CHAPTER IV.

THE GENESIS OF THE 'AZARIQA.

The Kharijites from Mecca entered al-Basra at a time when 'Ubaidullah b. Ziyad was just nearing his final downfall. Here at al-Basra their ranks were further augmented by a number of old Kharijites, estimated at four hundred, whom 'Ubaidullah, in a moment of weakness, ordered to be released from prison when his authority dwindled after the death of Yazid(1). According to another account (2), the Kharijites themselves broke open the door of the prison-house when the people rose against 'Ibn Ziyad, and joined 'Afi and his party. However that may be, this new accession of strength gave a fillip to their activities. They took full advantage of the preoccupation of the Basrans with their own dissensions and went on vigorously preaching their own faith, disseminating sedition and exhorting the people to rise against all 'unjust rulers and tyrants'. In the feud between al-'Azid and the Tamīm, they, except a few who participated in it, adopted a perfectly neutral and isolationist attitude and strictly adhered to it(3).

But the Kharijites had been the common enemy of both the 'Azid and the Tamīm. They were looked upon by all the people of

(1). Kam. 610; Anon. 79.
(2). Tab. 2/517 1. 20).
(3). Kam. 610.
al-Basra as a common danger not only to their peace but also to the prosperity of their trade and commerce which had, on many occasions, suffered greatly as a result of the Kharijites rendering the up-country communications unsafe. It was only their internal troubles that for a time diverted their attention from the activities of the Kharijites in their very midst. As soon as they were relieved of their own anxieties, they turned at once and without delay to the Kharijites and determined that they should not be tolerated any more. This stiff attitude of the Basrans or, perhaps, even actual threats from them made the Kharijites apprehend imminent trouble and soon they departed for al-`Ahwāz in the end of Shawwal, 64 A.H. (1).

Except for `Abdullāh b. `Aṣfar, `Abdullāh b. `Ibad and a few others of their way of thinking, nearly all of the Kharijites made a trek to al-`Ahwāz. The number of those assembled at al-`Ahwāz reached 350 and ʿAlī b. al-`Azraq was appointed to their leadership.

Hitherto the Kharijites had known no differences of a fundamental nature. All of them were united in the basic principles of their faith. The creed of `Abū Bilāl Mirdūs b. `Ubayya, a veteran chief who had taken part in the battle of al-Nahrawān and rose to leadership during the days of `Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, was still the creed of them all (2).

(1). Anon. 79; I Ath. 4/32.
(2). Kam. 610; Tab. 2/517.
The creed of Mirdas was that of 'al-intibāgh', i.e., peaceful isolation. According to him, it was impossible to stay where the tyrants and the unjust held sway but the alternative of an armed revolt was also too hideous to be countenanced. He, therefore, adopted the mid-way of 'fleeing with one's faith' in order to escape from and avoid submission to, the unjust rule of the heretic tyrants. At the same time Mirdas expressly and unequivocally declared that his intentions were quite peaceful. He would not spread disorder nor would he terrorise any one. He will not draw his sword against any one except in defence and he would never make the communications unsafe. But he and his followers would not hesitate to take forcibly their annuities—of course, the legitimate amount no more no less—from the State revenue and would, of course, collect the tax from the land they defended and guaranteed (1). Mirdas also acknowledged the permissibility of 'al-taqiyya' or dissembling in face of danger.

It will be observed that the creed of Mirdas was not at all aggressive or violent in its conception although in practice it did often times lead to the contrary.

For one month, Nāfi' and his followers remained quite peaceful at al-'Āhwāz. Then suddenly Nāfi' developed the radical and almost revolutionary views that have since formed the creed of the 'Azāriqa, which is the distinctive name of the Kharijite sect founded by him.

(1) Kam. 585-87.
THE CREED OF NAFI.

Briefly, the following are the cardinal principles of this new creed (1):

1. Every one who does not believe in the doctrines of the 'Azariqa is a 'mushrik' i.e. outside the pale of Islam. Hence, it is prohibited to partake of an animal slaughtered by him or to have any relations with him by way of marriage or inheritance.

2. 'Al-Taqiyya' both in word and in deed, is unlawful and the 'Qad' i.e., the Abstainers or the passive Muslims (Kharijites) are to be treated the same way as the non-believers.

3. Further, the opponents are to be placed in the same category as the non-Muslims of Arabia. Either they should come over to Islam, — (Islam as defined by the 'Azariqa) —, or they should be put to the sword. Jizya was not to be accepted from them.

4. The country is to be regarded as 'Dar al-Kufr'. Therefore, it is lawful for the true Muslims (i.e., the 'Azariqa themselves) to spill the blood and to seize the property of all the inhabitants except those who declared their 'Iman, — ('Iman in the sense that they understood it).

5. The women and minor children of those regarded as infidels have only a place in the Hell. Hence, it is quite legitimate to kill them.

