

## The civil wars in Islam

### 1. Discuss the battle of Camel 36 AH

- i. This battle was between Ali and his followers and Aisha and her group.
- ii. Aisha demanded the new caliph to punish Othman's murders.
- iii. When caliph failed to do so, she decided to punish them herself. She was joined by Talha and Zubeir and raised a force of 3000 men and marched to Basra.
- iv. When the news reached Ali (RA), he led a large army to meet Aisha at Basra. He tried negotiation for peace, and succeeded.
- v. Some of the murders of Uthman who formed part of Ali's forces, feared that such understanding would lead to their punishment. At night they attacked both armies
- vi. Each side thought that it had been treachery attacked by the other.
- vii. Ali tried very hard to stop bloodshed but all in vain.
- viii. Final fighting broke out and Ali won the battle. Aisha was sent to Medina with her brother Muhammad and was treated well.
- ix. About ten Muslims died in this battle, Talha and Zubeir were killed while were running away.
- x. This was called the battle of camel, because Aisha who was leading it had mounted a camel.

### 2. Discuss the battle of Siffin 37AH

- i. The victory of the battle of camel gave caliph Ali (RA), sometime to consolidate his fold in Arabia, Egypt and Iraq
- ii. The whole empire had now accepted him as a caliph except Syria, where Muawitah was the governor.
- iii. The caliph sent a letter to Muawiyah instructing him to pledge his allegiance to him. Muawiyah replied he will do so, if the murders of Uthman been punished and Muslims choose their caliph freely.
- iv. Ali set out with a force of fifty thousand men to meet Muawiyah, who had prepared an army of eighty thousand at place called Siffin.

- v. Negotiations for peace followed but no good results came out of them and fierce fighting broke out.
- vi. When the Syrian army was defeated, Amr Ibn al-A`'s advised them to rise up copies of the Quran on spears and call for arbitration.
- vii. Ali knew this was just a trick and asked his army to go on. At this the army split into two, one section wanted to stop fighting while the other wanted to continue.
- viii. The caliph was forced to stop fighting and enter into talk with Muawiyah
- ix. The two sides then agreed to appoint two arbitrators, one from each side to settle the dispute by compromise.
- x. Abu Musa Al-Ashari was appointed on Ali`s side (though then against the wishes of Ali) and Amr bin Al-A`s was chose on the side of Muawiyah.
- xi. The agreement was endorsed by both sides and it was decided they would meet at a neutral spot in Damascus to give their judgment that would be based on the Quran and Sunnah
- xii. Amr proposed that both Caliph Ali and Muawiyah be deposed, and that matter be left to the Muslims to choose the caliph. Abu Musa agreed.
- xiii. When the two arbitrators emerged from their private to announce their decision. Amr played him a trick he asked Abu Musa to talk first because he was older.
- xiv. Abu Musa announced that they had reached an agreement to depose both Ali and Muawiyah and suggested to the people to choose a fit man of their choice to be caliph.
- xv. When Amr came to speak, he said that he agreed to the fact that Ali was unfit person but Muawiyah was a fit person to the office.
- xvi. This led to a situation which put Islam into a period crisis

### 3. Describe the Khawarij

- i. The Khawarij are the people who withdrew from Ali`s comp and formed independent opinion against both Ali and Muawiyah.
- ii. They strongly objected to the agreement at Siffin and wanted the battle to go on.

- iii. They chose Rabia as their leader and set their headquarters at a place called Naharawan. They were about 12000 people.
- iv. They worked for the principle that Allah alone is to be obeyed, arguing that both Ali and Muawiyah were in error and were to be eliminated.
- v. They opposed the institution of caliphate and killed anyone who accepted a caliph.
- vi. When their conduct became unbearable Ali sent prominent companion Abdullah bin Abbas to negotiate with them. Some agreed to come back to the fold of the caliph and some refused.
- vii. Ali marched upon them and defeated them. But the Kharij movement dispersed to other centres.

#### 4. **Define the fitna period**

The term Fitna means unrest, disturbance, disorder or turmoil. It refers to the civil war in Islam, which took place during the reign of Ali (RA).

#### 5. **Mention the Causes of Fitna**

- i. The murder of Uthman (RA).
- ii. The Sabaites factor
- iii. The struggle between the Ummayyads and the Hashimites
- iv. Selfish motives of individuals
- v. Opposition of lady Aisha (RAA).
- vi. The opposition of Khawarij.
- vii. Clan difference i.e. clan rivalry between the Banu Hashim and Banu Ummayya.

#### 6. **State the characteristics of the rightly guided caliphs**

- i. The four caliphs were dedicated to serve Islam on all their wealth and deeds.
- ii. Their government was according to the teachings of the holy Quran and Sunnah of the prophet (saw).
- iii. They balanced between spiritual and political growth in the life of the Ummah.
- iv. They were all elected by people.
- v. They led a very religious and pious life.

**7. The major achievements of the four caliphs**

- i. They maintained unity of the Muslim Ummah.
- ii. They spread Islam to distance lands.
- iii. They did expansion of the Muslim empire.
- iv. There was an organised central and local government.
- v. There was a sense of justice and fair play for all Muslims and non-Muslims during their reign.
- vi. There was an Islamic atmosphere through-out the empires.
- vii. There was administrative reforms and financial transformation.
- viii. There was introduction of Islamic calendar.
- ix. There was compilation of the Quran.

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