

## **Al-Fitnah Al-Kubra Roots Sectarianism In Islam**

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### **Abstract**

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*The assassination of Uthman was the starting point for the emergence of divisions among Muslims. The incident of al-Fitnah al-Kubra became a dark record that tarnished the glorious history of this Ummah. In the midst of this crisis, Ali tried to fix the situation. However, Ali ascended the throne at an inopportune time. The short-lived and busy government stabilized the state of the state. Civil wars such as Jamal's war and Shiffin's war are also inevitable. This research is a review of existing literature (library research). Library research is a literature review, either from books, notes, or research relevant to this research. The results concluded The schism widened when Ali's dispute with Mu'awiya was ended through tahkim. In fact, it gets worse. If the wound of Muslims with the death of Uthman is likened to the scratch of a dagger, So the wounds of the people, after being caused by various events afterwards, were not only slit but also chopped. So the people seemed to be a pile of meat divided by hungry wolves. Not only that, each group of wolves attacks each other to take the other. To understand the complexity of this condition, the author tries to explain the roots of sectarianism in the bodies of Muslims.*

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### **Introduction**

After the assassination of 'Umar ibn al-Khaththab by Abu Lu'Luah (al-Shuyūṭi, 2012), Uthman ibn Affan was chosen by Ahl al-Halli wa al-'Aqdi as his successor. The government, which lasted ±12 years, was divided into two terms. The first 6-year period was stable, and the second 6-year period was turbulent. There were at least three things that caused chaos in Uthman's second 6-year period: the politics of nepotism, the mutation of the chairman of the bait al-māl council, and taking part for his family from the bait al-māl. These three points are most likely Marwan's actions. It's just that Uthman, as the head of Nagara, is considered unable to hold Marwan (Nasution, 2015).

Various events occurred in the second 6-year period of Uthman. Among them was the appointment of Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah as Governor of Egypt. Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah received rejection from the Egyptian people and asked Uthman to replace him. The insistence was even stronger, coupled with the



insistence of the companions of the Prophet, such as Talha ibn Ubaidillah, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and even 'Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, who also warned Uthman. This insistence made Uthman replace Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah with Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr at the whim of the Egyptian people (al-Shuyūṭi, 2012).

Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, with his entourage, set out for Egypt. On the way to Egypt, they met Uthman's servants. Upon investigation, Uthman's servant brought a letter containing orders to Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah. One of the points in the letter is for Abdullah to kill Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr when he reaches Egypt. The letter made Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr and his entourage return to Medina. Once in Medina, the letter was reported to the companions of the Prophet. The contents of the letter made the people of Medina hate Uthman even more. People began to move around Uthman's house, culminating in Uthman being killed in his room (al-Shuyūṭi, 2012).

After Uthman's assassination, the people urged Ali to become caliph. Had refused but was finally accepted by Ali. After Ali became Caliph, people began to demand that Ali investigate who killed Uthman. Claims that Ali never resolved led to confrontations between Ali and 'Aisha and other companions such as Zubayr and Thalhah. The confrontation known as the Battle of Jamal resulted in Talha and Zubayr being killed, and Aisha returned to her home. It did not stop; there was also a confrontation between Ali and Muawiya in the Siffin War. The war that ended in Tahkim/arbitration became the starting point of sectarianism in Islam.

From the description above, the author feels the need to draw a common thread from the beginning of sectarianism in Islam. Starting from the tragedy of Uthman's assassination known as al-Fitnah al-Kubra, Ali's confrontation with Aisha, Talha, and Zubayr in the battle of Jamal, and the confrontation between Ali and Muawiya in the battle of Siffin, which ended with Tahkim/Arbitration.

### **Research Methods**

This research is a review of existing literature (library research). Library research is a literature review, either from books, notes, or research that has been available before. More specifically, a literature review is a data collection technique that involves conducting a review study of books, literature, notes, and reports that have a relationship with the problem to be solved (Nazir, 2003). In literature research, there are two sources of data, namely primary data and secondary data (Hadi, 1994). Primary data is the main data of the object of research. Primary data can be one manuscript or one theme in various manuscripts. In this study, the primary data subject is the tragedy of al-Fitnah al-Kubra as the starting point of the emergence of firqah, or sectarianism, in Islam. While secondary data is supporting data in solving problems, For this case, all literature that the author can reach related to the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan until the end of the Tahkim "drama" is supporting data. Including theories that develop around events that occur.

