

Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (852H): The Foundation of the Khārijites are the Qur’ān Reciters of ‘Irāq Who Revolted Against ‘Uthmān

Under one of al-Bukhārī’s chapter headings pertaining to the Khārijites, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī writes: “The origin of this tribulation or from amongst its causes is that the people of Irāq rejected the behaviour of some of the relatives of ‘Uthmān and reviled ‘Uthmān (in turn) because of that. It used to be said of them that they are ‘Reciters’ (Qurṛā) because of their severe preoccupation in recitation and worship. Save that they used to interpret the Qur’ān with what was not intended by it, would insist on their viewpoint, would show extremism in abstinence and humility and other such affairs...” Fath al-Bārī (al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah) 12/283. An element known as the the Qurṛā played a significant role in many of the problems within the camp of ‘Alī because of the traits they possessed, chief amongst them being misinterpreting the Qur’ān and misguided zeal comprising extremism. They were present from the beginning in the activities against ‘Uthmān’s leadership until they formed the block that later seceded from the army of ‘Alī. The Messenger (ﷺ) had described them in numerous traditions, “They will recite the Qur’ān but it will not go beyond their throats” and in a narration, “their collarbones”. Ibn Ḥazm (456H) provides further details as to how they abandoned the Companions and had no understanding of the Qur’ān.¹ As for the revolt against ‘Uthmān, then Muslim scholars have thoroughly analysed the claims that were made against ‘Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) and refuted them² and indicated that it was the humility, gentleness and softness of ‘Uthmān that the renegades took advantage of and had they been in the time of ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه), they would never have come out in the same way due to their fear of ‘Umar’s stern character.

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¹ Refer to <http://www.kharijites.com/kj/?flnhbqdb> for details.

² Refer for example to al-‘Awāṣim min al-Qawāṣim of al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr bin al-‘Arabī (543H).