IBADHISM

The Cinderella Of Islam



By

Soud H. Al-Ma'awaly

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I was born, in what was the peaceful island of Zanzibar, of Ibadhi Muslim parents. My religious education started at home where I learnt to recite the Qur'an under an Omani teacher Maallim Nasser who had come from the village of Hubra in the Wilayat of Wadi-l-Maawil. We always remembered him for he did not spare his rod. It took me about a year to complete it, after which I was sent to a nearby mosque where religious classes were held after evening (Maghrib) prayers. Our teacher was the late Sheikh Said bin Rashid bin Slim Al Ghaithy, a maternal uncle of my father, who was later appointed a Qadhi. For our lessons, we used the textbook, Talqeen Subyaan by the late Al-Allamah Sheikh Abdullah bin Humaid Al-Saalmy; it was in fact a standard textbook for all Ibadhi pupils. We were the two of us, cousins of the same age; our elder cousins were studying Arabic grammar under the same teacher.

After the lessons, we were taught how to say our prayers; our instructor was the late Sheikh Nasser bin Issa bin Saleh Al-Harthy who had come from the village of Al Qabil in the Sharqia reqion of Oman. He settled in our village and married into our family to a cousin of my father. He later returned to Oman where he was appointed Wali of Al Qabil.

At the same time I attended a Government school in the mornings, one mile away from home. My first teacher was the late Sayyid Hamid Mansab who belonged to a religious Shareef family from Hadhramut. He was a rather tall, bulky figure and happened to be a fine artist, and also good at reciting the Qur'an (Tajweed). He taught us the fundamental principles of Islam by heart in the form of "qasseda" which made it easy for us to memorise them.

After finishing primary education I was sent to an intermediate boarding school eight miles away from home. Our teacher in charge of religious instruction was the late Sheikh Amor bin Ali bin Ameir Al Marhouby in addition to his other teaching and administrative duties. He was no stranger to me for he, like Sheikh Nasser bin Issa, had also married

in our family to another cousin of my father. There were separate religious classes for Sunnis and Ibadhis, but these were held in the mosques. There was one thing Sheikh Amour said in one of his lessons, which I still remember: -

> *The ibadhis believe that those who enter Hell will remain there forever whereas the other sects (the Sunnis) believe they will eventually get out of it after completing a prescribed period. He then explained that the Ibadhi stand was a safe one because if the Sunnis were right then we would still benefit from the amnesty and we too would come out of Hell since after all, we were all Muslims. But if they were wrong and we were right, it meant we had taken a precautionary stand which required us to work harder in this life to avoid going to Hell in the Hereafter.*

Sheikh Amor used a flexible approach; he did not go into intricate theological arguments by interpreting the relevant Qur`anic verses which we would not have understood, in any case, at our young age, nor did he say they were wrong and we were right as some sectarian extremists would have done. He left open the possibility of either side being right since nobody had gone to the Hereafter and come back with a report of the actual situation. Apart from these occasional side discussions about sectarian differences, there was never any friction among students either in the school or outside it.

But to my surprise, on coming to Arabia, the birthplace of Islam and of its founder, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) himself, I began to hear accusations against the Ibadhis. This prompted me to want to know more about the sect. So this work is the result of efforts to understand better the Islamic school to which our forefathers have belonged for a period of more than one thousand and three hundreds years. Until now there has been a lack of reliable books on the Ibadhi sect in English. Therefore it is published for the benefit of the English speaking Ibadhis who have limited knowledge of the Arabic language.

After the 1964 revolution in Zanzibar I attended afternoon lessons in Arabic and religious studies under an Egyptian teacher recruited by the Government. Everyone who attended had a secret intention of fleeing the island but nobody disclosed his plan to the other. On arrival in Muscat I resumed my studies by attending evening classes for adults arranged by the Ministry of Education. Our instructors were again Egyptian teachers. These classes were of great benefit and helped us to grasp the basic principles of the Arabic grammar.

THE BOOK'S TITLE:
CINDERELLA

Some of those who reviewed the book before publication were not happy with its title. They felt the name was reminiscent of a fairy-tale while Ibadhism was a fact which existed within the Islamic community. The word Cinderella means a person or thing of unrecognized or disregarded merit.

In all Islamic sects there are differences not only among themselves but also within each one of them. These differences are the result of disagreements in the interpretations of the Qur`an or Hadiths or historical events. They are tolerated and papered over if they occur within a group of sects. They are only magnified and made serious if the Ibadhi sect is involved.

And the fact that they share the same beliefs in the basic principles of Islam and that Ibadhis differ only in the subsidiary issues is not enough, in the eyes of the sectarian fanatics, to qualify them for full membership of the Islamic brotherhood. The sectarian fanatics are determined to exclude the sect from the mainstream of Islam and to treat them as heretics or even apostates.

For the reasons stated above, the author could find no better title than the one he has chosen for the book.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Even for a small book like this it is not possible to do all the necessary research and collect the essential materials without the help of others. First of all I would like to express my sincere gratitude to His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed bin Hamed Al Khalily for his patronage and for assigning some of the gentlemen mentioned below to peruse the manuscript. So I am particularly indebted to the following friends for supplying me with books of reference: -

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Many thanks to all including those who have preferred to be anonymous.

Author.

INTRODUCTION

Thanks to Allah, the Almighty for creating us in a world of infinite diversities in which people of different races, complexions, languages and religions live together; in each group some are tall, others short, some are fat while others are slim. Within each race, there are tribes and within a tribe, clans and within a clan, there are families. Thus the chain of varieties is endless, both in the animal and in the plant kingdoms. Life would have been boring and monotonous if the world we live in consisted of uniform creation, and thus we perceive the wisdom of Allah.

As in the physical, so in the spiritual world. There are different religions in which some people worship one God, some several gods, and others no god at all. So we have Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, paganism and several others. And in each religion there are sects, and in each sect further sub-divisions. Thus among Christians there are Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Protestants with their multiple sub-divisions. And so in Islam, we have Sunnis, Shias, and Ibadhis and in each sect there are sub-sects.

Strangely enough, the followers of each sect claim that their sect or madh-hab is the right one and the others are wrong or heretic. What is the basis of their claim? Have they studied the teachings of all religious schools and then come to the conclusion that their madh-hab is right and the rest wrong? No! In all honesty their claim is based on one factor and one factor alone, namely, that they happen to be born into that particular religion and sect, that is the religion and sect of their parents. A Sunni Muslim is so because he was born of Sunni parents, and the same is true of those born of parents of other religious denominations. In other words, we belong to a particular madh-hab by accident of birth, and not by choice. It is true, though, there are some people who change from one faith to another but those are relatively very small in number, they are the exception to the rule. The general rule is that millions of people are born every day into one or other of the world's religions, and into one or other of the madh-hab of their parents.

The influence of parents at home and teachers at school on children is tremendous and indelible. If a parent persistently and over a long period of time tells his child, for example, that the sun is god and at the same time enumerates the various benefits the sun bestows on man, the child will eventually grow up to worship the sun. The father can go on with his indoctrination by telling his son or daughter that anyone who does not believe the sun is god is an infidel (kafir) and should therefore be killed. Children brought up under such religious environment grow up to become blind, fanatic adherents of their religion or sect. In the above example, the sun has been selected as an object of worship but the reader can substitute the dogma of his madh-hab for the sun and he will find it fits in perfectly. Many of us are thus the products, if not the slaves, of our upbringing and parent's prejudices.

What is to be done then? The solution is, while giving religious lessons to children, we should at the same time make them respect other people's religions and madh-habs. In this way we should be able to promote an atmosphere of religious tolerance, understanding and respect for people of other faiths and sects. In actual fact the majority of people work towards that end, but unfortunately there are a few religious and sectarian fanatics in positions of influence who are bent on fomenting dissension and misunderstanding among people of different religions and sects. In secular societies parents refuse to have their children indoctrinated with religious teachings and prefer them to make their own free choice when they grow up as adults. Finally since we blindly adopt the religion or madh-hab of our parents we have no right to criticize other religions or sects. It would have been different if our religious or sectarian beliefs were based on rational grounds. But, regrettably, for some sects, rationalism is tantamount to heresy!!.

Ibadhism is one of the most misunderstood Islamic sects, and is wrongly considered as one of the Khawarij group of sects that are regarded as heretic or even apostate that has deviated from the mainstream of Islam. This is not the opinion of all Muslim scholars, at least at present, but it is still held by a core of sectarian fanatics partly as a result of ignorance and prejudice and partly due to political ambitions to dominate all or part of the

Islamic world. The main issues of contention between the Ibadhis and some other sects are two, the first arising from historical events which happened after the death of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) or, to be more precise, during the third and fourth administrations of Caliph Uthman and Caliph Ali respectively. The second issue of dispute results from the interpretation of certain Qur'anic verses dealing with the events expected to take place in the Hereafter. Fortunately there are no serious disagreements in the present life as to the forms of worship, for we all pray five times a day together, fast during Ramadhan together and perform pilgrimage once a year together at the same place and time, and most important of all, we all believe in the same one God who has no partner, and in the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as the last of His messengers. We are also generally agreed on what acts are lawful (halal) and what acts are unlawful (haram) with probably a few minor differences.

I will deal first with the historical issues.

PART 1 – HISTORICAL

CHAPTER – 1

The caliphate of Uthman bin Affan (644-656 C.E.) (23 AH-35 AH)

References: -

1. **Professor Masud-ul-Hassan, History of Islam, Vol.1 (Lahore, 1987).**
2. تاريخ الخلفاء للأمام جلال الدين السيوطي (بيروت١٩٩٦)
3. **Dr Amr Khalifa Ennami, Studies in Ibadhism.**
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CHAPTER 1

Caliph Uthman bin Affan

The Ibadhis are some times criticized for finding faults in Caliph Uthman for his handling of the administration. Therefore it would be wise to trace the historical events from the time of his rule, for the first signs of Islamic disunity began to appear in his Caliphate. Seyyidna Uthman was one of the close Companions (Sahabas) of the Holy Prophet and the third Caliph who ruled from the year 23 to 35 AH (644-656 C.E). He had married the two daughters of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), first Ruqayya and after her death Umm Kulthum, for which he was known as Dhu-Nurain (the possessor of two lights).

Caliph Uthman bin Affan was a wealthy merchant who always made generous contributions for the cause of Islam whenever the need arose. But the most important contribution he made was the commissioning of the Companion Zeid bin Thabit and other Sahabas to produce an authentic version of the Qur'an in the standard Arabic dialect prevailing in Mecca at the time of revelation. As a result of this sacred assignment, the final version of the Qur'an was completed and all previous copies were destroyed. If it was not for this noble effort on his part, there would have been different versions of the Holy Book and sectarian differences would have multiplied, if not intensified.

But Seyyidna Uthman, in spite of his outstanding achievements, was after all a human being, and like all other human beings, he was prone to make mistakes, a simple truth, which some Islamic scholars tend to ignore or forget. And so in his administration of the Islamic state, there were a number of instances of public corruption (misuse of public funds) and nepotism (distribution of public offices to relatives and friends); in other words high positions of state were awarded not on the basis of merit but through kinship and friendship (القرابة و الصداقة). At this juncture it would be well to quote from Prof. Masud-ul-Hassan of Pakistan in his book, The History of Islam (Vol. 1 pp. 125-126), about the situation: -

> *"By 652 C.E. disaffection mounted very high among the people. Hadhrat Uthman commissioned his agents to visit Kufa, Basra, Damascus and Egypt, and report about the genuiness of the complaints against the administration. The agents deputed to Basra, Kufa, and Damascus reported that the complaints were frivolous and did not merit any consideration. The agent deputed to Egypt... came to hold the view that the complaints were genuine, namely:*
>
> (1) *That the distinguished Companions (Sahabas) had been removed from high offices and in their places inexperienced young men belonging to the Umayyad clan and closely related to Caliph Uthman had been appointed;*
>
> (2) *That the money from the Bait-ul-Mal had been misused, and his favorites had been awarded large amounts out of public funds... ... ...*
>
> (3) *That copies of the Holy Qur'an had been burnt which was sacrilege;*
>
> (4) *That in the matter of prayers on the occasion of the pilgrimage certain innovations had been introduced which carried no religious sanction;*
>
> (5) *That his uncle Hakam bin Al Aas who had been exiled by the Holy Prophet had been recalled by him (Uthman) to Medina and honoured;*

(6) *Hadharat Abu Dhar Ghifari, an eminent companion who was a vehement critic of Othman's financial administration was banished to a remote village in the interior of Hejaz where he spent the rest of his life in prayers and meditations."*

Professor Masud-ul-Hassan goes on: -

> *"Unfortunately things were allowed to drift and the situation steadily deteriorated. The rebels from various parts of the country swarmed Medina. Hadhrat Uthman was besieged in his house. The Umayyads betrayed the cause of Hadhrat Uthman and fled to Syria. On 17th June, 656 CE, the besiegers scaled the walls, entered the room where Hadhrat Uthman was reading the Qur'an. Hadhrat Uthman was martyred by his own men who professed to be Muslims."*

But Jalalu Din Assuyuti, the author of تاريخ الخلفاء (The History of the Caliphs 2nd Edition p.144) gives the following detailed version of the tragedy: -

وجاء علي إلى إمرأة عثمان فقال لها من قتل عثمان؟
قالت لا أدري ، دخل عليه رجلان لا أعرفهما ومعهما محمد بن أبي بكر ، و أخبرت عليا والناس بما صنع محمد ، فدعا علي محمدا فسأله عما ذكرت إمرأة عثمان ؟
فقال محمد : لم تكذب ، قد دخلت عليه و أنا أريد قتله فذكرني أبي فقمت عنه و أنا تائب إلى الله تعالى ، والله ما قتلته ولا أمسكته فقالت إمرأته صدق ولكنه أدخلهما .

> "(Seyyidna) Ali came to the wife of (Caliph) Uthman and asked her, *Who killed Uthman?,* She said, *I do not know, two men entered upon him with Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, I do not know them.* She informed Ali and the people what Muhammad had done. Ali called Muhammad and asked him about what Uthman's wife had mentioned. Muhammad said, *she is not lying, I have by Allah entered upon him (Uthman) and I wanted to kill him. But he reminded me of my father and so I left him and I now turn to Allah in*

repentance. By Allah, I did not kill him nor seize him. Uthman's wife said, *he speaks the truth, but he brought both of them inside.* (Translation by the author).

The administration of Caliph Uthman has engendered a great deal of comments and controversy and Jalalu Din Assuyuti has conveyed to us the following reports in his book, The History of the Caliphs (pp.139, 141): -

وفي سنة خمس وعشرين عزل عثمان سعدا عن الكوفة ، وولى الوليد بن عقبة بن أبي معيط وهو صحابي أخو عثمان لأمه وذلك أول ما نقم عليه ، لأنه آثر أقاربه بالولايات ، وحكى أن الوليد صلى بهم الصبح أربعا وهو سكران ، ثم التفت إليهم فقال أزيدكم ؟

"And in the year 25 H, *Uthman discharged Sa'ad from (the governorship of) Kufa and appointed Al Waleed bin Uqba bin Abi Mu'iit who was a Companion and maternal brother of Uthman. And that was the first complaint against him because he favoured his relatives in the administration of districts. And it is reported that Al Waleed led their morning prayers with four (prostrations) while he was drunk, then turned to them and said, shall I lead you some more (rakaat)?"* (Translation by the Author)

وفي سنة خمس وثلاثين كان مقتل عثمان .

و قال الزهري: ولي عثمان للخلافة اثنتي عشر سنة يعمل ستة سنين لا ينقم الناس عليه شيئا ، ثم توانى في أمرهم واستعمل أقرباءه وأهل بيته في الستة الأواخر ، وكتب لمروان بخمس أفريقية ، وأعطى أقرباءه وأهل بيته المال ، وتأول في ذلك الصلة التي أمر الله بها، وقال : إن أبا بكر وعمر تركا من ذلك ما هو لهما ، و إني أخذته فقسمته في أقربائي ، فأنكر الناس عليه ذلك ، أخرجه إبن سعد .

"And in the 35th year, Uthman was assassinated. Azzuhairy said, *Uthman took charge of the Caliphate for twelve years. For (the first) six years there was no complaint against him... ... . He then neglected them in their affairs and employed his relatives and his household*

in the last six years. He allotted one-fifth of the African (booty) to Marwan, and gave wealth to his relatives and members of his household, and attributed that to what Allah has ordered (given) as gift. And (Uthman) said, *Abu Bakr and Umar renounced what was their entitlement, while I have taken it and divided it up among my relatives. The people censured him for that (it was stated by Ibn Sa'ad)".* (Translation by the Author)

The above accounts were presented by non-Ibadhi scholars on the situation prior to the murder of Caliph Uthman. Let us now see what an Ibadhi scholar, Dr. Amr Khalifa Ennami of Libya has written in his book, Studies in Ibadhism (pp.151-152):

"Ibadhi authorities reported five detergent (?) (divergent) attitudes held by the Companions (Sahabas) concerning the question of Uthman: -

a) Those who held that Uthman deserved to be killed by Muslims for his innovations. The Muslims tried for six years to make him change them, and keep the path of his predecessors or resign. When he refused to agree with them they killed him. Among this group were the Companions Abdullah bin Masud, Ammar bin Yasir, Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari, Abdul Rahman bin Awf, Amr bin Muhammad bin Maslamah, and Zaid bin Thabit and most of the Ansaris.

b) Those who held that the question of civil war (fitna) was a matter of personal judgment (Ijtihad). Some even say that both sides were correct. This later opinion is ascribed to Ali bin Abi Talib.

c) Those who say that Uthman had repented for his innovations, and that he was killed after he had repented, therefore his opponents were wrong. This was the opinion of the Companions Talha, Al-Zubair and A'isha.

d) Those who reserved their opinion on the civil war and refused to take part in it...Among those were Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas, Abdullah bin Umar, Muhammad bin Maslamah and others.

e) Finally, the attitude of Ma'awiya and Amr bin Al'As who held that Uthman was right all the way and claimed revenge for his death".

It is important to bear in mind that at the time of the murder of Caliph Uthman there were no Khawarij. They were simply all Muslims. The Ibadhi scholar Dr. Amr K. Ennami has merely summarized the position of different Companions who were contemporaries of the event. Ibadhi scholars might have later adopted the opinions of the first group of Sahabas who held strong views against Uthman's administration. They did not form an independent opinion of their own on the issue but merely agreed with the stand taken by the first group of Companions. In Arab tradition it is considered improper to criticize another person especially if that person is a ruler considered infallible. Their personal relationships are generally governed by 'mujamala' or flattery, which in other cultures is considered hypocrisy. So when the so-called Khawarij publicly voiced criticisms against Caliph Uthman previously expressed by a group of Companions privately, they were immediately branded heretics.

Some Muslim scholars consider it heresy to criticize any of the four rightly guided Caliphs or even some of the Sahabas. That was understandable up to about fifty years back when people were expected to render blind obedience to rulers. But today rulers themselves, because of the complexity of modern administration, have established parliaments or consultative councils in which representatives of the people sit together with Government officials to consider, among other things, any new policies or measures to be introduced; and if the representatives find faults in them, it is their duty to draw them to the attention of the authorities. Constructive criticism is something to be welcome and acceptable today in modern administration because only through such cooperation can we avoid confrontation and repetition of the same mistakes. It is something of a surprise that Islamic scholars of some other denominations should censure Ibadhis for endorsing the criticisms levelled by some Companions against Uthman's administration. Since the first four Caliphs were regarded infallible, public corruption and nepotism worsened during the administration of Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, and in many Muslim countries today it is as rampant as it was during the last six years of Uthman's rule because Muslims have failed to learn from the lessons of history.

In general the issue of the Caliphate of Uthman is a historical, though a controversial one but should not be the cause of discord in the Muslim community today. It is irrelevant because none of the existing sects took part in it. But enemies of Islamic unity keep recalling it repeatedly and putting the blame on the Ibadhis as if they were the ones who killed him. The Ibadhis recognize the Caliphate of Uthman and have no dispute with him in the matter of religion. In fact the collection of Hadiths by Imam Rabi' which the Ibadhis rely on has recorded several traditions narrated by Uthman and here are some examples: -

الحديث رقم ٤٦ من مسند الربيع ، قال عثمان : سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول : (سيكون من بعدي أمراء يقرؤون كما تقرؤون ويعملون ما تنكرون وليس لأولئكم طاعة)

Uthman said: I heard Allah's Messenger saying: -

There will come after me rulers who read as you read and do what you disapprove; they do not deserve obedience.

* * *

الحديث رقم ١٠١ من مسند الربيع ، قال عثمان بن عفان : سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول : (ما من امرئ يتوضأ فيحسن وضوءه لصلاته ثم يصليها إلا غفر الله له ما بينها وبين الصلاة الأخرى حتى يصليها)

Hadith No. 101

Uthman bin Affan Said: "I heard the Prophet (Peace be upon him) saying: -

'No person who has taken ablution well for his prayers, then says his prayers but Allah forgives (his sins) till he performs the next prayers"

* * *

الحديث رقم ٥١٩ من مسند الربيع ، قال عثمان بن عفان : سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : (لا ينكح المحرم و لا ينكح ولا يخطب).

Hadith No.519

Uthman bin Affan said:- "The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said,

'A pilgrim in ritual consecration shall not get married nor shall he give in marriage, nor shall he propose marriage''

The acceptance by Ibadhi scholars of the traditions narrated by Uthman bin Affan has been explained by Dr. Amr K. Ennami in his book, 'Studies in Ibadhism (p.256) as follows:-

> *"Needless to say this "bara-ah" (dissociation) of the Ibadhis from such Companions concerned only their political activities and not their knowledge of religion. Ibadhi jurists as is evident from the Ibadhi sources presenting legal and theological opinions from Ali bin Abi Talib, Uthman bin Affan and others accept their legal opinions. Even Muawiyah, of whom the Ibadhis strongly disapprove, was one of the persons from whom Jabir bin Zaid narrated Traditions of the Holy Prophet".*

In other words the so-called Khawarij dissociated themselves from Uthman, Ali and Muawiyah not on religious but on political grounds. But the Islamic community is misled to believe that the Khawarij are apostates who have broken away from the mainstream of Islam. When we come to Seyyidna Ali we will also quote the Traditions transmitted through him and recognized by the Ibadhis. Most of these traditions have been confirmed by later collectors of Hadiths.

CHAPTER – 2

1. Prof. Masud-ul-Hassan, History of Islam (Lahore, 1987).
2. Dr. Amr Khalifa Ennami, Studies in Ibadhism.
3. Dr. Majid Ali Khan, The Pious Caliphs (Kuwait, 1987).
4. تاريخ الخلفاء للإمام جلال الدين السيوطي (بيروت١٩٩٦)
5. مسند الإمام الربيع الجامع الصحيح

CHAPTER 2

Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib

Imam Ali was the fourth and last of the rightly guided Caliphs. He was a close companion of the Holy Prophet as well as his cousin and son-in law. He was brought up by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and was one of the first to convert to Islam. On the death of Uthman, Seyyidna Ali was proclaimed his successor in the year 35AH (656 CE). His tenure of office which lasted four years only was clouded with tension and crisis. He had many enemies and the Khawarij were certainly not the only ones.

The crisis, which had erupted during the Caliphate of Uthman, spilt over to his successor and prolonged until Seyyidna Ali was murdered. At the beginning of his rule, the Muslim community was divided into two main groups; one, the supporters of Uthman (Uthmaniyyun) led by Muawiya (a distant cousin of Uthman) who wanted to avenge his murder, and the other, the supporters of Ali. For the first time, Muslims fought each other on three occasions.

The first battle was fought in Basra in December 656 CE, six months after Ali was proclaimed Caliph. This was known as the battle of the Camel, so called because Seyyida Aisha (the Prophet's widow) was riding on a camel watching the conduct of the war. She and the Companions Talha and

Al Zubair were on the side of the avengers, but the latter two were killed during the fighting. Seyyidna Ali won the battle and there was no split among his supporters.

But the ghost of Uthman was still haunting the two parties to the conflict, and so the following year another battle flared up at Siffiin. When Muawiya felt he was going to lose the battle he proposed a truce. Among Ali's supporters were some in favour of it and some against. Seyyidna Ali was at first hesitant but eventually agreed to it. Those who opposed the truce and subsequent arbitration came to be known as the Khawarij. Under the terms of the truce, an arbitration committee was formed comprising two arbitrators, one nominated by each side to settle the question of who should be the Caliph between the two contenders – Seyyidna Ali or Muawiya.

Muawiya nominated Amr bin Al'Aas, the former Governor of Egypt to represent him in the arbitration proceedings, and Abu Musa Ash'ari was appointed to represent Seyyidna Ali; Abu Musa was the former Governor of Kufa. The two arbitrators met at Tabuk towards the end of 657 CE; they met in private to discuss the issue when Abu Musa, Ali's representative, hinted on deposing both claimants and holding fresh elections, to which Amr in Al'Aas agreed. When the formal session was held in the presence of a large crowd of followers of both sides, Abu Musa rose to say that in order to end the conflict among the Ummah (the nation) over the question of the Caliphate it was agreed to depose his principal Ali. Thereupon Amr bin Al-Aas took the stage, and said that since Ali was deposed, the only claimant left in the field was Muawiyah, and as such the verdict of the arbitrators implied that, as Muawiyah was the only candidate for the office, he was now the Caliph.

This was a fraud and betrayal pure and simple, and the meeting ended in great uproar. Here it can be clearly seen that the so-called Khawarij were right in dissociating themselves from the arbitration and truce. As with all historical records it is difficult to know the exact truth because there were several contradictory versions about the detailed events, each depending on the doctrinal disposition of the historian and the time it was written.

When Seyyidna Ali came to know of the results of arbitration proceedings, he repudiated them as a sheer betrayal. He accordingly decided to go to war against the people of Sham. Ali apprised the Khawarij of his decision, and wanted them to join his forces, but they refused to participate on the ground that the war was for worldly ends. But despite the defection of the Khawarij, Ali mustered a considerable force. These preparations took a few months, but when Seyyidna Ali was on the point of ordering a march to Syria, the army generals advised him to eliminate the menace of the Khawarij. Therefore he first directed a campaign against them in December 658 CE when he led his forces to Nahrawan. The Khawarij were heavily outnumbered and practically wiped out. So Ali won the victory in the battle of Nahrawan but that was not the end of the struggle.

After Nahrawan, Ali wanted to march to Syria but the army, strangely enough, insisted to go back to Kufa to take some rest. Back in Kufa, he faced another crisis. Most of the people killed in Nahrawan were from Kufa and many of their relatives were there, and so there was a general atmosphere of grief, which made people pause and wonder what they were fighting for and shedding so much blood among themselves. And so the expedition to Sham (or Syria) was abandoned because of lack of support. There again the Khawarij were right when they refused to go to Syria and fight because they said the war was for materialistic interests. It was not a war of 'Jihad' any more. They were right, as they were right before when they repudiated arbitration because it turned out to be a deceit. Seyyidna Ali was betrayed twice, first by his representative Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari in the arbitration committee, and secondly by his army generals who advised him to fight the Khawarij first but after defeating them, they refused to go and fight in Syria on the pretext that they wanted to go back and rest in Kufa.

Hadhrat Ali came to be overwhelmed with troubles from all quarters and the painful tragedy was that they came from friends. So in January 661 CE he was mortally wounded by one Abdul Rahman Muljam in revenge for the massacre of the relatives of his wife at the battle of Nahrawan.

The above account is a summarized version of the events during the short rule of Seyyidna Ali until his death as given by Prof. Masud-ul-Hassan

in his book, The History of Islam. The professor adds the following comments: -

> *"The battle of Siffin (صفين) gave birth to an unhappy secession movement among the men who had originally supported Hadhrat Ali, and had fought for him. These men came to be known as the Khawarij – the seceders. It was under their pressure that Hadhrat Ali had agreed to arbitration proceedings. After the conclusion of the truce, these men assembled at Haraura near Kufa and elected their leader".*

Ibadhi sources do not accept that Seyyidna Ali agreed to arbitration under their pressure, for Dr. Amr Khalifa Ennami of Libya in his Studies of Ibadhism (p.255) comments as follows (quoting from Muhammad bin Mahbub Sirah, MS):-

> *"According to the Ibadhis, Muawiya and his supporters were the rebellious party and Ali had to fight them till they reverted to God's commandment, that is, the rule of the legal Caliph. The acceptance of arbitration by Ali meant his deposition from the Caliphate, a fact which displeased a group of Muslims and obliged them to choose a new Imam, Abdullah bin Wahb Al-Rasbi. The Ibadhis hold that the people of Nahrawan were right, and Ali bin Abi Talib was wrong for accepting arbitration in the first place, and secondly for fighting the people of Nahrawan."*

As regards Muawiya bin Abi Sufyan, Abdullah bin Ibadh described him in the following words: -

> *"We do not know anyone of the people who were more callous (i.e. insensitive) to the distribution of wealth according to the laws laid down by God than he, nor anyone more indifferent towards the commandment of God than he, nor anyone blood-shedding than he".*
>
> (Studies in Ibadhism, p.256).

The periods of the Caliphates of Uthman and Ali were critical in the history of Islam. From the times of the Holy Prophet, Abu Bakar, Umar and up to the first six years of Uthman, the Islamic State was solidly united. With the expansion of the Islamic empire, more countries were conquered, and more wealth was acquired but its distribution was less equitable. Corruption of public property was rampant as was the allocation of high public offices to relatives and friends. Cracks in the Islamic unity began to appear in the last six years of his rule and, after his murder, they widened to a point of no return. Those who had been supporters of Uthman headed by Muawiya became deadly opponents of Ali, the new Khalifa.

The so-called Khawarij fought on the side of Imam Ali in the battles of the Camel and Siffin against the forces of Muawiyah. When the victory was in sight and in favour of Ali, Muawiya proposed a truce and arbitration. The Khawarij turned down the proposal but Ali accepted it. When the arbitration was held the results turned against him because of a trick devised by Muawiya's representative in the arbitration committee. Bearing in mind that Ali was the lawful Khalifa appointed and accepted by the people, then who was the rebel or Khariji who broke away from the Islamic State?

1. Was it not Muawiya the real Khariji and rebel who refused from the beginning to recognize Ali as the lawful Khalifa?
2. Were it not Muawiya and the Uthmaniyun the real Khawarij who fought against the lawful Khalifa Ali bin Abi Talib at the battle of the Camel and Siffin in which thousands of Muslims lost their lives?
3. Were it not Muawiya and Amr bin Al'Aas the real Kharijis who manipulated the arbitration to depose Ali from the office of Caliphate?
4. Was it not Muawiya the real Khariji who bribed Hassan bin Ali bin Abi Talib to renounce the Caliphate?
5. Was it not Muawiya the real Khariji who created an innovation by making his son Yazid his successor? The office of Khalifa had for the first time become a hereditary one and had ceased to be a religious establishment.

The readers will only be able to find the correct answers if they review the historical facts objectively and without bias and ignore whatever biased information told to them by their parents, school teachers and Imams in the mosques about the so-called Khawarij. If Muawiya had not rebelled against the lawful Khalifa, the Islamic state would have remained intact and division would have been avoided at least during Ali's tenure of office. Muawiya was the usurper of the office of Khalifa and secured allegiance of the people of Makkah and Medina by force of arms. And so his successors and followers the Uthmaniyyun were the real Khawarij.

Seyyidna Ali had many enemies and the Khawarij were certainly not the only ones: -

1. First, the supporters of Seyyidna Uthman including members of the Umayyad clan who wanted to avenge his murder.
2. The companions Talha and Al Zubair had taken the oath of allegiance to Seyyidna Ali as Khalifa, but fought against him in the battle of the Camel. Hadhrat Aisha joined the two Companions.
3. After the battle of Nahrawan, the victorious army also betrayed him and refused to fight the Syrians.
4. In the arbitration proceedings, the person who was appointed as his representative (Abu Musa Al Ash'ari) betrayed him and became a party to the plot to depose him from the Caliphate.
5. Abdullah bin Abbas, his cousin, whom he had appointed Governor of Basra left him and escaped to Makkah
6. Even his real brother Aqil fought on the side of Muawiya.

The main cause of fierce opposition to Seyyidna Ali was his failure or reluctance to punish the culprits, including his stepson Muhammad bin Abi Bakar who were directly involved in the assassination of Uthman. Seyyidna Ali married his mother (Asma) after the death of Abu Bakar. So there was a marriage relationship between Seyyidna Ali and Muhammad bin Abi Bakar, although, as we have seen Muhammad bin Abi Bakar did not actually kill Uthman, he aided and abetted the crime when he led the assassins to his room and so he was also an accessory before the fact of murder. What might

have strengthened people's suspicion was that Seyyidna Ali appointed Muhammad bin Abi Bakar Governor of Egypt, which his opponents might have interpreted rightly or wrongly as a reward for what he had done.