(1). From Kam. 610 seq.; Tab. 2/513; Anon. 80 seq.; Shah. 89 seq.
6. Whenever a new person came to join the settlement of the 'Azariqa it was necessary to hold an 'al-'Imtihan' or an enquiry into his religious views.

Such was the militant creed of the 'Azariqa. In a word, they deemed it their religious duty to exterminate all those who differed from them. Even the lives of women and innocent children were not to be spared.

It was obvious from the very beginning that even all the Kharijites themselves did not find it possible to go the whole hog with Nafi'. The result could be but a split in their own ranks. Henceforth, they were divided among themselves. Najdah b. 'Amir who had followed Nafi' to al-'Awaz was the first to dissent from him. Having failed to dissuade Nafi' from the new course he had set for himself, he left him and went away to al-Yamamah. 'Abdullâh b. Saffar, 'Abdullâh b. 'Ibâd and 'Abû Baihas founded separate schisms of their own. It is needless here to enter into a discussion about the points of agreement and difference among them as we are concerned with the 'Azariqa alone. So we pass on to the subsequent history of the 'Azariqa.

With the dawn of the year 65 Nafi' elaborated and vigorously pressed forward with his radical views till seven months after his arrival in al-'Awaz (1) he rushed headlong into the path of indiscriminate slaughter. Consequently the morale of the whole population even in the distant corners of the province was badly shaken and panic spread throughout the land. Nafi' s power, rather his terror grew as every day passed and his agents

(1). Anon. 95.
established themselves in many parts of al-Sawād.

These happenings at last perturbed the people of al-Bašra. Perhaps it was the actual advance of Nāfi' towards the capital that roused them to resistance. Anyhow, their perturbation was so great that many of them kept their camels by their side in order to be ready to leave the city any moment(1). They gathered round al-'Āhnaf b. Qais, the prominent chief of the Tamīm and told him that the enemy was only at two or three nights' distance from them. And the enemy was what they all knew, — cynically indifferent to slaughter and destruction. 12f]īn replied: "Verily, if the enemy gets the upper hand of you, he will do unto you as he has done in the suburbs. So, be earnest in your fight against him." Thereupon, ten thousand people flocked to al-'Āhnaf. Prominent men spoke to Babba and Babba appointed to their command Muslim b. 'Ubaïs b. Kuraiz b. Rabīʿah. Ibn 'Ubaïs was known to be a man of honesty and bravery and the force under his command also included many a learned man and theologian(2).

(1). THE BATTLE OF DŪLĀB.

Ibn 'Ubaïs sallied forth in Jumāda II, and continued his march onwards till he reached Dūlāb, a village at a distance of four farsakh from al-'Āhwāz (3), where he encountered Nāfi', who had a force 500 or 600 strong. A

(1). Anon. 93.
(2). Ibid
(3). Anon. 84, Dūlāb; Yaq. 2/622 Daulāb.
deadly fight ensued in which 'Ibn 'Ubaís fell on the battlefield and was succeeded by his own nominee, al-Rabî' b. 'Amr al-'Ajdham al-Ghudanî. Another close fight followed and resulted in the death of Nâfi' b. al-'Azraq (Jumâdâ II, 65 A.H.)(1).

The death of Nâfi' was not the end of the battle. 'Ubaidullah b. Bushair b. al-Mahûz(2) filled his place.

On the side of the Basrans al-Muhallab b. 'Amr al-'Ajdham al-Ghudanî and al-Hajjâj b. Bâb al-Imyari successively fought and fell before him (3). The battle had lasted for about a month when Haritha b. Badr al-Ghudanî took the banner in his hands. In the meantime the 'Azâriqa received a fresh accession of strength from al-Yamamah and it became impossible for the Basrans to withstand them. Haritha beat a retreat towards the Duja'il (Karûn) and crossed over to Nahr 'Tirâ (4), a town to the west of al-'Ahwâz. The 'Azâriqa were too wearied to pursue them.

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(1) Mas. (5/229) has quite incidentally dropped a hint that Nâfi' was killed at the hands of al-Muhallab in the year 65. Also according to Yqb. 2/317 and Bain 282, Nâfi' survived this battle till he was killed later on in an encounter with al-Muhallab. This version, however, does not merit any attention because it goes against established subsequent facts without offering any satisfactory alternative account. Mas. does not go beyond that mere hint. Yqb. (2/324) makes Nâfi' survive till the time of 'Abdu 'l-Malik which is as absurd as the omission by Bain of any mention of the leadership of al-Zubair b. 'Ali in succession to 'Ubaidullah b. al-Mahûz. Al-Shahrastânî (89-90) confirms that Nâfi' was killed before al-Muhallab's leadership.

(2) Anon.; Bushair; Tab. and Kam., Baghîr.

(3) The report of Highâm in Tab. 2/581 varies as regards the order of succession.

