

The Military Defeat of the Khārijites in 659 and the Military Defeat of The Khārijites in 2017

Bismillāh wal-Ḥamdulillāh. The very first Khārijites under the leadership of ‘Abd Allāh bin Wahb al-Rāsibī established their breakaway, rival “**Islāmīc State of Nahrawān**”, after they had:

- revolted against ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه),
- declared him a polytheist on account of the issue of ḥākimiyyah,
- started killing the Prophet’s companions such as ‘Abd Allāh bin Khabbāb (رضي الله عنه) and others,
- developed an ideology of terrorism in the name of jihād and enjoining the good and prohibiting the evil.

So ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه) fought them at Nahrawān, which is some 10-12 miles south of Baghdād in Irāq. He defeated them and slaughtered the vast majority of them, almost completely wiping them out. However, as the reports indicate, some of them survived and fled to various lands. They became seeds for the Khārijite doctrine to survive in keeping with al-qaḍā al-kawnī.

Al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153) wrote in al-Milal: “So ‘Alī fought them at al-Nahrawān with intense fighting and less than ten of them survived whilst less than ten of the Muslims were killed. Two of them fled to ‘Umān, two to Kirmān, two to Sijistān, two to the [Arabian] peninsula, one to Tall Mawzun and two to al-Yaman. The innovation of the Khārijites then appeared in these places and has remained till today.”¹ This defeat was a military one, not an ideological one.

¹ *Al-Milal wal-Niḥal*. Beirut: Dār Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah. (1413/1992), 1/109.

Because of the survival of this ideology, the Khārijites kept appearing and continued to plague Muslim societies, leading to the death of millions over the span of the Umayyad and Abbāsīd eras as mentioned by al-Ḍahabī in al-Siyar. One can understand the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ), “If I was to reach them, I would slaughter them like the slaughtering of ‘Ād” which Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī explained to mean that he would kill every single last one of them and completely wipe them out. However, the Khārijites will continue to appear successively, being cut off each time, before the right circumstances arise again for them to congregate and mobilise once more.

In consideration of the above, the seed of the Khārijite ideology was revived in the 20th century by the likes of Ḥasan al-Bannā, Abū A’lā Mawdūdī, Sayyid Quṭb and others, and this culminated in the emergence of the alleged Islamic State (Daesh, ISIS) 70 years later. This shows how ideas start and develop and the great danger in remaining silent against them. As it stands, the Khārijites of ISIS and al-Qaeda have been fought, weakened and pretty much disbanded in Syria and Iraq. However, in accordance with al-qaḍā al-kawnī, there are survivors amongst them and this ideology has been seeded across the world due to the rapid means of communication which are present today.

This indicates the tremendous burden of jihād upon the shoulders of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah—who follow the way of the Companions, the Salaf—in fighting against this evil ideology on account of which the affairs of the dunyā are overturned. There is a large and tremendous heritage of refutation and warning from the Salaf, starting with Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه), the Qur’ān expert,

throughout the ages till the scholars of today whose statements about the Khārijites, their leaders and their ideology are abundant.

That ISIS (Daesh) have been weakened and the effect of their propaganda has waned should not produce any laxity, as it is this very laxity that allows these scorpions to infect others with their poison. One should always keep in mind the statement of **Abu Bakr al-Ājurī** (d. 970) (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) who said: “The scholars have not differed that the Khārijite (extremists) are an evil people, disobedient to God and His Messenger, even if they pray, fast and strive hard in worship. None of that will be beneficial to them. They proclaim the commanding of good and prohibiting of evil but that will not benefit them because they distort the Qur’ān upon their desires and deceive the Muslims. God, the Most High, warned us against them. The Prophet warned us against them. The rightly-guided caliphs warned us against them. The Prophet’s companions warned us against them. They are an evil, filthy despicable people.”² These warnings must continue today, unabated and with full vigour and force against not only the Khārijites, but also against their sympathisers, those who make excuses against them and the “silent devils” who hold sway over Muslims—as speakers and lecturers—and despite knowing their evil, speak not against them nor their ideology.

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² Al-Sharī‘ah (1/136).