With regard to the death of Seyyidna Ali, Jalalu Din Assuyuti in his book, The History of the Caliphs gives the following summarized translated account as narrated by Ibn Sa'd (p.156): -

> *"Three members of the Khawarij met in Mecca and agreed to kill Seyyidna Ali, Muawiya and Amr bin Al'Aas in order that the country might rest in peace. It fell upon Abdul Rahman bin Muljam Al Murady to kill Seyyidna Ali. So he proceeded to Kufa (Iraq) where he met his fellow Khawarij and confided in them. As Seyyidna Ali was announcing Fajr prayers, Ibn Muljam struck him on the head with a sword and Ali died two days later".*

According to Prof. Masud-ul-Hassan, Ibn Muljam, an extreme Khawarij fanatic, from whom his beloved wife (Qataam) had demanded the head of Hadhrat Ali as a vengeance for the massacre of the Khawarij at the battle of Nahrawan, struck at him and mortally wounded him. Seyyidna Ali died in January 661 CE. It should be noted that there were no Ibadhis at this time.

After Seyyidna Ali's death the Islamic ummah was divided into three factions:-

1. Seyyidna Ali's followers (The Shias).
2. Muawiya and his followers (Uthmaniyyun) – The Khawarij No.1.
3. The so-called Khawarij (The Khawarij No.2).

But these factions were political, not religious because they appeared as a result of a political struggle between Seyyidna Ali and Muawiya for leadership of the Islamic state. It had nothing to do with religion. In this connection it is worth quoting Professor Masud again from his book, The History of Islam (p.192,1st Edition):-

"It may be borne in mind that the Caliphate is not a religious office. It is a political office only. This is because both the Qur'an and the Sunnah have no injunction on the point..... for any objective view of the matter, it is necessary that we should not make the matter a religious, but should let it remain a political issue".

Dr. Majid Ali Khan in his book, The Pious Caliphs, published by Islamic Book Publishers in Kuwait said the same thing about the Khawarij (p.209):-

"The Khawarij were more a political group than theological. They accepted the authority of Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Umar but denounced Hadhrat Uthman, Ali and Muawiya".

With regard to the denunciation of Uthman there were no Khawarij during his time, and in the case of Seyyidna Ali, the Khawarij fought on his side in two battles- the battle of the Camel and the battle of Siffin; as for Muawiya he was indeed their mortal enemy and they denounced him vehemently. When the Khawarij *"denounced"* Uthman they were merely echoing the grievances which a group of Companions (Sahabas) who lived during his lifetime were expressing against his administration.

Unfortunately exactly the opposite happened. The conflict was interpreted as a religious one by later Islamic scholars. The only plausible explanation is that the Khawarij No.1 (The Uthmaniyyun) emerged out of the conflict as rulers whereas the Khawarij No.2 and Shias as rebels, and so throughout Islamic history there was confrontation between the two sides. By making the difference appear religious it was easier for the Umayyad rulers and later the Abbasids to get the support of the people. At this juncture it is interesting to see how an Islamic scholar like Ibn Taymiya was caught in the propaganda of the rulers of his time. He said:-

كان أول من فارق جماعة المسلمين من أهل البدع الخوارج المارقون وهم أول من كفر أهل القبلة بالذنوب ، بل بما يرونه من الذنوب واستحلوا دماء أهل القبلة بذلك.

"The first to leave the Islamic community among the heretics are the Khawarij the defectors. And they are the first to accuse Muslims of sins, but what they considered as sins, and made it lawful to shed the blood of Muslims for that".

With all due respect to Ibn Taymiya, the above is not the correct picture. The first to leave the Islamic community was Muawiya (and his followers, the Uthmaniyyun) who refused to declare his allegiance to Seyyidna Ali, the legitimate Khalifa while the so-called Khawarij supported him all along until after the battle of Siffiin. Then he goes on to say that the Khawarij were the first to accuse Muslims of sins and to justify the shedding of their blood. On the contrary the people who justified shedding the blood of Muslims were a group of Muslims from Egypt and Iraq in collusion with the people of Medina including some Sahabas who murdered Seyyidna Uthman. The Khawarij did not even exist then.

When the so-called Khawarij defected from Seyyidna Ali and his army, they did not fight him. It was his army which went to fight them in the battle of Nahrawan. So the innocent Khawarij were neither the first nor the second nor the third to shed the blood of Muslims.

The followers of Ibn Taymiya accuse the so-called Khawarij of declaring open hostilities and hatred against Seyyidna Ali and his people. This again is not true. Those who declared open hostilities against him were Muawiya, Talha, Al-Zubair and Seyyida Aisha when they fought him at the battle of the Camel. The one who declared hatred against Seyyidna Ali was again Muawiya, and according to Prof. Masud (p.177):-

"Hadhrat Muawiya had introduced the practice of abusing Hadhrat Ali on Friday sermons. Umar bin Abdul-Aziz abolished this practice" when he became Khalifa.

There have been attempts to present the conflict as a religious one by categorizing the Islamic ummah at that time into four factions, the fourth one being:-

Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaa (Dr. Majid Ali Khan p.208).

The first three groups listed before in this chapter included Seyyidna Aisha, Muawiya, 'Amr bin A'as, Abu Musa al Ash'ari, Al-Zubair, Talha and hundreds of other Sahabas who were split among all the three groups in the conflict. Were they not Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaa? Of course, they were. So to say there was a fourth group is a misrepresentation of early Islamic history.

As in the case of Seyyidna Uthman, the Ibadhis have no quarrel with Seyyidna Ali in the matter of religion, and so in the Musnad of Imam Rabii (which the Ibadhis mainly rely on for the Prophet's Hadiths) are to be found a number of Traditions narrated by Imam Ali. Here are some examples:-

الحديث رقم ١٢٤ : جابر بن زيد قال : بلغني عن علي بن أبي طالب أنه أنكسر إحدى زنديه فسأل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم (أن يمسح على الجبائر فقال له : نعم)

Hadith No.124
Jabir bin Zeid said:-

"I have been informed that Ali bin Abi Talib broke one of his forearms and asked the Prophet (Peace be upon him) if he can wipe the splint. (The Prophet) said, 'yes''

* * *

الحديث ٢٢٠ جابر بن زيد قال : بلغني عن علي بن أبي طالب قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم:(تحريم الصلاة التكبير وتحليلها التسليم)

Hadith No.220
Jabir bin Zeid said:-

"I have been informed that Ali bin Abi Talib said: The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: "The consecration of prayer begins with 'Allahu Akbar' and ends with 'Assalamu Alaikum'.

The above are only examples but there are several other Hadiths narrated by Seyyidna Ali on theological issues. These have been mentioned in Part III of the Musnad.

One final point on the four rightly-guided Caliphs should be mentioned. The Uthmaniyyun (Khawarij No.1) accuse the Shias for not acknowledging the first three Caliphs, Abu Bakar, Umar and Uthman and they make a big issue out of it, forgetting that they themselves never recognized the Caliphate of Seyyidna Ali. They fought him and continued to oppose him until his death. The Khawarij No.2 was the only Islamic sect to have recognized all the four Khalifas. They later criticized Seyyidna Uthman's administration when it went astray but they did not kill him. They pledged allegiance to Seyyidna Ali and fought with him against the Uthmaniyyun in the battle of the Camel and at Siffiin but abandoned him when he accepted arbitration. The results of the arbitration proved the correct stand of the Khawarij No.2. He also made a wrong decision when he accepted the advice of his army generals to fight the Khawarij No.2 at Nahrawan.

It is interesting to quote a Hadith of the Holy Prophet reported by Imam Ahmed as follows:-

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم :(الخلافة ثلاثون عاما ، ثم يكون بعد ذلك الملك)

"The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: (The office of) Caliphate will last for thirty years and afterwards there will be kingship".

If we count the total number of years that the four Caliphs and Imam Hassan ruled, we find that the total period tallies exactly with the Holy Messenger's prophesy:-

Abu Bakar		**2 years – 3 months**
Umar bin Khattab		**10 years**
Uthman bin Affan		**12 years**
Ali bin Abi Talib		**4 years – 9 months**
Hassan bin Ali		**1 year**
	Total -	**30 years**

How right was the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as he had always been!

History shows that those who ruled the Islamic state after Seyyidna Hassan were indeed not Caliphs but kings, many of whom were tyrants. The

Chapter 3

Reference:

1. **Prof. Masud-ul-Hassan, History of Islam (Lahore, 1987).**
2. **Abu Ameena Bilaal Philips, The Evolution of Fiqh (Riyadh, 1996).**
3. **John Alden Williams, Islam (London & New York, 1961).**

CHAPTER 3

The Umayyad Period

The Khawarij suffered a great deal under the Umayyad as well as Abbasid rulers because of their rebellion against the ruling authorities but not against Islam. They were hunted and persecuted. Even those who were loyal to the rulers were not spared. So the struggle for political power continued during the Umayyad rule. When Muawiya died in 680 CE, he was succeeded by his son Yazid I, but the people of Kufa, Iraq wanted Seyyidna Hussein to be their Khalifa, and so started a military conflict for the office, and this is how it ended according to Professor Masud:-

> *"On the 10th of Muharram, the Umayyad troops increased their pressure (on Seyyidna Hussein), and the unequal contest between the small band of Hadhrat Hussein on the one hand, and a considerable army of the other began in the stony plain of Kerbala. Hadhrat Hussein and his followers soon met their martyrdom".*
>
> *"The murderous crowd cut off the head of Hadhrat Hussein. His body was trampled upon under the hoofs of Umayyad cavalry with savage ferocity and subjected to every ignominy. All male members of his family*

accompanying Hadhrat Hussein perished with him. The solitary exception was his sickly child Ali (who later came to be known as Zain-ul-Abidin)".

What a shame that a faction of Muslims under Yazid I for the sake of worldly power should treat the grandson of the Holy Prophet with such beastly barbarity. The Holy Messenger was right when he said,

" أن أول دينكم بدأ نبوة ورحمة ثم يكون خلافة ورحمة ، ثم يكون ملكا وجبرية"

"Verily, the first (stage) of your religion is the beginning of Prophet hood and mercy, then there will be the rule of Caliphate and mercy and then there will be kingship and (Government by) coercion."

And the Khawarij No.2 were right too when they dissociated themselves from the tyranny and moral depravity of the Umayyad rule. Altogether there were eleven kings under the Umayyad rule but only Umar bin Abdul Aziz bin Marwan received the support of the Khawarij because he followed the footsteps of his illustrious great grandfather, Seyyidna Umar bin Khattab. He had been imprisoned by his cousin and brother-in-law Al Walid bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan when the latter succeeded his father, Abdul Malik bin Marwan. Professor Masud has this to say about him:-

"Umar bin Abdul Aziz was a devout Muslim, and he wanted Muslims to follow the Islamic way of life. He himself set the pattern for such life. He led a simple life on the lines set by the rightly-guided Caliphs. Unlike the other Umayyad Caliphs he had only one wife. He had no maids in his harem. He set a new standard of what a Muslim ruler should be. He avoided show and ostentation. He enjoyed simplicity and austerity in all affairs pertaining to the State. He was very particular in the use of money from the Bait-ul-Mal (State Treasury). He went to the extent of asking his wife to surrender all her ornaments to the State treasury.

"Umar bin Abdul Aziz abolished the practice introduced by Muawiya of reviling and abusing Seyyidna Ali in the Friday sermons. All the properties which had been confiscated by his predecessors including the property of the family of Seyyidna Ali were restored to original owners.

"He improved the status of converts to Islam, and decreed that on conversion to Islam, a person would no longer be subject to poll tax. This led to conversion to Islam on a large scale under his reign. When it was pointed out to him that this would mean considerable loss of revenue, he said he would not be a party to discrimination between a Muslim and (another) Muslim. He pointed out that the Holy Prophet had been sent as a mercy to mankind and not as a tax gatherer".

With regard to the relation of Umar bin Abdul Aziz with the Khawarij, Prof. Masud has this to say:-

> *"At the outset of his reign, the Kharijites raised their head and resorted to terrorist activities. Instead of military action against them, he (Umar bin A'Aziz) summoned a delegation of their representatives and brought home to them the point that as Muslims they should not disturb the peace of the land. He assured them that if they had any legitimate grievances he would remove them. He emphasized that if, in spite of that, they resorted to terrorist activities, they would be betraying the cause of Islam which they professed to champion. Thereafter the Kharijites gave no more trouble during his reign."*

From the above passage it is clear that the Khawarij No.2 were not a people who fought the ruling authorities for the sake of making trouble but for the purpose of establishing Islamic justice and when they found it in Umar bin Abdul Aziz they cooperated with him, and so peace and tranquility in the land prevailed in his reign. But the Umayyads were not happy with his policies and so conspired to get rid of him. He was poisoned to death in 720 C.E. when he was only 39 years old after a reign of just three years.

To recapitulate what happened during the reign of the rightly – guided Khalifas and Umayyad rulers, the following were assassinated:-

1. Umar bin Khattab - murdered by a Persian.
2. Uthman bin Affan - murdered by fellow Muslims
3. Ali bin Abi Talib - murdered by fellow Muslim

4. Hassan bin Ali - murdered by Uthmaniyyun
5. Hussein bin Ali - murdered by Uthmaniyyun
6. Abdullah bin Zubair - murdered by Uthmaniyyun
7. Walid II - murdered by Uthmaniyyun
8. Ibrahim bin Walid - murdered by Uthmaniyyun
9. Marwan II - murdered by Uthmaniyyun
10. Umar bin Abdul Aziz - murdered by Uthmaniyyun

Among the ten rulers murdered only one Khalifa was killed by a Kharijee who acted alone to avenge the death of 3000 innocent Khawarij killed at Nahrawan. The last seven rulers were murdered by the Uthmaniyyun in the struggle for political power. But the sectarian fanatics when they read their gloomy side of Islamic history put on dark glasses so that they do not see anything as if nothing had happened, and then boast to their followers that they are the right ones (أهل الحق).

In the case of the Caliph Uthman, there were no sects when he was murdered but there had been general complaints from all spectrum of society in the Islamic state, and the Ibadhi historians reiterated what those complaints were, which happened to be shared by many of the Sahabas. When we come to the Abbasid reign we will see almost the same number of rulers killed and their names will be given later.

Before closing this section on the Umayyad rule it would be interesting to hear what a non-Ibadhi scholar Abu Ameena Bilal Philips, has to say about the Umayyad rulers in his book, *"The Evolution of Fiqh"* (p.46):-

> *"The Umayyad Caliphs introduced a number of practices which were common in the non-Islamic states of that time, such as Byzantine, Persia and India. Many of these practices were in clear contradiction to the Fiqh of the earlier period. For example, the central treasury, the Bayt al-Maal, was turned into personal property of the Caliphs and their families, and taxes not sanctioned by Islam were introduced to further increase their fortunes. Music, dancing girls, magicians and astrologers were officially*

introduced as forms of amusement in the court of the Caliph. Furthermore, with the forced acceptance of Yazeed as crown prince imposed by Caliph Muawiya in the year 679 CE, the office of Caliph was converted into that of hereditary kingship".

Abu Hamza al-Mukhtar bin 'Awf, one of the prominent Ibadhis of Basrah had this to say about the Umayyad rulers in general and Yazid in particular during a Friday sermon in Medina in the presence of Imam Malik ibn Anas:-

"There came Yazid, a libertine in religion and unmanly in behaviour, in whom was never perceived right guidance.....He would eat forbidden food, and drink wine, and wear a robe worth a thousand dinars, through which you could see his flesh so that the veil of modesty was rent, an unpardonable disrobe. And Hababa the singing-girl on his right, and Salama the singing-girl on his left, both singing – if you had taken drink away from him, he would rent his garments! And he would turn to one of them and say, Shall I fly? Aye, he flew. To God's damnation, and the burning Fire, and a painful torment.!

He then turns to the Umayyads:-

"The sons of Umayyads are a party of error, and their strength is the strength of tyrants. They take conjecture for their guide, and judge as they please, and put men to death in anger, and govern by mediation and take the law out of context and distribute the public moneys to those not entitled to them - for God has revealed those who are entitled, and they are eight classes of men, for He says:-

"The freewill offerings are for (1) the poor and (2) the needy, (3) those who work to collect them, (4) those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and (5) slaves and (6) debtors, and (7) those in the way of God and (8) travelers (Suratu-Tawbah verse 60). They make themselves the ninth and take it all! Such are those who rule by what God has not sent down."(John A. Williams, p.218).

No wonder the Umayyad regimes did not last 100 years, and they had to flee to Spain. Thus the so-called Khawarij did not break away from Islam as their enemies accuse and condemn them but from morally depraved rulers who did not abide by the Islamic standards of morality and social justice.

The Ibadhis had every right in fighting and dissociating themselves from such corrupt regimes as the Umayyads and establishing their own separate Imamate. But the Uthmaniyyun (the Khawarij No.1) supported them and continued to support them and must share the full responsibility for that disgraceful state of affairs.

CHAPTER 4

Reference:

1. **Prof. Masud-ul-Hassan, History of Islam (Lahore, 1987)**

2. **Abu Ameena Bilaal Philip, The Evolution of Fiqh (Riyadh, 1996)**

CHAPTER 4

The Abbasid Period

Abu Abbas Abdullah bin Muhammad 132-136 (750 – 756 CE)

After the Umayyad rulers were driven out, Abdullah Abu Abbas took over as the leader of the Abbas family and as the *"Khalifa"* and moved his capital from Damascus to Kufa in Iraq. The Abbasids derive their family name from Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet, and the father of Abdullah bin Abbas, the Sahaba from whom the Ibadhis collected many of the Prophet's traditions. Abu Abbas brother, Ibrahim, had been killed by the Umayyad ruler, Marwan II.

The beginning of the Abbasid era did not augur well for Muslims in general, for Abu Abbas after accession called himself Assaffah meaning a shedder of blood or killer. Imagine, a ruler of a Muslim state calling himself by such a title!! Professor Masud reports the following tragedy:-

> *"Assaffah appointed his uncle Abdullah as the Governor of Syria. Abdullah invited all the Umayyad princes in Damascus about eighty in numbers to a banquet. At a given signal, a band of executioners entered the banquet hall and clubbed all the Umayyad princes to death. Abdul Rahman a grandson of the Umayyad Caliph Hisham was*

the only Umayyad prince to escape from this massacre. He fled to Morocco, and the Abbasids broke open the graves of some of the Umayyad Caliphs and burnt their corpses".

Naturally the Khawarij were among the first people to revolt against such savage and brutal conduct of those who usurped Islamic leadership. Professor Masud continues:-

"At the outset of their rule, the Abbasids had to face revolts in various parts of the country. These revolts were sponsored by the partisans of the Umayyads, by the partisans of the Shias, and by the Kharijites".

When Assaffah died after a rule of four years, he was succeeded by his brother Al Mansur in 754 CE. Al Mansur founded the city of Baghdad and moved his capital there. But like his brother, his rule was characterized by treachery and atrocities. He had Abu Muslim assassinated; Abu Muslim was the Governor of Khurasan who had made great contribution to the building of the Abbasid Empire.

There was a struggle for power between Al Mansur and Muhammad, a great grandson of Imam Hassan over the office of Caliphate. Imam Muhammad was backed by the Shias. In the struggle for power Muhammad fled to Medina where the people offered him allegiance. What is interesting is that Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik, the prominent jurists at the time supported him. Al Mansur sent a force to Medina, and in the battle that ensued Muhammad and his supporters were killed, and Medina was restored to Abbasid rule. Those who supported Muhammad and his brother Ibrahim were subjected to torture. In Medina Imam Malik was flogged, and in Baghdad Imam Abu Hanifa was arrested and put in jail until he died.

There again the Khawarij have been proved right in dissociating themselves from the Caliphate and establishing their own independent Imamate. But the Umayyads, Abbasids and their sectarian fanatics are not yet convinced even today!! They believe that the Khawarij seceded from Islam and if we go by their logic, so did Imam Malik and Imam Abu Hanifa who refused to support Al Mansur as the Khalifa.

Harun Arrasheed (170 - 193 H) (786 – 809 CE)

Harun Arrasheed is the grandson of Al-Mansur; he was famous for his lavish style and splendour; he was the fifth Abbasid Caliph who ruled for 23 years. His wife Zubeida is a legend of the Arabian Nights (ألف ليلة وليلة) and is associated with the construction of a canal that supplied water to Makkah. Among the notable events of his rule was that he ordered the arrest of Imam Shafee accused of Shiite leanings while teaching in Yemen in the year 805 CE. He was taken prisoner before Harun Arrasheed in Iraq but was soon released after extricating himself from the allegations (see Abu Ameena Bilal Philips pp.80-81). Before the Khalifa died, he willed that after his death his eldest son Al Amin should succeed him, and then his next son Al Ma'amun and after him his other son Mu'tasim.

When Al Amin took over after the death of his father Harun, he wanted to change the line of succession in favour of his son instead of his brother Al Ma'amun who was then the governor of Khurasan in Persia. And so fighting broke out between the two brothers, but the fighting turned out into a racial conflict because Al-Amin's mother Zubeida was an Arab while Ma'amun's mother was a Persian and so the whole of Persia rose in support of Al Ma'amun. Al Amin was defeated, captured and beheaded. So Al Ma'amun succeeded to the throne (813 – 833 CE) but the most significant thing that happened with him was that he adopted the doctrine of the Mu'tazila (مذهب المعتزلة) as the official madh'hab. The doctrine was founded by Waasil bin Ataa and was based on rationalism. Abu Ameena Bilal Philips in his book, The Evolution of Fiqh has briefly explained it (p.150) as follows:-

> *"Among its more notable principles were the belief that Allah was everywhere, the belief that the Qur'an was created and only its meanings were divine, that Allah would not be seen by the people of paradise, that man has free will without divine interference, and that one who commits a major sin enters a state between belief and disbelief".*

Abu Ameena has also explained it as a philosophical school of thought commonly called 'rationalism'.

The Ibadhis have adopted some of its principles and we shall discuss them in greater detail later in this book. But Imam Ahmed b. Hanbal rejected them and for this reason he was imprisoned by the order of Al Maamun. Whether the Mutazalite doctrine was right or wrong, it was wrong of Al Maamun to force others to accept a religious doctrine against their will, and to imprison them if they did not. The Mutazalites continued to have the support of his brother Al Mu'tasim when he succeeded him and of his nephew Al Wathiq (842-847CE). But when his other nephew Al Mutawakkil succeeded to the throne (847-861CE) he banned the Mutazalite doctrine and fundamentalism was restored. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and other fundamentalist scholars were released from prison. The Mutazalites in turn were put in prison and their properties confiscated.

But Mutawakkil did not live long. He only ruled for four years before he was murdered by his own disinherited son (Muntasir) and successor who in turn was murdered by poisoning six months later by a physician on bribery by Turkish generals. Al Mutawakkil pursued anti-Shia policies and destroyed the mausoleum of Imam Hussein at Kerbala. All these series of murders were not committed by the Khawarij who are often accused of terrorism but by the Abbasids themselves.

Al Qahir who ruled for only two years from 933 – 934 CE was a cruel Abbasid monarch. His end has been described by Prof. Masud as follows:-

> *'The army was won over by the conspirators. A detachment of the army assaulted the palace of the Caliph. With sword in hand Al Qahir defied the army. He was overpowered, and asked to abdicate.*
>
> *He refused to abdicate. Thereupon he was blinded and deposed. All his property was confiscated. He was lodged in prison for some years and then released. Deprived of all sources of income he was reduced to begging in the streets of Baghdad. It was a most pathetic sight, a peculiar revenge of nature for the depravities committed by him during the period of his Caliphate. Al Qahir's rule lasted hardly two years..... After his deposition, Al Qahir lived for sixteen years..... He was the first Abbasid ruler to be blinded and reduced to beggary".*

The Khawarij whom Prof. Masud often refers to as terrorists had nothing to do with this savagery. It was all the work of those Muslims who called themselves the righteous people (أهل الحق).

Six years later in 940 CE, another Abbasid ruler Al Muttaqi succeeded the throne. In the ensuing period of coups and counter coups among Turkish generals, differences arose between Al Muttaqi and the Turkish General Tuzun whom he had appointed as Amir-ul-Umaraa. After some fighting, Al Muttaqi sought shelter elsewhere. After some negotiations with Tuzun, he assured Al Muttaqi of his loyalty and asked him to return to Baghdad. On his return, Prof. Masud describes the following painful episode:-

> *"The Caliph was received with all respect, and then escorted to the camp. In the camp, Tuzun went back on his promises. Al Muttaqi was placed under arrest and deposed. His eyes were seared (i.e. scorched) with a hot iron, and he was blinded. Al Muttaqi was led to an island in the Tigris where he remained in prison for twenty five years until he died".*

This is an unbelievable barbarity committed by Muslim Generals against Muslim rulers. But the sectarian fanatics continue to sing their national anthem that the Khawarij were the first to shed the blood of Muslims. Under the circumstances of Al Muttaqi it would have been better if his blood had been shed instead of going through those terrible tortures.

Al Muttaqi was succeeded by Al Mustakfi in 944 CE whose father al Muktafi had ruled for five years (902 – 907 CE). As was the case with rulers of this period, all the power were in the hands of army Generals who assumed the title of Amir-ul-Umaraa. This time the General was Ahmad Buwayh who belonged to the Shia faith. According to Prof. Masud, the General reduced the privileges of the Khalifa and allowed him only a small subsistence allowance and so the relation between them was bitter. One day Mustakfi was arrested, blinded and deposed and then put in prison. This is the third ruler to be blinded but this time by the order of a Shia General. It is said that Mustakfi adopted the Shia faith to please his master, but that did not help him in any way.

Al-Musta'sim was the last Abbasid ruler whose reign lasted 14 years (1242-1256 CE). Prof. Masud gives the following account of his rule (p.307):-

> *"At the outset of his reign, the country came to be rocked by Hanafi-Hanbali and Shia-Sunni riots and disturbances. In these the Shias who were in a minority suffered most. Many Shias were killed and their quarter Karkh, a suburb of Baghdad, was destroyed. The Minister of Musta'sim, Muwayyid ud-Din Muhammad bin Al Kami was a Shia. He turned out to be a traitor, and entered into a secret correspondence with the Mongols inviting them to invade Baghdad".*

The Mongol forces under General Hulaku besieged the city of Baghdad but the Baghdad forces were weak and so surrendered. Prof. Masud continues:-

> *'The population of Baghdad was gathered on a plain outside the city. The Shias were spared and the rest of the population running into several Lakhs were mercilessly massacred. Hulaku (the General) had the Caliph Al-Musta'sim put in a sack, and then trampled under the hooves of the Mongol horses. The city of Baghdad was subjected to plunder, and thereafter put to flames. The fire raged for several days and nights and the city of Baghdad, once the glory of the civilized world was no more. With the fall of Baghdad, and the tragic end of Musta'sim, the Abbasid rule was extinguished and they disappeared from political history after having ruled for over five hundred years from 750 to 1258 CE, one of the longest rule of any dynasty in history".*

The lesson to be learnt from this tragic episode is that it is a repetition of the tragedy of Seyyidna Ali, the battle of Nahrawan and the Khawarij. As a Khariji Abdul Rahman Muljam murdered Seyyidna Ali in revenge for several thousand innocent Khawarij killed in the battle of Nahrawan, so Al-Musta'sim was brutally murdered in revenge for many Shias killed during the Shia-Sunni riots. The atrocious massacres of the Sunni population and

the brutal murder of Al-Musta'sim were carried out by the Mongols on the invitation from his Shia Minister, Muawayyid-ud-Din Muhammad Al Kami.

The list of Abbasid rulers who were murdered by their fellow Muslims (excluding the Khawarij):-

1) Al-Amin - 809 – 813 CE
2) Al-Mutawakkil - 847 – 861 CE
3) Al-Muntasir - 861 – 862 CE
4) Al-Mu'tazz - 866 – 869 CE
5) Al-Muhtadi - 869 – 870 CE
6) Al-Raashid -1134- 1135 CE
7) Al-Musta'sim -1242- 1258 CE

The following Abbasid rulers were tortured and made blind by their fellow Muslim (excluding the Khawarij):-

1) Al-Qahir - 933 – 934 CE
2) Al-Muttaqi - 940 – 944 CE
3) Al-Mustakfi - 944 – 945 CE

Thus the Abbasid era, extended over a period of 500 years, was ruled by 37 monarchs. It was a period of revolts and counter-revolts, characterized by anarchy, lawlessness and instability. In the end the rulers became puppets of their military Generals. Those who were subservient to them survived longer on the throne. Seven of those rulers were brutally assassinated and three others were tortured and blinded. The saddest thing is that these inhuman treatments were carried out by their fellow Muslims, sometimes in retaliation for similar treatments received from the Umayyad and Abbasid regimes. The Khawarij justifiably dissociated themselves from the Umayyad and Abbasid regimes and so they were not involved in any way in those barbaric activities. But for the sectarian fanatics, the only Islamic history they want to know and to tell their people about is that the Khawarij criticized Seyyidna Uthman and killed Seyyidna Ali.

CHAPTER 5

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CHAPTER 5

The Imamate

The institution of Imamate is a historical one; it no longer exists although the system, in its hereditary form, still continues among the Shia sects where Imams trace their ancestry back through Imam Ali to the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). For the Ibadhis the institution is essential if we are to implement Islamic laws as laid down in the Holy Qur'an and in the Traditions of the Holy messenger. There are attempts to revive the system, but it is doubtful they will ever succeed in view of the separatist tendencies of some fanatical sects which reject any efforts to unify Muslims of various schools. Islamic unity is a pre-requisite for the institution to function effectively. The reason why it broke down is partly due to the formation of dozens of sects each promoting its own religious doctrines some of which were hostile to the Caliphate. The Ibadhis' views on the establishment of the institution are at variance with those held by some other sects. For the Ibadhis, an Imam must have the following qualifications: -

> *"The Imam must be a mature male of outstanding intelligence. He must not be blind, deaf senile, nor lack limbs which would prevent him from taking part in the obligation of war (jihad) ... He must not be mad, feeble minded, nor should he be envious, cowardly, mean, a liar,*

nor a man who fails to keep promises and agreements, nor indeed possess any other characteristic that causes concern. He must be a man of great learning, for without learning and perception how could he carry out his duties and interpret the laws, and ensure that his subordinates do".

In other words an Imam must be healthy, God-fearing and well versed in Islamic law. (Dr. Isam Al-Rawas p.104).

So the Ibadhi's ideas of Imam differ from those of some other Islamic schools. We cannot find such a person if the institution is hereditary, the less so if he is expected actively to participate in jihad wars and at the same time be an impartial judge of legal disputes that arise among the Muslims in their daily lives. So the following questions arise: -

Must an Imam be a Quraishi or an Elected one?

The first four successors to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) were Quraishis and so were Umayyad and Abbasid rulers who succeeded them. The first two were nominated by their predecessors before their deaths, while the latter two were appointed by Shura (i.e. consultation) with leading members of the Quraishi tribe. The Umayyad and Abbasid rulers who succeeded them were usurpers who took over the leadership initially by force and then passed it over to their offspring by inheritance. There are several of the Prophet's hadiths on this issue but let us take only one of them narrated by both Al-Tirmidhi and Imam Ahmad: -

"Sovereignty is (invested) in the Qureishis, administration of justice in the Medinites and (privilege of) making calls for prayers in the Habeshis".

The inference to be drawn from the hadith is that it gives the Quraishis preference to the Imamate; it does not necessarily prove that the appointments of other than Quraishis to the office would not be legitimate. The same is true of appointment of judges from Medina and of callers for prayers from among the Habeshis. The hadith is nowhere fully implemented today.

The Ibadhis favour appointment of Imams by Shura as was done in the case of the latter two of the rightly – guided Khalifas (الخلفاء الراشدين). The choice of Imam should be done by consultation among religious scholars including tribal leaders in order to give added weight to his authority when he comes to power. This method should ensure that the candidate possesses the requisite attributes outlined above.

The first Ibadhi Imam was appointed in Hadhramut in the year 129 H (747 CE.); he was Abdullah bin Yahya Al-Kindi. This was followed by another appointment, five years later, of Julanda bin Masoud Al-Ma'awaly as Imam of Oman (134H). The third Imam was elected in Maghrib in North Africa and the choice fell on Abu-1- Khattab in 140 H. These appointments were made in co-ordination with the Ibadhi headquarters in Basra under the leadership of Abu Ubaida Muslim bin Abi Karima Al Tamimi, student and successor to Jabir bin Zayd, the spiritual founder of Ibadhism.

The establishment of these imamates took place at a time when the Umayyad rule was collapsing and before the Abbasid dynasty was in full control of the State. The Ibadhis had been waiting for such an opportunity and when it presented itself they grabbed it. They have however been criticized for allowing an establishment of three Imamates at about the same period, and we should reply that the Quraishis themselves at one time maintained three Khalifates: the Umayyad dynasty ruling in Spain, the Abassid family ruling from Baghdad and the Fatimids in Egypt and other parts of North Africa. The Fatimids were Ismailis who founded the city of Cairo and built the Al Azhar mosque which became a famous center of learning.

Should Muslims revolt against a tyrant Imam?

