

From the Attributes of the Khawārij

Original Title: البشائر لأهل الحرمين والعساكر

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¹ This is an excerpt from the pamphlet “al-Bashāʿir li Ahl al-Ḥaramayn wa al-ʿAsākir” (pp. 26-35) by Sulṭān al-ʿĪd.

Contempt and Disrespect for the Scholars

From the attributes of the Khawārij is their contempt and audacity when dealing with the scholars. Rather, they even behaved this way with the messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه) just as that man² said to him, “Muhammad, be fair!” and “Messenger of Allah, fear Allah!”

They will behave arrogantly and disrespectful with anyone who opposes them even the people of virtue and knowledge and even with the companions of Allah’s messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Imam Ahmad narrated in his “Musnad” (4/382) that Sa`īd Ibn Jumhān said, “We were with ‘Abdullah Ibn Abī Awfā while fighting against the Khawārij. Ibn Abī Awfā used to have a young man (that served him, helped him, etc.) but he joined the Khawārij. So we called to him (the young man), ‘Oh Fayrūz, this is ‘Abdullah Ibn Abī Awfā!’ He replied, ‘A great man if he only made *Hijrah* (migrated and joined the Khawārij)!’ Ibn Abī Awfā

² [Translator’s Note] The author, Sulṭān al-‘Id, is referring to the man known as Dhū al-Khuwayṣarah who disagreed with how the prophet was distributing money and said, “Messenger of Allah, be fair for you surely have not been fair!” The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied:

وَيْلَكَ وَمَنْ يَعْدِلُ إِذَا لَمْ أَعْدِلْ قَدْ خَبِتَ وَخَسِرْتَ إِنْ لَمْ أَكُنْ أَعْدِلُ

Beware. And who would be fair if I was not? You would be ruined if I were not just.

‘Umar said, “Messenger of Allah, allow me to strike his neck.” He replied:

دَعُهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ أَصْحَابًا يَحْقِرُ أَحَدَكُمْ صَلَاتَهُ مَعَ صَلَاتِهِمْ وَصِيَامَهُ مَعَ صِيَامِهِمْ يَقْرَأُونَ الْقُرْآنَ لَا يُجَاوِزُ
تَرَافِيهِمْ يَمْرُقُونَ مِنَ الدِّينِ كَمَا يَمْرُقُ السَّهْمُ مِنَ الرَّمِيَّةِ

Leave him. He will certainly have companions (from his progeny) whom one of you would belittle his own prayer when compared to their prayer and his fasting compared to their fasting. They will recite the Quran but it will not go beyond their throats. They will pass through the religion as an arrow passes through a target.

Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3610) and Muslim (no. 1064).

asked, 'What is this enemy of Allah saying?' He was told what he said. So he ('Abdullah) said, 'A Hijrah after the Hijrah I made with the messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)? I heard Allah's messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saying:

طُوبَى لِمَنْ قَتَلَهُمْ وَقَتَلُوهُ

Tūbá (a tree in Paradise, success) is for he who kills them or they kill him.³

So do not be amazed with their arrogance and audacity nowadays when they deal with our own scholars. They (the Khawārij) will never be pleased with anyone until they renounce allegiance and obedience to a legitimate leader and join their sect, even if the person accompanied the messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)!

Outward Righteousness and Inward Corruption and Beliefs

From their attributes is their outward portrayal of righteousness and piety while concealing corruptive beliefs inside. [The prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:]

يُحَقِّرُ أَحَدُكُمْ صَلَاتَهُ مَعَ صَلَاتِهِمْ وَصِيَامَهُ مَعَ صِيَامِهِمْ، يَقْرَأُونَ الْقُرْآنَ لَا يُجَاوِزُ تَرَاقِيهِمْ يَمْرُقُونَ مِنَ الدِّينِ كَمَا يَمْرُقُ السَّهْمُ مِنَ الرَّمِيَّةِ

One of you would belittle his own prayer when compared to their prayer and his fasting compared to their fasting. They will recite the Quran but it will not go

³ This Ḥadīth is *Ḥasan*. It is recorded by Ahmad (no. 18922). al-Haythamī also mentioned it in "Majma' al-Zawā'id (6/232) and he said, "al-Ṭabarānī and Ahmad both recorded it and the narrators in Ahmad's version are all trustworthy."

beyond their throats. They will pass through the religion as an arrow passes through a target.⁴

So do not be deceived by their alleged asceticism and piety or by their strictness in matters, their claim that they are supporting the religion, or their allegation that they propagate Islam and make Jihad. A person is truly defined by his conformity to the Sunnah and his adherence to the Salafi methodology. This is why Allah's messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said about the Khawārij, despite their intense worship and crying:

هُمُ شَرُّ الْخَلْقِ وَالْخَلِيقَةِ

They are the worst of people, the worst of all creatures.⁵

Also in "Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim:"

أَنَّهُمْ مِنْ أَبْغَضِ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ إِلَيْهِ

They are Allah's creation that He is most angry with.⁶

Manifesting Something of Truth to Justify Falsehood

And from their attributes is that they outwardly speak some aspects of truth but only to justify false and illegitimate results. They profess reconciliation and call for the

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3610) and Muslim (no. 1063).