(4) The town of Nahr 'Tirâ (Anon. Taira) was situated on a river or canal of the same name which flowed into the Karkha from its right side. (Le Stra. 241).
The leader of the 'Azd in this battle was Qabīqa b. 'Abī Sufra, a brother of al-Muhallab and the grandfather of Hazār Mard (1). The whereabouts of al-Muhallab himself at this time cannot be ascertained. Dain. (280, 3) is obviously wrong in saying that he was acting as wālī of Khurasān on behalf of Ibn al-Zubair because it has already been established that he had long ago been ousted from that office by 'Abdullāh b. Khāzim, — a fact of which Dain has taken no notice at all.

(2). THE EXPEDITION OF 'UThMāN.

Again the 'Azārīqa continued their usual activities unabated in al-Ahwāz with 'Ubaidullāh b. Būshāir at their head. Three months elapsed after the death of 'Ābn 'Ubais and Babba made no further attempt to check them. He would not risk another encounter with them. This hesitant and inactive attitude at last tired the patience of the Basrans who made a representation to 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair requesting him that Babba be removed and another man appointed in his place. 'Ābn al-Zubair wrote to 'Anās b. Mālik to lead the prayers who did so for forty days and then came 'Umar b. 'Ubaidullāh b. Mā'mar as the new stattholder. Thus the dismissal of Babba must have taken place approximately about the end of Ramaḍān, 65 A.H. while the appointment of 'Umar b. 'Ubaidullāh must be placed forty days later i.e., in the month of Dhu 'l Qa'da, 65 A.H.

(1). Anon. 89; Agh. 6/4.
Umar b. Ubaidullah summoned his own brother Uthman to lead a fresh campaign against the Azariqa. Meanwhile the news of the new changes and the preparations of the Basrans against them reached the Azariqa who at once decided to take the initiative and advance towards al-Basra. Haritha b. Badr, who had all the time stayed at Nahr Tirā, made a bold attempt to intercept them and successfully pushed them back to Dūlāb.

A little later there came Uthman with a body of ten or twelve thousand soldiers from al-Basra. Accompanied by Haritha b. Badr he crossed the Dujail and met Ubaidullah b. Bushair at the old battle ground of Dūlāb. Uthman was brave to a fault; he was rash. Haritha b. Badr cautioned him at the very outset against judging the strength of the Azariqa by their numbers or underestimating their power in any way. But the overweening pride and the haughty over-confidence of Uthman would not let him heed the advice of an Iraqite. To him it was nothing but cowardice to hold back from a head-on clash. So he plunged forthwith into a straight and deadly fight the result of which was not in doubt for long. Within a few hours, Uthman was killed and his army put to flight (Dhu ‘l- Qa‘da, 65 A.H.)(1).

It again fell to the lot of Haritha b. Badr to push back the Azariqa so as to prevent them from pursuing the remnants of Uthman’s army. Haritha succeeded in effecting a retreat to Nahr Tirā while the Azariqa went back to al-Ahwāz.

The remnants of Uthman’s army reached al-Basra and added a great deal to the panic already prevailing there. (1). Anon. 93.
Ibn al-Zubair dismissed 'Umar b. 'Ubaidullah and appointed al-Harith b. 'Abdullah b. 'Abi Rabī'a called 'al-qubā' as his successor. The appointment of al-qubā' is mentioned by al-Tabarī under the year 65. It must, however, be noted that the report of Hiṣām b. Muḥammad on the authority of 'Abū Rikhnāf as given in Tab. (2/581 seq.) omits the mention of the governorship of 'Umar b. 'Ubaidullah b. Ma'mar and the expedition of 'Uthmān. Hence all subsequent chronology is ante-dated by several months. As compared with it the account in Anon., which is quite perfect and coherent, expressly avers (1) that the advent of al-qubā' came off only in 66 i.e., in the very early days of that year since the change of governorship was effected as a consequence of, and not long after, the failure of the expedition of 'Uthmān.

Hāritha was still at Nahr Tirā. His request for formal commission and reinforcements was rejected by al-qubā' who recollected him to al-Baṣra. Hāritha, however, refused to move until he was relieved by a successor. But soon the soldiers around him began to melt away till he found himself deserted by all except a small band of his own tribesmen. As soon as the 'Azāriqa learnt of the precarious position of Hāritha they crossed the Dujail and inflicted a night attack upon him. Hāritha was compelled to take to heels. He reached the bank of the Dujail and boarded a boat which, however, sank.

(1). Anon. 99.
References:

Anon. 78-101.
Tab. 2/517-20; 580-82.
Kam. 616-17 and 623-26.
Agh. 6/1-5.

(1). Anon. 100; Kam. 626. According to Tab. 2/585; Yaq. 4/268 Ḥarītha was drowned after the appointment of al-Muhallab.