The Ibadhis do not encourage revolts against their Imams to avoid bloodshed. It is justifiable only as a last resort and in extreme circumstances. The history of Ibadhi Imamate in Oman speaks for itself as following list shows:-

Name of Imam	Period of Rule	How he died
1. Julanda ibn Masoud Al-Ma'awaly	132 – 134 H.	Killed in fighting with Abbasid invaders.
2. Rashid bin Nadhar Al Julandi	134 – 177 H.	Overthrown (had been installed by Abbasids).
3. Muhammad bin Affan	177 – 179 H.	Deposed.
4. Al-Warith bin Ka'b	179 – 192 H.	Drowned in Wadi rescue operation.
5. Ghassan bin Abdullah	192 – 208 H.	Natural death.
6. Abdul Malik Humaid	208 – 226 H.	Natural death
7. Muhanna bin Jayfar	226 – 237 H.	Natural death
8. Al-Salt bin Malik	237 – 273 H.	Deposed.
9. Rashid bin Nadhar Al Yahmady	273 – 277H.	Deposed.
10. Azzan bin Tamim Al-Kharusi	277 – 280 H.	Killed in fighting with Abbasid Aggressors.

From the above picture one can see that none of Ibadhi Imams was assassinated. The first and the last Imams were killed by Abbasid aggressors. The others died naturally or were deposed as a result of pressure from the people. Their rule extended over a total period of about 150 years. This is in contrast with the Umayyad rulers when seven of them were murdered, and during the Abbasid reign the same number of rulers were also killed and three others were tortured and blinded under savage conditions. And yet some so-called Islamic scholars and historians have the impudence to say that Ibadhis are Khawarij who are terrorists and shedders of blood. According to Dr. Amr Khalifa Ennami (Ibadhiyah, p.33), Abdullah bin Yahya Al-Kindi, the first Ibadhi Imam of Hadhramawt and Yemen, in the second century H, in his letter of commission to his Governor, Abd Al-Rahman bin Muhammad issued the following directions:-

> *"We do not block people's way and murder them on sight without inviting them first to realize the truth. But we invite them to the truth. He who accepts it enjoys all the*

rights that the Muslims enjoy, and is subject to all their obligations. He who denies the truth and fights us, we fight him and ask God to give us support against him".

Abdullah bin Yahya further writes:-

"This is our policy. We do not punish the innocent for the guilty, the good for the evil, the woman for the man, or the young for the old. We do not slay people on sight without calling them to the truth, and making it clear to them".
(p.34).

He continues:-

"... ....He who fights us, we fight him back, and inspect his property in order to return it to its owners..... No booty or captives should be taken from the people of the Qiblah (i.e. Muslims), for they are not like polytheists whose property is to be despoiled and their women and children to be taken captives. But the people of Qiblah are two parties of which one summons to what is right, holding fast to it, and the other summons to injustice and persists in it". (p.34).

Dr. Amr further explains that the above statements describe Ibadhi policy throughout their history, whereas the policy of murdering opponents without previous warning was the distinguishing mark of the Azraqis all times. It was also one of the main issues which made the Ibadhis oppose the Azraqis and other extreme Kharijites such as the Najdat and Sufriyah (p.28 – 30). And it should be added that the murdering of opponents was not just the distinguishing mark of the extreme Khawarij but also of the Umayyad, Abbasid and Fatimid rulers.

When Imam Abdullah bin Yahya Al Kindy wrote that letter to his Governor he must have had in mind the atrocious activities of the notorious Al Hajjaj who had been the Governor of Basra during the reign of Umayyad ruler Abdul Malik bin Marwan (65 – 86 H.) and lived up to the reign of his son Al Walid (86–96H.). According to Jalaluddin Assuyuti, in the year 74H,

Al-Hajjaj went to Medina and harassed its people there and looked down upon the surviving Sahabas like Anas, Jabir bin Abdullah and Sahl bin Sa'ad Al Sa'ady and sealed (stamped) them on their necks and hands, thus humiliating them (p.190). Assuyuti further reports (p.199) that among the prominent people who died during the reign of Al Walid bin Abdul Malik was:-

سعيد بن جبير (الذي مات) شهيدا ، قتله الحجاج لعنه الله

"Said bin Jubair (who died a martyr) was killed by Al Hajjaj, may Allah damn him."

After the year 81 H. Al Hajjaj sent several military expeditions to subjugate the people of Oman and, after being twice defeated, they managed in the end to win a victory and humiliate its people. So Abdullah bin Yahya Al-Kindy did not want his governor to behave like Al-Hajjaj, the tyrant. Those were the kind of rulers who were terrorizing the Muslim population, and the Ibadhis were one of the groups which were fighting against them to establish a just and true Islamic society.

Having said all that, it is worth remembering what has been stated before that although the Ibadhis consider the system of Imamate as essential in an Islamic society in order to implement Islamic sharia, for the majority of Muslims the institution has for all intents and purposes fallen into disuse. The subject has been brought up for discussion simply to defend the Ibadhi stand on the system because other writers have raised it without explaining the reasons behind it so that non-Ibadhi readers are left wandering in the wild with biased views against the madh-hab.

Ian Skeet who stayed in Oman for two years from 1966 to 1968 in his book, Muscat & Oman, The End of an Era, made the following comments on the Ibadhi Imamate (p.92).

"Ibadhi philosophy contains elements of democracy, although in practice it has turned out conservatively traditional to the point of being reactionary. Ibadhis believe, for instance, in the election of the Imam by the

whole community that he should rule with the advice and consent of his people and that, if he loses popular support, he may be deposed. Ibadhis differ from most other Islamic communities, who have Imams or Caliphs within their system, in their belief that it is not necessary to have an uninterrupted succession of rulers; if there is no suitable candidate, then the office can remain vacant".

The history of Ibadhi Imams as summarized above in the Table of Imams in this chapter bears witness to Ian Skeet's comments on the system.

PART II - THEOLOGICAL

CHAPTER 6

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ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES & OTHER DOCTRINAL ISSUES

In the previous section of this book we have seen how historical events have been misrepresented in order to put undue blame on one group of Muslims for mistakes committed by other groups. In this section we will deal with theological factors which brought about sectarian differences, namely, disagreements on the interpretation of certain Qur'anic verses which relate mainly on the following issues: -

1. Whether the Qur'an is created or uncreated.
2. Whether Allah will be seen on the Day of Judgment.
3. Whether Allah is everywhere or only in the seventh Heaven.
4. Whether believers who enter Hell will remain there forever or transferred to Heaven after serving their term.
5. Whether Allah has Hands, Legs, Eyes, and Face among His Attributes.
6. Whether man has freewill, or are his actions predestined?

We will examine in the following pages the relevant ayahs in the Qur'an which deal with each subject at issue.

Is the Qur'an Created or Uncreated?

One of the sectarian differences among Muslims is whether the Qur'an is created or uncreated. For millions of Muslims it is the word of God and that is enough for them. But some factions of Muslim scholars treat this issue so seriously that they regard those who say that the Qur'an is a created word of God, like the Ibadhis, are heretics or unbelievers. Those who say that the Qur'an is uncreated mean that it is eternally pre-existent, that is, like God Himself, has no beginning whereas those who believe it is created imply that it did not exist before creation. For a Muslim layman it is a controversy on semantics.

Almighty God, in His infinite power, has created, out of nothing, matter and energy from which everything else in the universe is made of. He has created millions of stars and solar systems and hundred of thousands of galaxies. He has created our solar system including the earth and the planets around it. He has created the animal and plant kingdoms in their infinite varieties; and air and water to sustain life; He has created angels, satans and men including prophets like Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. The Almighty Allah has created holy books as guides to mankind, including the Tawrat, Bible and Zabur, and so He has created the Qur'an, the holiest book out of nothing. By believing in this we are recognizing God's unlimited powers of creation. In Ayahs 101 and 102 of Suratul An'am (6) the Almighty describes Himself:

آية (١٠١) : "بديع السموات والأرض أنى يكون له ولد ولم تكن له صاحبة وخلق كل شيء
آية (١٠٢) : ذلكم الله ربكم لا إله إلا هو خالق كل شيء فاعبدوه ..."

101 He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have children when He has no wife? He created all things... (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan)

102 That is Allah, your Lord! There is no god but He, The Creator of all things: then worship Him: (Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

In the first Ayah, Allah has used the words خلق كل شيء to mean He has created everything and in the second verse He has said خالق كل شيء in a comprehensive sense to mean He is the Creator of everything, including, by implication, the Qur'an.

In the historical part of this book, we mentioned that the Abbasid ruler Al-Ma'amun (813 – 833 CE) adopted the Mut'azilite doctrine which embodied, among other things, that the Qur'an is created. He declared it to be the State creed. The Ibadhis have adopted some, but not all, of the principles of this doctrine which is based on rationalism. On the other hand, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, the founder of the Hanbali Madh-hab which is prevalent in Saudi Arabia, did not agree and so was arrested and imprisoned on the orders of the ruler. Al Maamun quoted the following ayah in support of his arguments with Islamic scholars: -

إنا جعلناه قرآنا عربيا لعلكم تعقلون (سورة الزخرف الآيه ٣)

"We have made it (the Qur'an) in Arabic that you may be able to understand (it)." (S.43 verse 3).

In another Surah (Suratul An'am (6) Verse 1) Allah says: -

وجعل الظلمات والنور

which has been translated, *"and originated the darkness and the light"*... ... ...

The crucial word here is جعل . In the first verse above, the word has been translated, *"to make;"* and in the second verse, *"originate"*, which means to create.

When a man makes something, he does it out of other materials made by God. For example a carpenter who makes a table, he does not create it but he merely assembles and joins pieces of wood with nails and glue together. In other words he has made a table out of materials created by God. But when Allah makes something he does it out of nothing or out of other materials He has created out of nothing.

In the second verse the word جعل has been interpreted as originate which means create. But the following convincing ayah seems to have escaped the attention of scholars: -

وجعلنا من الماء كل شيء حي (سورة الأنبياء "٢١" آية ٣٠)

which has been translated as follows: -

"And we have made from water every living thing".

Here the word ((جعلنا)) means without a shadow of doubt "We have created" and the science of biology has confirmed that life originated from water, that is, created from it. This is again confirmed by verse 54 of chapter 25 (al Furqan) where Allah says: -

وهو الذي خلق من الماء بشرا...

"And it is He who has created man from water".
(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

In this ayah Allah has used the word خلق instead of جعل used in the earlier-quoted verse to explain that man has been created from water. In other words the two words in this context are synonymous. Here is another interesting verse in chapter 7 (Al A'raf), verse 189: -

هو الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة وجعل منها زوجها ليسكن إليها

"It is He who has created you from a single person (Adam), and (then) He has created from him his wife (Hawwa) in order that he might enjoy the pleasure of living with her". (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Thus Allah has used both words, جعل and خلق to mean to create.

In suratu Nnisaa (verse 1) Allah says: -

يأيها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة وخلق منها زوجها....

"O mankind! Fear your Lord who created you from a single person and created, out of him, his wife..."

In this verse Allah has used the word خلق twice and has not used the word جعل as He has done in the previous ayahs, which shows that the two words convey the same meaning in this context. So taking into consideration all these Qur'anic verses, the Ibadhis have come to the conclusion that when Allah says in chapter 43 (Az-Zukhruf), ayah 3: -

إنا جعلناه قرءانا عربيا لعلكم تعقلون

He meant: *"Verily We have created the Qur'an in Arabic that you may be able to understand (it)"*

The Abbasid Khalifa, Al Maamun, the son of Harun Rasheed, understood the ayah the way the Ibadhis have come to understand it.

Whatever the case, the fierce arguments about its origin, whether the Qur'an is created or uncreated, should not distract Muslims from its contents which is the most important purpose of the Qur'an, and from obeying the Divine Commandments and avoiding the Injunctions enshrined in it. Whether the Qur'an was created 1400 years ago or 14 billion years before or has pre-existed eternity should not be the issue. What is important is that it is the word of Almighty God, and that is what millions of Muslims everywhere understand; the philosophical side of it is the pastime of sectarian scholars. Before leaving the subject of the creation of the Qur'an it would be of interest to look into two other ayahs on the matter of creation. They are verses 71 and 72 of Surat Sad (38): -

إذ قال ربك للملائكة إني خالق بشرا من طين (٧١) فإذا سويته ونفخت فيه من روحي فقعوا له ساجدين(٧٢)

(Remember) when your Lord said to the angels *"Truly I am going to create man from clay".*

(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

The underlined words in verse 72 have however been given contradictory interpretation. Prof. Abdullah Yusuf Ali has translated them thus: -

"And I breathed unto him of my spirit",

while Dr. Al Hilali and Dr. Khan have explained them this way:-

"And I breathed into him (his) soul created by me".

The implication of the first translation is that God has given part of His spirit and so man is the essence of God. This sounds very much like those who say the Qur'an is the essence of Allah. In the second translation by Dr. Al Hilali and Dr. Khan, it means that God created man's soul and then breathed it into him. This interpretation agrees with those who say that the Qur'an is created. The two translations are contradictory and both have been endorsed by the Islamic authorities in Saudi Arabia. Fortunately neither of the translators is an Ibadhi nor a Khariji nor a Shia, so there has been no sectarian uproar in the Islamic world!!

Will Allah be Seen on the Day of Judgment?

Ibadhis do not believe that Allah will be seen on the Day of Judgment. Those who believe that Allah will be seen on the Day of Judgment rely on verse 15 of Suratul Muttaffifin (83): -

كلا إنهم عن ربهم يومئذ لمحجوبون

It is translated thus: -

> *"Verily, from (the Light of) their Lord, that Day, will they be veiled?* (Abdullah Yousuf Ali).

The word, "they", in the verse refers to those who deny the Day of Judgment (verse 11), the sinners (verse 12) and those who deny the Qur'an as the word of God (verse 13). According to the translation, the sinners will be veiled from the Light of (not the sight of) their Lord. The translator explains it further in the footnote (No. 6018) as follows: -

> *"At Judgment the true Light, the Glory of the Lord, the joy of the Righteous, will be hidden by veils from the eyes of the sinful. Instead, the Fire of Punishment will be to them the only reality which they will perceive."*

In Suratul Shura (42) we also read the following verse (51):-

وما كان لبشر أن يكلمه الله إلا وحيا أو من ورئ حجاب...

It is translated thus:-

> *"It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration or from behind a veil... ... ... "*
>
> (Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

The translator then quotes under footnote 4599 a Hadith recorded by Muslim that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said:-

> *"His veil (God's veil) is Light: were He to withdraw it, then would the august splendours of His Countenance surely consume everything that comes within His Sight".*

In other words it would be impossible to see Allah, for to see Him is to be consumed or completely destroyed!!!! In the light of this Hadith, the only sensible translation of ayah 15 of suratul Mutaffifin is that the sinners will be veiled not from the sight of Allah but from His mercy. (see p.52 of الحق الدامغ by Sheikh Ahmed Al Khalili). Those who believe they will see Allah on the Day of Judgment also rely on the following ayahs 22 and 23 of Suratul Qiyama (75):-

وجوه يومئذ ناضرة (٢٢) إلى ربها ناظرة (٢٣)

That means:-

> *"Some faces that Day will be shining (22) <u>looking</u> towards their Lord (23)".*

To understand the meaning of the word ناظرة we have to search for it in the Qur'an itself. Ayah 198 of Suratul A'araf (7) is interesting; it reads as follows.

وإن تدعوهم إلى الهدى لا يسمعوا وتراهم ينظرون إليك وهم لا يبصرون

> *"And if you call them to guidance, they hear not and you will see them <u>looking at you, yet they see not</u>".*
>
> (Dr. Al Hilali and Dr. Khan).

Also in verse 83-85 of Suratul Waqi'a (56) Allah says:-

فلولا إذا بلغت الحلقوم (٨٣) و أنتم حينئذ تنظرون (٨٤) ونحن أقرب إليه منكم ولكن لا تبصرون (٨٥)

"Then why do you not (intervene) when (the soul of a dying person) reaches the throat? (83) And you at the moment are looking on (84). But we (our angels who take the soul) are nearer to him than you! But you see not (85)

(Dr. M. T. Al Hilali and Dr. M.M.Khan).

These ayahs very clearly show the difference between the word نظر *"to look at"* and the word بصر *"to see"* in that you can look at something without seeing it, and it does not necessarily mean you will see it. So the ayah quoted before this: إلى ربها ناظرة does not mean that Allah will be seen on the Day of Judgment.

When we have been saved from an accident or some other misfortune or we have recovered from an illness, we pray to God and raise our hands and look upwards towards the heaven in expression of our joy and gratitude to His mercy and grace. That does not mean in this process that we are seeing the Almighty. Therefore Ibadhi scholars interpret the word ناظرة to mean waiting for God's mercy and entry to Paradise, and this is confirmed by Suratu Zzumar (39), Ayah 68:-

" ثم نفخ فيه أخرى فإذا هم قيام ينظرون"

"Then it (the Trumpet) will be blown a second time, and behold they will be standing, looking on (waiting)".

(Dr. Al Hilali and Dr. Khan).

Taking all these ayahs into consideration, we believe that Allah will not be seen, neither in this world nor in the Hereafter and this belief is supported by the following Qur'anic verse: (v.103 s.6)

لاتدركه الأبصار وهو يدرك الأبصار وهو اللطيف الخبير " (الأنعام)

"No vision can grasp Him, But His grasp is over all vision; He is subtle well aware".

(Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

In other words none can see Him but He sees everything however fine or minute. The verse is short and clear, free from any ambiguities; it is not clouded with any uncertainties.

In the English translation of the Qur'an by Dr. Muhammad T. Al-Hilali & Dr. Muhammad, M.Khan, there is a Prophet's Hadith narrated by Abu Said Al-Khudri quoted under footnote 1 (c) to Ayah 42 of Suratul Qalam (68) in which the Prophet (Peace be upon him) is asked whether our Lord shall be seen on the Day of Resurrection. He is alleged to have replied,

> *"Do you have any difficulty in seeing the sun and the moon when the sky is clear?"* The reply was *'No"*. He then said "So you will have no difficulty in seeing your Lord on that day as you have no difficulty in seeing the sun and the moon (in a clear sky)".

If you scrutinize this Hadith thoroughly and objectively, you will suspect that it is fabricated. First of all who can see the sun on a clear day in the Arabian sky? If you try to do it you will be blinded. During a solar eclipse when the sun is not so bright and is under the shadow of the moon, doctors advise us to use special glasses to look at the sun. This Hadith narrates several other events which will take place on the Day of Resurrection and is so long that one doubts that it could have been orally transmitted intact through a period of over 200 years without being distorted in the process before it was recorded by Bukhari. It is about one and half pages in small print or 66 lines long.

In Suratu An-Nisaa (4), Allah says in ayah 153:-

فقد سألوا موسى أكبر من ذلك فقالوا أرنا الله جهرة فأخذتهم الصعقة بظلمهم

> *"Indeed they (The Jews) asked Moses for even greater than that when they said: 'Show us Allah in public' but they were struck by thunder and lightning for <u>their wrong doing</u>.....".*

Thus Allah has described the Jew's request to see Him as a '<u>wrong doing</u>' and so punished them by striking them by thunder and lightning because they have asked for something that was impossible to get. In Suratul-A'raf (7), verse 143 prophet Musa (Moses) said to Allah:-

"أرني أنظر إليك قال لن تراني"

"Show me (Yourself), that I may look upon You" Allah said, *"You cannot see Me",.....*

(Dr. Al Hilali and Dr. Khan).

The Al Ash'ari contend that if Moses's request to see God was wrong, he would not have asked for it because he was a prophet, and so he was free from sins. But let us see what the Holy Qur'an says. In Suratul-Qasas (S.28), verse 15 – 16 it is narrated that Moses struck and killed a non-Jew who was fighting a Jew. Moses said to Allah:

"My lord! Verily, I have wronged myself, so forgive me" Then He (Allah) forgave him. (verse 16).

(Dr. Al Hilali and Dr. Khan).

So the Ash'aris contention is groundless because Moses did commit a sin but was forgiven. Ibadhi scholars, on the other hand, explain that Moses' request to see Allah was made, not for his own sake, but to prove to his people, the Jews, that it was impossible to see Him.

Allah's Omnipresence

Is Allah in the seventh Heaven or everywhere? Ayah 5 of Suratu Taha (20) reads as follows:-

" الرحمن على العرش استوى"

Abdullah Yusuf Ali has translated it thus:-

"The Most Gracious is firmly established on the Throne".

Dr. Muhammad T. Al Hilali and Dr. Muhammad M. Khan, in the Appendix II of their translation of the Qur'an, have explained it as follows:-

"The most Gracious (Allah) rose over (Istawa) the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty)", over the seventh heaven; and He comes down over the first (nearest) heaven to us on the day of 'Arafah (i.e.

the 9th of Dhul-Hijja), and also during the last third part of the night as mentioned by the Prophet (Peace be upon him), but He is with us by His Knowledge, not by His Personal-Self (bi-Dhatihi). It is not as some people think that Allah is present everywhere – here, there and even inside the breasts of men".

The latter two translators' comments have very serious implications. Does it mean that at other times of the day and night, the Almighty has no knowledge of what is going on on the earth? We know today that the earth is round and so time is not the same everywhere. When it is the last third part of the night in the Arabian peninsular, it is morning in the Indian subcontinent and it is evening in some parts of Africa. So the third part of the night keeps on rotating westwards with Allah's knowledge rotating with it!! It is obvious that this interpretation of the Qur'anic verse leads to preposterous conclusions. Those who fabricated hadiths 1200 years ago did not have modern knowledge of geography and so did not think they would be found out!. Those who share the belief of the two translators should bear in mind what Allah Himself said about His Knowledge in Suratul Mujadalah(58) Ayah 7:-

"ألم تر أن الله يعلم ما في السموات وما في الأرض ما يكون من نجوى ثلاثة إلا هو رابعهم ولا خمسة إلا هو سادسهم ولا أدنى من ذلك ولا أكثر إلا هو معهم أينما كانوا"

The two translators have interpreted the ayah as follows:-

> *"Have you not seen that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth? There is no Najwa (secret counsel) of three but He is their fourth (with His knowledge, while He Himself is over the Throne, over the seventh heaven), nor of five but He is their sixth (with His Knowledge), nor of less than that or more but He is with them (with His Knowledge) where so ever they may be".*

The ayah contradicts the Hadith quoted by the two translators. God's knowledge as described by the ayah is universal and comprehensive regardless of time and place, whereas according to the Hadith quoted by the translators it is restrictive of time (The last third part of the night) and place (Arafat). This is sheer contradiction and no fabricated Hadith will be consistent with the Qur'an.

Abdullah Yousuf Ali in his translation of ayah 255 of suratul Baqara appends a footnote No.297 in which he says:-

> Allah's knowledge is absolute, and is not conditioned by time or place. His Knowledge and our knowledge are therefore in different categories.

In the ayah No.115 of suratul-Baqara (2) Allah says:-

ولله المشرق والمغرب فأينما تولوا فثم وجه الله إن الله واسع عليم

"To Allah belong the east and the west; and wherever you turn there is Allah's Countenance. For Allah is all – embracing. All-knowing". (Dr. Israr Ahmed Khan).

According to Dr. Israr Ahmed Khan in his book Qur'anic studies, An Introduction (p.175), the ayah *"simply expresses the omnipresence of Allah".* He further explains that the ayah was revealed to show that when a person, on a journey, does not know the direction of Qibla, he can pray in any direction.

In the Hadith No.848 of Musnad Imam Rabi'i it is narrated that Seyyidna Umar heard a man saying:

والله حيث كان

"Allah is where he was"

Seyyidna Umar said:

ويحك كأنك تلتمسه إن الله بكل مكان

"Woe to you! It is as if you are looking for Him. Verily Allah is everywhere".

Abdul Qahir Tahir Al.Baghdady Al Tamimy in his book Al Farq Baina Al Firaq (الفرق بين الفرق) has quoted the following statement by Seyyidna Ali (p.333).

إن الله تعالى خلق العرش إظهارا لقدرته
لا مـــكانا لـــذاته ، وقال أيضا :
قد كان ولامكان وهو الآن على ما كان

Indeed Allah the Exalted created the Throne as a Manifestation of His Power, not a place for Himself.

Seyyidna Ali added:-

(Allah) was where He was without a place and He is now where He was.

The Ibadhi position on this issue has been explained by Sheikh Ahmed b. Hamed Al Khalily, Al.Mufti-I-'Aam for the Sultanate of Oman in his booklet, الآيات المتشابـهات في القرآن الكريم (Ambiguous verses in the Holy Qur'an p.38) as follows:-

أن الله تعالى لم يتـغير عما كان قبل خلق الزمان والمكان ،
فهـو الآن على ما عليه كان ، لم يطرأ عليه أي تغـيير

That Allah the Exalted has not changed from where He was before the creation of Time and Space, so He is now where He was, no change has taken place (in His position). (Translation by the Author).

In other words, where was Allah before the creation of the Universe? He must have been somewhere. So He is still there where He was, His position has not changed.

Here again the Ibadhis have adopted Seyyidna Ali's view on the issue, which is another proof that they had no quarrel with him with regard to matters of religion; their differences with him relate to political affairs only, contrary to what enemies of Islamic unity have been maliciously preaching to their followers.

Would Believers who enter Hell remain there forever?

On the Day of Judgment there will be three classes of people:-

1) Those who had full belief in Allah, in the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), His other Prophets, the Qur'an and His other books and angels, in the Hereafter and have fulfilled Allah's Commandments and avoided His Prohibitions in life. Paradise is their destination.

2) Those who had no belief in one God, Allah, and in the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) etc. their abode will be Hell.

3) Then there is a third group which comprises the believers who failed to comply with God's Commandments and avoid His Prohibitions and then again failed to ask for Allah's forgiveness before their deaths.

There is no controversy with regard to the fate of the first two groups but there is a disagreement on the last group due to differences in the interpretation of some ayahs in the Qur'an. Islamic scholars of some other sects hold the view that the third group will enter Hell and remain there for a period commensurate to the degree or gravity of sins they had committed in this life, and then with God's mercy, will be taken out of it even if they had not repented for their sins in their lifetime.

Ibadhis, on the other hand, believe that those who commit grave sins and have not repented before their deaths will enter Hell and remain there forever. They hold this view on the authority of verse 14 of Suratu Nnisaa (4):-

" ومن يعص الله ورسوله ويتعد حدوده يدخله نارا خالدا فيها وله عذاب مهين"

"And whosoever disobeys Allah and his Messenger and transgresses His limits will be put into the Fire to abide therein forever, and he shall have a humiliating punishment", and again in Suratu-1- Muuminuun (23), ayah 103 Allah says:-

" ومن خفت موازينه فأولئك الذين خسروا أنفسهم في جهنم خالدون"

"And those whose scales (of good deeds) are light, they are those who lose their own selves, in Hell will they abide". (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

But those who say that sinners will be released from Hell after serving their terms rely on ayah 128 of Suratul An'am (6) to support their belief:-

"قال النار مثواكم خالدين فيها إلا ما شاء الله"

which means:-

(Allah) says (to the assembly of Jinns and men):

"The Fire will be your dwelling – place, you will dwell therein forever, except as Allah may will":
(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

The ayah contains an exceptional clause, إلا ما شاء الله "except as Allah may will" which, they say, means that sinners will be released from Hell after completing their terms of punishment.

But Sheikh Ahmed bin Hamed Al Khalily, the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman in his book (The Overwhelming Truth) does not agree with this interpretation, and has cited several other ayahs which contain the exceptional clause but do not admit to the same explanation. For example in Suratul A'ala (87) Ayahs 6 and 7 Allah addresses Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as follows:-

" سنقرئك فلا تنسى " (٦) "إلا ما شاء الله".....(٧)

which translates thus:-

(6) "We shall make you (O Muhammad SAW) recite (the Qur'an), so you shall no forget (it).

(7) "Except what Allah may will……." (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Sheikh Ahmed Al Khalili argues that if Allah wants to make the Prophet (Peace be upon him) recite the Qur'an without forgetting it, the exceptional

clause cannot be construed to mean that if He wishes He will make him forget it. That would be contradictory and defeat the whole purpose of the passage.

Allah's will is not like man's will. If a man wills something today he may change his mind tomorrow, and when tomorrow comes he may again adopt a completely different idea. But if Allah wills something, it means He has made a decision regarding it. There is no question of changing His mind because Allah is well aware of all the circumstances before and after He made the decision. In Suratu Yunus (10), verse 64 Allah says

لا تبد يل لكلمات الله

"There is no changing in the words of Allah"

In other words God does not change His mind as men do.
In chapter 48 (Suratul Fat'h) ayah 27 Allah assures His Messenger thus:

(لتدخلن المسجد الحرام إن شاء الله آمنين.....)

"Certainly, you shall enter the sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, secure... ...."

In the ayah above Allah has used the word لتد خلن which has been translated "certainly you shall enter". The word has started with a prefix لام (or L) which is known in Arabic grammar as a letter of swearing (لام القسم) . At the same time the word has ended with a suffix نون (or N) and is known in the grammar as a letter of emphasis (نون التأكيد) . So when Allah said, لتدخلن it meant that He swore and stated emphatically to His Messenger that he shall enter the sacred Mosque." So the subsequent clauses, "if Allah wills", which appears in the same verse cannot be construed then to mean that He will change His mind, because He has already made a decision on the matter. Thus when Allah said,

"The fire will be your dwelling place, you will dwell therein forever, except as Allah may will" (S.6.V.128),

the exceptional clause could not be interpreted to alter or reduce the permanent nature of the punishment as decreed by Allah Himself. In Suratu Hud (11), the following verses (106 – 108) recount the facts about the Day of Judgment:-

فأما الذين شقوا ففي النار لهم فيها زفير وشهيق (١٠٦)

(106) "Those who are wretched shall be in the Fire: There will be for them therein (nothing) but the heaving of sighs and sobs".

خالدين فيها ما دامت السموات والأرض إلا ما شاء ربك إن ربك فعال لما يريد (١٠٧)

(107) "They will dwell therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord wills, for the Lord is the (sure) Accomplisher of what He plans.

و أما الذين سعدوا ففي الجنة خالدين فيها ما دامت السموات والأرض إلا ما شاء ربك عطاء غير مجذوذ (١٠٨)

(108) "And those who are blessed shall be in the Heaven they will dwell therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure. Except as thy Lord wills; a gift without a break.

In both ayahs 107 and 108 there is a conditional clause *"so long as the heavens and the earth endure"* (مادامت السموات و الأرض) and there is an exceptional clause, *"except as thy Lord wills"* (إلا ما شاء ربك). The exceptional clause has already been explained above when discussing verses 6 and 7 Suratul A'ala (87).

With regard to the conditional clause, Sheikh Ahmed Al Khalily has explained that the heavens and the earth mentioned in the two verses are not the existing ones in which we live because these will disappear before the Day of Judgment. But the ayahs refer to the earth and heavens which will replace the present ones as mentioned in Suratul Ibrahim (14), ayah 48:-

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"يوم تبدل الأرض غير الأرض و السموات و برزوا لله الواحد القهار"

"On the Day when the earth will be changed to another earth and so will be the heavens, and they (all creatures) will appear before Allah, the one, the Irresistible"
(Dr. Al Hilali & Khan).

Abdullah Yusuf Ali has explained in the footnote No.1608 in his translation of ayah 107 the meaning of the word خالدون as follows:-

"Khalidun is the word which is usually translated 'dwell forever'..... Here it is definitely connected with the two conditions, viz (1) as long as the heavens and the earth endure, and (2) except as Allah wills. Some Muslims theologians deduce from this the conclusion that the penalties referred to are not eternal, because the heavens and the earth as we see them are not eternal, and the punishments for the deeds of life that will end should not be such as will never end. The majority of Muslim theologians reject this view. They hold that the heavens and the earth here referred to are not those we see now, but others that will be eternal. They agree that Allah's Will is unlimited in scope and power, but it has willed that the rewards and punishments of the Day of Judgment will be eternal".

In other words the views of Sheikh Ahmed bin Hamed Al Khalili on the issue of eternal punishment conform with the view of the majority of Muslim scholars as pointed out above. It is worth mentioning that Abdullah Yusuf is not an Ibadhi and his translation of the Qur'an was approved by Muslim authorities in Saudi Arabia.

With regard to those who will be blessed with the Garden or Heaven (الجنة) mentioned in ayah 108 above, the conditional clause and the exceptional clause have been clarified by Allah Himself at the end of the ayah when He says that the Garden (i.e. Heaven) is *"a gift without a break"* or without end (عطاءً غير مجذوذ). In other words those who will be admitted to Heaven will dwell there forever, despite the exceptional clause and the conditional clause.

Those who believe that Muslim sinners who enter Hell will eventually come out of it claim to have the authority of the Holy Prophet's Hadiths which say that He will intercede with Allah for them, that is, on their behalf. Dr. Mustafa Mahmoud, a well-known Egyptian scholar has a different opinion on the subject and casts doubts on the authenticity of some of these Hadiths. In his booklet, الشفاعة (the Intercession) he points out that Allah in verse 44 of Surah 39 (سورة الزمر) says that, *"All intercession belongs to Allah"* (لله الشفاعة جميعا). He quotes several other verses to the same effect:-

"مالهم من دونه من ولي ولا يشرك في حكمه أحدا" (سورة الكهف آية ٢٦)

"They have no protector other than Him (Allah) and He makes none to share in His Decision" (V.26.S.18)

"ليس لهم من دونه ولي ولا شفيع" (سورة الأنعام آية ٥١)

"They will have neither protector nor an intercessor beside Him (Allah)" (V.51 S.6)

" وكم من ملك في السموات لا تغني شفاعتهم شيئا إلا من بعد أن يأذن الله لمن يشاء ويرضى" (سورة النجم آية ٢٦)

"And there are many angels in the Heavens, whose intercession will avail nothing except after Allah has given leave for whom He wills and is pleased with." (V.26 S.53)
(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan)

" يا أيها الذين ءامنوا أنفقوا مما رزقناكم من قبل أن يأتي يوم لا بيع فيه ولا خلة ولا شفاعة والكافرون هم الظالمون" (السورة البقرة آية ٢٥٥)

"O you who believe! Spend of that with which we have provided you, before a day comes when there will be no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession. And it is the disbelievers who are the wrong doers." (V254 S.2)
(Dr Al Hilali & Dr Khan).