⁵ Recorded by Muslim (1067) from the Ḥadīth of Abū Dharr (رضي الله عنه).

⁶ Recorded by Muslim (1066) from the Ḥadīth of 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Abī Rāfi' (رضي الله عنه).

implementation of Sharia – even though it is already being implemented – in order to justify taking up arms and overthrowing the government.

In “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,” ‘Ubaydullah Ibn Abī Rāfi’, a former slave freed by the messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), said that when he was with ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, the Ḥarūriyyah – meaning the Khawārij – revolted saying, “Judgment is only for Allah!” ‘Alī (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said, “A statement of truth intended therewith falsehood!”

He (‘Alī) was certainly correct. True statements are very often used to support falsehood. So do not be misled by someone claiming to speak the truth yet his personal desires, intentions, and support are for other than the people of Sunnah, the Salafis.

The Khawārij ended up publicly declaring ‘Alī (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) to be a disbeliever and those with him after this incident of their displeasure with ‘Alī’s judgment. So they considered the companions of Allah’s messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), their blood and their wealth, lawful for them to take. In doing so, they regarded themselves as preventing evil and defending the religion and they tried to fool people with that.

Ignorance of the Quran and Sunnah

From the attributes of the Khawārij are their ignorance of the Book and the Sunnah and their wicked interpretations of their meanings just as the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

يَقْرَءُونَ الْقُرْآنَ يَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّهُ لَهُمْ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ

They read the Quran thinking it is in support of them while it is actually against them.⁷

The reason for this ignorance of theirs is that they abandon and avoid the genuine scholars. They conceitedly consider themselves higher than the scholars and discourage others from attending their lectures. All this because they think they are the ones responsible for scrutinizing and monitoring the scholars. This is what ignorance does to a person.

Considering the Blood of Muslims and Mu'āhids Lawful to Take

From the characteristics of the Khawārij is that they kill Muslims and Mu'āhids (those at peace with or guaranteed peace by Muslims). They consider it permissible to violate their honor, steal their wealth, and even harm their children!

In "Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim," there is a Ḥadīth in which 'Alī encouraged the Muslims to fight against the Khawārij when the latter renounced allegiance and began spreading corruption throughout the land. He ('Alī) said, after mentioning the Ḥadīth about the Khawārij's leaving of Islam:

Oh people, you are leaving these people among your children and property. By Allah, I believe that these (the Khawārij) are the people (that the prophet warned

⁷ Recorded by Muslim (1066) from the Ḥadīth of Zayd Ibn Wahb al-Juhanī (رضي الله عنه).

of) for they have shed sacred blood and have raided and attacked even the livestock belonging to Muslims. So go forth in the name of Allah (and fight them)⁸

And in the “Musnad” of Imam Ahmad (1/86), there is a narration in which `Āishah (رضي الله عنها) asked ‘Abdullah Ibn Shaddād, “So did ‘Alī fight and defeat them?” He replied, “By Allah, he did not send (an army) against them until they started robbing travelers, spilling blood, and declaring the people (non-Muslims) under the protection of Muslims lawful to kill.”⁹

As for the killing of those (non-Muslims) at peace with Muslims, they understand that the one who guarantees them peace and safety is the Muslim leader, yet they considered even him (‘Alī at that time) a disbeliever!

‘Alī used to forbid them from showing any hostility towards the nonbelievers that were living in Muslim lands under a treaty of peace.

In the Ḥadīth mentioned above, ‘Alī sent individuals to the Khawārij before fighting them saying, “Let us agree that you will stop spilling forbidden blood, stop blocking roads (to rob travelers), and stop oppressing nonbelievers (living among us). If you all agree to this, we will cease this war between us, and Allah does not like treacherous people.”

Young with Reckless, Deficient Intellects

⁸ Same as the preceding footnote: Recorded by Muslim (1066) from the Ḥadīth of Zayd Ibn Wahb al-Juhanī (رضي الله عنه).

⁹ Recorded by Ahmad (no. 658) from the Ḥadīth of ‘Abdullah Ibn Shaddād. See “Majma’ al-Zawāid” (6/235-237).

