

The Members Of The Army

In his book *al-Irshad* p. 169, al-Mufid said: "Al-Hasan sent Hujr b. `Adi to order the leaders (Ummal) to set out and to call the people together for war (jihad). They were slow to (answer) him and then they came forward. (Al-Hasan) had a mixed band of men: some of them belonged to his Shi'a and to his father's; some of them were members of the Muhakkima (i.e., Kharijites) who were influenced by (the desires of) fighting Mu`awiya with every means (possible); some of them were men who loved discords and were anxious for booty; some of them were doubters; others were tribal supporters who followed the leaders of their tribes without reference to religion." 1

I (the author) say: From what we have just said, we have known that the number of al-Hasan's army was about twenty thousand fighters or little more. However, we do not know in detail the way used to form this army. However, I think it was the primitive way which was not based on the succeeding, acquired improvements. It was the way which the Muslim communities followed during the first centuries A.H. It was the way that did not stipulate any qualities necessary for accepting the soldier or the fighter (mujahid).

It did not stipulate personal abilities and age, nor did it stipulate compulsory military service as it is in the present time. For the Muslim person who was able to carry the weapon had a religious motive. Thus he took part in jihad willingly when he heard the summons to it in the way of Allah. This motive made him feel his religious obligation. So he was ready to sacrifice his life in the way of Allah. Otherwise, he was unable to carry out his religious duty. For the worldly desires would suppress this feeling in him. Moreover, they would have deprived him of his share of the reward and booty if Allah had predetermined victory and booty for that war.

Modern military laws force people to carry out military service, summon them in certain years, and examine their limited abilities. These laws were not known at that time. Besides they disagree with the Islamic law that is general and tolerant.

Islam is certain correct facts so that the people obey it. In other words the laws of this religion do not force anyone to carry out any obligation. For Islam has showed people two ways (i.e., the way of good and the way of evil). Moreover, it has helped them to choose the way of good through guidance:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا ﴿٤﴾

"And (as for) those who strive hard for us, We will most certainly guide them to Our ways."

(Qur'an 29:69).

In this way Islam enjoins people to do good and forbids them from doing evil. Also Muslim leaders have used the same way to enjoin people to do well and to prevent them from doing evil. When they decide to wage war (against their enemies), they follow an excellent way to urge people to take part in jihad (holy war) through convincing them to carry the weapon.

Among these ways are: They increase the salaries of fighters, order their governors to encourage people to take part in jihad, and spread their orators and prominent figures to urge people to volunteer to strive in the way of Allah, the Great and Almighty.

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, followed all these ways from the day when he assumed the succession in Kufa. Also he used them when he declared jihad. Among his measures, as we have said earlier, were: He increased the salaries of the fighters to 100%. He sent Hujr b. `Adi to his rulers to summon them to jihad.

His notable companions, who were orators, helped him with his task. Among them were `Adi b. Hatam, Ma'qal b. Qays al-Riyahi, Ziyad b. Sa'sa'a al-Tamimi, and Qays b. Sa'd al-Ansari. They criticized the people² for their slowness and urged them to take part in jihad for Allah. Then they themselves competed with each other for their places in the general camp, and they competed with the people for that.

They spread the standards of jihad all over Kufa. They summoned the people (to obey) Allah, the Great and Almighty, and the family of Muhammad, peace be on them.

Thus new awareness arose in the slow city. Namely, the Kufans felt their obligations, and became ready to carry them out.

The slowness in the war happened because either the people inclined to worldly pleasures or the Syrians changed their religious beliefs. This slowness included some of the people in Kufa and the regions around it.

As for this new awareness which the eloquent orators made, it soon created motivation in many of the slow people. The wish stirred up an activity. So enthusiasm resulted from the activity. To some extent, the summons of the Shi'a to jihad was successful in making the majority eager for war in spite of the ignoble attitudes of the oppressors in Kufa at that time. "The people became active for going out to their camp." 3

Moreover, the summons of the Shi'a to jihad was successful, to a great extent, in winning the public opinion in Kufa, its seventh (asba), its tribes, and the neighboring outskirts whose dwellers used to come to markets and official offices.

The orators of al-Hasan were so skillful that they exploited the appropriate mind of the people. So they spared no effort to summon them to support the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt) under the pretext of the summons to jihad.