In literature research, there are at least four stages that must be completed. First, collect empirical data, both primary and secondary. Second, read the data that has been collected. Third, present reading data. Fourth, examine the data that has been presented to draw a conclusion. Subjects that have been collected will be analyzed using data analysis techniques that focus on content analysis. The content analysis technique is a study technique for inferences that can be



replicated and the truth of data by paying attention to the context (Bungin, 2007). Burhan Bungin further explained that the stages in content analysis begin with determining the problem, compiling a frame of mind, compiling methodological tools, data analysis, and finally data interpretation.

## **Discussion**

### *Al-Fitnah al-Kubra*

Uthman was a simple, soft-hearted, and very shaleh figure. Uthman's personality like this was used by his relatives who wanted to rule from among the Umayyads (Arif, 2021). The second six years of Uthman's reign began with the emergence of opposition groups opposed to his policies. Uthman was considered to have committed an offense in running the government. The policy that was vocally accused of Uthman was about the practice of nepotism. The appointment of Marwan ibn Hakam, who was his cousin, to be secretary and the appointment of Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah, his half-brother, to be governor of Egypt were two of Uthman's family members who were made state officials. The appointment of these two people was met with opposition from various circles.

Referring to what al-Ṭabari wrote, the tragedy of Uthman's assassination began with the propaganda of Abdullah ibn Saba', also known as ibn Sauda'. Among Ibn Sauda's propaganda was the fabrication of a false will about Ali being entitled to the Caliphate. This will circulate in Egypt and provoke the public. Provocations became more widespread after they also sent letters to Bashrah and Kuffa rejecting Uthman's rule (al-Ṭabari, 1387 AH).

Things got out of hand when Uthman appointed Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah to be the governor of Egypt. Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah was Uthman's half-brother (Morsi, 2005). The appointment of Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah was met with opposition from Egyptian figures and society. They complained to Uthman. Uthman responded by sending a warning letter to Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah. Uthman's letter was ignored by him. About 700 people then went to Medina and complained about this to the other companions. Talha ibn Ubaidillah stood up and spoke harsh words to Uthman. Then more and more companions criticized Uthman in this regard. Starting from 'Aisha sent a letter to Uthman asking Uthman to be fair, and Ali also met Uthman, asking to replace Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah (al-Shuyi, 2012).

The growing pressure to replace Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah made Uthman leave it to them to choose who his successor was. The representative of Egypt proposed the name Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr. After that, Uthman wrote a decree appointing Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr as Governor of Egypt. On the way to Egypt, Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr and his entourage saw a servant riding a camel in a hurry. Like being chased or chasing someone. When stopped and interrogated by the companions of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, it was recognized that he was a servant of Uthman who was sent to meet Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah with a letter. The letter brought by the servant contained orders to kill Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr and his entourage after reaching Egypt. It is also mentioned in the letter that Abdullah ibn Abi Sarah remained governor of Egypt. They recognized the letter as written by Marwan ibn Hakam. Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr and the rombongan returned to Medina and showed the letter to the companions. Information about the contents of the letter spread quickly and made people move around Uthman's



house. They demanded that Uthman hand over Marwan ibn Hakam. However, their request was tolerated by Uthman (al-Shuyūṭi, 2012).

The situation spiraled out of control as more and more people gathered at Uthman's house. Ali sent Hasan and Husayn to guard Uthman's house. Likewise, Zubayr, Talha, and other companions sent their sons to guard Uthman (al-Shuyūṭi, 2012). This situation shows that the main companions were not involved in the rebellion against Uthman. Even they were the foremost men in protecting Uthman. Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr went into Uthman's room and pulled Uthman's beard. Uthman reminded Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr that his behavior must have been disliked by his father. Finally, Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr came out of Uthman's room. After that, they entered Uthman's room, namely Sudan bin Humran al-Sukuni, Qutairah bin Fulan al-Sukuni, and al-Ghafiqi bin Harb al-Akki (al-Ṭabari, 1387 AH). Uthman's possible killers were these: In contrast to al-Abari, Ibn 'Asyagir argues that Uthman's murderer was Hamma, an Egyptian ('Asakir, 1995).

