

Application of the Theory of Social Forces: A Case Study of Khawarij¹ during the Reign of Hazrat Ali² (AS)

By

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Abstract

Many books have been written so far about Khawarij but few have looked at them as a social force. It is attempted in this paper with a sociologic look and based on historical sociologic approach first to investigate the issue if we can consider Khawarij as a social force or not, and secondly, to know the treatment of Hazrat towards them if considering them as a social force. To respond these two questions, first it is briefly dealt with the issue of social forces and their characteristics and also the origins of the formation of Khawarij and their different views with that of the Alawite society and then, comparing the characteristics of Khawarij with those of the social forces, it is confirmed that Khawarij had been a social force. Finally, with the statement of the treatment of Imam Ali (AS) towards Khawarij in different stages of its life, it is shown that the Alawite government, as a model for Islamic government, had coped with Khawarij with tolerance, benevolence, and with no knocking-out approach.

Keywords: *Imam Ali (AS); Khawarij; Social Forces; Islamic Government; Nehru.*

¹The origin of Kharijism lies in the first Islamic civil war, the struggle for political supremacy over the Muslim community in the years following the death of Muhammad. After the third caliph (Uthman ibn Affan), a struggle for succession ensued between Caliph Ali and Mu'awiyah, the governor of Syria and cousin of Uthman, in league with a variety of other opponents.

²He was the son of Abu Talib a.s., son of Abdul Muttalib of the distinguished tribe of Bani Hashim. Only one step above his lineage coincided with that of the Prophet s.a. of Islam. The Prophet s.a. had embarked upon a mission which was against the trend of the times, the prevailing environment, the practice of the entire city and of his own people and tribe. He was so devoted to the Prophet s.a. It was due to the distinguished attributes and services rendered by Hazrat Ali a.s. that the Prophet s.a. had great respect for him and used to publicize his qualities both by his words and deeds. Sometimes he used to say: "Ali is from me and I am from Ali." On another occasion he said: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali a.s. is its gate."