The throats of the companions became hoarse because they mentioned many laudable qualities of the family of Muhammad. In the meantime they showed the defects of their enemies. They resisted the different clubs of Kufa, its districts, and its public places. They drew the attention of the people to the excellent position which no one of the Muslims occupied but the two lords of the youth of Paradise (i.e., al-Hasan and al-Husayn), peace be on them. They indicated the religious firmness inherited by the members of the House of Inspiration. They spread the distinguished qualities of this tribe such as knowledge, purity, religious devotion, sacrifice for Allah, and reforming acts. They indicated their obligatory love on the believers.

Then they (the orators of al-Hasan) mentioned the pledge of allegiance to al-Hasan. They reminded the people that Allah would ask them about obedience of these rulers and the obligatory pledge of allegiance to them.

They (the orators) mentioned the lineage in their enthusiastic sermons. Suddenly, this lineage was very nice, very truthful, and very effective. They bewildered the people and filled them with admiration.

The orators mentioned al-Hasan and Mu'awiya. They said: "What a great difference is between b. 'Ali and b. Sakhr! What a great difference is between b. Fatima and b. Hind! What a great difference is between his (i.e., al-Hasan's) grandfather the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, and his (i.e., Mu'awiya's) grandfather! What a great difference is between his (al-Hasan's) grandmother Khadija and his (i.e., Mu'awiya's) grandmother!"

They cursed the more unknown one of the two persons (i.e., al-Hasan and Mu'awiya). Also they cursed the more ignoble one of them in lineage, the more evil one of them in the past and the present time, and the older one of them in unbelief and hypocrisy. So the people shouted and said: `Amen!' Then the generations came after them (the people). When a Muslim person reads this nice comparison, he will record a new amen against Mu'awiya.

These wise ways and enthusiastic eloquent orations played an important role in moving the people. So they were ready to desert Sham (Syria) and to support Kufa.

In Kufa, the new powerful city, there were mixed bands of people. They belonged to Arab and non-Arab communities. They adopted Islam, but they were displeased with it. In other words they embraced Islam and used it as means to achieve their immediate interests. So they understood the summons to jihad as

means for interests and booty. When these mixed bands became satisfied with the success of that war, they joined the army of al-Hasan, peace be on him, to achieve their interests and to take their shares of booty. So why did they not join those who were the first to take part in jihad?

You may agree with me on discovering the motives that drove these rabble mixed groups to join the army of al-Hasan, peace be on him. Suddenly, the men of discords, the men of booty, the men of tribalism, the doubters, and the like became volunteers in the army of al-Hasan.

As we have previously said, the regulations of the Islamic mobilization at that time did not prevent the above mentioned groups from joining the army as fighters or mujahidin. That is because these regulations stipulated only one condition that was the ability to carry the weapon.

Concerning the reason that urged the Kharijites to join the army of al-Hasan, Shaykh al-Mufid, my Allah have mercy on him, said: "They chose to fight Mu`awiya with every means (possible)."

However, we (i.e., the author) do not believe in this reason though brief, and we do not deny it because it has some meanings. What al Mufid said might be part of their aim, and their aim might be a thing other than this.

The relations between al-Hasan, peace be on him, and the Kharijites do not encourage us to have a good opinion about them. Besides, if we study the events (of the Battle) of al-Nahrwan, our doubt in them will double. Suppose that they were right when they summoned al-Hasan to fight against Mu'awiya, and that they had no ill-intention towards him, then where were they during the lifetime of Mu'awiya? Why didn't they band together against him as they did against 'Ali, peace be on him? Moreover, hasn't history kept their revolt against the latter?

The enmity and malice of the Kharijites, and the way of their abominable summons move us to mistrust their purpose when they wanted to go out with: al-Hasan, peace be on him.

We have known the conditions of the Kharijites before their going out for that war. Namely, they cajoled the people. Meanwhile they complimented al-Hasan after their unbelieving fighting against the late Imam (i.e., 'Ali), peace be on him. Through that, they tried to avoid the general abhorrence that prevailed them after that great tragedy.

Do you not think that the Kharijites followed cunning ways? Didn't their timely pressing conditions make them pretend to be loyal soldiers, volunteers in the army of al-Hasan? Without doubt they had hidden their purposes under this pretense. So they became soldiers to achieve their hidden principles which no one has known since then.

The idea of the Kharijites represented an evil beginning that resulted from the matter of the arbitration (al-tahkim) at the Battle of Siffin. For this reason, they were called al-muhakkim. The roots of this idea were fixed in themselves as a firm thought. In the course of time, their idea spread here and there. Thus

many people followed it. Therefore it created various kinds of disasters and hardships.

Although the Kharijites were intense in the matter of the religion, they did cunning very well.