The killing of Uthman was regretted by many of the Prophet's companions. Zubayr ibn al-Awwam and Ali ibn Abi Talib prayed for Uthman and condemned his murderer. Even Sa'ab ibn Abi Waqqash prayed evil for them (al-Ṭabari, 1387 AH). Huzaifah ibn Yaman stated that the assassination of Uthman was the beginning of the slander faced by Muslims and would end with the assassination of the Dajjal. ('Asakir, 1995). Likewise, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari stated that the killing of Uthman was evil and that the ummah worsened after that (Sa'ad, 1408 AH). Taking one interpretation of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari's statement that the assassination of Uthman and the endless chaos that followed is a strong reason to call this event al-Fitnah al-Kubra,.

#### *Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib*

The day after Uthman's assassination, Ali was willing to take allegiance to become caliph. All the companions pledged allegiance to Ali either voluntarily or forcefully. Among the companions who were forced to pledge allegiance were Talha and Zubayr (al-Shuyūṭi, 2012). Various problems arose during Ali's reign. Among them are demands to investigate and punish Uthman's killers. The first demands came from Aisha, Talha, and Zubayr. In 656 AD, there was a confrontation between Ali and Aisha, Talha and Zubayr, known as the Jamal War (Nurasmawi, 2012). Zubayr, Talha, and several others were killed in this battle.

At the end of Jamal's war, there was a demand from Damascus Governor Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Shufyan that Ali investigate Uthman's murderer. Mu'awiyah's demands also led to a confrontation between him and Ali. After receiving news of Mu'awiyah's movement, Ali set out with his army until he reached Iffin. In accordance with the meeting place of these two armies, the confrontation between Ali and Mu'awiyah was called the battle of Iffin. In this war, Ali and his army almost gained victory. But the ingenuity of Mu'awiyah and 'Amr ibn 'Ash brought the war to an end with Tahkim (Hasan, 1979). The Mu'awiyah group raised the Quran and invited all parties to punish it. So the people became reluctant to continue the war and called for peace. Ali initially refused the request of some of his troops to make peace because he considered it a ruse. Although Ali was finally accepted because of the strong pressure from some of his troops (Nasution, Sejarah Pradaban Islam, 2013), Ali sent Abu Musa al-Ash'ari as negotiator, and Mu'awiyah sent 'Amr ibn 'Ash. Once an agreement is made, they will meet again in



Adzruah at the end of the year. At that meeting, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari first conveyed that he had dismissed Ali from the post of Caliph. Thereafter, 'Amr ibn 'Ash took advantage of the vacancy in the office of Caliph by taking allegiance to Mu'awiya (al-Shuyūṭi, 2012). Some sources state that there were actually three points of decision in the Tahkim/Arbitration, namely Ali's dismissal from the post of Caliph, Mu'awiya's dismissal from the post of Governor of Damascus, and the Caliphate handing over to the Ummah. It's just that Mu'awiyah's camp betrayed the results of tahkim.

On the way to Kufa, part of Ali's army defected. They blamed Ali for accepting Tahkim as a solution to the problem. They marched to Harur and rallied an army there. To quell their movements, Ali sent Ibn Abbas to Harur. Ibn Abbas was able to win the argument, and some of them returned to Ali's ranks. But others refused. Those who refused to continue their journey to Nahrawand were pursued by Ali. Ali succeeded in conquering them in Nahrawan (al-Shuyūṭi, 2012). Those who rejected this tahkim were originally proposers of peace with Mu'awiyah (Nasution, Sejarah Pradaban Islam, 2013).

This Tahkim event made Muslims split into three main groups. First, the group broke away from Ali's ranks. Later, they were called Khawārij. This name is taken from the word Kharaja, which means out. He meant they came out of Ali's ranks. Both groups were defending Ali's ranks. They became loyal followers of Ali. This group is known as Shi'a al-'Aliy. Today, we call it Shi'a only. The three groups of Mu'awiyah rank This Mu'awiya line was the forerunner of the establishment of the Umayyad State in Damascus.

Another impact of this tahkim event was the attempt by the Kharijites to kill the people involved in it. 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muljam left for Kuffa and was in charge of killing Ali. Al-Burak ibn 'Abd Allāh was in charge of killing Mu'awiya in Damascus. While 'Amr ibn Bakr set out to kill 'Amr ibn 'Ash (al-Shuyūṭi, 2012), The only one they managed to kill was Ali ibn Abi Talib. Mu'awiya survived despite being wounded, while 'Amr ibn Bakr mistakenly killed people.