Those who believe that Muslim sinners who enter Hell will eventually come out of it claim to have the authority of the Holy Prophet's Hadiths which say that He will intercede with Allah for them, that is, on their behalf. Dr. Mustafa Mahmoud, a well-known Egyptian scholar has a different opinion on the subject and casts doubts on the authenticity of some of these Hadiths. In his booklet, الشفاعة (the Intercession) he points out that Allah in verse 44 of Surah 39 (سورة الزمر) says that, *"All intercession belongs to Allah"* (لله الشفاعة جميعا). He quotes several other verses to the same effect:-

"مالهم من دونه من ولي ولا يشرك في حكمه أحدا" (سورة الكهف آية ٢٦)

"They have no protector other than Him (Allah) and He makes none to share in His Decision" (V.26.S.18)

"ليس لهم من دونه ولي ولا شفيع" (سورة الأنعام آية ٥١)

"They will have neither protector nor an intercessor beside Him (Allah)" (V.51 S.6)

" وكم من ملك في السموات لا تغني شفاعتهم شيئا إلا من بعد أن يأذن الله لمن يشاء ويرضى" (سورة النجم آية ٢٦)

"And there are many angels in the Heavens, whose intercession will avail nothing except after Allah has given leave for whom He wills and is pleased with." (V.26 S.53)
(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan)

" يا أيها الذين ءامنوا أنفقوا مما رزقناكم من قبل أن يأتي يوم لا بيع فيه ولا خلة ولا شفاعة والكافرون هم الظالمون" (السورة البقرة آية ٢٥٥)

"O you who believe! Spend of that with which we have provided you, before a day comes when there will be no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession. And it is the disbelievers who are the wrong doers." (V254 S.2)
(Dr Al Hilali & Dr Khan).

The Qur'an mentions at the same time that intercession will be available on the Day of Judgment but with the permission of Allah as in the following verses:-

" من ذا الذي يشفع عنده إلا بإذنه (سورة البقرة آية ٢٥٥)

"Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His permission?" (V.255 S.2) (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

" ما من شفيع إلا من بعد إذنه(سورة يونس آية ٣)

"No intercessor (can plead with Him) except after His leave" (Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

On that Day no intercession shall avail except the one for whom permission has been granted by the most Gracious and whose word is acceptable. But this intercession will not be available to everybody and it is not known in what circumstances it will be given. There might be Muslims who committed grave sins in extenuating circumstances who would deserve intercession but this is a divine secret which nobody knows. Dr. Mustafa Mahmoud in his booklet on Intercession (p.5 Para 2) makes the following comment on this issue:-

أما الشفاعة بمعنى هدم الناموس واخراج المذنبين من النار وإدخالهم الجنة فهي فوضى الوسائط التي نعرفها في الدنيا.....

ولا وجود لها في الآخرة ...وكل ما جاء بهذا المعنى في الأحاديث النبوية مشكوك في سنده لأنه يخالف صريح القرآن .

"As for intercession in the sense of breaking the rule and discharging sinners from Hell and admitting them into Heaven is the chaos of mediators which we know in this world; it does not exist in the Hereafter. And whatever has come in the Holy Prophet's Hadiths in this sense is doubtful in its authenticity because it contradicts what has been clearly stated in the Qur'an".

(Translation by the Author)

Ibadhis believe that for the sinners to be forgiven for their sins, they must repent before their deaths not just in words but also in deeds. For example if a sinner who had the habit of stealing public funds or other forms of public property seeks Allah's pardon, he must not only stop doing it but he must refund the public property to the rightful owner, that is the State. It is not enough for him to say after his obligatory prayers, *"O Allah Forgive me! I will never do it again"* while he continues to enjoy what he had illegally acquired before repenting. And so the angels will be asking forgiveness for the faithful who repented as follows:-

"ربنا وسعت كل شيء رحمة و علما فاغفر للذين تابوا واتبعوا سبيلك وقهم عذاب الجحيم" (سورة غافر آية ٧)

"Our Lord! You comprehend all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who repented and follow your Way, and save them from the punishment of the blazing Fire." (V.7 S.40) (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

In other words intercession الشفاعة by angels will not be for all and sundry but only for *"those who repented and followed Your path"*, that is, those who repented and reformed, and then again it must be with the prior permission of our Lord.

Even Allah's forgiveness is not automatic but is granted subject to certain conditions. Thus in verse 82 of Chapter 20 (Taha) Allah tells the Israelis through Prophet Moses (Nabii Musa):-

وإني لغفار لمن تاب و آمن وعمل صالحا ثم اهتدى

And verily, I am indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes in Allah and does righteous deeds, and then keeps on following the right way (reformed).

And in verse 17 of Chapter 4 (An Nisaa) Allah says:-

إنما التوبة على الله للذين يعملون السوء بجهالة ثم يتوبون من قريب فأولئك يتوب الله عليهم ...

Allah accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and repent soon afterwards, to them will Allah turn in mercy..... (Abdullah Yusuf Ali)

And in the next verse, Allah continues:-

وليست التوبة للذين يعملون السيئات حتى إذا حضر احدهم الموت قال إني تبت الآن ولا الذين يموتون وهم كفار أولئك اعتدنا لهم عذابا أليما.

And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil, until death faces one of them, and he says, 'Now I have repented indeed," nor of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them we have prepared a painful torment. (D. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Thus in brief Allah's forgiveness will only be granted to those who repent and believe in him and do righteous deeds and then reform after repentance. It will also be granted to those who do evil acts out of ignorance but then repent soon after.

It will however not be granted to those who do evil deeds (sins) but do not repent until they find death approaching them, nor to disbelievers when they are on the verge of death. And so the believers as well as disbelievers who delay repenting until when they are about to die will not be pardoned for their rebellion or disbelief.

Hence if those who repent and do not fulfill the condition required will not have their repentance accepted, how can those who have not repented at all in their lifetime expect Allah's mercy on the Day of Judgment? Just as there are conditions for repentance, so there are conditions for intercession (الشفاعة) as well, namely, Allah's prior permission and consent and then for those who repented soon after and reformed, and then long before their deaths.

In the book الموسوعة الميسرة في الأديان والمذاهب و الأحزاب المعاصرة published in Riyadh under the supervision of Dr. Maani'i bin Hammaad Al-Juhany, the following passage appears on p.64:-

الذي يرتكب كبيرة من الكبائر يطلقون (أي الاباضيون) عليه لفظة "كافر" زاعمين بان، هذا كفر نعمة أو كفر نفاق لا كفر ملة بينما يطلق عليه أهل السنة و الجماعة كلمة العصيان أو الفسوق، ومن مات على ذلك في نظر أهل السنة فهو في مشيئة الله إن شاء غفر له بكرمه وإن شاء عذبه بعدله حتى يطهر من عصيانه ثم ينتقل إلى الجنة، أما الاباضية فيقولون بان العاصي مخلد في النار.

Translation:-

"He who commits one of the grave sins, they (the Ibadhis) apply to him the term "ungrateful" claiming that this is ingratitude of (Allah's) blessings or hypocrisy, not infidelity, whereas the Sunnis apply to him the term disobedience (rebellion) or wickedness, and whoever dies in that (state), in the view of the Sunnis, with Allah's Will, He pardons him by His Magnanimity (Generosity), and, if He wills, He punishes him with His Justice until he is purified of his sins, then he is transferred to paradise. As for the Ibadhis, they say that a sinner (of a grave sin) remains in Hell for ever". (Translation by the Author).

But let us see what Allah Himself says in verse 14 of chapter 4 (An-Nisaa):-

"ومن يعص الله ورسوله ويتعد حدوده يدخله نارا خالدا فيها وله عذاب مهين"

And whosever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits, He will cast him into the Fire, to abide therein; and he shall have a disgraceful torment.
(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

The term خالدا used in the above – cited verse means, *"Lasting or remaining for ever".* In other words such sinners will remain in Hell forever, and so the Ibadhi's belief is consistent with the Qur'an. If Muslims were given the choice between the interpretations of Sunnis and that of Ibadhis everyone will opt for the former for two reasons:-

(1) Nobody is certain that he will not enter Hell. We all pray and work hard in our lifetime to avoid that destination.

(2) But if he were to enter Hell he would still want to get out of it – nobody would like to be there forever!!

So we pray that the Sunnis' interpretation turns out to be right. But are we to interpret the Qur'an according to our convenience or choice? It would have been different if the Ibadhis were sure to go to Heaven and others to Hell. But this is Allah's secret which nobody knows, and so we cannot be accused of selfishness or meanness for wishing to remain in Heaven alone to the exclusion of others. It is apparent that these liberal interpretations of relevant Qur'anic verses were made to placate feelings of guilty conscience or allay the fears suffered by many of the Umayyad, Abbasid and Fitimid rulers for atrocities committed on their directions and in their names against innocent fellow Muslims.

God's Attributes

Does God have anthropomorphic attributes (human features)? The Ibadhi's reply is negative. Their understanding of the attributes of God differ from that of some other Islamic schools, again, due to the difference in the methods of interpretation of certain Qur'anic verses. Some of the other sects apply literal interpretation in cases where figurative method is suitable as we shall see. Thus in Suratu Taha (20), ayah 39, Allah after relating to Nabii Musa (Moses) the story of how, when he was a baby, he was placed in a chest and the chest was put in a river, ended by saying:-

وألقيت عليك محبة مني ولتصنع على عيني

The verse has been literally translated as follows:-

> *"And I endued you with love from me, in order that you may be brought up under My Eye".*
>
> (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Ustadh Abdullah Yusuf Ali after translating the ayah in the same way as above went on to explain it further in the footnote no.2560 that "Allah's special providence (i.e. God's special care) looked after him (Nabii Musa) in bringing his mother to him". In other words, Abdullah Yusuf Ali interprets the phrase, "under my eyes" in the verse to mean, "under God's special care". We must not forget that the Pharaoh had issued instruction for all male Israel babies born in Egypt to be killed, so for Nabii Musa to survive or be saved, he needed God's special providence and protection. The Ibadhis agree with Abdullah Yusuf Ali's interpretation but some Islamic sects construe the phrase "under my eyes" literally to mean that God has eyes (though not like human eyes) which interpretation we totally reject. Again in Suratul Qamar (54) Ayah 14, Allah talks about Noah's Ark (Nabii Nuh's ship)

تجري بأعيننا جزاء لمن كان كفر

> *"(The ship) floating under Our Eyes: a reward for him who had been rejected"!* (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

But Abdullah Yusuf Ali has explained it this way:-

> *"She floats under Our Eyes (and care): a recompense to one who had been rejected".*

The latter translation conforms with the Ibadhi's understanding that Allah's eye means His care. This metaphorical translation is based on the opinions of such Sahabas and Tabi'in as Ibn Abbas, Al-Hassan, Al-Dhahak and others (See part III, Section 30 of Musnad Rabi'i).

Now let us see how the word يد which has appeared in several verses in the Qur'an has been literally and wrongly interpreted as "hand". In Suratul Fat'h (48), verse 10 reads as under:-

" إن الذين يبايعونك إنما يبايعون الله يد الله فوق أيديهم فمن نكث فإنما ينكث
على نفسه ومن أوفى بما عاهد عليه الله فسيؤتيه أجرا عظيما "

Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan have translated the verse as follows:-

> *"Verily those who give pledge to you (O Muhammad SAW) they are giving pledge to Allah. <u>The Hand of Allah</u>*

is over their hands. Then whosoever breaks his pledge, breaks it only to his own harm and whosoever fulfils what he has covenanted with Allah, He will bestow on him a great reward".

The Almighty after using the clause, *"The Hand of Allah is over their hands"*, metaphorically He then goes on to explain it at the end of the same ayah to mean, *"and whosoever fulfils what he had covenanted with Allah, He will bestow on him a great reward".*

Therefore the original words in the verse,

يد الله فوق أيد يهم

do not prove that God has a hand but mean He will bestow a great reward to those who fulfill their pledge to the Prophet. Further details of the great reward which Allah would bestow on those who would fulfill their pledges are given in ayahs 18-20 of the same Sura, that is, Suratul Fat'h (48). In Suratu Sad (38) we come to the following verse (75):-

"قال يا إبليس مامنعك أن تسجد لما خلقت بيدي"

(Allah) said: *"O Iblis what prevents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with Both My Hands".* (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

"One", in the verse, refers to Adam.

Ibadhis have adopted the interpretation given by the Sahaba, Ibn Abbas to the word بيدي in the ayah, to mean with My Power and Skill and have rejected the literal interpretation of the word in the sense of with Both My Hands. The Ibadhi's figurative interpretation is supported by ayah 59 of Suratul Imran (3) where Allah says

" إن مثل عيسى عند الله كمثل آدم خلقه من تراب ثم قال له كن فيكون".

"Verily the likeness of Isa before Allah is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: "Be!" and he was." (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan)

In other words God created Prophet Isa (Jesus) in the same way as He created Adam. He created him from dust and then said to him: *"Be"* and he was. Allah did not say that he created him with both His Hands as was alleged in S.38 V.75 above. So when Allah wants to create something He does not create it with both his Hands as a potter does. He merely says *"Be!"* and it is. Allah has said the same thing in Ayah 40 Suratu An-Nahl (16):-

"إنما قولنا لشيء إذا أردناه أن نقول له كن فيكون"

"Verily! Our word unto a thing when We intend it, is only that We say unto it: 'Be' – and it is".

(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

In Arabic, as in other languages, a word may have several meanings, some of them literal, others metaphorical. For example the word يد means *"hand"*, but it also means power, control or help. Thus the Arabs say:-

How long a person would live is in the power of God = الأعمار بيد الله

Under his control = تحت يده

God's help goes with the group (instead of individuals) = يد الله مع الجماعة

The matter is not in my authority = ليس الأمر بيدي

In all these examples, and there are several others, the word يد has not been used to mean 'hand' in its literal sense. In the same way, in the Qur'an some words like عين وساق و وجه (eye, leg, face) have been applied in their figurative meanings. It is also alleged that Allah has legs and the following verse no.42 of Suratul Qalam (68) is presented as a proof of it:-

"يوم يكشف عن ساق ويدعون الى السجود فلا يستطيعون"

which is literally translated as follows:-

"(Remember) the Day when the Shin shall be laid bare (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) and they shall be called to prostrate themselves (to Allah), but they (hypocrites) shall not be able to do so".

(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Abdullah Yusuf Ali after translating يوم يكشف عن ساق as *"The Day that the Shin shall be laid bare"* he explains it further to mean *"when men are confronted with the stark reality of the Day of Judgment"*. In other words he does not seem to agree with the literal translation. The literal interpretation is strange because the words يوم يكشف عن ساق form an Arabic expression (عبارة خاصة) which is employed in the following contexts:

كشفت الحرب عن ساقها

to mean the war was violent or flared up; it has nothing to do with legs. Ibn Abbas, the Holy Prophet's cousin is reported to have explained the expression:

يوم يكشف عن ساق يعني عن الأمر الشديد

"The Day when things will be difficult".

These interpretations of Ibn Abbas agree with the explanation given by Abdullah Yusuf Ali above. It is also alleged that Allah has a Face and the following verses are cited in support of the claim:-

ولله المشرق والمغرب فأينما تولوا فثم وجه الله (البقرة آيه ١١٥)

which is translated literally as follows:-

"And to Allah belong the east and the west, so wherever you turn there is Allah's Face". (Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

And in Ayah 88 of Suratul Qassas (28) Allah says:-

كل شيء هالك إلا وجهه

which Dr. Hilal and Dr. Khan have translated this way:-

"Everything will perish save His Face".

If we are to accept these literal translations as right, one might as well ask, if *"everything will perish except Allah's Face"*, then what about His Hands and Legs? Will they also perish since only the Face will remain? There is no doubt that these literal translations lead us to blasphemous

conclusions. So the Ibadhis reject them and construe the word *"Face"* to mean God Himself. The Ibadhi interpretation of the word وجهه to mean *"himself"* has been unwittingly supported by the above – mentioned translators when they came to translate ayah 125 of Suratu Nnisaa (S.4) figuratively as follows:-

"ومن أحسن دينا ممن أسلم وجهه لله وهو محسن واتبع ملة إبراهيم حنيفا"

"Who can be better in religion than one who submits ***his whole self*** *to Allah, does good, and follows the way of Abraham the true in faith?"* (Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

while Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan translate وجهه to mean *"his face (himself)"*. Thus the translators have thus interpreted the word وجهه metaphorically in the same way as the Ibadhis have done in previous ayahs. This is the explanation given by Ibn Abbas when he was asked about the following verse:-

"ويبقي وجه ربك ذوالجلال والإكرام" (سورة الرحمن ٥٥ آية ٢٧)

He explained that everything will perish except Allah Himself.

(Hadith 873 of Musnad al-Rabi'i).

To say that Almighty Allah has hands, legs, eyes and face, etc. and then add a statement that there is nothing like Him is to contradict oneself. Suppose a person were to say that God has branches, leaves, flowers and roots, our immediate reaction would be, He must be like a tree or plant, and if the person were further to add: But He is not like anything (ليس كمثله شيء), we would say this person is inconsistent with himself in his description of God.

Some of these words have been used in the Qur'an in their functional rather than ordinary senses. For the function of a hand is to work or control. A farmer works with his hand and owner of an animal (be it horse, dog or cow) controls it from straying by holding firm the rope with which it is tied round its neck. The same is true of an eye; the mother's or nurse's eye is a protection for a child against potential danger. Nobody, in his senses, would leave a child under the care of a blind man.

In Suratul Baqara (Ayah 272) Allah says:-

وما تنفقون إلا ابتغاء وجه الله

which Abdullah Yusuf Ali, after translating it literally, *"and you shall only do so (i.e. spend) seeking the Face of Allah,"* goes on to explain, in the footnote, the word, Face, to mean Favour or Glory. So the ayah would translate as follows:-

And you shall only spend seeking Allah's Favour.

Similarly in Suratul A'Raf (Ayah 29) Allah has commanded:

"وأقيموا وجوهكم عند كل مسجد وادعوه مخلصين له الدين"

which has been interpreted by the same translator as follows:-

"And that ye set your whole selves (to Him) at every time and place of prayer, and call upon Him, making your devoting sincere".

In Suratul Imran (3), Ayah 20 Allah says to His Messenger:-

"فإن حاجوك فقل أسلمت وجهي لله ومن اتبعن"

which means:

"So if they dispute with you say: "I have submitted myself to Allah and so have those who follow me".

In all these Qur'anic Verses, and there are many others, Allah has used the word وجه in its figurative sense to mean "self" and not *"face".*

In the same way, in Chapter 14 (Ibrahim) Allah has said in verse 4:

"وما أرسلنا من رسول إلا بلسان قومه ليبين لهم"

And we sent not a messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the Message) clear for them. (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Here the translators have interpreted the word لسان to mean, language, not *"tongue".* In other words they have explained the word لسان in its functional or figurative sense rather than its literal meaning.

Similarly in verse 14 of chapter 32 (As – Sajdah) Allah says:-

فذوقوا بما نسيتم لقاء يومكم هذا إنا نسيناكم

Then taste you (the tournament of the Fire) because of your forgetting the Meeting of this Day of yours. Surely We too will forget you. (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Ustadh Abdullah Yusuf Ali after translating the word, نسيناكم in the same way as above went on to explain in the footnote that *"forget"* has been used in the sense of *"to ignore deliberately"* because Allah does not forget, as Prophet Moses (Nabii Musa) said in reply to the Pharaoh in chapter 20 (Taha), verse 52:-

لا يضل ربي ولا ينسى

My Lord neither errs nor forgets (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Thus it can be seen the danger of literal interpretation in that it might lead to contradictions. So Ibadhis have resorted to allegorical interpretation in such circumstances in order to reconcile what appears to be contradictory verses. It should also be remembered that forgetfulness is a human, not divine attribute.

In the interpretation of the Qur'an, it is important to bear in mind that certain fundamental principles laid down on the Qur'an itself must not be violated. For example in Suratul Ikhlas, the basic principle of faith have been described as follows:-

(1) Allah is One.

(2) He is Independent and Self –Sufficient.

(3) He begets not, nor was He begotten.

(4) There is none like unto him (or comparable to Him).

So any interpretation of the Qur'an that even remotely suggests, for example, that there is more than one God, or that He begets or was begotten, or that He resembles or compares with, in any way, one of His

creatures, must be rejected. To resort to Hadiths to support literal interpretation of the Qur'an in such cases is inappropriate because Hadith cannot validate what is contrary to the principles of faith enshrined in the Holy Book. The Qur'an is the Basic Law of Islam, and Hadiths are its supplementary or subsidiary legislation which is intended to explain the Basic Law but it cannot be applied to alter it. A genuine or authentic Hadith should not contradict the Qur'an, if it does then it must be fabricated or invented.

Advocates of literal interpretation of the Qur'an sometimes bend the rule to support their beliefs as in Verse 26 of Chapter 10 (Suratul – Yunus) where Allah says:-

للذين أحسنوا الحسنى وزيادة

To those who do right is a goodly (reward) and "more".

They interpret *"more"* figuratively to mean *"to see Allah's Face"* on the Day of Judgment and have tried to support the interpretation by weak Hadiths. On the other hand, Ibadhis interpret "more" in the light of Verse 160 of Chapter 6 (Suratul An'am):-

من جاء بالحسنة فله عشر أمثالها

"Whoever brings a good deed shall have ten times the like thereof to his credit" (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Thus there is not one particular rule for interpreting all the verses of the Qur'an, but the sectarian fanatics are bent on condemning and apostatizing others for allegorical method of interpretation which they themselves indulge in when it is convenient for them to do so.

Dr. Israr Ahmed Khan in his Qur'anic studies, An introduction (p.143), after commenting that scholars have subscribed to three different views on the interpretation of Allah's attributes, the first two being literal forms, explains:-

> "And thirdly, the attributes of Allah, particularly those depicted through the words denoting human organs such

as 'hand' and 'eye' are all allegorical, hence interpretation in the light of popular usage, i.e. 'Allah's hand' signifies His authority, and 'Allah's eyes' mean His all-awareness.

Literal explanation of these statements enshrined in the previous heavenly-Books has already led individuals and nations to the development of an anthropomorphic concept of God and thereby to the growth of the divine-idol sculpture".

In other words, Dr. Israr A. Khan explains the reasons why God is depicted in human form in some religions is because their scholars have applied literal methods in interpreting their Scriptures.

Ibadhis have been accused of having adopted through the Mu'tazilites certain ideas of Allah's attributes as a result of contact with and influence of the Roman Greek and Indian cultures and religions. But anyone who has been to Greece and visited their museums in Athens would have seen exhibitions of statues of Roman and Greek gods with hands, legs, and eyes. So one wonders who has adopted Greek ideas of God, we or those who say that God has limbs!

In the matter of the attributes of Allah (صفات الله) Ibadhis are guided by the following Hadith of the Holy Prophet narrated by Ibn Abbas and Abu Dhar:

تفكروا في الخلق ولا تتفكروا في الخالق فإنه لا يدرك إلا بتصديقه

"Think of the creation but do not think of the Creator for He is incomprehensible except by belief in Him".

(Hadith 823 of Musnad Imam Rabi'i").

Then what are Allah's attributes? These have been expressed in His beautiful ninety nine names such as:-

الرحمن، الرحيم، العظيم، الغفور، الكريم، العلي، العليم، القدير، الخبير، الخ

"The Merciful, the Compassionate, the Mighty, the Forgiving, the Benefactor, the Supreme, the All-Knowing, the Omnipotent, the Well Aware, etc".

In verse 22, 23 & 24 of Suratul Hashar (59), some of these attributes have been expressed as follows:-

هو الله الذي لا إله إلا هو عالم الغيب والشهادة هو الرحمن الرحيم(٢٢)

"He is Allah beside whom there is no god but He. He is Omniscient of what is invisible and what is visible. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful".

"هو الله الذي لا إله إلا هو الملك القدوس السلام المؤمن المهيمن العزيز الجبار المتكبر سبحان الله عما يشركون" (٢٣)

"He is Allah beside whom there is no god but He, the King, the Holy, the Source of Peace and Perfection, the Guardian of Faith (and Provider of Security), the Preserver of Safety, the All-Mighty (the Omnipotent), the Compeller, the justly Proud, Glory be to Allah! (High is he) above all that they attribute to Him as partners."

هو الله الخالق البارئ المصور له الأسماء الحسنى(٢٤)

"He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Creator of all Forms and Shapes, To Him belong the Beautiful Names."

These are only a few of Allah's attributes, but while probably all Islamic schools are agreed as to their close association with Allah, there are however differences as to the exact nature of their relationship with Him. The so-called Orthodox and the Ash'aris hold the belief that Allah possesses these qualities which are in His essence whereas Ibadhis and the Mu'tazilites believe they are His essence (جوهره). We may however understand these conflicting conceptions if we examine man's relation with his knowledge. We acquire knowledge from the moment we are born, from our parents when we are babies, from teachers when we go to school and generally from our environment, physical as well as social. Our behaviour is considerably influenced by these external sources of knowledge and experience. This process of gaining knowledge is continuous throughout

our lives and knowledge so gained becomes part of us in an extraneous sense. Knowledge thus gained may also be lost through, say, mental illness or infirmity or through old age by forgetting some or all of what we know. Allah has said in chapter 16 (An-Nahl), verse 70:-

ومنكم من يرد الى ارذل العمر لكي لا يعلم بعد علم شيئا

"And of you there are some who are sent back to senility (feeble age) so that they know nothing after having known (much)". (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

But in the case of Allah, His knowledge is His. He has not acquired it from outside sources and then become part of Him nor is He ever going to lose it as in the case of man, nor is His knowledge increasing or decreasing. The same is true of other attributes and so Ibadhis believe that they are His essence (عين ذاته) or (جوهره) or All that make Him what He is. This will be even more clear if we were to explain ayah 23 of (سورة الحشر) in this way:-

هو الله، هو الملك، هو القدوس، هو السلام، هو المؤمن، هو المهيمن، هو العزيز، هو الجبار، هو المتكبر....الخ

In other words Allah is The Total Combination of all His attributes. In a booklet الأصول الثلاثة وشروط الصلاة والقواعد الأربعة by the late Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahhaab (the founder of Wahhaabism) (p.15), he has quoted the following Hadith narrated by Ibn Masoud:-

كنا نقول قبل أن يفرض علينا التشهد: السلام على الله من عباده.... وقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا تقولوا، السلام على الله من عباده ، فإن الله هو السلام ولكن قولو التحيات لله والصلوات و الطيبات ، السلام عليك أيها النبي ورحمة الله وبركاته...الخ

What Ibn Masoud narrates is that they used to say in prayers while kneeling (عند التحيات) السلام على الله but Allah is Salaam, so السلام على الله would mean السلام على السلام so the Holy Prophet forbade them to pray like that and instructed them to say like this:-

السلام على النبي الخ

By saying that الله هو السلام the Prophet (Peace be upon him) has meant to explain the attribute of السلام as Allah's essence, not in His essence. The same is equally true of His other attributes.

Thus man has these qualities in an extraneous, possessive sense and so we say, Man has knowledge or has power. But with respect to God, He is Knowledge and He is Power, as these qualities are His Essence (عين ذاته) they are part of Him, not apart from Him.

Freewill and Predestination

Does man have freewill to do what he likes or are his actions predestined before their occurrence? A debate on this issue has been going on since the first century of Islam when the Umayyad dynasty was ruling the Islamic State. Because of the abuse of power exercised by the ruling family, people began to wonder whether their misconduct was permissible under Islamic justice. The State officials defended the policy by saying that they were not personally responsible for what they did. On the contrary their actions were governed by God who was the power for everything for good and for evil alike. A man by the name of Ma'bad al-Juhany started to oppose this policy by preaching openly the doctrine known as Qadariya in which man is made accountable for his wrong doing - they should not be ascribed to God. The implication of this doctrine is that it made rulers also accountable for their wrong actions – and so it did not find favour with them. Ma'bad al-Juhani was therefore executed by Hajjaj, the Governor of Basra, in 80 H. under the orders of the ruler, Abdul Malik bin Marwan. Ghaylan al-Dimashqi, a student of al-Juhani continued with the campaign and added it was incumbent on every Muslim to urge people to do right actions and to forbid them from committing wrong deeds (الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر). But he too was put to death on the orders of the ruler Hisham Abdul Malik after his accession to the throne in 105 H.

It was not long before a new movement under Wasil bin Ata' (80 – 131 H.) and Amr bin Ubayd was formed in the name of Mu'tazila after they broke away from their teacher, the famous scholar Hasan Al-Basri. The two

were his pupils who had attended his lectures in the great mosque of Basra. The adherents of this movement, the Mutazilites, adopted the doctrine of freewill (qadariya) advocated by Ma'bad al-Juhani by which man was to be made accountable for his wrong actions otherwise it would be unjustified to punish him either in this life or in the Hereafter. The antithesis of Qadariya is Jabariya, a doctrine which explains that man's actions are the results of compulsions from God and that if He did not wish he (the man) would not have committed sin. The first person to advocate it publicly was al-Juhani bin Safwani, a pupil of Ja'ad bin Dirham. The movement started in Tirmidh (Khurasan) in the beginning of the second century H.

On the other hand, Abu al-Hasan Ash'ari (270 – 330 H.) explained that man's deeds were created by God but acquired by man. Ibadhis have adopted the Al-Ash'ari's approach to explain the relation between man's actions and his Creator. The Sunni's view or stand in this regard has been expressed by الموسوعة الميسرة (p.36) as follows:-

و الإنسان عبد الله مخلوق في هذا الوجود ، مسير في بعض شأنه ومخير في بعضها

"And man is Allah's slave created in this existence, controlled in some matters and free in others".

Let us now see what the Prophet's Tradition say in this regard. The Prophet was asked by Jibril, what is Faith? He replied:-

أن تؤمن بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله و اليوم الآخر وبالقدر خيره وشره إنه من الله

"To believe in Allah and His angels, His books, His Messengers, the Hereafter and in the predestination (Fate) that good and evil are from Allah"

Hadith No.769 (Musnad Imam Rabi'i).

The Hadith has been confirmed by other collectors – Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Muslim, Al Tirmidhi and others. In the Holy Qur'an there are number of verses which appear to support both views. For example:-

ما أصاب من مصيبة في الأرض ولا في أنفسكم إلا في كتاب من قبل ان نبرأها (الحديد ٥٧ آية ٢٢)

"No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (Al-Lauh Al-Mahfudh) before We bring it into existence."

(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

In another chapter (Suratu Nnisaa, verse 78), Allah says:-

وإن تصبهم حسنة يقولوا هذه من عند الله وإن تصبهم سيئة يقولوا هذه من عندك قل كل من عند الله

"And if some good reaches them they say, "This is from Allah", but if some evil befalls them, they say, "This is from you (Muhammad)". Say *"All things are from Allah".*

There are many examples of calamities which befall us for which we have no control: earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, tornadoes, drought or lack of rains and other so-called natural disasters. On the other hand we get moderate rains, fine weather, as examples of blessings from Allah without any efforts on our part.

But there are other Qur'anic verses which put the blame on man for evils suffered by him,

"ما أصابك من حسنة فمن الله وما أصابك من سيئة فمن نفسك"

(آية ٧٩ سورة النساء ٤)

"Whatever of good reaches you is from Allah, but whatever evil befalls you is from yourself".

(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

And in another verse, Allah says:-

"وإذا أذقنا الناس رحمة فرحوا بها وإن تصبهم سيئة بما قدمت أيديهم إذا هم يقنطون" (آية ٣٦ سورة الروم ٣٠)

"And when we cause mankind to taste of mercy, they rejoice therein; but when some evil afflicts them because of (evil deeds and sins) that <u>their own hands have sent forth,</u> behold, they are in despair!".

(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

There are several other Qur'anic verses which also put the responsibility for wrong doing on the culprit himself but the following is more emphatic:-

"وما أصابكم من مصيبة فبما كسبت أيديكم ويعفوا عن كثير"

(آية ٣٠ سورة الشورى ٤٢)

"And whatever misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much".

(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Let us now see the practical application of these ayahs. Strange as it may seem, man has no control over what is going on inside his body; he cannot, for example, regulate the circulation of his blood, nor his digestive or respiratory system. Once he swallows food through his alimentary canal it goes through a digestive process over which he has no control, and the same is true of the respiratory system by which oxygen is inhaled into the lungs and then absorbed in the blood stream. These various systems in our bodies have been set up by Allah Himself as part of His creation of man. He has also created substances which are poisonous to the systems in our bodies. For example if a person drinks liquor over a long period of time, he may get cancer of the liver. Similarly a habit of cigarette smoking leads to cancer of the lungs. Therefore if a man is addicted to liquor or cigarette smoking and consequently suffers from cancer of the liver or the lung, he should not say that God inflicted him with the disease since He has created good and evil. It is true that He created man with all the systems inside him as well as the substances which are poisonous and harmful to them. But man has brought the affliction on himself by acquisition, that is acquisition of poisons into his body. And so Ibadhis believe that Allah has created evils but man acquires them.