So the Kharijites seized the opportunities of the war that took place between the two great enemies. They joined this army that moved from Kufa to Maskan and al-Mada'in.

Through these explanations, I do not want to deny the enmity of the Kharijites towards Mu'awiya. Moreover, I do not deny their choice to fight against him with every means (possible), as Shaykh al-Mufid, May Allah have mercy on him, has said. However, I think that the Kharijites intended to achieve two purposes through their plan.

They had no purpose through their revolts and plots but to destroy the great Islamic figures in Iraq, Egypt, and Syria. The purposes of these people were secret assassinations. These purposes prevailed their other plans. For this reason, they went with al-Hasan to make discords. They followed the way of jihad to make corruption. For example, they achieved a traitorous act at Mazlam Sabat.⁴ The act harmed al-Hasan very much. It was the second dangerous part of the series of the crimes which this evil band committed against the great, Prophetic family.

Both those two crimes resulted from the active, secret plots which the foolish Kharijites mastered on various occasions.

Ibn. Sinan al-Asadi⁵ stabbed al-Hasan. Also Ibn. Muljim al-Muradi, Sinan's friend, stabbed the Commander of the faithful, al-Hasan's father, peace be on him. Through His favor, Allah wanted these two stabs to be different from each other.

This mean plot represented the ugliest estrangement towards the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. For, through this stab, b. Sinan tried to kill his eldest grandson, and to render a rare service to Mu'awiya. This stab belonged to the people (i.e., the Kharijites) about whom it was said: "They went out with al-Hasan because they chose to fight against Mu'awiya with every means (possible)."

In this way, al-Hasan became certain of the intentions of the muhakkima (i.e., the Kharijites) in spite of their false flatter for him. From the beginning, al-Hasan was very cautious of them. Still he treated them kindly in spite of their hidden spites.

There is no one more dangerous than the enemy who pretends friendship. Such an enemy shows you friendship openly, but he fights against you secretly. So the most dangerous enemy is he who fights against you with hatred, malice, and tribalism, as the Kharijites did against al-Hasan.

In this way, the army of al-Hasan, peace be on him, was full of those mixed bands who discouraged it from winning the battles. It was also afflicted by the plots of both internal and external enemies, namely in Iraq and Syria (Sham).

It was natural for such an army to be liable to internal discords and mutiny against its commanders.

The holy war (jihad) was not some means for material greed, nor was it a field for dangerous plots, nor was it an aspect for trivial, ignorant tribalism, nor was it an arena for the experiences of the doubters.

So "the insight of al-Hasan increased when the people (i.e., the mixed bands) deserted him.⁶

Many words have been reported on the authority of al-Hasan. They indicate that he had low confidence in his army.

Al-Hasan said very eloquent words when he addressed his army in al-Mada'in. These words are appropriate for the subject of this chapter. Thus we will mention them here: "During your movement towards Siffin, your religion was before your life in this world. Anyhow today, your life in this world is before your religion. So you are between two killed persons: one was killed at (the Battle of) Siffin and you weep over him. The other was killed at (the Battle of) Nahrawan⁷ and you avenge his blood. As for the rest, they are betrayers. As for the weepers, they are revolutionaries."

This is the only oration of al-Hasan, in which he refers to the inclinations and desires of the mixed bands in his army during the battles.

As for the revolutionary weepers, al-Hasan refers to the large number from his companions and his bosom ones. As for those who wanted to avenge the blood, he refers to the Kharijites who were in his army. Namely, they wanted to avenge the blood of their companions on al-Hasan. As for the betrayers, he refers to the other groups from the men of the discords, the followers of the ambitions, and the worshippers of desires.

Go over the pages of history. You will find gloomy bloody lines in them. That was because of what the captivated prominent figures from those mixed bands followed. Also it was because of their terrible deeds with which they corrupted the field of the holy war (jihad). Some of their deeds were treason, discords, breaking pledges, plots, forgetting the religion, and the like. So the rest of the family of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, were liable to their attacks. We will mention some of these tragic pictures in their appropriate places in this book.

Conclusion

Here, we have to listen to what sounds in the mind of people when they study this sorrowful presentation about the bands of the army of al-Hasan, peace be on him. They ask: "Why did al-Hasan permit these mixed bands to join his army? After their joining his army, why was he slow in purifying his army from them? Why did he not use the methods that commanders of armies use to purify their armies such as dismissing corrupt members, censuring them, and banishing them?"

