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I was very grateful for the books which I organized and kept in a special place, which called the library. I rested for a few days, and received the time-table for the new academic year, and found out that I had to work for three consecutive days, and that for the rest of the week I was off-duty.

I started reading the books, so I read "The Beliefs of al-Imamiyya" and "The Origin and Principles of al-Shi'a," and felt that my mind was at ease with the beliefs and ideas of the Shi'a. Then I read "al-Murajaat (correspondences)" by al-Sayyid Sharaf al-Din al-Musawi.

As soon as I read the first few pages, I became engrossed in it and could not leave it unless it was necessary, and even took it with me to the institute. I was surprised at the straight forward clarity of the Shi'i scholar when he solved problems that appeared complicated to the Sunni scholar from al-Azhar.

I found my objective in the book, because it is not like any ordinary book where the author writes whatever he likes without criticism or discussion, for "al-Murajaat" is in the form of a dialogue between two scholars, who belong to a different creed, and are critical of each other's statement. Both base their analysis on the two important references for all Muslims: The Holy Qur'an and the Right Sunnah which is approved in Sihah al-Sittah. I found that there was something common between myself and the idea of the book: for I was an investigator searching for the truth, and was willing to accept it wherever it was found. Therefore I found this book immensely useful, and I owe it a great deal.

I was astonished when I found him talking about the refusal of some of the Companions to comply with the orders of the Prophet(saw), and he gave many examples, including the incident of "Raziyat Yawm al-Khamis (The Calamity of Thursday)", for I could not imagine that our master Umar ibn al-Khattab had disagreed with the orders of the Messenger of Allah (saw) and accused him of Hajjr (talking irrationally), and I thought at the beginning that it was just a story from the Shi'a books. However, I was even more astonished when I noticed that the Shi'i scholar made his reference to the incident in the "Sahih of al-Bukhari" and the "Sahih of Muslim".

I travelled to the Capital, and from there I bought the "Sahih of al-Bukhari", the "Sahih of Muslim", and the "Mosnad of Imam Ahmed", the "Sahih of al-Tirmidhi", the "Muwatta of Imam Malik" and other famous

books. I could not wait to get back to the house and read these books, so throughout the journey between Tunis and Gafsah I sat in the bus looking through the pages of al-Bukhari's book searching for the incident of "The great misfortune of Thursday" and hoping that I would never find it.

Nevertheless, I found it and read it many times; and there it was, exactly as it has been cited by al-Sayyid Sharaf al-Din.

I tried to deny the incident in its entirety, and could not believe that our master Umar had played such a dangerous role; but how could I deny it since it was mentioned in our Sihahs; the Sihahs of al-Sunnah, in whose contents we are obliged to believe, so if we doubt them or deny some of them, it means that we abandon all our beliefs.

If the Shi'a scholar had referred to their books, I would not have believed what he said, but he was referring to the Sihahs of al-Sunnah, which could not be challenged, because we are committed to believe that they are the most authentic books after the Book of Allah. Therefore, the issue is a compelling one, because if we doubt these Sihahs we are left with hardly any of the rules and regulations of Islam to rely on.

This is because the rules and regulations which are mentioned in the Book of Allah take the form of general concepts rather than details. We are far from the time of the Message, and have thus inherited the rules of our religion through our fathers and grandfathers with the help of these Sihahs, which cannot be ignored.

As I was about to embark on long and difficult research, I promised myself to depend only on the correct Hadiths that are agreed by both the Shi'a and the Sunnah, and that I would drop all the sayings which are mentioned exclusively by one group or the other. Only through this just method could I keep myself safe from emotional factors, sectarian fanaticism and national tendencies. In the meantime I would be able to pass through the road of doubt and reach the mountain of certainty, and that is the correct path of Allah.

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