Similarly if a man, while intoxicated, drives a car and meets with an accident, he should not say that God caused the accident when in fact he is personally responsible for it. Otherwise all criminals who are caught will plead that God caused them to commit the crimes for which they are charged and will demand acquittal.

The learned Ibadhi scholar, the late Sheikh Abdullah bin Humaid Al Salmy has summarized poetically Allah's relationship with man's actions in the following verses:-

وعلمه سابق في كل ما جعلا
وإنما الفعل مخلوق ومكتسب
فالخلق لله والكسب لمن فعلا

His knowledge precedes every act of His creation
Yet action is created as well as acquired
But then creation is Divine, and acquisition is human

(Translation by the Author).

The term 'qadariya' in the sense of freewill is confusing because it comes from the word 'qadar' meaning predestination or fate which is the opposite of freewill. But it has been explained in the الموسوعة الميسرة (p.1125 vol.2) that the term 'qadariya' is applied both to those who deny 'qadar' as well as to those who assert it. In the studies in Ibadhism by Dr. Amr Khalifa Ennami, the term Qadariya has been used in the sense of predestination (p.146), and also in the Hadith No.806 of Musnad Rabi'i the term has been applied in the same sense.

In the theological issues that have been discussed in this chapter there are, in general, two schools of thought; (1) Mu'tazilism and (2) Ash'arism.

The Mu'tazila School

It started in the first century of the Hijra in protest against the arbitrary exercise of power during the Umayyad regime. The state officials defended their tyrannical conduct by saying that they were not responsible

for what they did, for God predestined everything. So Ma'abad Al Juhany opposed this policy and started preaching publicly the doctrine that man, including the Caliph, was accountable for his own evil conduct; it should not be ascribed to God. Hence Caliph 'Abdul Malik ibn Marwan ordered his execution in the year 80H. (699CE). After the death of Al Juhany, Ghailan al-Dimashqi continued the campaign and added that is was the duty of every Muslim to order the performance of good deeds and to forbid committing evil actions. This was interpreted as a campaign to overthrow the Umayyad rule and so he too was executed under the order of Caliph Hisham ibn Abdul Malik in the year 105H (724CE). But the real founder of the school was Wasil ibn 'Atta who lived in 80-131H.

Among its notable principles are:

(1) That the Qur'an is a created word of Allah.

(2) That Allah will not be seen by the people of Paradise.

(3) That Allah is everywhere.

(4) That those who commit grave sins are neither believers nor non-believers, they are between the two states and are destined to Hell unless they repent before their deaths.

(5) That the Quranic verses relating to anthropomorphic expressions should be interpreted allegorically to avoid any resemblance of Allah to his creatures. That Allah's attributes are part of His essence, not apart from Him. So they say Allah is powerful instead of He has power. In the latter expression, it would mean that power is a separate entity from its Possessor, Allah, whereas according to the Mu'tazilites the two are one entity.

(6) That it is the duty of a Muslim to order the performance of good deeds and to forbid wrongdoing. Thus it is incumbent on every individual to implement the doctrine according to his capacity. Thus:-

A ruler to his subjects,
A Governor to the people of his district,
A preacher or Imam to his parishioners,
A teacher to his students,
A father to members of his household etc.

(7) That man creates his own actions, and so has complete freedom in, and full responsibility for, his conduct (whether good or bad) otherwise he could not be rewarded for good deeds nor punished for his sins.

(8) That rational interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadiths be applied where appropriate.

With the exception of the principles No.3 and 7, the Ibadhis share common ground with the Mu'tazila doctrine.

In section 5 of chapter 3 of الموسوعة الميسرة (p.76) it is stated that Mutazila's conception of God's attributes and their relation with Him has been influenced by a Greek philosopher, Anbaduqles and a statement by him has been quoted from a book الملل والنحل by Shahrastani, a Shafi'i scholar who lived 479-548H. According to the statement, Anbaduqles says that God's attributes are His essence that is part of His nature. This is also the view of Mutazila. If we refer to الملل والنحل (Al Milal wa Nihal p.67) we learn that Anbaduqles went to Nabii (Prophet) Daud and studied under him; he also frequently visited Luqman, the sage, and acquired knowledge from him and then returned to Greece. It should be remembered that both Nabii Daud and Luqman were Muslims. Nabii Daud was a prophet, and like all prophets who came before and after him, was a Muslim – they all preached one religion, namely, Islam. Likewise Luqman was a Muslim, and there is a chapter in the Holy Qur'an named after him – Suratu Luqman (31). In verse 13, Allah says:-

وإذ قال لقمان لابنه وهو يعظه يابني لا تشرك بالله إن الشرك لظلم عظيم

And (remember) when Luqman said to his son when he was advising him: 'O my son! Join not in worship others with Allah. Verily joining others in worship with Allah is a great wrong indeed. (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Here Luqman was teaching his son the first fundamental principle of Islam. Then in verse 17, Luqman continues,

O my son! Perform prayers... .....يابني أقم الصلاة

(7) That man creates his own actions, and so has complete freedom in, and full responsibility for, his conduct (whether good or bad) otherwise he could not be rewarded for good deeds nor punished for his sins.

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And (remember) when Luqman said to his son when he was advising him: 'O my son! Join not in worship others with Allah. Verily joining others in worship with Allah is a great wrong indeed. (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Here Luqman was teaching his son the first fundamental principle of Islam. Then in verse 17, Luqman continues,

O my son! Perform prayers... .....يابني أقم الصلاة

Thus Luqman taught his son the second pillar of Islam. So it is obvious that when the Greek philosopher went to Nabii Daud (AS) and the sage Luqman to acquire knowledge, he must have learnt a great deal about Islam and so his philosophical principles which he formulated when he returned home to Greece must have been influenced considerably by what he learnt from them. Hence it is not correct to deduce that whenever Islamic principles happen to agree with Greek philosophy, the former have been necessarily influenced by the latter, because the common religion of Islam, as taught by previous prophets, came much earlier than Greek philosophy. And Greek philosophers visited various parts of the Middle East especially at the time when they ruled that region. So the Mutazila principles are not the result of the influence of Greek philosophy; on the contrary it is the Greek philosophy which has been influenced by Islam as taught by Luqman, Nabii Daud and other prophets who came before Nabii Muhammad (Peace be upon him). This is not to say that everything that is in Greek philosophy constitutes Islam – but there are traces of Islamic principles in it which have been later modified. (See, for example, the philosophy of Pythagoras on p.72 of الملل و النحل).

The Al-Ash'ar School

It is so-called after Abul Hassan Al Ash'ari, a descendant of Abu Musa al Ash'ari who represented Seyyidna Ali in the Arbitration. He lived 270 – 330H. He studied in the Mu'tazila School and was its adherent for forty years, then abandoned it. According to Prof. Saeed Sheikh in his book, Studies in Muslim Philosophy (published in Lahore), the following are among the principles of Ash'arism:-

(1) That the Qur'an is uncreated, and so it is pre-eternal with no beginning, and part of the essence of Allah.

(2) That Allah will be seen by the people of Paradise,

(3) That Allah has attributes but have no resemblance to human attributes, and they are not part of His essence.

(4) That he who committed a grave sin, even if he did not ask for forgiveness before his death, will be granted pardon with Allah's mercy or with the Prophet's intercession (p.92 الموسوعة الميسرة). (Simplified Encyclopedia).

(5) Allah creates actions and man acquires them.

Ibadhis do not agree with the above principles except the last one (No.5).

Chapter 7

1. **English Translation of the Qur'an by Dr. M.T. Al Hilali and Dr. M.M. Khan**

2. **The Evolution of Fiqh by Abu Ameena Bilal Philips**

3. الأصول الثلاثة وشروط الصلاة والقواعد الأربعة للشيخ / محمد بن عبد الوهاب

4. الشفاعة للدكتور مصطفى محمود

5. الإباضية ومنهجية البحث عند المؤرخين واصحاب المقالات لعلي بن محمد بن عامر الحجري.

Hadiths

Hadiths (or Sunna or Traditions)

These are Holy Prophet's narratives and practices made or performed during his lifetime. They include actions of the Sahabas performed in the presence of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and he did not object to them. The Hadiths are the second important source of authority after the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Book consists of Allah's General Commandments and Prohibitions while the Hadiths contain detailed explanation or instructions on how to perform these commandments and to avoid the prohibitions.

For example, the Holy Qur'an enjoins us to pray but does not tell us in detail how to say our prayers. So we have to resort to the Sunna for guidance and detailed instructions, for example, as to how many prostrations (raka'a) we have to perform in each prayer and what chapter of the Qur'an we have to recite and so on. The same is true of the pilgrimage. Before his death the Prophet (Peace be upon him) made a farewell journey to Makkah to show the faithful how to perform the pilgrimage, and it is on the basis of the procedures of rites that he followed in each stage that millions of Muslims today perform the different rites (manasik) of the pilgrimage.

Unfortunately these hadiths were not all recorded immediately during the Holy Prophet's lifetime but came to be collected many years later long after the deaths of his Companions (Sahabas) who had actually heard or saw him. The more commonly known compilations of Hadiths are:-

1) Bukharee
2) Muslim
3) Abu Dawood
4) Al Tirmidhi
5) An-Nasaaee
6) Ibn-Maajah

But there is another, most authentic collection of hadiths which is never mentioned by members of other sects out of prejudice, it is Musnad Ar-Rabii. It is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, collection made before the Six Compilations referred to above. It was compiled in the second century of Hijra while the others were collected 100 years later, that is, in the third century Hijra. It comprises about 700 hadiths, but they say that they are based on hearsay. But the truth is, all hadiths relied on by other sects are also hearsay. None of the collectors lived during the Prophet's lifetime, the traditions being handed down by word of mouth from one person to another over a period of more than 200 years. Later collectors like Imam Ahmad, Bukhari, Abu Dawood and others have confirmed many of the hadiths in the Musnad Ar-Rabii which Ibadhis rely on. The Ibadhis recognize that the Musnad does not contain all the hadiths for it is estimated there are about 4000 of them and so they sometimes refer to other collections of hadiths when they are looking for a solution to a religious issue.

The problem about these hadiths is that they are not all-genuine or authentic (صحيح) . Some of them were fabricated in order to support a certain view or dogma, and some have been distorted in the process of transmission, not necessarily intentionally. For this reason Ibadhis have refused to accept some of them particularly those hadiths dealing with theological questions and the events in the Hereafter.

A scholar interested in the study of oral transmission of messages conducted a trial involving about twenty students standing in a row, each student being some distance apart from another. The first student in the row was given a short secret verbal message to convey to the second student and the second to the third and so on until the last student. When the message reached the last student it was found to be completely different or totally distorted from the original one, and that was in a matter of less than ten minutes. It follows that the longer the message and the wider the interval of time, the greater is the likehood of the message being distorted. This is a simple experiment that people should try to check for themselves the unreliability of oral transmission of messages or hadiths. Many of the Holy Prophet's traditions were compiled about 200 years after his death and some

of them are so long that it is impossible to have been remembered in such great detail over such a long period of time. The shorter the hadith the more likely it is to be accurate, and those involving actions or deeds like performance of prayers and pilgrimage are even less likely to get misrepresented with the passage of time.

With regard to Sunnahs involving action, the people of Medina, where the Holy Prophet lived for ten years, are better qualified to know how the God's messenger, for example, used to say his prayers and though, in general, all Muslims pray practically in the same way, yet there are some minor differences that again some people tend to magnify them. For example followers of Shafii, Hanafi and Hanbali fold their arms when standing in prayers while Malkis, Shias and Ibadhis let them straight down. The latter three pray the way their Imams used to do. Imam Malik was born and lived in Medina all his life, and Imam Ali (and his two sons) lived with the Holy Prophet all his life and he was the best to know how his cousin and father-in-law used to say his prayers. But the sectarian fanatics are not to be defeated!! They say that Imam Malik used to let his arms hanging while praying because he was unable to fold them as a result of injuries inflicted by the order of the Governor of Medina. The story of his injury is true but the inference made from it is doubtful. People with injured arms generally cannot let them hanging down but normally keep them folded. Anyone who has visited an orthopedic hospital will have noticed that those with injured arms have their arms bent and supported by a bandage from around the neck and if he is not cured completely, they will remain bent forever. The inference is concocted in order to prove that those who fold their arms are right and those who don't are wrong. Those fanatic scholars who fabricate stories take undue advantage of the incredulity of their adherents, and do not realize that someone, one day, will find them out!!

If Imam Malik could not clasp his arms while praying because of injuries, one might as well ask how could he perform prostrations (سجود), because prostrations involve the bending of arms and it is more painful to bend injured arms during prostrations due to the weight of the body on them. The truth is, Imam Malik used to say his prayers with his arms down, not as a result of injuries but because that is how the people of Medina used

to pray and the people of Medina were best qualified to know how the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was conducting his prayers.

Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (founder of the Wahhabi sect) of Saudi Arabia in his book الأصول الثلاثة وشروط الصلاة والقواعد الأربعة published in Medina laid down fourteen principles of prayers and each is based on an ayah in the Qur'an or Hadith. But he did not mention that folding arms or letting them down was one of them. He has quoted, however, a Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira relating to a man who was taught by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) how to pray after failing three times to say his prayers properly. The Holy Prophet said:-

اذا قمت الى الصلاة فكبر ثم اقرأ ما تيسر معك من القرآن ، ثم اركع حتى تطمئن راكعا، ثم ارفع حتى تعتدل قائماً ، ثم اسجد حتى تطمئن ساجداً ، ثم ارفع حتى تطمئن جالساً ثم افعل ذلك في صلاتك كلها.

'When you stand for prayers, Say 'Allahu Akbar' (God is greatest), then read a section of the Qur'an, Then bow completely; Then stand up straight; Then prostrate to the ground completely; Then get up and kneel completely; Then repeat that in all your prayers'.

If you go through the Hadith carefully you will not fail to notice that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) has mentioned all the important movements or gestures involved in the prayers but has not mentioned at all about raising or clasping of arms. So the clasping of arms is not as important as some people try to exaggerate it; a few of them are so fanatic about it that when they see a person praying with his arms down they interrupt him in the middle of his prayers, thus displaying complete ignorance of Islam and lack of good manners. They should remember what Allah said to the Holy Prophet in ayah 84 of Suratul Isra' (17):-

" قل كل يعمل على شاكلته فربكم أعلم بمن هو أهدى سبيلا "

"Say (O Muhammad to mankind): Each one does according to his way (or his religion) and your Lord knows best who follows the right path (or religion)"

(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

There is also a difference of opinion as to whether the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to raise his hands before and after bowing (rukoo) during prayers. Abu Haneefa (the first of the four Orthodox Imams) and his two students Imam Muhammad ibn Hassan and Abu Yusuf ruled against the practice whereas Imam 'Isaam Yousuf al-Balakhee, a student of Imam Muhammad Hassan found evidence of an authentic Hadith that supported the raising of hands (Abu Ameena Bilal Philips, p.126). But proof in such cases where the Sunna involves action should come not from an oral Hadeeth but from the practice of the people of Medina where the Prophet (Peace be upon him) spent the last ten years of his life. Imam Muhammad Hassan had gone to Medina to study under Imam Malik for three years and must have seen how the people there were performing their prayers. It is therefore something of a surprise that his student who came a generation later after him should support the practice from evidence of an oral Hadeeth.

Dr. Mustafa Mahmoud, the Egyptian scholar referred to in the previous chapter made the following comments in his pamphlet entitled, الشفاعة (Intercession): -

١- وقد أجمع رواة الأحاديث علي أن النبي عليه الصلاة والسلام قد نهى عن تدوين الأحاديث وجاء هذا النهي في أكثر من حديث لأبي هريرة و عبد الله بن عمر وزيد بن ثابت وأبي سعيد الخدري وعبد الله بن مسعود وغيرهم....وفي كلمات أبي هريرة يقول في قطيعة لا تقبل اللبس : (خرج علينا الرسول ونحن نكتب أحاديثه) فقال: ((ما هذا الذي تكتبون؟)) قلنا: (أحاديث نسمعها منك يا رسول الله) قال: (أكتاب غير كتاب الله؟!) يقول أبو هريرة : (فجمعنا ما كتبناه وأحرقناه بالنار).

٢- وأبو هريرة نفسه هو الذي قال في حديث آخر: (بلغ رسول الله أن أناسا قد كتبوا أحاديث، فصعد المنبر، وقال: (ما هذه الكتب التي بلغني أنكم قد كتبتم؟ إنما أنا بشر فمن كان عنده شيء منها فليأت بها) يقول أبو هريرة : (فجمعنا ما كتبناه وأحرقناه بالنار).

٣- وهو نفسه صاحب الحديث المتفق على تواتره : (لا تكتبوا عني غير القرآن، ومن كتب عني غير القرآن فليمحه).

٤- وفي رواية لأبي سعيد الخدري قال :(استأذنت رسول الله عليه الصلاة والسلام أن أكتب حديثه فأبى أن يأذن لي).

٥- و أبو بكر أول الراشدين روت عنه ابنته عائشة : (جمع أبي الحديث عن رسول الله ، وكان خمسمائة حديث ، فبات ليلة يتقلب كثيرا فلما أصبح قال : (أي بنية هلمي بالأحاديث التي عندك ، فجئته بها ، فدعا بنار و أحرقها) أنظر " الذهبي تذكرة الحفاظ" ج ١ ص٥.

٦- أما ثاني الخلفاء الراشدين عمر بن الخطاب ... فجمعها و أحرقها . وكان خوف عمر أن يحدث ما حدث لأهل الكتاب من تأليه الأنبياء وتقديس كلامهم ، فيتحول مع الوقت الى وحي له شأن الوحي الإلهي وكهنوت ، كما حدث في الأديان الأخرى ...ثم كان الخوف الأكبر من الأحاديث الموضوعة والمدسوسة وليس أدل على هذا الخوف من أن البخاري لم يدون من ستما ئة ألف حديث جمعها إلا أربعة آلاف حديث فقط، وهو نفس الخوف الذي كان في قلب أبي حنيفة الذي لم يصح عنده إلا سوى سبعة عشر حديث من مئات الألوف.

1. 'The narrators of Hadiths were agreed that the Holy Messenger (SAW) had forbidden recording of Hadiths. This prohibition came in more than one Hadith by Abu Huraira, Abdullah bin Umar, Zaid bin Thabit, Abu Said al Khudary, Abdullah bin Masoud and others. And in the words of Abu Huraira he says emphatically and without ambiguity:-

   "The Messenger came upon us while we were recording his Hadiths"

   He said, *'What is this you are writing?'*

   We said, *'Hadiths we have heard from you, O Allah's Messenger'*

   He said, *'(Are you writing) a book other than Allah's book?'*

   Abu Huraira said, *'So we collected what we had written and burnt it in the fire'.*

2. And Abu Huraira himself is also the narrator of another Hadith:
   "It came to the ears of the Allah's Messenger that people had recorded his Hadiths".

He went up the pulpit and said,

> *'What are these books which, I hear, you have written?'*
>
> *'I am a mere human being, if anyone has any of them bring them to me. So we collected what we had recorded and burnt them in the fire'.*

3. In a still another authentic Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira, the Holy Messenger (SAW) said,

> *"Do not write (statements) from me except the Qur'an and he who writes (statements) from me other than Qur'an let him wipe it off".*

4. And in a narrative by Abu Saeed Al Khudary, he said,

> *"I asked the permission of Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) to record his Hadith but he refused to allow me".*

5. Sayyida Aisha narrates a Hadith about her father Abu Bakr, the first rightly-guided Khalifa:-

> *"My father collected 500 Hadiths and went to bed at night turning over many times, and when he woke up in the morning he said to me, 'Bring me the Hadiths which you have,' I gave them to him and he asked for fire and burnt them".*

6. As for Umar bin Khattab, he is also reported to have called for all the Hadiths, collected them and burnt them. Seyyidna Umar feared that they might lead to the deification of the Holy Prophet, as happened with the people of the Book and their prophets, and regarded his words as sacrosanct which with the passage of time would come to be considered as divine revelation. And the greatest fear of all was that of fabricated hadiths.

   And what was the greater proof of this fear than that Bukhary recorded only 4000 out of 600,000 Hadiths; and Abu Hanifa found only 17 Hadiths as authentic (Sahih) out of hundreds of thousands of them (Translation by the Author).

It is the adoption of hundreds of Hadiths (so-called Sahih) that has led to the differences between religious sects (madhahib) in Islam. As a result, two Islamic schools of jurisprudence appeared, one in Iraq and the other in Hejaz with their different approaches to Hadiths. The first relied heavily on individual judgment (اجتـهاد) and less on Hadiths which they used sparingly and under stringent circumstances. To this school belonged the Sahaba Abullah b. Masoud and Imam Abu Hanifa who both lived in Iraq. On the other hand, the Hejaz school laid greater emphasis and importance to the Prophet's Hadiths in formulating their judgments (fatwas). The Sahaba Abdullah b. Umar and Imams Malik, Shafi'i and Hanbaly were adherents of the latter school. As for the Ibadhis they adopted both methods in their fiqh. It is of interest to note that Seyyidna 'Umar b. Khattab forbade excessive quotation of Hadiths and ordered the Sahabas to concentrate on the narration and study of the Qur'an' (Abu Ameena Bilal Philips p.41).

Sheikh Ali b. Muhammad b. Amir Al Hijry in his book Al Ibadhia (p.79) quotes from Ibn-l-Araby's book العواصم من القواسم (p.370) the following passage: -

ولا يشتغل برواية الحديث من كل كتاب فالباطل فيه كثير ، و أما الصحيح من حديث النبي إلا كنقطة من بحر ، وليحذر كتب الصالحين ، ومن ينتمي إلى الوعظ فانهم لم يألو في الكذب على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بقصد ، وبغير قصد...

'One should not busy oneself with Hadiths from every book because there are a lot of lies in it. And what is genuine of the Prophet's Hadiths is like a drop in the ocean. And one should be aware of books of the devout and of those concerned with giving admonition because they are not free from falsehood against Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) either intentionally or unintentionally...."

Thus while there is no doubt that the Prophet's Hadiths constitute the second most important source of authority, there are however in it a large number of hadiths fabricated to support a certain dogma or doctrine especially if it is against another Islamic sect.

Chapter 8

SECTS (MADHAHIB)

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SECTS OR MADHAAHIB

The origin of madhahib was not always religious. In some cases there were social or political factors which brought about the rise of certain movements in the name of religion. For example during the period of Umayyad and Abbasid rulers, many countries were conquered and so considerable wealth was acquired. As a result, Muslim ruling classes led a life-style of luxury, pomp and affluence in sharp contrast to the austere way of living led by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) and his Companions. This brought about resentment and revolt especially among those of older generations who still remembered the simple life of Allah's Messenger. And so started the adoption of the doctrine of Sufism with its teachings of ascetism, self-denial and unworldliness.

Likewise Mu'tazilism came into existence to protest against the exercise of arbitrary and despotic powers by the Umayyad rulers. Their officials defended them by saying that the rulers were not responsible for what they did- it is God who causes everything, whether it is good or bad:

ما أصاب من مصيبة في الأرض و لا في أنفسكم إلا في كتاب من قبل أن نبرأها

(verse 22 of Suratul Hadeed)

"No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (Al-Lawhul Mahfudh) before we bring it into existence."

(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Or as the Holy Prophet said,

إنك لن تجد ولن تؤمن وتبلغ حقيقة الإيمان حتى تؤمن بالقدر خيره وشره انه من الله (مسند الإمام الربيع حديث ٧٢)

"You will not find nor believe and reach the true faith until you believe in the Divine Predestination (Fate), its good and its evil are (all) from Allah"

(Hadith 72 of Musnad Imam Rabi)

Because of the misapplication of the doctrine of Fatalism, the idea of Freewill arose in which man including a ruler is made accountable for his actions (Studies in Muslim Philosophy by Saeed Sheikh, Lahore, 1962). Similarly, the formation of Shia and Khawarij was the result of the political crisis surrounding Seyyidna Ali and Muawiyah over the office of Caliphate. The Shias were all along on the side of Seyyidna Ali whereas the Khawarij, although at first supported him, eventually extricated themselves from both contenders. Thenceforward each party went its own way.

And so Islam, like all other religions, started as one undivided unit during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and continued to be so for the next 24 years after his death. But during the second half of the third Caliphate of Uthman, troubles and discontent began to simmer underground until violence erupted on his 12th year of office when he was murdered by a group of Muslims from Egypt and Iraq in conspiracy with some Companions (Sahabas) from Medina. When Seyyidna Ali took over as Khalifa, the Uthman supporters directed their anger at him for failing to punish the culprits. A rebellion broke out led by Muawiya, the Governor of Syria and distant cousin of Uthman who refused to recognize Seyyidna Ali as Khalifa. As we saw when we were tracing the tragic events during Seyyidna Ali's Caliphate, the first group to break away from him were the Uthmaniyyun. They were thus the first group of seceders. Then when an arbitration committee was later proposed to settle the dispute between Ali and Muawiya another faction from among Ali's supporters also seceded- they became the second group of Khawarij. But the Khawarij No.1 (the Uthmaniyyun) became the rulers of the Islamic State after the death of Ali. Hence nobody dared call them Khawarij, and so the label Khawarij has remained stuck to the second group until today. If Khawarij means breaking away from Imam Ali and from the mainstream of Islam, then the only true Islamic group that remains is the Shia because they have not withdrawn their allegiance from him nor from his descendants up to the present time. This is the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the logic of the sectarian fanatics. The succeeding generations witnessed continuous bloody conflicts between the first group of Khawarij as rulers and the second group as rebels fighting against corruption and tyranny which characterized, with few exceptions, the Umayyad and Abbasid rules. The Uthmaniyyun usurped the

Caliphate from its rightful incumbent, Seyyidna Ali. When a group of people seizes power wrongfully they should not expect others will stand idly by without armed rebellion.

On the question of calling each other by labels like Khawarij, the Holy Qur'an has this to say in ayah 11 of Suratul Hujuraat (49):-

" ولا تلمزوا أنفسكم ولا تنابزوا بالألقاب بئس الإسم الفسوق بعد الإيمان ومن لم يتب فأولئك هم الظالمون"

Its translation runs as follows:-

> *"Nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad to insult one's brother after having faith [i.e. to call your Muslim brother (a faithful believer) as sinner or wicked]. And whosever does not repent, then such are indeed wrongdoers"* (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

In other words, Allah has forbidden Muslims to call one another by bad names (like Khawarij) after becoming believers. The two translators of the Qur'an (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan) in spite of the above ayah have appended a footnote to ayah 115 of Suratu Tawba (9) as follows:-

> *"Killing the Khawarij (people who dissented from the religion and disagreed with the rest of the Muslims), and the Mulhidun (heretics) after establishment of firm proof against them".*

The statement in the footnote contradicts what Seyyidna Ali said about the Khawarij. He said:-

لا تقاتلوا الخوارج بعدي فليس من طلب الحق فأخطأه، كمن طلب الباطل فأدركه

> *Do not fight the Khawarij after me, for those who sought for a right and missed it are not like those who sought for a wrong and attained it* (Dr. Hussein A. Ghabbash quoting from Nahji – 1- Balaaghah by Imam Ali)

Here Seyyidna Ali was comparing two groups – the Khawarij and the Uthmaniyyun. The former fought for a right which they failed to achieve namely the establishment and the general recognition of Seyyidna Ali's lawful Caliphate; whereas the latter group fought for a wrong which they won, to wit, the establishment of an unlawful Caliphate of Muawiyah. Hence Seyyidna Ali's statement, 'do not fight the Khawarij henceforth'. So the inflammable statement quoted in the footnote to verse 115 of Chapter 9 of the Holy Qur'an by the two translators is intended to create sectarian friction and dissension among Muslims.

The footnote continues:-

> *"And Ibn Umar used to consider them the worst of Allah's creatures." 'Them' here refers to the Khawarij and the Mulhidun*

Dr. Hussein A. Ghabbash in his book عمان (Oman p.56) makes the following comments on Seyyidna Ali's statement quoted earlier:-

> و ما يلفت النظر حقا ، هو أن عليا لم يعتبر المنشقين عنه مشركين أو منافقين بل كما يقول " إخواننا بغوا علينا فقتلناهم "
>
> *And what really draws (one's) attention is that (Seyyidna) Ali did not consider those who seceded from him polytheists or hypocrites but, as he said, 'They are our brothers who wronged us and we fought them'.* (Seyyidna Ali's statement has been quoted from Ibn Katheer's Al-Bidaayah Wa Nnihaayah).

Note the contradictions between Ibn Umar's alleged statement and Seyyidna Ali's. Ibn Umar referred to the Khawarij as 'the worst of Allah's creatures', that is, worse than the infidels or polytheists whereas Seyyidna Ali considered them as 'our brothers who wronged us'. Ibn Umar's alleged statement is again intended to create discord among Muslims. Seyyidna Ali knew the Khawarij more than any other Muslim leader. They fought for him in two battles and they wanted to continue fighting for him to the end, and so rejected the arbitration, and it proved they were right because the arbitration turned out to be a fraud.

The two translators have moreover exhibited complete misunderstanding of this aspect of Islamic history. If they had studied it objectively, without bias, they would have learnt that the Khawarij were a group of people who broke away from Imam Ali for political rather than religious reasons. Dr. Majid Ali Khan in his book, The Pious Caliphs published in Kuwait (p.209) says:-

> **'The Khawarij were more a political group than theological..... in the later period this group became almost extinct'.**

The Khawarij as a group of Islamic sects (Azraqis, Najdat, Sufriya) no longer exists.

The Khawarij were not the only ones to secede. The Uthmaniyyun and their leader Muawiyah were the first Khawarij to break away from Imam Ali and refused from the beginning to pledge allegiance to him as the legitimate Khalifa of all Muslims, while the so-called Khawarij accepted and recognized him and fought on his side all along against the Khawarij – Uthmaniyyun. It is only later when an arbitration was proposed that they seceded and rejected the proposal, and it turned out they were right because the arbitration proved to be a deceit against Imam Ali, and the deceit was perpetrated by Muawiyah and his followers.

The two learned translators also write about 'Killing the Khawarij'. It is very regrettable that they have chosen Allah's Holy Book as a forum to foment terrorism against fellow Muslims. Every Muslim should know that Islam today is accused of supporting terrorism. Hence the translators have supplied the enemies of Islam a firm proof that it is a religion of terrorism. In the current world situation, human rights issues are given great prominence and one of the fundamental rights of man is his Freedom of Worship. Not only has man the right to belong to any religious sect, he also has the right to belong to any faith he chooses, and no civilized society would permit the killing of a man for his religious beliefs. It might have been accepted in the first and second millennium in some societies but is certainly not acceptable in any society in the third millennium. The footnote continues:-

"And Ibn Umar used to consider them (the Khawarij and the Mulhidun) the worst of Allah's creatures and said, 'These people took some verses that had been revealed concerning the disbelievers and interpreted them as describing the believers".

The two translators have not mentioned what those verses are which have been misinterpreted. With regard to Ibn Umar, the Ibadhis have respect for him, first, because he was one of the Sahabas and, secondly, he was the son of Seyyidna Umar whom the Ibadhis have the greatest admiration for his just administration. But Ibn Umar was not a prophet, his opinion in one way or another would not entitle a Muslim to go to Heaven nor would it help him on the Day of Judgment. It is his private opinion which can be taken at face value – it carries no weight.

The Khawarij are not the only ones whose interpretation of some Qur'anic verses differ from others. The following are examples of Ayahs which have been given different meanings by two different translators, the differences being fundamental, not merely superficial:-

A) Verse 1 of Suratul Qalam (68)

"ن والقلم وما يسطرون"

Dr. Al-Hilali and Dr. Khan translate it as follows:-

"By the Pen and by what they (the angles) write (in the records of men)"

Ustadh Abdullah Yusuf Ali on the other hand explains it this way:-

"By the Pen and by the (record) which (men) write".

The reader will thus notice that the first translation of وما يسطرون means *"and by what the angels write....."* Whereas the second translator understands it in the sense of .... *"And the (record) which men write"*..... totally different interpretation!!

B) In verse 7 of Suratul Jinn (72)

"وأنهم ظنوا كما ظننتم أن لن يبعث الله أحدا"

Dr. Al-Hilali with Dr. Khan interpret it thus:-

> *"And they thought as you thought, that Allah will not send any messenger (to mankind or jinn)"*

while Ustadh Abdullah Yusuf Ali translates it as follows:-

> *"And they (came to) think as you thought, that Allah would not raise up anyone (to Judgment)"*

One has translated the word يبعث to mean *"to send"* and the other in the sense of *"to raise up"* (i.e. resurrect). There is obviously a stark difference in the two interpretations.