### *Islamic sectarianism*

Linguistically, sectarianism comes from the word sect. The word sect is equivalent to the word firqah in Arabic. The term sectarianism can be understood as groups of people with the same understanding having different views from other groups (Azzahra, 2019). Sectarianism is a study that never gets stale to discuss. If we look at the civilizations that have been built over time, there are always sects from that group of civilizations. Call it Christianity, for example, which has Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and other sects. This condition is also not spared in Islam.

Although the beginning of the rift had arisen when the Prophet (peace be upon him) died, it could be suppressed during the reigns of Abu Bakr and Umar. The sectoral ego was already emerging at that time when Muslims from among the Ansar gathered at Tsaqifah Bani Sa'idah. The meeting that did not involve the Muhajirin received criticism from the Muhajirin. Finally, their gathering was visited by three Muhajirin figures, namely Abu Bakr, Umar, and Abu Ubaidah. Each felt more entitled to replace the leadership of the Prophet (al-Shuyūṭi, 2012). This rift condition can be mitigated by the election of Abu Bakr (al-Mubārakfūriy, 2010).



The conditions that could be suppressed in the time of Abu Bakr and Umar were like fire in chaff. It looked fine on the surface, but inside, the fire kept burning. The peak began with the last half of Uthman's leadership, which led to the killing of Uthman. The rebellious movement that led to Uthman's assassination received criticism among friends. In the midst of the murky situation, Ali ibn Abi Talib was pledged to become caliph. Some circles want the reins of leadership. It's just that because the main companions have pledged allegiance to Ali, they are forced to take it. Although there is a small percentage who do not pledge allegiance,.

The civil war continued during Ali's reign. It is undeniable that the seeds of division previously suppressed by Abu Bakr and Umar came to the fore. So politics has become the cause of the division of Muslims (Hamur, 1998). The divisions caused by this policy are growing. Originally only related to the struggle for power, it eventually turned into theology. The movement that was originally only about sectoral egos in leadership succession turned into a movement of religious justification, reaching the stage of mutual exclusion from Islam.

The transformation of political movements into theological domains began with the concept of *lā Hukma illa li Allāh*. The concept echoed by the group that came out of Ali's ranks (Kharijites) had an impact on disbelieving tahkim perpetrators (Nasution H., 1986). They disbelieved Ali, Mu'awiyah, and 'Amr ibn 'Ash because they were considered lawless by the Law of Allah. Anyone who is not lawful by Allah's law has disbelieved and lawful blood (Hervrizal, 2020).

On the other hand, blind fanaticism towards Ali also began to develop among his followers. This group, known as Shi'a, also penetrated into the realm of theology. One of the most prominent sects in this group claimed that all the companions after the death of the Prophet had apostatized except for three people, namely al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, and Salman al-Farisi (Al-Kulaini, 1375 AH). Some Shi'ites also specifically disbelieved Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and anyone they considered usurping the rights of Ali's caliphate.

At the center of the debate between the Kharijites and the Shiites emerged a sect that tried to comply. This school is known as Murji'ah. This group adheres to the ideology of *irja'* or *arja'*, which means to delay. They suspended or suspended the status of those who were disbelieved by both Kharijites and Shi'ites. In their view, let Allah Almighty. determine their status later in the afterlife. Murji'ah appears in an effort to avoid sectarianism in Islam (Muis, 2016). However, their emergence actually added a new sect to the dynamics of Kalam.

The debate about the status of the perpetrators of the great sin, among others, attributed to those disbelieved by the Kharijites and Shi'ites spread to Hasan al-Bashri's Majelis. One of Hasan al-Bashir's disciples, Washil ibn Atha', asked about the status of the great sinner. This question has not been answered or has not been answered by Hasan al-Bashri. Then Washil ibn Atha answered his own question. According to Washil ibn Atha', the great sinner is not an infidel and is not a believer. But between the two, After delivering his statement, Washil left his assembly, Hasan al-Bashri. In response to that, Hasan al-Bashri said *I'tazala Washil ibn Atha'* (had broken away Washil ibn Atha'). Since then, this group has been called the Mu'tazilites. Washil's opinion about the position between infidels and believers became a Mu'tazilite ideology known as *al-manzilah baina al-manzilataini* (Mibtadin, 2020).