These questions are the secret of the matter of al-Hasan. In response to these questions, we say:

1. Islam has abolished classes in jihad as it has abolished them in society through its laws and regulations. So it is unfair for the rulers to differentiate among the classes of Muslims who want to be soldiers. That is because such soldiers believe in Islam and are able to carry weapons. As for those mixed bands who followed al-Hasan, they believed in Islam and were able to carry weapons. Thus it was incumbent on the Imam to accept them according to the Islamic law.

2. The Prophet himself, may Allah bless him and his family, and such groups afflicted the Commander of the faithful during their battles. It is reported on their authority that they permitted such soldiers to enter their armies though they suffered from their disturbances at battlefields.

Concerning the Battle of Hunayn, the historians said: "Some Muslims saw the large number of their army, so they admired it. Then they said that the small army of their enemy would not overcome. However, the army of the Muslims was mixed. Among them (the Muslims) were many of those who came for booty."

The events of the returning of the Muslims from the campaign against the Banu al-Mustalaq indicates the existence of such mixed bands in the army of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family.

Also concerning the army of 'Ali, peace be on him, the historians said: "The army of 'Ali at (the Battle of) Siffin had mixed bands. They belonged to various tribes and communities. They were disobedient and opposing. They did not yield to any command, nor did they take any advice."

In his book (*al-Mahasin wa al-Masawi*), al-Bayhaqi has narrated the following on the authority of Mu'awiya, who said: "He (i.e., 'Ali), peace be on him, was among the most wicked army and the most one of them in disagreement. I (i.e., Mu'awiya) was among the most obedient army and the least of them in disagreement."

I (the author) say: So al-Hasan had to follow the Sunna (practice) of his grandfather and that of his father. For it was enough for him to follow their example.

Al-Hasan conformed to Islam and fear of Allah in every movement and silence. Still the opponents of al-Hasan did not conform to these Islamic manners. Were it not for that (i.e., al-Hasan's fear of Allah and his conforming to Islam), you would find that the history of that period would be written in a way different from what you read today.

3. Nevertheless, al-Hasan refused to treat the situation through these ways. The commanders of armies use ways to purify their armies from corrupt persons. For example, they kill them, remove them from office, scold them, and the like. For he did not want to hasten the disaster before its time, as we have mentioned in chapter four. Besides he did want to be the direct reason for stirring up discords, declaring disagreement, and raising the banner of disobedience, at least, in half of his army. This means that al-Hasan intentionally wanted to light the fire of the revolt in the core of his army. Also this means that the holy war (Jihad) would turn into violent internal war. If al-Hasan had taken such steps, he would have

achieved Mu'awiya's hopes. For the latter did his best to sow division between al-Hasan and his companions. Thus al-Hasan was very careful of Mu'awiya's tricks.

Moreover, al-Hasan, peace be on him, had no opportunity to reform those mixed bands of people and to unify their ideas, for his time was short and was full of various disasters. In other words, no one, except Allah (the Great and Almighty), was able to reform that situation at that time. That is because the manners, the religion, and the inherited backgrounds of the community were in need of reform during that short time. Moreover, the opposing trends that brought about various kinds of temptation to that generation prevented al Hasan from reforming the members of his army and unifying their ideas. Thus al-Hasan had to treat the situation through the ambitions themselves. This means that he had to cure the illness through the illness. However, he was not ready to follow such a way, for he took the fear of Allah into consideration.

1. Also see: Al-Arbali, Kashif al-Ghumma, p. 161. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al Anwar, vol. 10, p. 110.

2. Ibn Abu al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 4, p. 14.

3. Ibid.

4. In Arabic, Sabat means a shelter between two houses through which there is an open way. Sabat was a village in al-Mada'in. Near Sabat there was an arch over the river of the King (nahr al-malik). Maybe it was called so because there was a rare shelter among the shelters (Sawabit) in it. We think that this rare shelter was Mazlam Sabat.

5. In his book (al-Dawla al-Amawiya fi al-Sham wa al-Andalus, p. 50, chapter 4.), Hasan Murad made a mistake when he attributed the stab of al Hasan, peace be on him, with the dagger to the followers of the Umayyads, excluding the Kharijites. In chapter, the Secret of the Attitude, you will read the texts of the event which the old historians reported, and which the modern historians should understand.

6. Al-Mufid, al-Irshad, p. 170.

7. In his book [al-Malahim wa al-Fitan, p. 142, (Najaf, 1368)], Ibn Tawus has narrated: "And the other was killed at (the Battle of) Nahrwan and you avenge his blood on us."

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