C) In Suratul-Jinn again, verse 28 has been translated differently by the two translators:-

ليعلم أن قد أبلغوا رسالات ربهم

Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan explain it as follows:-

> *"(Allah protects the Messengers), till He sees that they (the Messengers) have conveyed the message of their Lord (Allah)".*

Thus they have translated the word:- ليعلم to mean *"till God sees"..... whereas Ustadh Abdullah Yusuf Ali understood it to mean, "that the Holy Prophet may know... ...."*

D) The best example in this connection is ayah 29 of Suratul-Hijr (15):

" فإذا سويته ونفخت فيه من روحي فقعوا له ساجدين"

Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan's interpretation of the ayah is as follows:

> *"So when I have fashioned him completely and breathed into him (Adam) the soul which I created for him, then fall (you) down prostrating yourselves unto him".*

Ustadh Abdullah Yusuf Ali explains it this way:

> *"When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit fall you down in obeisance unto him".*

Thus one has translated the words (ونفخت فيه من روحي) to mean I breathed into him (Adam) the soul which I created for him whereas the other interpreted the clause to mean, "and breathed into him (Adam) of My spirit": There is a world of difference between the two translations. If the second translation is correct it means man's soul is part of Divine Soul, whereas according to the first, man has a soul specially created for him, separate from the Soul of Allah and then breathed into him.

E) In verse 15 of Suratu Ibrahim Allah says:

واستفتحوا وخاب كل جبار عنيد

which has been explained to mean:

> *"But they sought victory and decision, and frustration was the lot of every powerful transgressor".*

Obstinate

Ustadh Abdullah Yusuf has explained that "they" refers to the ungodly (Kuffars) whereas Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan say it means the Messengers (that is the Prophets). The two interpretations are totally contradictory.

In all the five examples given above there are serious differences in the translations and one of them must be right and the other wrong, although both translations have been approved by Islamic Authorities in Saudi Arabia. But then can we describe the translator who is wrong (whoever he may be) as "the worst of Allah's creatures" as Ibn Umar is alleged to have described the Khawarij because they have been wrongly accused of misinterpreting some Qur'anic verse? These differences are common among scholars of all Islamic sects; they are only magnified and exaggerated when they involve scholars among the Khawarij or Ibadhis. Every scholar makes an honest attempt to translate the Qur'an to the best of his knowledge and ability, but there are some Qur'anic verses which are not

clear (آيات متشابهات) and as Allah Himself has said in ayah 7 of suratul-Imran (3), "no one knows its true meaning except Allah".

Among the Qur'anic verses which are ambiguous are those dealing with theological issues and that is why they have brought about differences among the madhahib. To the Ibadhis these issues are not so important; what is important is that we should obey and worship our Lord in this life according to what are commonly accepted as His Commandments and Injunctions as prescribed in the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet's Sunnas. But to the others these controversial side issues are more important than the fundamental principles of Islam itself and those who disagree with them are branded as heretics.

Dr. Israr Ahmed Khan in the Introduction to Qur'anic studies (Kuala Lumpur, 200 p.305) refers to Dr. Muhammad Hussein Al Dhahabi who emphasize that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) elaborated a great portion of the Qur'an to his companions (Sahaba) but not the entire book. He presents two arguments supporting his opinion.

a) According to Abdullah bin Abbas, Tafsir (interpretation of the Holy Qur'an) has four dimensions:-

   1) Tafsir based on the Arabs' understanding of the language.

   2) Tafsir of those parts of the Qur'an that are easily comprehensible even by an ignorant person;

   3) Tafsir known to 'Ulama' (Scholars); and

   4) Tafsir which is known to Allah alone for example the occurrence of the Last Day and the reality of the Spirit are beyond human perception and are known to Allah alone. (This also seems to be the opinion of Al Tabari).

b) Had the Prophet (Peace be upon him) explained to his adherents the whole Qur'an, there would not have been controversy among them over the meaning of certain Qur'anic verses.

   With regard to the opinion no.4 above about 'ayahs' the interpretation of which is known to Allah alone, it is supported by verse no.7 of Suratul Imran (3) which reads as follows:

"He (Allah) it is who has sent down to you (Muhammad) the Book (the Qur'an). In it, are verses fundamental that are clear (in meaning); they are the foundation of the Book, others are not entirely clear. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is not entirely clear, seeking discord, and searching for its interpretation. <u>But no one knows its true meaning except Allah"</u> (Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

In man-made laws, disagreements in their interpretation are very common among lawyers, even though they were prepared by well-trained legal draftsmen, and passed by Parliament which consists of members, many of whom are lawyers. When disputes go to courts of law, parties to the disputes as represented by their advocates argue fiercely about the meanings to be attached to the wording of the enactments in front of a bench of judges who are highly qualified and experienced. And yet the decision arrived at is not unanimous, some of the judges decide one way, and the others the other way. When the matter is appealed to the Higher Court, the Appeal Court sometimes overturns the majority opinion of the lower Court. The point worthy of note here is that if we cannot agree on the interpretation of laws enacted by ourselves, how can we unanimously agree onthose laws made by Allah in the Qur'an. Indeed some of them have been explained by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) in his lifetime, but there is still a body of Qur'anic verses which have remained unclear and each school tries to interpret them as best as it can in the way its members understand them. The only difference is that some of them take a tolerant view towards their opponents while others assume an aggressive position against anyone who does not agree with them. This is not Islam, it is religious dictatorship since they regard those who do not conform to their dogmas as heretic and Hell is their destination.

The Ibadhis strongly object to being classified in the same group as the Khawarij especially in the distorted sense of breaking away from Islam. It is true that during Seyyidna Ali's crisis there was a political group which opposed the truce and arbitration between Muawiyah and Seyyidna Ali. The group came to be known as the Khawarij which afterwards disintegrated

into various factions and were as poles apart as the heavens and the earth. The only thing in common between the Ibadhis and the Khawarij was their opposition to the truce, arbitration and usurpation of the throne of Caliphate by members of the Umayyad family. Their initial alliance had nothing to do with the essence of Islam. If the office of the Caliphate is so important to Islam, then today the religion of Islam does not exist because there is no longer Khalifa or Imam of all Muslims as was before.

Abdullah bin Ibadh was not the only one in Islamic history who had seceded from a creed. All Sahabas were at one time pagans (Kufar) and some of them were fierce opponents of Islam. Should we not recognize them as Muslims because they had once been pagans? Imam Al-Ghazali was first a Sufist and then reverted to Orthodoxy. Abu-I-Hassan Al-Ash'ary was once a Mutazilite but later became a bitter opponent of the Rational school. Ibn Hazm was initially a Shafi, then he changed to Dhahirii. It seems that all religious thinkers and leaders had a freedom to change their minds except Abdulla bin Ibadh, his prejudiced opponents still maintain that his followers are Khawarij.

The Ibadhis share common beliefs with many other Islamic schools – with the Sunnis in the fundamental principles of Islam, with the Shias and the Mutazilites in the subsidiary issues relating to certain events expected to happen on the Day of Judgment. They also have differences with all of them, just as there are differences within each sect, among the Sunnis, the Shias, the Mutazilites and the Sufists. Within each group there are factions and each one holds religious views which distinguish it from others.

During the reigns of the Umayyad and Abassid dynasties, it was a fashion for some Islamic scholars, in order to win favour from the rulers, to criticize the Khawarij in the same way as Muawiyah used to curse Seyyidna Ali in his sermons before Friday prayers until it was abolished by Umar bin Abdul Aziz when he acceded to the throne. Unfortunately this practice is still continued to some extent today by some of those so-called Imams paid by wealthy patrons to create division in the Islamic community, forgetting or deliberately ignoring what Allah says in Ayah 107 of Suratul Tawba (9):-

" والذين اتخذوا مسجدا ضرارا وكفرا وتفريقا بين المؤمنين وارصادا لمن حارب الله ورسوله من قبل وليحلفن إن أردنا إلا الحسنى والله يشهد إنهم لكاذبون"

"And there are those who put up a mosque by way of mischief and infidelity to disunite the believers and in preparation for one who warred against Allah and His Messenger aforetime. They will indeed swear that their intention is nothing but good, by Allah does declare that they are certainly liars"

(Translation by Abullah Yusuf Ali).

Although the ayah refers specifically to a rival mosque which the hypocrites wanted to build at Qubaa outside Medina, it applies generally to those who want to use a mosque as a forum to create dissension among Muslims, for Allah's words have wider and far reaching applications than the occasion for which they were revealed. And yet some Imams (hypocrites and paid agents) instead of preaching to the worshippers during Friday prayers on Islamic unity resort to controversial issues in order to cause inter-sectarian dissension. And in Ayah 108 of Suratul An'am (6) Allah says:-

" ولا تسبوا الذين يدعون من دون الله فيسبوا الله عدوا بغير علم "

"And do not insult (or abuse or call names) those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest out of spite they insult Allah in ignorance"

If Allah has forbidden Muslims to abuse false gods whom disbelievers worship, how can they stand on the pulpit of a mosque during Friday sermons and abuse their fellow believers because of sectarian differences which exist not only between one sect and another but also within each sect? At this juncture it is worth quoting from a book, Should a Muslim Follow a Particular Madhhab? by Sheikh Muhammad Sultan Al-Ma'soomi of Azerbaijan who lived in Saudi Arabia and died 40 years ago. He says (p.16):-

"Different Madhahib are personal and private opinions, judgments and interpretation of legal points according to religious scholars and jurists. Allah and the Prophet have not ordered us to follow these opinions and interpretations. There is a possibility of being correct or incorrect in their opinions and interpretations. There are many issues on which Imams had different views and they explained them according to their own reasons and speculation".

Since this is the position, one wonders why scholars of some sects hold extreme views against other sects and launch malicious campaigns against those who disagree with them on certain religious issues and on interpretations of certain Qur'anic verses. Sheikh Al-Ma'soomi is not a Kharijee but he is trying to defend a minority sect (not Ibadhis) within a group of sects. But his learned observations are most interesting. On p.21 of his book he says:-

"The entire Muslim Ummah is divided into different sects...every sect condemns the others in foul and abusive language. Everybody claims: 'our faith and our views are the best and the rest is rubbish. Hanafi took Shafi as his rival and vice versa. Sometimes the followers of the same sect are bitter opponents and fight with each other as they are fighting against non-Muslims. For example, Hanafi Barailvi is harsh against Hanafi Deobandi"

But the Muslim laity are told by their sectarian fanatics that it is only the Khawarij who are condemning other sects. On the matter of blind following of Imams, Sheikh Al-Ma'soomi (p.20) has the following to say:

"Later religious leaders and intellectuals wrote volumes over volumes and thousands of pages and the masses took those writers as jurists, whereas their knowledge about Islam was shallow. The so-called scholars made it incumbent on people to follow one of the four Imams and prohibited them from following another at the same time. In other words, they raised up the Imams to the level of Prophets to whom scriptures are revealed and made it obligatory to obey every word of the Imam".

Worse still some sectarian fanatics not only blindly follow the Imam of their madhhab but even idolize some of their scholars within the madhahab and call them reformers and in all their writings they would quote more often from them than from the Qur'an itself. The more extreme a sectarian scholar is, the less educated he is and the more shallow is his knowledge of Islam. A true scholar must have a wider view of Islam and not concentrate on minute irrelevant or unimportant details, whether historical or theological, which artificially divide the Muslim Ummah. On page 32 of his book, Sheikh Al-Ma'soomi has quoted a statement made by Sheikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiya below:-

> *"Anyone who makes it obligatory to blindly follow a specific Imam should be asked to repent and give up fixated (obsessive) following and if he is not prepared for it, he should be executed, since this is associating partners with Allah in setting down Sharee'ah, which is one of the unique rights of the Lord".*

While we agree with Ibn Taymiya's ideas on blind following, we disagree that those who follow a specific Imam blindly he should be executed as he has so ruled above. Fortunately several important Muslim countries have not yet complied with his ruling or 'fatwa' because Saudi Arabia (where he has many followers) has codified Islamic law according to the Hanbalee madhhab, Pakistan and Turkey according to the Hanafi madhhab, Egypt based it on the Shafii madhhab and Iran based on the Jaafary madhhab (The Evolution of Fiqh by Abul Ameena Bilal Philips p.111). In other words by codifying the legal rulings of their respective madhhab, it means they have made it obligatory to follow the rulings of their specific Imam. To apply Ibn Taymiya's ruling would mean executing all those responsible for codifying sectarian law within the legal system of the country concerned and even judges who administer the code.

For those not familiar with court procedures, the implications of the codified law needs further elucidation. Suppose a Turkish magistrate is presented with a case involving Islamic Sharia and finds that the subject of contention can be resolved equitably and fairly by the application of the

Hanbali code. If he does so, his decision would be overturned by the Appeal Court because he has not complied with the law of the country which in this case is the Hanafi Code. So he will have to apply the Hanafi Code even if, in his opinion, it does not provide in the circumstances of the case a satisfactory solution.

Similar situations would arise in other Islamic countries which have codified their legislation according to the legal rulings of Imam of their respective particular madh-hab. On the other hand, magistrates in countries which have not codified according to a particular madhhab have a wider discretion to apply legal opinions of any of the Imams which seem to them most appropriate in the circumstances.

Thus the countries which have incorporated the legal rulings of a madh-hab into their legal system are the ones which have tied themselves to a particular Imam. But let us see what Sheikh Al-Ma'soomi has to say on this issue on page 31 of his book:-

"He who deviates from the right way of *Tabe'in* (تابعين) and sticks to one specific Imam and is prejudiced in his favor, is similar to one who leaves aside all Companions of the Prophet and follow one only, as the Shias and Khawarij do. This is the way of heretics and apostates. Qur'an, Hadith and Ijma denounce them".

The Khawarij have not stuck to one specific Imam. But the people who have stuck to one specific Imam are those who have codified or incorporated the legal rulings of their madh-hab into their country's legal system, and they are the people of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, Turkey and Iran. However we would never call them heretics and apostates, let alone advocate their execution as Ibn Taymiya has done. The Ibadhis have not codified their Islamic law according to the legal opinions of their Imam. They follow the Qur'an and the Sunna as they understand them. Nonetheless we would still continue to refer to Sheikh Ma'soomi. On page 28 of his book, he makes the following observations:-

"Research proves that these madhahibs and sects were propagated by power-hungry rulers with the help of knavish (unprincipled) scholars. This is how the Muslim Ummah was disunited and sects were initiated in (the) interest of these power-mongers".

Sheikh Ma'soomi's observations were not only true during the periods of Umayyad and Abbasid rulers, but are applicable even today when some power-hungry scholars in some countries are trying very hard to isolate Ibadhis from the mainstream of Islam because historically and politically Ibadhis have refused to be subservient to any but Divine authority.

One more quotation from Sheikh Al-Ma'soom's book (p.68):-

"Sectarian following brings nothing but destruction, and it is an innovation in religion. This heresy (of sectarianism) was introduced by kings and rulers to attain their political ends and save themselves and their empire".

As we have seen, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) knew that there would arise numerous sects, hence the Hadith that there would be 73 sects after his death. This is something natural and to be expected, for there are as many differences between men as there are things in common among them, and that is what makes life interesting and worth living. Everybody is entitled to cherish the beliefs which he thinks are right and not be forced to accept the dogmas of other people even if they are wrong. What then is to be done? The solution is to iron out these differences by friendly discussions, in an atmosphere of mutual respect, for our respective points of view instead of hurling insults at each other in the mosques or inciting Muslims of different sects to fight one another as is happening in some Muslim countries even today. If we cannot solve these problems peacefully, the least we can do is to comply with Allah's instructions as laid down in the following chapters of the Qur'an. In verse 10 of Suratu-Sshura (42), He has said,

" وما اختلفتم فيه من شيء فحكمه إلى الله "

"And whatever it be wherein ye differ, the decision thereof is with Allah". (Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

But the translator's comments in the footnote are more clarifying,

"If their differences arise merely from selfish motives, or narrowness of vision, they are sinning against their own souls. If their differences arise from sincere but mistaken notions, their proper course is not to form divisions and sects, or to increase contention and hatred among men but to leave all things to Allah, trusting in Him and turning to Him in all difficulties. The final decision in all things is with Him".

In chapter 16 (AN-Nahl), verse 125 Allah addresses His Prophet as follows:-

" ادع إلى سبيل ربك بالحكمة والموعظة الحسنة وجادلهم بالتي هي أحسن
إن ربك هو أعلم بمن ضل عن سبيله وهو أعلم بالمهتدين"

Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious for thy Lord knows best, who have strayed from His path, and who receive guidance

(Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

Thus Allah instructed His messenger to preach Islam with wisdom and good advice, and argue in a gracious manner. He did not tell him to spread the holy message by violent means. So where is the justification or the authority for spreading sectarian dogmas by bloodshed and abuses?
In Suratul-An'am, aya 117 Allah says:-

إن ربك هو أعلم من يضل عن سبيله وهو أعلم بالمهتدين"

"Your Lord knows best who strays from His way, and knows best who are rightly guided".

(Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

The leading scholars of each Islamic school claim that the tenets of their sects are correct, and others are wrong, but the above ayah is a reminder that only Allah knows best who are right and who are wrong. So they should not be overconfident, it may turn out on the Day of Judgment that they are wrong and those whom they assume to be wrong are right. Religion is not

like trade where each trader claims that his goods are the best. In business every consumer is a judge but in religion Allah alone is the Judge. So who gave the sectarians the authority to assert that their madh-habs are right?

The ill wishers of the madh-hab of Ibadhi say that Imam Jabir bin Zaid the founder of the Ibadhi sect, was not an Ibadhi. They say that Jabir denied, when asked, whether he belonged to this sect. That was natural because, at that time, Ibadhism was an underground movement rebelling against the Umayyad rulers; it was a political faction in a way fighting against the corruption of the ruling regimes, and if Jabir denied he was Ibadhi, he was naturally trying to save his own skin otherwise he would have been arrested and imprisoned, and in fact he was for a short period of time and then released. He was later exiled to Oman. But that is not the point. The important thing is that Ibadhis follow his teachings. The Prophet's Hadiths which they rely on were transmitted through him from Ibn Abbas and other recognized narrators. Shias follow Seyyidna Ali but he was not a Shia nor belonged to any sect. This is true of all Imams; Muslims identify themselves with one or the other of the Imams, not in their lifetime but long after their deaths.

In their own frantic effort to disparage Ibadhism, they say it is a small sect only. Since when does righteousness necessarily go with numerical strength? Islam is the second largest religion after Christianity. So those who go after big numbers, they might as well join Christianity. On the question of numbers, let us see what Sheikh Al-Ma'soomi says in his book (p.64):-

> *'Those who do not follow the right path may be greater in number but are worthless before Allah'.*

Former righteous and nobles have said:

> *'Choose the right path and do not feel lonesome in this path due to your smallness in number. Keep away from the wrong way and do not be taken in by the majority – certainly they are approaching their destruction'.*

In religion, unlike politics, numerical strength is irrelevant. Remember you are worshipping God, and that is what matters, even if you are alone. Imam Auzai is reported to have said:-

> *'Follow the pious predecessors of the early period of Islam even if you are left alone; do not pay any heed to later views and opinions because most of these are just adorned with high sounding words and phrases....'*

Dr. Mustafa Mahmoud, an Egyptian scholar in his treatise on Intercession (الشفاعة) has this to say on the question of majority:-

في دنيانا الفوز بالأغلبية يوصلك الى الفوز بكل شيء ، فأحزاب الأغلبية هي التي تفوز بالمناصب وهي التي تمثل الشعب أكثر وهي التي تمثل وجهات النظر الأكثر عدلا والأكثر إنصافا ... وإن تكون مع الأغلبية معناها أن تكون مع الحق ومع أهل الصدارة .. هذا حال الدنيا أما في الآخرة فيعلمنا ربنا أن الأغلبية على الضلال...وأن الأكثرية في جهنم ... فأكثر الناس في القران لا يعلمون ، وأكثر الناس لا يفقهون ، وأكثر الناس لا يؤمنون ، وأكثر الناس لا يعقلون أن هم إلا كالأنعام بل هم أضل ... ويقول ربنا عن الأكثرية .. إن يتبعون إلا الظن... فهم على الباطل دائما وهم الأخسرون على طول الخط ...ولن يدخل الجنة في آخر المطاف إلا الأقلية.

'In our world, victory by majority leads you to success in everything. The majority parties are the ones which win (high) positions, and they are more representative of the people, and they represent more fair and just points of view. And to be with the majority means to be on the side of right and to be with those in the front place. This is the position of this world. As for the Hereafter, our Lord instructs us that the majority are astray (in error) and the majority are in Hell. In the Qur'an it is mentioned, most of the people are ignorant, most of the people do not understand,, most of the people do not believe, and most of the people are unreasonable; they are but like cattle and more astray. Our Lord says about the majority: they follow nothing but conjecture, they are always wrong, they are the losers all along, and in the end they will not enter Heaven except the minority'. (Translation by the author).

There are a number of ayahs in the Qur'an which support Dr. Mustafa's statement above but I will quote only two of them. In Suratul An'am (6), verse 116 says:-

وإن تطع أكثر من في الأرض يضلوك عن سبيل الله إن يتبعون إلا الظن وإن هم إلا يخرصون .

"And if you obey most of those on earth, they will lead you astray, far away from Allah's Way. They follow nothing but conjecture and they do nothing but lie." And in the same Surah (الأنعام), verse 119, Allah says:-

" وإن كثيرا ليضلون بأهوائهم بغير علم إن ربك هو أعلم بالمعتدين"

"And surely many do lead (mankind) astray by their own desires without knowledge. Certainly your Lord knows best the transgressors". (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

So if someone invites you to join his religion or sect because they are the majority, there is no better advice to take than that given in the above verses by Allah Himself.

One of the factors which contributed to the numerical strength and survival of some madh-habs is the support they received from the State or government. State support is the most important deciding factor for the survival of a madh-hab. According to Abu Ameena Bilal Philips, there were other madhhabs with outstanding scholars but they disappeared for political reasons. Now let us see how these major madhhabs came to flourish and spread to other countries.

HANAFEE MADH-HAB

When Abu Yusuf, a student of Abu Hanifa was appointed chief judge during the second half of the 8th Century (CE) of the Abbasid rule, he used to appoint judges for various cities, and all his appointments were followers of the Hanafee madh-hab. Thus he was instrumental in the spread of this school throughout the Muslim empire.

When Ottoman rulers codified Islamic law according to the Hanafi madh-hab in the 19th century CE and made it state law, any scholar who aspired to be a judge was obliged to learn it. As a result, the madh-hab spread throughout the Ottoman Islamic State during the last part of 19th century to countries like Iraq, Syria, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Guyana, Trinidad, throughout Turkey itself and to some extent Egypt. (Abu Ameena Bilal Philiphs p.68).

MALKI MADH-HAB

In his closing chapter, on the Causes of Madha-hib, Sheikh Al-Ma'soomi (p.77) quotes from a book by Ahmad bin Muhammed Muqri the following passage:-

"Previously the people of Morocco and Andalus followed the method of Imam Auzai but afterwards they adopted the method of Imam Malik because Hakam bin Hisham Abdul Rahman Al-Dakhil, the third Omayyah (Umayyad) ruler of Andaluus ordered them to pass judgment according to the views and words of Imam Malik and people of Medina. This had happened for political considerations by orders of (the ruler) Hakam". One of the political considerations is that Imam Malik admired the ruler of Andalus and said to a man from Andalus,

"May your ruler take over the charge of our Haram (masjid) and may Allah bless him".

The man narrated this incident to the ruler Hakam who urged the people of Andalus to adopt the madh-hab of Imam Malik

SHAFEE MADH-HAB

Until the tenth century, the Madh-hab of Imam Awzai was the dominant creed in Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon as well as in Spain. But when Abu Zar'ah Muhammad ibn Uthman of the Shaafi'ee madhhab was appointed judge of Damascus, he began the practice of giving a prize of 100 dinars to any student who memorized the book, Mukhtasar al-Muuzanee (a basic book of Shaafi'ee Fiqh). Naturally this practice caused the Shafi'ee Madh-hab to spread rapidly in Syria. (Abu Ameena Bilal Philips p.69).

HANBALEE MADH-HAB

The majority of the followers of this Madh-hab can now be found in Palestine and Saudi Arabia. Its survival in Saudi Arabia, after almost completely dying out elsewhere in the Muslim world, is due to the fact that the founder of the so-called Wahhabee revivalist movement, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, had studied under the scholars of the Hanbalee madh-hab, and thus it unofficially became the fiqh madh-hab of the movement. When Abdul-Azeez ibn Sa'ud captured most of the Arabian peninsula and established the Saudi dynasty, he made the Hanbalee madh-hab the basis of the kingdom's legal system. (Abu Ameena Bilal Philips p.86-87).

SHIA MADH-HAB

"One of the kings of Iran, Khudaa Bandah (خدا بنداه) belonged to one of the Sunni sects. One day he was angry with his wife and divorced her three times. Then he wanted to revoke the divorce and take his wife again. But the Sunni scholars told him that there was no way until she married someone else and get divorced. The king found that difficult, so he sought the legal opinion of Ibnu-l-Mutahhar (ابن المطهر) , one of the Shia scholars in jurisprudence (fiqh) who decided that there had been no divorce because not all the conditions of divorce had been fulfilled and so the king could take back his wife. The king was pleased with this legal opinion and decided to appoint him as his adviser, and this had an effect of influencing the king to become a Shia and his people followed suit". (p.143 الموسوعة الميسرة). (Translation by the Author).

Thus the dominance of a madh-hab in any particular country is the result of having been imposed by the political authorities in power, it has nothing to do with its genuiness or otherwise. When Western powers ruled Africa they brought their religion with them and so Christianity flourished there and became the largest religion in the continent, south of the Sahara but that is not to say that it is the best of all other religions prevailing there.

Unitarianism is one of the smallest, if not the smallest, sects in Christianity. Its followers adhere to the original teachings of Jesus Christ

and believe in one God, and reject the doctrine of Trinity. They are nearest to Islam, but, like the Khawarij, they suffered persecution under the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Europe. Michael Servetus (1511-1553 CE) who was born in Spain was a great advocate of Unitarianism; he was a physician as well as geographer. Because of his religious belief, there was an attempt on his life and he fled to France and then to Switzerland. He was considered a heretic by other Christian denominations, like the Khawarij by some other Islamic sects.

Muhammad Ata-ur-Rahim, in his book, *"Jesus, A Prophet of Islam"* (p.115) writes the following account of Servetus' attempt to spread the doctrine of Unitarianism:-

> *"Since all his attempts to influence people by personal contact failed, Servetus published two books, one was called "The Errors of Trinity" and the other "Two Dialogues on Trinity". The result was that the Church hounded Servetus from one place to another. Servetus was forced to change his name, but not his views. From 1532 until his death he lived under an assumed name".*

Calvin, his Protestant opponent had him arrested by the Roman Catholics and thrown into prison on a charge of heresy (a very popular charge among religious, including Muslim, scholars when they differ from one another). He tried to escape in disguise from prison but was again arrested and prosecuted. At his trial he was found guilty of heresy. On 26th October 1553 Servetus was burnt alive with a copy of his book, The Errors of Trinity, tied with him. In later years the people of Geneva in remorse erected a statue in his memory, not of his opponent Calvin who was supposed to be a reformer. Castillo, one of the followers of Servetus, said:-

"To burn a man is not to prove a doctrine" (i.e. The Trinity Doctrine).

The sect of Unitarianism still survives, 450 years after his death. Similarly, the Ibadhi madhhab survives after more than 1350 years of the massacre of the innocent people of Nahrawan. People may be buried to extinction but not the truth.

IBADHI MADH-HAB

In the battle of the Camel between Seyyidna Ali and Muawiya , there were a number of Companions (Sahabas) among the forces of the former. Dr. Majid Ali Khan in his book, The Pious Caliphs (p.186) describes the composition of Seyyidna Ali's army as follows:-

> *"This could be noticed with the fact that in the first battle which took place between Hadhrat Ali and Hadhrat Aisha (and her group) about 800 of those Companions who had participated in the Treaty of Hudaibiyah were with Hadhrat Ali besides other Companions".*

And so when a faction of Seyyidna Ali's army broke away and formed a separate independent group which later came to be known as the Khawarij, there were a number of Companions among them. Later the group decided to appoint one of them as their Imam and the choice fell on Abdullah bin Wahab Al-Rasby who was one of the Sahabas who had originally joined Seyyidna Ali. He was the first non-Quraish Imam. Hence when the battle of Nahrawan broke out, it was not meant just to crush the rebellion of the Khawarij but was also to overthrow Abdullah bin Wahab Al-Rasby from an office, which had hitherto been reserved for the Quraishis only. The battle ended with the killing of Abdullah bin Wahab.

Abdullah bin Ibadh Al-Tamimy after whose name the sect is known was not yet born. He was born later during the reign of Muawiyah (40-60H) and grew up at time when the political atmosphere was highly charged. It seems he did not live long, for he died during the rule of Abdul-Malik bin Marwan (65-86H) the 5th Umayyad ruler and so his life span stretched out to about 45 years only if not less. He came from the Najd region of what is now known as Saudi Arabia. He was politically active against the Umayyads and used to propagate the views of his movement openly. He was its spokesman and ardent activist. He is reported to have written to Khalifa/Abdul Malik bin Marwan in which he refuted allegations of religious extremism. He opposed the views of various other movements especially the followers of Al-Azraqi, an extreme wing of the Khawarij. Because of his open activities, the movement was named after him.

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> *"This could be noticed with the fact that in the first battle which took place between Hadhrat Ali and Hadhrat Aisha (and her group) about 800 of those Companions who had participated in the Treaty of Hudaibiyah were with Hadhrat Ali besides other Companions".*

And so when a faction of Seyyidna Ali's army broke away and formed a separate independent group which later came to be known as the Khawarij, there were a number of Companions among them. Later the group decided to appoint one of them as their Imam and the choice fell on Abdullah bin Wahab Al-Rasby who was one of the Sahabas who had originally joined Seyyidna Ali. He was the first non-Quraish Imam. Hence when the battle of Nahrawan broke out, it was not meant just to crush the rebellion of the Khawarij but was also to overthrow Abdullah bin Wahab Al-Rasby from an office, which had hitherto been reserved for the Quraishis only. The battle ended with the killing of Abdullah bin Wahab.

Abdullah bin Ibadh Al-Tamimy after whose name the sect is known was not yet born. He was born later during the reign of Muawiyah (40-60H) and grew up at time when the political atmosphere was highly charged. It seems he did not live long, for he died during the rule of Abdul-Malik bin Marwan (65-86H) the 5th Umayyad ruler and so his life span stretched out to about 45 years only if not less. He came from the Najd region of what is now known as Saudi Arabia. He was politically active against the Umayyads and used to propagate the views of his movement openly. He was its spokesman and ardent activist. He is reported to have written to Khalifa/Abdul Malik bin Marwan in which he refuted allegations of religious extremism. He opposed the views of various other movements especially the followers of Al-Azraqi, an extreme wing of the Khawarij. Because of his open activities, the movement was named after him.

But the real founder of the Ibadhi School was Imam Jabir bin Zaid leading it behind the scene; he was its spiritual leader and had his own group of students who were receiving religious teachings on the basis of the Qur'an, the Holy Prophet's traditions and the judicial rulings of the rightly guided Caliphs. Prominent among his students was Abu Ubeida Muslim bin Abi Karima Al-Tamimy who took over the leadership of the movement after his death. The latter was responsible for spreading Ibadhism and establishing the first Ibadhi Imamates in Hadhramawt, Oman and North Africa.

The Ibadhis broke away from other Khawarij factions because of the latter's extremist views towards their fellow Muslim opponents. The Azraqis, one of such factions regarded their Muslim opponents as 'Kuffar' in the sense of polytheists or idolaters and justified killing their women and children or take them as prisoners and plunder their property. They made it obligatory to fight them as jihad and those who stayed behind were regarded as idolaters. The Ibadhis rejected this view, and their policy on the relations with fellow Muslims was expressed by Abdullah bin Ibadh as follows:-

> *"We do not regard our Muslim opponents (Mukhalifun) as idolaters, for they believe in the unity of God, the Book, and the Messenger. But they are 'infidels-ingrate' (كفار النعمة). We hold it lawful to inherit from them, and live among them. The faith of Islam unites them (with us)".*
>
> [Studies in Ibadhism p.33].

