



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Nahj al-Balagha

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Lesson: 23

Topic: Sermon #3: Shiqshiqiyya (Continuance): The Battles of Siffin and Nahrawan

- Battle of Siffin: One of the fiercest battles in early Islam; tens of thousands were dead (some: over 100,000)
- Imam Ali عليه السلام considered the aggression of Muawiya a priority; the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله had instructed him to fight Muawiya. He was about to change Islamic rule to a kingdom for his dynasty.
- As soon as he settled in Kufa, Imam عليه السلام wrote to Muawiya that people had pledged allegiance to him and that Muawiya should step down.
- Muawiya refused and insisted that Imam عليه السلام was responsible for Uthman's blood and was seeking vengeance. This is how he mobilized the Syrians. Imam عليه السلام made it clear in his letter that he had nothing to do with the death of Uthman.
- To arouse people's emotions, Muawiya hanged Uthman's blood-stained shirt and his wife's cut fingers to defend her husband.
- Knowing Ali's courage and that he was a great warrior, Muawiya asked Amr ibn As, a well-known genius in logistical tactics, to join him. He asked for a good reward worth losing his religion. Muawiya promised him the governorate of Egypt.
- Muawiya responded that he would fight with Amir al-Mu'minin. Imam عليه السلام consulted the Kufis, Muhajirun, and Ansar, and they pressured him to fight and promised their support. Ibn Abbas joined Imam عليه السلام with his army from Basra.
- Two armies met near a city called *Al Riqqa* at a place called *Siffin*.
- Imam عليه السلام instructed and insisted his army not start. Both sides had around 120,000 soldiers.
- Muawiya devised the idea to seize the river banks at night and block it on Imam عليه السلام's army. They did it. For one day, the Kufa army was banned from drinking water until Imam عليه السلام permitted to take it back. After seizing the river bank, Imam عليه السلام didn't let his army block water on enemies.



- The battle was very long. When Muharram arrived, they agreed to stop fighting for one month. Here Imam عليه السلام tried to negotiate and invite the enemies to join Muslims by sending representatives, etc.
- Imam عليه السلام made it clear that he didn't participate in Uthman's death. Muawiya raised a second demand that if you were not involved in his death, execute all those involved. Imam عليه السلام refused because it was Uthman himself who brought assassination for himself. He kept killing and torturing companions. Hundreds of companions were involved.
- In Safar, the fight resumed, and Imam عليه السلام made amazing advances.
- Some of Imam عليه السلام's commanders: Malik al-Ashtar, Hashim ibn Utba, Ammar ibn Yasir, Muhammad ibn Hanafiyya, Abdullah ibn Abbas.
- Ammar was martyred, and people were reminded of the Prophet's hadith: "The oppressive transgressors will kill you, O Ammar!" This boosted the army.
- Muawiya figured they would lose the next day. He devised a tactic at night and instructed 500 soldiers to put the Quran on the spear.
- The next day, when Malik al-Ashtar's division had only some steps to win the war, Muawiya sent 500 soldiers to Imam عليه السلام's camp asking him to let the Quran decide.
- Imam عليه السلام knew this was a false trick. So, he rejected it. Even before that, Imam عليه السلام had asked for one-on-one combat that Muawiya had declined. And now he was an hour away from losing Syria.
- Imam عليه السلام said they were liars, but the army split. Some followed the Imam عليه السلام, but some (the early Khawarij) said they were taking refuge in the Quran and wanted to negotiate. They threatened Imam عليه السلام to accept arbitration; otherwise, they would kill him.
- Muawiya introduced Amr ibn Aas as his representative. The betrayers in the Imam عليه السلام's army didn't accept Malik al-Ashtar or Ibn Abbas, who were introduced by the Imam عليه السلام as arbitrators. They forced Imam عليه السلام to send Abu Musa Ash'ari as the arbitrator.
- Abu Musa Ash'ari was fooled by Amr ibn Al-Aas, so the Khawarij went to Imam Ali عليه السلام with their swords rebuking him for accepting arbitration and asking him to repent; otherwise, he would be deemed a disbeliever.
- The Battle of Siffin lasted for 110 days—over 45000 Muawiya's army and over 25000 from Imam Ali عليه السلام's army were killed.
- Many companions of the Prophet ﷺ, including 20 Badris, were killed: Ammar ibn Yasir, Khuzaima ibn Thabit Dhu Shahadatayn, Hashim ibn Utba, Suhayb ibn al-Amr Ansari, Abd Allah ibn Ka'ab Muradi, Abu Hazim Bajali, etc.



- Khawarij officially emerged after the *Tahkeem* incident. When Imam عليه السلام entered Kufa, 12,000 of his army broke off, camped outside the city, and rejected all advice, told they would fight the Imam (unless he repented).
- 8000 Kharijites repented. Four thousand remained and insisted on fighting the Imam عليه السلام. They camped in Nahrawan.
- The battle lasted for 1 hour, as Imam عليه السلام had foretold, all Khawarij were killed except ten, and no one from his army was dead but about 10.
- The battle of Nahrawan occurred on Safar 9th, 38 A.H.