Differences in political standards that turned into theological differences were increasingly widespread and penetrated various fields. Debates that were originally only about the status of the perpetrators of major sins spread in other cases. Among them is God's destiny. In this chapter, there are two schools of kalam known as Jabariyah and Qadariyah. Jabariyah, popularized by Ja'ad ibn Dirham and Jahm ibn Shafwan, adheres to the concept of forced man. Whatever man does is God's destiny. Humans cannot determine their actions (Pakatuwo & Mawaddah, 2021). This doctrine describes mausia as like a robot that is controlled but cannot control itself. On the contrary, Qadariyah, popularized by Ma'bad al-Jauhani and Ghailan al-Dimasyqi, actually considers that there is no interference of God in human actions. Whatever humans do is their own will (Pakatuwo & Mawaddah, 2021).

The wider the debate surrounding this kalam, the less wild the discussion. This condition is like smoke that has been released into the air. If allowed to continue, it will be dangerous for the condition of the people in the future. Thus, Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari emerged as a mediator. Inviting the ummah to return the problem to the basic framework left by the Prophet, steamy al-Quran and al-Sunnah. This school is known as al-Asharite. On the other hand, Abu Mansyur al-Maturidi also appeared with a similar ideology, which both put forward the Quran and al-Sunnah. However, it uses a greater understanding of reason than the Asharites. Abu Mansyur's thoughts are known as al-Maturidiyah (Adnin & Zein, 2020).

These last two schools are known as Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. It is called ahl al-Sunnah because it puts forward revelation and al-Jama'ah because it has many followers (Nasution H., Islamic Theology, Schools of Comparative History, 2011). The al-Asharite and al-Maturidiyah schools, called Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, later also received criticism from various figures. Among these figures is Ibn Taymiyah al-Harrani. Among the criticisms leveled at al-Ashariyah and al-Maturidiyah was about menakwil menakwil verses of Mutasyabihāt. According to Ibn Taymiyah, these verses are quite understood as the text and should not be transferred in meaning to others (Miolo & Arif, 2021). Ibn Taymiyyah's ideology later became known as the Salafi movement. It was named because of his massive invitation to understand religion in accordance with the early generation of understanding (salaf). Ibn Taymiyah al-Harrani's movement received a positive response from various circles, such as Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab al-Tamimi. The thought of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab is considered an extension of Ibn Taymiyyah's thought. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's ideology is widely known as the Wahabi movement (Miolo & Arif, 2021). Although his followers rejected the name, they gave the title Wahhabi to the followers of Abd al-Wahhab ibn Rustum.

The above conditions make Muslims even more divided. The sectoral ego is getting stronger, and the sense of unity is weakening. Each group quarrels with each other about truth claims. Islam commands us not to divide. As mentioned in the Quran,

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

"and cling to the ropes (religion) of Allah and do not divorce" (Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 103)



The same thing is also explained in one of the Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him);

الْجَمَاعَةُ رَحْمَةٌ وَالْفُرْقَةُ عَذَابٌ (رواه أحمد)

"*Congregation is mercy, and division is doom.*" (H.R. Ahmad)

The above verses and hadiths are shari'ah statements in nash in order to avoid division. Among the causes is the emergence of sectarianism in religion, which leads to truthful claims and accusations of wrongdoing.

### Conclusion

The seeds of division had begun to emerge after the death of the Prophet SAW. This condition could be suppressed by the election of Abu Bakr until the end of Uthman's first half-rule. The roots of the split resurfaced in terrible form when Uthman was killed at the hands of rebels. After the killing of Uthman, it made the situation for the people even more chaotic. Ali, who took allegiance to become caliph, also had difficulty stabilizing the situation. Ali's unwillingness to investigate Uthman's murderer stigmatized Ali's involvement in it. But the involvement of Ali and other companions of the prophet has been disputed by many scholars.

The stabilization of Ali's government continued to erode. Conflicts with various circles that cause confrontation among Muslims are inevitable. Jamal's war between Ali and Aisha was supported by Talha and Zubayr. Then the Shiffin war between Ali and Mua'awiya ended with Tahkim. Including the betrayal of 'Amr ibn 'Ash when politicizing the results of tahkim. This situation makes Muslims more defensive. From the initial conditions, political problems in Uthman's time continued to develop into the realm of theology. Until various sectarians appeared in Islam, Sectatironia that makes the ummah weaker in the midst of a majority position.



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