Not only did the Ibadhis dissociate themselves from the un-Islamic war policies of the Khawarij, they also had to fight against them in self-defence. Dr. Muhammad Rashid Al-'Uqaily in his booklet, الأباضية في عمان وعلاقاتها مع الدولة العباسية في عصرها الأول (published by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture of the Sultanate of Oman) reports that the Khawarij Najdat (another extremist wing) under the leadership of Najdah bin Amir Al-Hanafy imposed their authority on the eastern part of the Arabian peninsula and Bahrain and wanted to extend it to Oman. They sent an army under the command of 'Atayah bin Al-Aswad Al-Hanafy, seized it and murdered its ruler 'Abbad Al-Julandy. He stayed there for a month,

then left after appointing Abu Qassim as his deputy. But the Omanis did not wait long before they revolted against Abu Qassim, killed him and restored Al-Julandi rule over Oman. The Omanis warded off another attempt by Najdat to seize the country again, which proves without doubt Ibadhis' utter refusal to the principles of the extremist factions of the Khawarij like Azariqas and Najdat. Another occasion when Ibadhis fought the Khawarij, this time the Sufriyyah faction, has been reported by Dr. Isam Al-Rawas of the Sultan Qaboos University in his book, Oman in Early Islamic History (P.117):-

> *"After the Sufriyyah, under the command of Shayban Al-Yashkuri, arrived in Julfar, they were met by the Ibadhiyyah, who refused them access to the town. The Imam, Al-Julanda bin Masud, who was thus faced with the dual challenge of the Sufriyah and the Abbasid army, sent Hilal bin Attyyah Al-Khurrasani and Yahya bin Najih to fight them. According to Ibadhi sources, the Imam's army refused to give Suffriyyah shelter. Instead they asked them to accept the Ibadhi doctrine or else leave the town peacefully. The Sufriyyah chose to fight... ... The two parties then met in battle and the Sufriyyah were defeated".*

The events narrated above gives us the following clear picture. From the policy declarations made by Abdullah bin Ibadh and Abdullah bin Yahya al-Kindi regarding their treatment of Muslim opponents in times of war, and the two battles which took place first with the Najdat and then with the Sufriyyah, showed clearly that the Ibadhis had nothing in common with the Khawarij apart from the Muhakkimah, when a faction of Seyyidna Ali's army defected when he accepted arbitration with Muawiyah. After that, the faction split up into different groups and each one of them went its own way, pursuing separate policies. So those who group together the Ibadhis with other extremist splinter groups are distorting history, and aim to perpetuate division among the Islamic ummah especially bearing in mind that the other splinter groups no longer exist today.

Ibadhism is one of the oldest, if not the oldest school of Islam. In history it has been associated with various groups fighting against the

tyranny and injustices of the Umayyad and Abbasid rulers. Its followers have lived, by and large in remote areas of North Africa. At the same time Oman was for centuries isolated from the rest of the world. That is why many Muslims of other countries have heard little, if at all, of the sect. It is only in the last thirty years that Oman and Ibadhism have received the limelight. There is another factor which has kept Ibadhism in the dark. We do not pursue a vigorous propaganda campaign as our rivals do; and nowadays you cannot sell without advertisement, and bad goods sell better with it than high quality ones without it.

We need to publish more Ibadhi literature and translate it into other languages so that Muslims of other sects and nationalities become acquainted with and educated about it. We should not try to convert them; if they join us, well and good; if they don't, it is their free choice! We should adopt the policy of our forefathers of not imposing our creed on others as some other sects are vigorously attempting to do: "لا إكراه في الدين – there is no compulsion in religion" (Verse 256 of Suratul Baqara). But we ought to try to enlighten them on what Ibadhism is all about, so that they are cleansed of their ignorance, fanaticism and prejudices which they have acquired for centuries from their parents, religious teachers and enemies of Islamic unity.

Islam is a universal religion in the sense that it has been brought for the benefit of all mankind, not just for people of a particular race or country, and the way it has spread to other regions of the world proves its cosmopolitan character. It was born in the village of Mecca in the midst of paganism in the year 610 CE when the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) received his first divine inspiration. Twelve years later it fled from the pagans' persecution and sought refuge in Medina where the Prophet was given warm welcome. The tender seedling of Islam was nurtured in that city until it was firmly rooted, and by the time the Prophet died in 632 CE it was fully grown up at the matured age of twenty-two. At this time there were only three countries in the world which had embraced Islam, namely, Hijaz, Oman and Yemen (see map attached) The rest of what is now the Moslem world was either under Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism or paganism. A large part of the Arabian peninsula too was still

under paganism (see map in the appendix). Oman like Medina, but unlike Mecca, accepted Islam peacefully. Mecca after many years of armed confrontation surrendered to Islam in 630 CE. On the other hand Oman responded positively after the Prophet (Peace be upon him) sent a special emissary, Amr bin Al-'As with a letter calling upon the rulers of Oman to accept Islam about the year 629 CE. Thus Oman and Mecca entered Islam at about the same time. The Prophet's emissary remained in Oman for some time to teach its people the Qur'an and what Islam is.

And yet when Omani students meet Muslim students from some other countries abroad, the latter ask the former to testify to the two articles of faith:

شـــهادة أن لا إله إلا الله و أن محمـــــــدا رسول الله

implying that the Ibadhis are not Muslims!! It is a shame that these misguided students do not know the history, the essence and principles of Islam. But they are not to be blamed because they had been subjected to indoctrination under a wrong system of religious education based on an arrogant maxim:

"We only are right, the rest are wrong!!

In the next twenty-eight years, Islam continued to thrive in Medina, in spite of internal pressures, producing seeds which spread far and wide, both eastwards and westwards. At the age of fifty it moved to Damascus where it established its capital and lasted for nearly a century. However as a result of a bloody struggle for power among the Quraishis, the Islamic empire was split up, one part of it under the Umayyad family establishing its headquarters in Spain, and the other part under the Abbasid House settled in Iraq. Iraq developed into a thriving culture center of the Islamic world.

It had contacts with and was influenced by Greek, Persian and Indian civilizations. Many books from those countries were translated into Arabic, and Muslims who studied the translated works developed interest in mathematics, science, astronomy, literature and medicine. Parallel developments in these fields were taking place in the western part of the Islamic State, that is Spain. The Abbasid rule continued for the next 500 years until its collapse in the middle of the 13th century. After that it

transferred its metropolis to Constantinople in Turkey in the beginning of the 14th century with the rise of the Ottoman Empire during which time Islam was able to penetrate into the heart of Europe as well as Asia. Constantinople remained the religion's stronghold for a period of more than half a millennium leaving a permanent impact on some parts of Europe and in many parts of Asia. These achievements, intellectual as well as spiritual, have been the results of valuable joint contributions and concerted efforts exerted by multifarious people of different parts or regions of the world.

Thus the Islamic torch moved from one country to another like a relay race, the first runner hands over the torch to the next until the last runner, and when the race is won, the credit goes to all who participated in the race, not just to the last or the first runner. Thus Islam belongs to all Muslims; it does not belong to any group of them or to any particular country. For those who are not familiar with Ibadhi contribution to the spread of Islam, the following are brief accounts. Dr. Issam Al-Rawas in his book, Oman in early Islamic History (p.50-51), quoting from al-Awtabi, writes as follows:-

> *"Thus the Omanis played a major role in the conquest of Persia. They had joined with the rest of the Arab tribes in the war from Iraq, where they were centered in Basra, while others crossed the sea from Oman to the Persian coast, being skilful navigators, where they succeeded in encircling the Persians along with their fellow soldiers. As a result, many Omani tribes, after completing the mission of conquering Persia, either returned to or emigrated and settled in Basra".*

Another occasion in which Ibadhis made a contribution in the defence of Islam presented itself in the second half of the 17th century. After expelling the Portuguese from the coast of Oman in January 1650, the Ibadhi Imam, Sultan bin Seif Al-Yaaruby received a request from the Muslims of East Africa to assist them in ousting the Portuguese colonizers from their territories. Apart from levying heavy taxes on the local Muslim population, there was evidence that the Portuguese were trying to impose Christianity on them as they did in Goa in India, East Timor in Indonesia and Macao in China. Norman R. Bennet in his book, A History of the Arab

State in Zanzibar (p.10 – 13), describes the situation in Mombasa, Pemba and Zanzibar as follows:-

> *"Prior to falling under the sway of Mombasa the usual four or five separate rulers resident upon Pemba apparently had been supplanted during the course of the sixteenth century by one ruler, including one individual whom the Portuguese had sent to India for education. He also married a Portuguese subject. On his return however he failed to receive the acceptance of Pemba inhabitants, the affair dragging on unresolved into the seventeenth century".*

"In Mombasa, following the death of the first ruler of the Malindi dynasty, relations between the inhabitants and the Portuguese progressively deteriorated. An attempted solution to the problem was the sending of a future ruler, Yusuf bin Hassan, to India where he accepted Christianity and was educated in Portuguese ways before returning to assume his position in Mombasa. Yusuf, however, became increasingly dissatisfied with his foreign masters and, fearful of his own future, seized control of Mombasa in 1631".

> *"Answering requests for aid from a Pemba delegation to Muscat, an Omani expedition, with support from Pemba (unsuccessfully) raided in 1652 the Portuguese establishment in Zanzibar."*

"In the following decades Zanzibar remained quiet, but Pemba consistently supported Omani ventures against the Portuguese. Final Omani triumph came following an epic siege of Mombasa... With Mombasa's fall, Zanzibar briefly remained the only Portuguese occupied center north of Mozambique until the Omanis seized it..."

Had it not been for Ibadhi's military intervention, these three places would have been Catholic enclaves and would have remained so until today just like Goa, East Timor and Macao. The important thing to bear in mind is

that the Muslims of East Africa belong to the Shafii madh-hab but did not request military aid from the Muslim Khalifa (خليفة المسلمين) in Istanbul or his Governor in Mecca or Medina but chose to seek assistance from the Ibadhi Imam in Oman, or as the sectarian fanatics would call him Imam of the Khawarij (إمام الخوارج).

Another striking point on the part of Ibadhis, they did not impose their madh-hab on the people of that region as others would have done in the circumstances in the belief that all madhahib constitute the same religion- they worship the same one God and believe that Muhammad is His last Messenger and that the Qur'an is the word of Allah. Oman was and still is a relatively poor country and war costs money and manpower especially when the battlefield is many thousand miles away across the sea. But this was a war of 'jihad' and it was their duty to respond to the call and fight a ruthless enemy in defence of Islam and their Muslim brethren. So one would expect that the Islamic world would appreciate the sacrifice made for the cause of Islam.

But, No! That was not so. From the year 1800 onwards, Oman was subject to a series of raids and invasions from some neighbouring Muslim country in varying degrees of force over a period of seventy years. The purpose of these aggressions was the propagation of a new brand of Islam and extortionate plundering in the name of Zakaat (See Ian Skeet p.138 – 139). But why was Oman, and not any other neighbouring country, chosen as the target of these "missionary campaigns"? The reason is simple, because Ibadhis believe in the following fundamental principles of Islam:-

A. 1. (a) That Allah is one only and has no partner, and also they believe in His Angels, Messengers, Books, in the Hereafter and in Predestination.

(b) That Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is His last Messenger.

2. That it is obligatory to say daily prayers, five times.

3. That it is obligatory to pay Zakaat.

4. That it is obligatory to fast during the month of Ramadhan.

5. That it is obligatory to perform pilgrimage in Mecca once in one's lifetime for those who are capable.
6. That certain acts of behaviour or conduct are sins as prescribed by the Qur'an and are punishable in this world and in the Hereafter.

B. But Ibadhis also believe in the following:-

1. That Almighty God will not be seen in the Hereafter.
2. That those who will enter Hell for committing grave sins will not get out of it.
3. That the Qur'an is not part of essence of Allah though they believe it is the wor d of God.
4. That Allah has no limbs.
5. That Allah is not in a particular place, the seventh Heaven.

The second (B) group of beliefs is regarded by Ibadhis as secondary, not fundamental, theological issues which have arisen as a result of sectarian disagreements in the interpretation of certain Qur'anic verses. These issues have been discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

The result of these raids has left, in their wake, wounds and tensions in some areas between neighbouring villages and it is only in the last thirty years that they have started gradually to heal and abate. If the conflict arose as a result of doctrinal disagreements, one might as well ask 'what is then Islam?' The question was answered by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) when it was put to him by Angle Gabriel (Jibreel) as follows: -

((أن تشهد أن لا اله إلا الله و أن محمدا رسول الله ، وتقيم الصلاة وتؤتي الزكاة وتصوم رمضان وتحج البيت إن استطعت إليه سبيلا)).

قال جبريل : ما الإيمان ! فقال رسول الله ﷺ ((أن تؤمن بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله واليوم الآخر وتؤمن بالقدر خيره وشره)).

'Islam is to testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to perform the

prayers, to pay Zakat, to fast Ramadhan, and to make the Pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so".

Jibreel said, *"What is Iman (belief)"?* God's Messenger (Peace be upon him) said: *'It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in Destiny – both the good and the evil thereof."* (Imams Rabii, Ahmed bin Hanbal and Muslim).

This is Islam as defined by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) himself. Who else would know better than he what Islam is? The other disputable or controversial issues listed in B above are divine secrets which no human knows with certainty about them. They are opinions which constitute a madh-hab and as Al-Ma'soomi says (p.12): -

'Not only ignorant and illiterate people but also many scholars who imagine themselves well informed, are of the opinion that every Muslim must follow an Imam (that is madh-hab). This is not only a mistaken idea but it is also an attestation of people's ignorance and unawareness of the BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF ISLAM".

The basic knowledge of Islam is contained in the reply of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) to Angel Jibreel quoted above. To some people the fundamental principles of Islam are not all that important; what is important to them are the differences that exist among the various sects, ignoring the basic principles that unite them. Some Islamic scholars are so engrossed or obsessed in sectarianism or their madh-hab that they consider those outside their madh-hab who hold different views from them as heretics. But who are greater heretics than those who form sectarian clubs and call those inside them Ahlul Haq and those outside them Ahlul Bida'? Did the Holy Prophet authorize it? What he said about madh-hab is as follows:-

'My people will split into 73 sects. All of them will go to Hell. Only one will be saved. And all of them will claim they are that one". (Hadith No.41, Musnadul Rabii).

This Hadith has been confirmed by Imams Ahmed, Abu Daud, Al Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah. If you go through the Hadith carefully you will notice that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said only one will be saved, not four or twelve or none of them But some sectarian fanatics seem to have better knowledge than the Prophet himself. They have arrogated to themselves the Divine prerogative of passing judgment before the Day of Judgment; they are in a hurry to forestall the results before they are out by declaring which madh-habs are right and which are wrong!!

The question of who will go to Heaven or Hell does not depend upon membership of a particular madh-hab or group of madh-habs; it depends upon individual performance in this life, for as Allah Himself has said in Suratul-Qari'ah (S.101) verses 6-11:-

فأما من ثقلت موازينه (٦) فهو في عيشة راضية (٧) و أما من خفت موازينه (٨) فأمه هاوية (٩) وما أدراك ما هية (١٠) نار حامية (١١)

"Then as for him whose balance (of good deeds) will be heavy (6), he will live a pleasant life (in paradise) (7), but as for him whose balance (of good deeds) will be light (8), he will have his home in pit (Hell), (9); and what will make you know what it is? (10) (It is) a fiercely blazing Fire! (11). (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Thus we will be individually rewarded or punished according to the scale of our good deeds (ثواب) as against our sins (ذنوب) which we have committed in this world; our membership of a madh-hab would not count, for millions of Muslim do not even know the tenets of their respective sects although they are all aware of the fundamental principles of Islam. The above verses have been recited again with some modifications in Suratul-A'raaf (verses 8 and 9), In Suratul-Muuminuun (verses 102 and 103) and in Suratul-Anbiyaa (verse 47). Again in Suratul-Maryam, (verse 69), Allah says:-

"ثم لننزعن من كل شيعة أيهم اشد على الرحمن عتيا"

"Then indeed We shall drag out from every sect all those who were worst in obstinate rebellion against the Most Gracious (Allah)". (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

It should be noted that God did not say that He would drag out some sects which were worst in obstinate rebellion against Him, but He said, He would drag them out from every sect. In other words no rebellious person will escape from being singled out for punishment because of his membership to a particular madh-hab. It is his performance in this life which matters and decides whether he will be punished or not.

The following two poetic verses are ascribed to Imam Ali bin Abu Talib:-

لا دار للمرء بعد الموت يسكنها إلا التي كان قبل الموت بانيها

فإن بناها بخير طاب مسكنها و إن بناها بشر خاب بانيها

Thus Seyyidna Ali is telling us that a man will find in the next life the house which he built in this life before he died. So if he has constructed a pleasant dwelling by doing good deeds here in this world, he will find the same there in the next. On the other hand if he puts up an evil one here by committing mischief, the same will be there waiting for him. In other words, it is the performance of an individual Muslim in this life which matters rather than membership of a sectarian club as some religious fanatics try to mislead the Islamic ummah.

Before leaving the subject of the spread of madh-hab let us conclude with a reference to Sheikh Al-Masoomi again (p.77):-

> *"In a nutshell it can be said that these sects, madhahibs and creeds are part of politics of rulers, leaders and politicians. If you wish to know the reasons and causes of expansion of sects, study Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldun. He has discussed the cases in detail and has inferred that selfish, greedy imposters and cunning politicians are the cause of the spread of madhahib".*

Next time you go to a mosque for Friday prayers and you hear an Imam abusing followers of another Islamic sect, remember the words of Ibn Khaldoon, namely, they are nothing but selfish, greedy imposters and part of politics of cunning rulers. (By the way, Ibn Khaldoon, a Tunisian, is internationally acknowledged as a philosopher and Father of the Science of History. He belonged to the Malki sect).

As we are approaching the end of this book it would be of interest to read the comments of non-Muslim authors on the Ibadhi sect. These authors have been fortunate in that they had not been influenced in their childhood against any madh-hab and so have been able to study Islam with an open, impartial mind, free of any prejudices unlike some Muslim scholars. So professor Duncan B. Macdonald, author of a book, Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory (Beirut, 1956,24) has this to say on Ibadhism:-

> *"It cannot be doubted that these men (the Ibadhis) were the true representatives of the old Islam. They claimed for themselves the heir-ship to Abu Bakar and Umar, and their claim was just. Islam had been secularized, worldly ambition, fratricidal strife, luxury, and sin destroyed the old bond of brotherhood. So they drew themselves apart and went their own way, a way which their descendants still follow in Oman, in East Africa and in Algeria"* (Studies in Ibadhism by Dr. A.K.Ennami p.41).

The underlined words above describe the nature of the Umayyad, Abbasid and Fatimid regimes from which the Ibadhis isolated themselves by establishing their own separate independent Imamates.

Another writer, Prof. Schacht, author of Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence has made the foliowing observations on the Ibadhi sect: -

"The variants (differences) of Muhammadan law which are recognized by the ancient sects of Islam, the Kharijis and the Shiites, do not differ from the doctrine of the Orthodox or Sunni schools of law more widely than these differ from one another". (Dr. A.K. Ennami p.120)

Dr. Ennami adds that the reason for the similarity of law among the Islamic schools is due to the fact that they owe their origin from the Qur'an, the Sunnah and Ijmaa (consensus of the Sahabas). Hence the classifications of Islamic schools into Fiqhiyya (or Sunniyyah) and Aqaidiyya is artificial, misleading and arbitrary designed to create a rift in the religion.

The following is an extract from a book entitled, 'Islam' (published in London & New York, 1961) edited by John Alden Williams (pp 213 – 214):-

"The Kharijis soon divided into several sects; from the first they were men who would not and could not compromise. Since their principles frequently led them to fight to the last against overwhelming odds, only the most moderate of these sects, the Ibadhis, has survived into modern times..... their just dealings with the People of the Book made them many friends among the subject peoples. They were nothing if not sincere men, and in their devotion to the Qur'an and the Divine Imperative as they understood it, one must admire, even if grudgingly, the harsh uncompromising righteousness of the Semitic prophets whose followers they were. They have their own legal system and collections of Hadith. They are exceedingly puritanical, and forbid tobacco, games, music, Sufism, luxury,....."

With regard to tobacco, it is true that smoking is forbidden among the Ibadhis as it is considered 'haram' (unlawful) whereas some other sects regard it as distasteful (مكروه) ; and so at one time smoking in public was banned in Muscat. The outside world considered it, then, a peculiar law. Today there is a worldwide ban on public smoking in such places as restaurants, hospitals, aeroplanes and public transport, which shows that Ibadhism is ahead of times.

Now let us see what a Muslim author has to comment on this small sect. He is Dr. Ehsan Ehsanullah, author of a book, Siyasa Shar'iyya (Malaysia, 1996) who has defined the Ibadhi sect as,

> *"a minor, but by no means unimportant, orthodox branch of Islam. Doctrinally, they seem to balance the two extreme views of the Sunni and the Shii on the question of leadership of the Community of Faith, the Umma. Their fiqh, however, is generally speaking not very much different from the fiqh of others. The Ibadhis (are) generally regarded as being the remnants of the Khawarij. Majority of the Ibadhis, however, deny having any substantial connection with the Khawarij".*

On the question of leadership, both the Sunnis and the Shias have supported the hereditary system of succession for the institution of the Imamate, but whereas the latter insist that the candidate must be selected from among the descendants of Seyyidna Ali, for the former any Quraishi candidate can qualify for the office. For the Ibadhis the appointment is open to all Muslims who qualify for it by the general consensus of the Ummah through consultation. The Ibadhi stand is consistent with modern democratic trends.

Lastly here is a selection of a Friday sermon of an early Ibadhi leader who in 129 H (747 AD) briefly captured Mecca and Medina. It has been preserved in several early collections of rhetoric as an example of Arab eloquence and moral fervor. He is Abu Hamza al-Mukhtar bin Awf al-Uzdy al-Umany (also known as Abu Hamza al-Shari) one of the prominent Ibadhis of Basra. The sermon was delivered in Medina in the presence of Imam Malik ibn Anas:-

> *'I counsel you in fear of God and the Sunna of His prophet – His blessing and peace be on him and to observe the ties of blood, and magnify the truth of God which tyrants have diminished, and to diminish the falsehood they have magnified, to put to death the injustice they have brought to life, and to revivify laws they have let die; to obey God- and to those who obey Him, disobey others in obedience to Him, for there is no obeying a creature which disobeys its Creator. We call you to the Book of God and the Sunna of His prophet, and to equal sharing, and to justice for the subject peoples, and to putting the fifths of the booty in the place God ordained for them. As for us, we have not taken arms lightly or frivolously, for play or amusement, or for a change of government on which we hope to immerse ourselves, or for the revenge that was taken from us; but we did it when we saw the earth had grown wicked, and proofs of tyranny had appeared, and religious propagandists increased, but men did as they pleased, and laws were neglected, and the just were put to death, and speakers of truth treated*

violently, and we heard a herald calling us to Truth and the straight Path, so we answered the summoner of God.... And by His grace we became brethren... "

"O people of Medina! Children of the Muhajirin and the Ansar! How sound are your roots, and how rotten are your branches! Your fathers were men of certainty and religious knowledge – and you are a people of error and ignorance.... For God opened the door of religion for you, and you (let it grow choked with rubbish); He locked the door of this world for you, and you forced it open; hasters to temptation and laggards in the way of the Prophet; blind to the demonstration of Truth and deaf to knowledge; slaves of greed and allies of affliction! How excellent was the legacy your fathers left, had you preserved it, and how miserable will be that of your children if you hold on to it! Them He aided to the Truth – you He deserts in error. Your ancestors were few and pious, and you are many and malicious... the preachers of the Qur'an cry out to you, and you are not chidden' they warn you, and you do not ponder... " (Islam by John A. Williams (London & New York 1961 pp 215 – 217).

If these are the words of a heretic as some religious propagandists would like us to believe, then one might as well ask: Who is a true Muslim today? Abu Hamza died a martyr in the following year 130H. in a fierce battle with an Umayyad army sent by Marwan II to restore the city of Medina to his rule.

"THE KHAWARIJ"

We have seen in the historical part of this book, when we were tracing the events following the assassination of Seyyidna Uthman and the succession of Seyyidna Ali in the year 35 H (656 CE), that fighting broke out between the supporters of Muawiya who wanted to avenge the murder of Uthman and the supporters of the new Khalifa Ali b. Abi Talib. When

arbitration was proposed after the battle of Siffiin in the year 37H (657 CE), a section of Seyyidna Ali's army deserted him. This group opposed the proposed arbitration and regarded it as a challenge to the legitimacy of Ali's Caliphate. They persuaded him to reconsider his decision, and although he agreed at first, yet later on he reverted to his earlier position of accepting arbitration. It is not true, as is alleged by some writers, that the opponents of arbitration persuaded him to accept it and when he did, they abandoned him.

It is generally agreed that the arbitration eventually turned out to be a fraud. The secessionist party which came to be known by various names: the Muhakkimah, the Khawarij, the Shurah, the Al-Qaeda, Ahli Nahrawan or Ahli Haraura, went to settle in an area known as Nahrawan, near Kufa, in Iraq, and elected Abdullah b. Wahab al Rasby al-Uzdy as the first non-Quraishi Imam. In the year 38 H (658 CE) Seyyidna Ali and his army, on their way to Syria to fight Muawiya, decided to finish off with the Khawarij first. And so fighting broke out at Nahrawan when Imam Abdullah al-Rasby and about one thousand of his followers were killed in the battle. The tragedy brought about remorse and grief among the people of Kufa and so the expedition to Syria was abandoned. Seyyidna Ali, in remorse, said:-

"لا تقاتلوا الخوارج بعدي .."

'Do not fight the Khawarij after me'..

Two years later Seyyidna Ali was murdered by one Ibn Muljam in 40H (661 CE) to avenge the massacre of the relatives of his wife at the battle of Nahrawan. The conspiracy to kill him was hatched, according to Jalaluddin Assyuti, in Mecca, not in Basra where there was a large concentration of the people of Nahrawan. The identity of Ibn Muljam is not known but some historical sources allege that he was a Khariji, and so they accuse the Khawarij including the Ibadhis, of having murdered Seyyidna Ali. Today some Muslim leaders bitterly complain that the Western media unjustifiably accuse Muslims in general of terrorism because of the tragedy which happened in the World Trade Centre in New York on 11th September, 2001 and perpetrated by a group of young men belonging allegedly to the Islamic faith. But the same Muslim leaders had been in the forefront in accusing Ibadhis today for a crime which was committed by one man

almost 1400 years ago. Allah will punish the individual who murdered Seyyidna Ali but not all future generations belonging to a particular sect or madh-hab.

Twenty-seven years later serious disagreements occurred within the Muhakkimah party, and so in the year 65 H (685 CE) two extremist factions, the Azariqa and the Najdaat, broke away from it. These dissident groups developed a doctrine whereby they considered their Muslim opponents as polytheists and justified killing them, their women and children. They also held that it was lawful to confiscate their properties. At the same time they forbade inter-marriage with them. About ten years later another splinter group, the Sufriyya also seceded. The remnants left of the original Muhakkimah party developed their own independent body of principles known as Ibadhism (or Ibadhia), and also adopted a moderate approach towards their Muslim opponents; they did not share the extremist views of the other factions. It is under these circumstances that Ibadhism as an independent sect was born.

Thus the final split brought the end of the Muhakkimah party originally a one political group which distanced itself from a power struggle for the office of Khalifa and now split up into four separate sects, each with its own independent doctrine: -

The Azariqa
The Najdaat
The Sufriyya
The Ibadhis

The rest of the Muslim World condemned the extremist doctrines of the first three factions. The Ibadhis too not only condemned them but also fought them on different occasions. Thus Dr. Hussein Abeid Ghanim Ghabbash in his book "Oman, Islamic Democracy" reports on p.39 as follows: -

> *"And among the most prominent Omanis worth mentioning is... Muhallab b. Abi Sufrah who saved Basrah from the extreme Azariqa. According to Shahrastani, a*

Muslim Scholar of Shafii Madh-hab, Muhallab fought the Azariqa for 19 years until they were liquidated during the time of Al Hajjaj, the Umayyad Governor"

(Translation by the Author).

Dr. Muhammad Rasheed al 'Uqaily on page 5 of his booklet الاباضية في عمان reports that Omanis in about 70 H fought the Najdat when the latter imposed their authority on the eastern part of the Arabian peninsula and Bahrain. After several battles, the Najdat were driven away from Oman. Dr. Al'Uqaily comments that this confirms Omani's utter refusal to the principles of the extremist factions of the Khawarij like Azariqa and Najdaat.

Similarly Dr. Isaam al-Rawaas in his book, "Oman in Early Islamic History" reports on p.117 that the army of Imam Julanda b. Masud (who ruled Oman 131 – 133 H) refused to give shelter to the Sufriyyah. Instead they asked them to accept the Ibadhi doctrine or else leave the town (Julfar) peacefully. The Sufriyyah chose to fight. The two parties then met in battle and the Sufriyyah were defeated.

Thus it is clear that the Ibadhis have nothing to do with the extremist policies of the other splinter groups. The three terrorist factions of the Khawarij have ceased to exist for more than 1200 years, they exist only in the minds of those who want to perpetuate division in the Islamic Ummah (Community). They often single them out as examples of terrorism in the Islamic history, ignoring numerous cases of terrorist activities perpetrated by those in power such as the notorious Umayyad Governor, Al Hajjaj; Yazid whose army savagely murdered the Holy Prophet's grandson, Hussein and all male members of his family except his son Ali (also known as Zain-l-Abidin); and Assaffah, the first Abbasid Khalifa whose uncle organized the massacre of all Umayyad princes (eighty of them) at a party held in Damascus especially for the purpose.

The lists of murdered Khalifas which appear in the historical part of this book characterize the terrorist nature of some of those regimes. They are not exhaustive; they represent only a drop in the ocean. In the

appendices to this book there is a list of prominent and pious Muslims who were tortured or imprisoned by the ruling regimes.

The Khawarij are accused of having forbidden their followers intermarriage with members of other sects. But let us see what Abu Ameenah Bilaal Philips on p.107 of his book *"The Evolution of Fiqh"* has to say on this point with regard to other sects:-

"The hyper conservative scholars of this stage (i.e. during the Ottoman Empire) went so far as to rule that whoever was caught transferring from one Madh-hab to another was liable to punishment at the discretion of the local judge. A ruling was also made in the Hanafee Madh-hab prohibiting the marriage of a Hanafee to a Shaafee".

Another charge against the Khawarij is that they justified the confiscation of properties of their Muslim opponents. There are many cases of confiscation of properties by Muslims other than the Khawarij. For example, al Mansur the second Abbasid Khalifa (754 – 775 CE) confiscated the properties of the families of Muhammad and Ibrahim, the great grandsons of Imam Hassan who had been killed while leading a revolt against the Caliph. But the Khalifa did not seize the properties of the two brothers who had led the rebellion but of their families so that they were left without means of subsistence. And yet Prof. Masud al-Hassan describes Al Mansur as one who "maintained religious discipline at his court, and did not allow any practice repugnant to Islam". (History of Islam p.204 – 205).

Another Abbasid Khalifa, Al Qahir (933 – 934 CE) also seized the properties of nobles who had been the favourites of Khalifa Al-Muqtadir who ruled before him (907 – 932 CE).

One last charge against the Khawarij was that they were extremists or fanatics. But extremism in not confined to them only. All other sects were guilty of it at one time or another in history. Let us go back to what Abu Ameena Bilaal Philips says on p.107 of his book *"The Evolution of Fiqh"*:-

"And even the second most important pillar of Islam, Salaa, was not spared the effects of Madh-hab fanaticism. The followers of the various madh-habs began to refuse to pray behind the Imaams from other Madh-habs. This resulted in the building of separate prayer niches (Qiblas) in the masjids (mosques) of communities where more than one Madh-hab existed . Masjids of this type can be seen in places like Syria... Even the most holy Masjid, al-Masjid al-haraam of Makkah, which represents the unity of Muslims and the religion of Islam, was affected. Separate prayer niches were set up around the Ka'bah: one for an Imaam from each school. And when the time for Salaa came, an Imam from one of the Madh-habs would lead a congregation of followers from his Madh-hab in prayer; then another Imaam from one of the other Madh-habs would lead his congregation of followers and so on".

This is an extremism or fanaticism of the worst order. If one does not pray behind an Imaam of another Madh-hab it means he does not recognize that Madh-hab as one of the true Islamic sects. This amounts to apostatizing the other Madh-hab (تكفير) which is a serious matter especially when the Madh-hab belongs to the same group.

Thus we see that while the Khawarij declared in their doctrine extremist principles, other factions of Islam practiced them just the same in dealing with their Muslim opponents. This defence of the Khawarij is unnecessary because they have ceased to exist for a long time, but it has been raised because there is still in the Islamic ummah a section of Muslim extremists who keep on reviving old conflicts which have little to do today with the **basic principles of Islam.**

EPILOGUE

In this brief survey of the history of Ibadhism, we have seen how a crack in the unity of Islam started to appear during the tenure of the third Caliph, Uthman b. Affan. The crack developed into a serious and permanent split after Seyyidna Ali took over as his successor. Muslim scholars who reported the tragic events, which occurred during that period, were very apologetic in their commentaries on the circumstances that led to those events. In their views Seyyidna Uthman had not done anything wrong in his administration, nor those who murdered him!! Similarly, Seyyidna Ali was not to be blamed for failing to punish the culprits. Likewise, Muawiya was not to be censured for refusing to pledge allegiance to the rightful Caliph (Seyyidna Ali) and for revolting against him, resulting in considerable bloodshed and loss of hundreds of lives of Muslims. Seyyidna Ali's army was to be commended for attacking the people of Nahrawan, in which several thousand innocent people were killed. Nevertheless, the "learned scholars" were at last able to identify the group that was responsible, in their view, for all the tragedy that happened. They called this group the Khawarij. Why? Because it refused to participate in any further bloodshed on realizing that the conflict was not a jihad but a struggle for political power. However, the people of Kufa who lived with the events were better judges of the situation and so also refused to embark on any further bloody adventures to fight Muawiyah's forces, and hence the march to Syria was abandoned. In other words, the people of Kufa were sympathetic with the so-called Khawarij who had refused to continue fighting.

