif Radi; a Shi’ite production but which has prestige among Sunnis also. Before talking of it, a little digression:

A letter of ‘Aishah was “published” in which she incited people to rebel against ‘Uthman. After the latter’s murder, when she learnt what was attributed to her, she said: “No, by the One in

Whom believers believe and miscreants disbelieve, I never put the black on the white to these people upto the time I have taken seat on this place! (**Ibn Sa'd, Ill/i, p. 57**) In the version of Tabari: If you receive a whip, (unjustly). I cannot support; can I support the unjust sword with which 'Uthman (was killed)? You accused him but when you discovered him as pure as refined sugar, and as stainless as a washed piece of cloth, you killed him! Masruq says: I said: Mother, it is your act, you wrote to the people to rise against him! 'Aishah said: I swear by the One in Whom the believers believe and the miscreants disbelieve. I never wrote to them anything black on the white! al-A'mash adds, so people knew that something was falsely written under her name.

Mu'awiyah never aspired caliphate in the beginning, may be he felt himself too humble for that in the preserce of the "sabiqn awwalin", but gradually he was pushed to that, and he says: "Ever since one day the Holy Prophet told me: O Mu'awiyah, if you get Power, be indulgent, I did cherish the hope one day to get it." We discern that in the letters exchanged between him and 'Ali and preserved in the *Nahj al-Bafaghah*, In the beginning he demanded nothing but the punishment of the murder of 'Uthman, then gradually asks what right has 'Ali to caliphate, 'Ali says: (1) I have embraced Islam much before you and rendered services to the Prophot(ﷺ) and to Islam much more than you. (2) I belong to

the family of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the caliphate must be in the family in which God has put the prophethood. (3) I have been elected by those very people who elected Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman by the inhabitants of Madinah, and the provincials have nothing but to abide by the decision of the capital. — It is singular and significant that ‘Ali never uses the argument which would have been binding on Mu’awiyah and on any Muslim, namely the Prophet (ﷺ) has nominated me as his heir presumptive, ([at Ghadir Khum](#)). ‘Ali was certainly capable to making the sacrifice during the caliphate of the first three caliphs, thinking that caliphate is a worldly thing, without least importance. But why to neglect this argument at the time when he was not only claiming the caliphate but even defending his “right” but the use of arms, and at the time when arguments were demanded from him to justify his fight to caliphate?

When negotiations failed to reconcile ‘Ali and Mu’awiyah, and not only Syria but also several other regions willingly agreed to pay homage of caliphate to Mu’awiyah; War was inevitable, hence the battle of Siffin. I need not enter into details here, which are well-known to all readers of history. I would Only refer to a fact closely connected with the Heading of this article, the Jewish back-ground.

When the War was stopped by raising the copies of the Our'an, and the matter was to be referred to the arbitration of God, of the Holy Our'an, it was al-Ash'ath ibn Qays al-Kindi a person of Jewish origin who succeeded in persuading and even forcing 'Ali to agree to it as well as to the nomination of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari as his nominee (Cf **Tabari. I. 3332-5**), although there was tension between the two: Before the battle, 'Ali had sent his son al-Hassan to recruit volunteers in Basrah, and Abu Musa as governor hindere it, saying that civil War is a grave sin and the Prophet (ﷺ) has ordered that Muslims must remain neutral if they can. Thereupon, in anger, 'Ali had dismissed him from the post. And soon after 'Ali was asked by his own friends to nominate him as his representative in the council of arbitration.

After years of research, and without least preconceived notions, I have reached to the conclusion that the murder of 'Uthman and wars of the succession were a teleguided affair, and that 'Ali, Mu'awiyah, 'Aishah etc. all fought in good faith, and had absolutely no personal ambitions. There are many misunderstandings regarding the subsequent events of the Tahkim (arbitration), but that will be outside the purview of the theme of the article. So I present these conclusions to the scrutiny of the scholars, and I am open to correction.



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