Another attribute of the Khawārij is that they are as the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) described them:

حُدْنَاءُ الْأَسْنَانِ، سُفَهَاءُ الْأَحْلَامِ

Young in age, having reckless and deficient intellects.¹⁰

And from the virtues bestowed by Allah is that there is never anyone with them from the people of knowledge, dignity, or the Sunnah. As for anyone who may try to defend them, his is one of them and there is no dignity or respect for such a person. The great scholar, (Muqbil Ibn Hādī) al-Wādī'ī cited a narration of Ibn 'Abbās with a good chain of narrators that while he (رضي الله عنه) debated with the Khawārij, he said to them:

How can you criticize and detest the son-in-law ('Alī) of Allah's messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as well as those who migrated with him (the Muājirūn) and those who supported him (the Anṣār) while it was upon them that the Quran descended – and there is not even one of them among you – and they are the most knowledgeable of its (the Quran's) explanation?

Slandering the Scholars

Another description of the Khawārij is that they slander legitimate religious scholars and discourage the youth from attending their gatherings and lectures. This is because if the

¹⁰ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3611) and Muslim (no. 1066).

youth were to learn from the genuine Salafi scholars, turning to them desiring religious knowledge, that would be a means of safety for the youth and would cause them to hate the Khawārij because the scholars constantly warn against the ideology of those misguided people.

There is a narration in the “Musnad” of Imam Ahmad that ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه) sent ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās to the Khawārij. When he reached their camp, Ibn al-Kawā – at that time one of the Khawārij – stood up to address the people and to warn them from listening to Ibn ‘Abbās. He (Ibn al-Kawā) said (addressing the Khawārij):

Oh preservers of the Quran, this man is ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās. Whoever among you that does not know him, I certainly do know him. This man and his people are those about whom descended the verse:

﴿ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ ﴾

Rather, they are a people prone to argue.

[Sūrah al-Zukhruf, 43:58]

So send him back to his companions and do not belittle the Quran just because of him!¹¹

During our times today, the various rulings (Fatāwá) of the scholars are unknown to the Muslim youth, male and female. The religious rulings that warn against these misguided sects and against reading their books are kept concealed from them. The rulings regarding deviant scholars and the figureheads of biased factionalism (Hizbiyyah) of our times are unknown to the youth.

Many people know nothing of the statements of our scholars and their warning against these misguided groups, some of which falsely claim to be the main, original community

¹¹ Recorded in the Musnad of Imam Ahmad (1/86).

(of Muslims). Many people remain completely unaware that the scholars have always warned against these groups until some major calamity strikes or a catastrophe occurs.

So Allah is sufficient as a protector for us against those who hide religious rulings of the scholars from the youth, thereby cultivating them upon biased partisanship, harshness, and extremism.

Being Forsaken by Allah

From the attributes of the Khawārij is that they are forsaken by Allah; He exposes their plots and allows them to be uprooted and crushed. Neither can they ever attain any sense of honor nor will there ever be established a legitimate, authoritative leader among them. This is because they are the very people who pollute and oppose the Sunnah and whoever opposes the Sunnah is alienated and forsaken. The end result is that even their loved ones and friends will renounce and abandon them, and the control of all matters, before and after, is with Allah.

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنهما) said that the messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

يَنْشَأُ نَشْءٌ يَقْرَأُونَ الْقُرْآنَ لَا يُجَاوِزُ تَرَاقِيهِمْ، كُلَّمَا خَرَجَ قَرْنٌ قُطِعَ

There will rise up a group of people who will recite the Quran but it will not reach beyond their throats. Every time a new generation of them rises, they will be defeated.

Ibn ‘Umar said, “I heard Allah’s messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) say, ‘Every time a new generation of them rises, they will be defeated,’ more than twenty times and then said:

حَتَّى يَخْرُجَ فِي عِرَاضِهِمُ الدَّجَالُ

Until the Anti-Christ finally appears among them.¹²

From the kindness of Allah towards the people of the Sunnah is that disgrace always accompanies the Khawārij because they abandon the Sunnah preferring innovation instead. So the people of the Sunnah always overpower and defeat them by Allah's permission.

In "Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim," there is a narration in which Zayd Ibn Wahb al-Juhanī says:

When we met (in battle) that day, 'Abdullah Ibn Wahb al-Rāsibī was at the head of the Khawārij. He said to his army, "Throw your spears and unsheathe your swords, for I fear that they will confront you in the way they did on the Day of Ḥarūrā (which resulted in your defeat)." So they went back, let loose their spears and drew their swords. The people fought against them with spears, stabbing them and killing them one after another. And no one was killed that day – meaning of the people of the Sunnah – except two men.¹³

¹² Recorded by Ibn Mājah (no. 174) and al-Albānī said it is *ḥasan* in "Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'" (no. 8171).

¹³ Recorded by Muslim (no. 1066).