Sharastani, a Shafi' scholar who lived 479 - 548H and author of الملل والنحل defines a Kharijee on p.91 as follows:-

'كل من خرج على الإمام الحق الذي اتفقت عليه الجماعة يسمى خارجيا،'

'Everyone who rebels against a rightful Imam agreed upon by the community is called a Kharijee'

Anyone who has studied objectively the events surrounding the rightful Imam Ali will not fail to recognize that the people who refused allegiance to, and organized armed resistance against, him (خرجوا عليه) were Muawiya and his followers, the Uthmaniyyun, whereas the so-called Khawarij pledged their allegiance to him as the lawful Imam or Khalifa, fought on his side twice, at the battle of the Camel and at Siffin. But when the fighting was stopped on the suggestion of the enemy when he felt he would be defeated, as he had been defeated before, and when arbitration was proposed and accepted, a section of Seyyidna Ali's army withdrew or seceded from him (خرجوا عنه) because they believed that fighting must continue until the enemy was defeated. Bearing in mind Shaharastani's definition of a Kharijee, then who is the Kharijee between the two groups – Muawiya and the Uthmaniyyun who rebelled against Seyyidna Ali or the section of the army that seceded and rejected arbitration? The answer is obvious. But nobody dared declare Muawiya a Kharijee, because for the next 90 years he and his family ruled the Islamic State, and their iron-handed Governors, like Al Hajjaj and Ibn Ziyad, were there to see that everybody toed the line and submitted to their authority.

Nevertheless, the Ali/Muawiya conflict for the office of Khalifa was not the only one in the history of Islam. There was another armed struggle between Abdullah ibn Az-Zubair and Yazeed in 64H. (683 CE) for the same office. Yazeed had been nominated by his father Muawiyah to succeed him and declarations of allegiance must have been obtained by force from different parts of the State through the regional governors. But when Yazeed forces killed Seyyidna Hussein people withdrew their allegiances and transferred it to Abdullah ibn Az-Zubair who came to receive the support of the people of Iraq, Hejaz and Yemen. The question arose who was the rightful Imam between the two contenders? If Yazeed was entitled to the office, then according to Shaharastani, Abdullah ibn Az-Zubair and his followers were the Khawarij. But the latter was killed in a battle for the defence of Mecca by the forces of Abdul Malik ibn Marwan in 692 CE. Ibn Az-Zubair's followers surrendered to the Umayyad rule and so they ceased to be a threat to them. For this reason they were not considered Khawarij unlike those who withdrew their support from Seyyidna Ali.

On the other hand if the so-called Khawarij had surrendered to Muawiya and his successors, the epithet Khawarij would not have been stuck to them permanently. On the contrary, throughout Islamic history, they were in continuous armed conflict with the ruling regimes from Muawiya's onwards and became a serious threat to them. For this reason they had to be isolated from the rest of the Islamic community by telling people that "the Khawarij are heretics who have deviated from Islam and so they must be killed". In this way the Umayyads and their successors the Abbasids were able to harness general support and the support of the Islamic scholars and so maintain their position. Besides they were able to divert attention from their own mismanagement of the affairs of State. But as Al-Ma'soomi says (p.68):-

> *"Sectarian following brings nothing but destruction, and it is an innovation in religion. This heresy was introduced by kings and rulers to attain their political ends and save themselves and their empires".*

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said:-

إن أول دينكم بدأ نبوة ورحمة

ثم يكون خلافة ورحمة

ثم يكون ملكا وجبرية ،

'Verily the beginning of your religion is Prophethood and mercy.

Then there will be Caliphate and mercy.

Then there will be kingship and coercion'.

Seyyidna Ali was the last Caliph and mercy. After him there was kingship and coercion. Muawiya rebelled against him and usurped the office of Khalifa, and his son Yazeed succeeded by inheritance which was an innovation (بدعة) . The so-called Khawarij were therefore right in rebelling against them and their successors because they were not rightful Imams. Shahrastani's definition does not apply to the so-called Khawarij but it applies to their opponents.

This somewhat short exposition of the history of the crisis which occurred during Seyyidna Ali's Caliphate should not have been necessary because the ruling system of government of the Islamic ummah by Khalifas has long ceased to exist, and it is very unlikely that it would be restored in the foreseeable future because of the separatist tendencies and domineering attitude of some Islamic sects. But it has been reviewed here because there is still a small section of Muslims, which keeps on reviving old conflicts in order to perpetuate disunity, and they exploit the ignorance and incredulity of their followers. Whatever facts they happen to know about the crises comprise a distorted biased picture presented to them in order to promote sectarian prejudices against this or that madh-hab.

It is also worth recalling that during the Islamic history spanning a period of more than 1420 years, the Muhakkimah party or the Khawarij existed for a very short period of about only 27 years from 38 – 65H.(658 – 685 CE). During this time, the party was a political movement fighting the ruling regimes against their corruption and un-Islamic practices. From 65H onwards, the movement split up into separate factions, each developing its own independent doctrine. It is generally recognized, even by its enemies, that the Ibadhi faction adopted a moderate doctrine towards its opponents and was opposed to the extremist policies of the other groups. The split-up of the movement into factions was the end of the Khawarij, and eventually all the factions, except the Ibadhi, became extinct. So to group them together from this point in time was wrong, and those who did so were the mouthpieces of the Khalifas because each splinter group continued independently its campaign against the succeeding regimes. The Ibadhis too were at loggerheads from time to time with different Caliphs and their armies. The purpose of these counter military campaigns by the Ibadhis was to establish Islamic justice which was conspicuously absent then.

With regard to interpretation of the Qur'an, as we have seen in chapter 6, scholars of different sects or even of the same group of sects differ in their understanding of the true meanings of some verses although they generally agree on the meanings of the major portion of the Qur'an. But interpretations of those verses have been the subject of controversy since the first century of Islam. But as long as scholars are sincere and honest in

their interpretation of the Holy Scripture, then there should be no cause for contention. As Ustadh Abdullah Yusuf Ali has commented in a footnote to verse 10 of chapter 42 of his Translation of the Holy Qur'an.

> *"If their differences arise from sincere but mistaken notions, their proper course is not to form divisions and sects, or to increase contention and hatred among men, but to leave all things to Allah, trusting in Him and turning to Him in all difficulties. The final decision in all things is with Him".*

And in this connection, Allah has said in the same verse cited above:

> وما اختلفتم فيه من شيء فحكمه الى الله
>
> *Whatever it be wherein ye differ the decision thereof is with Allah* (Abdullah Yusuf Ali)

But in spite of Allah's admonition, sectarian fanatics, whenever they disagree with scholars of other sects in the interpretation of the Qur'an, they jump to the conclusion that their opponents are heretics or apostates (مارقون) forgetting that all Imams and several religious scholars were once in their lifetimes harassed or imprisoned by the Caliphs for alleged heresy (see Appendix). Even some of the Caliphs themselves were accused of heresy as we shall see below. So the charge of heresy or apostasy should not be taken seriously, as it is a personal opinion and is common in all religions. Servetus, a Spaniard, who lived in Switzerland, was burnt alive in 1553 CE after a conviction for heresy because he believed in one God and rejected the Trinity Doctrine!! He belonged to a small Christian sect of Unitarianism. All this is the result of fanaticism which in turn is due to ignorance. Fortunately with the spread of general education, religious as well as secular, and public discussion of religious issues in the media, fanatism is on the retreat and sectarian tolerance is on the rise.

Al-Maamun, the Abbasid Khalifa who ruled 813 – 832 CE adopted the Mu'tazila doctrine and declared it to be the State creed, which retained its official status until 847CE. However when Mutawakkil took over as

Khalifa in that year, he abolished it. Mu'tazilism is regarded by some sects as a heretic doctrine which has deviated from the mainstream of Islam. If that is so it means that during the period when it was an official creed, the Islamic ummah was ruled by three "heretic" Caliphs – Al-Maamun, Al-Musta'sim and Al-Wathiq.

Lastly, another charge which is hurled against the Ibadhis and some other sects is that they have adopted theological ideas from other cultures or religions. This is not true because as we have seen in Chapter 6 on Allah's Attributes, our beliefs are based on the Qur'an. The only problem is that we differ in the interpretations of the relevant Qur'anic verse. However we have presented a convincing case to support our beliefs. With regard to foreign influence, this is true of all Islamic sects because today, more than at any other time, we live on this planet increasingly as one society, culturally and economically.

Thus in India and probably Pakistan, Muslim parents of brides pay dowries to bridegrooms in accordance with Hindu custom which is the dominant culture there, while in Islam, it is the other way round – the bridegroom pays the dowry in accordance with Qur'anic instruction in verse 4 of Suratu-Nnisaa (4): -

وءاتوا النساء صدقاتهن نحلة

And give the woman (on marriage) their dower as an obligation (Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

In Turkey and Tunisia it is prohibited for women to wear 'hijab' (veil). The prohibition contravenes verse 59 of chapter 33 (Suratul Ahzab):-

يأيها النبي قل لأزواجك وبناتك ونساء المؤمنين يدنين عليهن من جلابيبهن

O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies (Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Allah's Command to wear veils has been repeated in Suratu-Nnur (24) verse 31

وليضربن بخمرهن على جيوبهن

And they should draw their veils over their bosoms
(Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

In practically all Muslim countries the sale of liquor is allowed in hotels as a way of promoting tourism in contravention of Allah's injunction laid down in chapter 5 (Suratul Maidah), verse 90: -

يأيها الذين آمنوا إنما الخمر ..... رجس من عمل الشيطان فاجتنبوه لعلكم تفلحون

O you who believe! Intoxicants... are an abomination of Satan's handiwork, so avoid it in order that you may prosper. (Abdullah Yusuf Ali)

In Muslim countries, banks charge as well as pay interests on loans to, and deposits from, customers in flagrant violation of Qur'anic injunction prescribed in verse 130 of chapter 3 (Al'Imran):-

يأيها الذين آمنوا لا تأكلوا الربوا اضعافا مضعفة

O you who believe! Eat not usury doubled and multiplied.
(Dr. Al Hilali & Dr. Khan).

Some Muslim countries today have adopted the Western system of divorce law. They no longer accept as valid unilateral declarations of divorce by men. Divorce cases are decided by courts of law because they are not just private matters between two individuals, there are children involved, so their rights must be protected and guaranteed, and this cannot be achieved if it is left to the whims of man who is craving to get married to another young girl. Besides the old wife needs shelter and so the court generally decides that she shall remain in the matrimonial home and the husband shall vacate it.

Besides, for certain sins like adultery and stealing there are punishments prescribed for them in the Qur'an but these are nowhere

implemented in the Muslim world except in one or two countries. But these are exceptions to the rule; the general picture is one of non-compliance. For example, the Qur'an enjoins us in verse 38 of suratul Maidah (5) as follows:

" والسارق والسارقة فاقطعوا أيديهما جزاء بما كسبا نكالا من الله "

"And as for the male and the female thief, cut off his or her hands as a retribution for their deed and exemplary punishment from Allah". (Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

This Divine Commandment is nowhere implemented except in one or two countries, and there it is applied only to those who steal a few hundreds but seldom, if ever, applied to those who steal millions. The punishments meted out in most Islamic countries is imprisonment.

Finally some sects use some Hebrew or Jewish words in their prayers. All these examples provide ample evidence of how foreign systems and cultures have crept into Islamic societies especially during the period when they were under colonial domination. And in the majority of those societies, the Ibadhis, the Mutazila or the Khawarij do not even exist let alone occupy a dominant position. So to accuse them alone of having adopted alien cultures or beliefs is to fail to recognize the world-wide social and economic changes that have permeated through the fabric of the Islamic ummah, not just this or that sect, and the trend continues with no sign of abating. Islam cannot live in an island of isolation. Being born in the Middle East, the cradle of monotheistic religions and the crossroad of world cultures, Islam has influenced, and been influenced by others, as much as, if not more than, any other religion. If must, however, choose what is beneficial for, and reject what is harmful to, itself.

In conclusion there is no better way of bringing this discussion to an end than by quoting from our legendary learned Ibadhi scholar, the late Sheikh Abdullah bin Humeid Al-Salmy the following lines:-

فناخذ الحق متى نراه لو كان مبغض لنا آتاه
والباطل المردود عندنا ولو آتى به الخل الذي له اصطفوا
فلا احترام عندنا لرجل خالف الحق ولو كان علي

We take the truth even from a man of hatred

And we reject falsehood even from a chosen friend

We have no respect for a man, however exalted

If from the truth he has deflected

(Translation by the Author)

These poetic verses express Ibadhi's relation with foreign cultures and ideas.

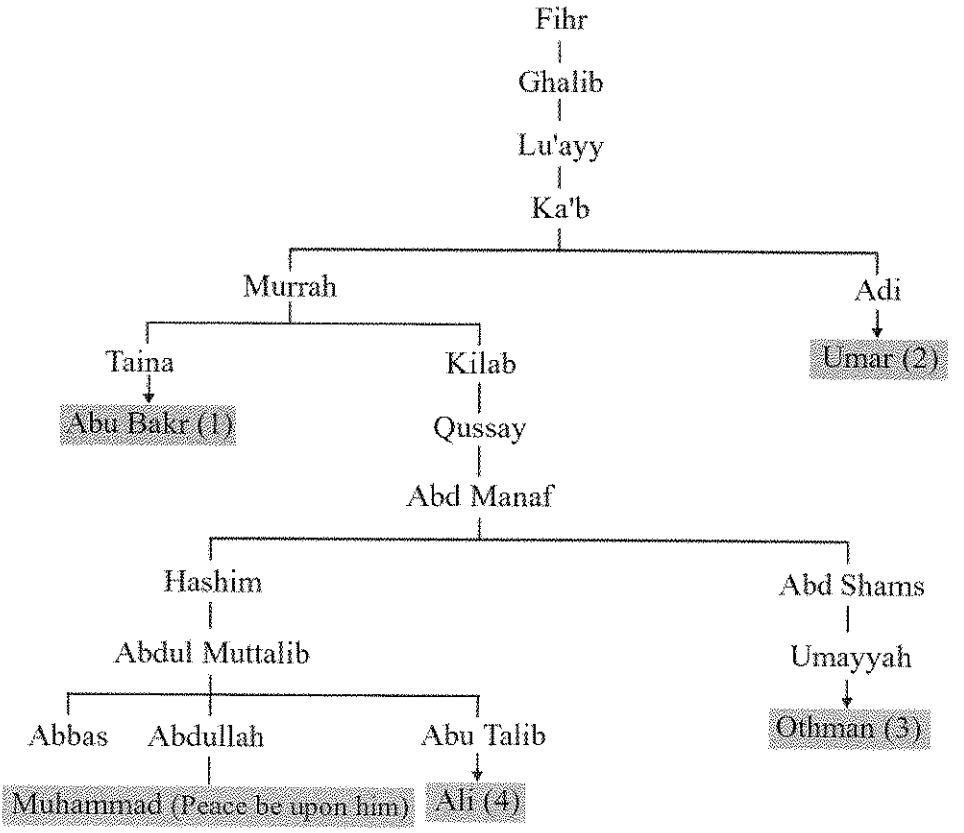
Despite all the criticisms leveled at it, Ibadhism has remained an impeccable madh-hab. However, its name was tarnished by the malicious propaganda of the self-styled Caliphs and their sectarian scholars for about 600 years from the time Muawiya usurped the office of Khalifa to the end of the Abbasid era, because the sect refused to recognize their authority by establishing its own independent Imamate. It is still a victim of a wave of vicious campaigns which is trying to isolate it from the mainstream of Islam, a policy which is again prompted by political motives, because Ibadhis refuse to submit to any but Divine Authority. The Islamic ummah, at last, however, has begun to realize the fallacy of those campaigns and have therefore ignored and rejected them, because today, unlike any other time, people do not accept blindly everything that is preached to them by sectarian fanatics. They study controversial issues objectively before making a decision, one way or the other, and this, again, is due to the rising level of general education and awareness of the Muslim ummah.

One last word of this epilogue. History bears witness that Ibadhism is an Islamic sect of moderation. Wherever they rule, there is a general atmosphere of religious as well as sectarian tolerance and understanding. That is why Ibadhism has survived for more than 1350 years as one of the two oldest madh-habs in Islam against overwhelming odds. They do not employ people, as some of their opponents actively do, to disseminate abroad religious fanaticism, social discord and friction among people of different religions and sects. And so, regrettably, Islam today finds itself in the quagmire in its international relations as a result of aggressive activities of its sectarian fanatics.

GLOSSARY

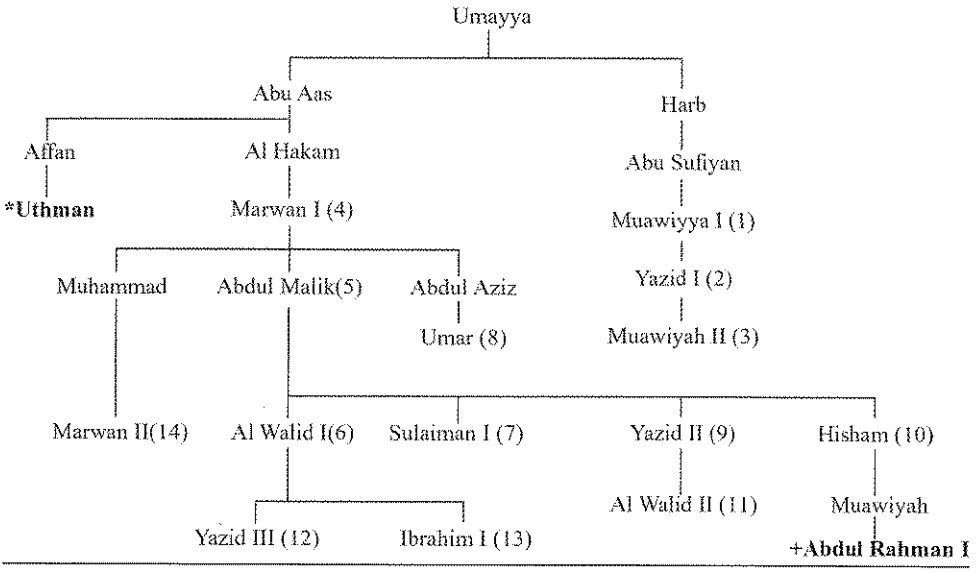
TERM	EXPLANATION
Azariqa	Members of a branch of the Khawarij named after Nafii b. Azraq. Known for their extremist views towards their Muslim opponents.
CE	Christian Era.
Fiqh	Islamic jurisprudence.
H	Islamic year of Hijra
Hijab	Veil worn by Muslim Women on the head and around the breast.
Khalifa (Caliph)	Successor to the Holy Prophet.
Madh-hab	Religious Sect (Plural Madhahib)
Muhakkimah	Another name for Khawarij.
Najdah	An extreme wing of the Khawarij named after Najdat b. Amir Al Hanafy
S	Sura or Chapter of the Qur'an.
Sahaba	Companion of the Holy Prophet.
Ssufriyya	A branch of the Khawarij named after Abdullah b. Sfar Al Sa'ady.
Uthmaniyyun	Supporters of Muawiyah named after Seyyidna Uthman, the third Khalifa.
V	Verse or Ayah of the Qur'an.
Zakaat	Obligatory Islamic tax prescribed in the Qur'an.

Genealogy of the Holy Prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs



Those numbered are the four rightly guided Khalifas in order of succession

The Umayyads 661 – 750 C.E.



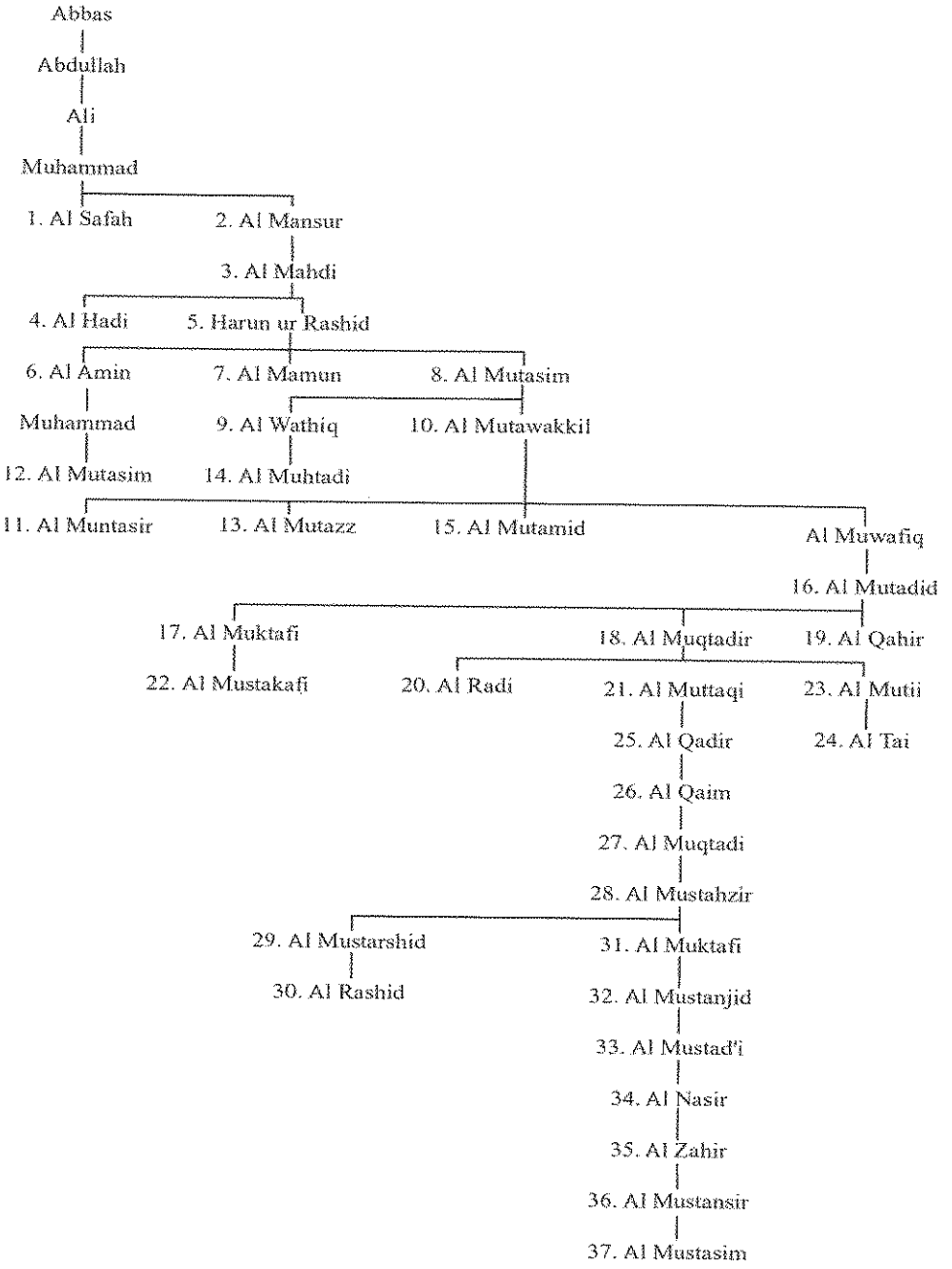
Note:

Those numbered are the Umayyad rulers who ruled from Syria.

* The third Khalifa among the rightly-guided ones.

+ The first of the Umayyad rulers who ruled Spain from 765 – 1031 CE. He was the only survivor who escaped the massacres committed by the Abbasids against the Umayyad family.

The Abbasids – 750 – 1258 C.E.



The Abbasids claim descent from Abbas ibn Abdul Mutalib the uncle of the Holy Prophet.

CHRONOLOGY OF MAIN ISLAMIC EVENTS

DATE	
CHRISTIAN ERA	PARTICULARS
ISLAMIC ERA	
571 CE	Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was born in Mecca.
610 CE	He received the first divine revelation.
622 CE 1 H	He migrated with a group of Companions to Yathrib (Medina) to avoid Quraishi persecution.
632 CE 11 H	The Holy Prophet died. By this time only Hejaz, Yemen and Oman embraced Islam.
632 - 634 11 - 13 H	Seyyidna Abu Bakar assumes the office of Khalifa. During his tenure, the whole of Arabia was united under Islam; Iraq and Syria were conquered; the Qur'an was compiled to one book from scattered pieces.
634 - 644 13 - 23 H	Seyyidna Umar b. Khattab took over as Khalifa after the death of Seyyidna Abu Bakar. Having consolidated the conquests of Iraq and Syria, he proceed to Persia and Egypt which then became parts of the Islamic State. Seyyidna Umar was murdered by his Persian slave in 644 CE (23H).
644 - 656 CE 23 - 35 H	Seyyidna Uthman succeeded as Khalifa. During his administration, the Islamic State extended in the east to Azarbijan, Armenia and Asia Minor, and in the west to North Africa. He ordered the production of seven more copies of the Holy Qur'an in the standard dialect of Mecca so as to avoid confusion in its reading, and distributed them to various regional capitals of the State. In 656 CE he was murdered by group of Muslims, and so the first cracks in Islamic unity appeared.

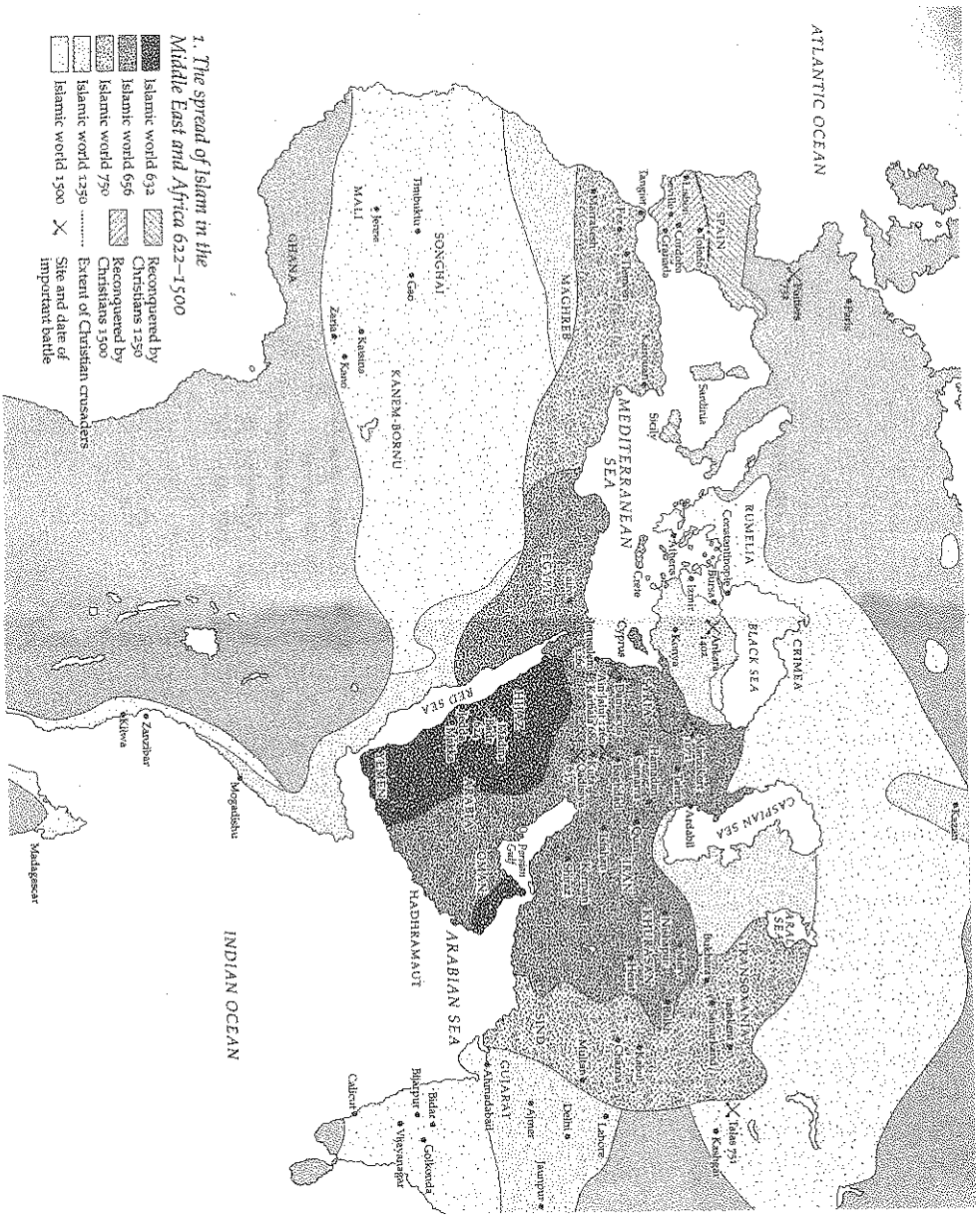
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DATE	
CHRISTIAN ERA	PARTICULARS
ISLAMIC ERA	
656 – 661 CE 35 – 40 H	Seyyidna Ali succeeded as Khalifa. His rule was characterized by bloody conflicts among Muslims themselves over the office of Khalifa. Muawiya, the Governor of Damascus and relative of the late Khalifa/Uthman was the main challenger. Several battles were fought: - (1) The battle of the Camel was fought in Basra in the same year of his accession. Seyyidna Ali won the battle. (2) The battle of Saffain broke out the following year 657 CE (36H). Before the battle was concluded, Muawiya fearing defeat proposed a truce and arbitration. Seyyidna Ali agreed to the proposal, but a section of his army rejected it and so broke away from him. This group came to be known as the Khawarij and elected their own leader, Abdullah b. Wahb al-Rasby, a non-Quraishi Sahaba who had fought on the side of Seyyidna Ali. (3) The battle of Nahrawan was started by Seyyidna Ali's forces in 658 CE(37H) in which the Khawarij who were over-whelmingly outnumbered were brutally massacred including their elected leader Abdullah b. Wahab al Rasby. (4) Seyyidna Ali was murdered in January, 661 CE (40 H) by one Ibn Muljam to avenge the massacre of the innocent relatives of his wife in the battle of Nahrawan. Ibn Muljam acted alone.
661 – 662 CE 40 – 41 H	Seyyidna Hassan b. Ali was chosen by the people of Kufa to succeed but soon abdicated as a result of pressure from Muawiya.
661 – 750 CE 41 – 132 H	<u>The Umayyad Period</u> Eleven Khalifas ruled during this period beginning with Muawiya in 661 CE and ending with Marwan II in 750 CE. The most prominent among them were Muawiya 661 – 680 CE, Abdul-Malik b. Marwan 685 – 705 CE and Umar b. Abdul-Aziz 716 – 720 CE.
750 – 1258 CE 132 – 659 H	<u>The Abbasid Period</u> It started with Abdul Abbas Assafah in 750 CE and ended with AL-Musta'sim in 1258CE. Distinguished among them were Abu Jaafar Al-Mansur 754-775CE, Haroon Rasheed 786-809, and his son, Al Maamun 813-833 who introduced the Mutazalite doctrine based on rationalism whereby man was held to have freewill to choose between good and evil. The doctrine also maintains that the Qur'an is created, and that God will not be seen on the Day of Judgment and that He is everywhere. Imam Ahmed b. Hanbal rejected it, and so was imprisoned on the orders of the Khalifa. The debate continues until today.

CHRONOLOGY OF IBADHI EVENTS

CHRISTIAN ERA (CE)	
ISLAMIC YEAR (H)	PARTICULARS
657 CE 37 H	A party of Seyyidna Ali's army broke away after he accepted arbitration proposed by his opponent Muawiya. The dissidents went to settle at Nahrawan, Iraq and elected Abdullah b. Wahb al Rasby, a non-Quraishi Sahaba, as their Imam. Seyyidna Ali's army attacked them and Al-Rasby was killed with the majority of his followers.
658 – 680 CE 38 – 61 H	Abu Bilal Mirdas al Tamimy, one of the survivors of Nahrawan moved to Basra where he started to preach the principles of the Muhakkimah party. He was joined by Jabir b. Zeid al Yahmady and later by Abdullah b. Ibadh al Tamimy. But Abu Bilal Mirdas was under the watchful eye of the Umayyad Governor of Basra, Abdullah b. Ziyad, and so he had to move to another safe area of Asik with forty of his followers where he could advocate his view freely. Nevertheless in the year 61 H the Governor sent his force there and exterminated them with their leader, Abu Bilal Mirdas.
680 – 711 CE 61 – 93 H	After the death of Abu Bilal, Abdullah bin Ibadh al Tamimy took an active part openly in the movement's campaign although Jabir b. Zeid remained its brain and worked actively behind the scene. The former was the movement's roving ambassador and public relations man while the latter was its spiritual leader. Jabir died in 711 CE (93 H) while Abdullah bin Ibadh died before him, but the exact date of his death is not known. But long before their deaths, in the year 685 CE (65 H) a split in the movement took place resulting in two splinter groups breaking away, the Azariqa and the Najdaat. Ten years later another division took place, and a new dissident group was born, the Sufriyya. By about 700 CE (80 H), the remainder of the movement, the Ibadhi, was rid of all extremist groups.
713 CE 95 H	Two years after the death of Imam Jabir, his student Abu Ubaida Muslim b. Abi Karima al Tamimy took over as the leader of the movement. He played a vital role in spreading the Ibadhi doctrine overseas to Yemen, Oman and North Africa.

748 CE 129 H	The first Ibadhi Imamate was established in Hadhramout and Yemen under Imam Abdullah b. Yahya al Kindy, a student of Abu Ubeida. An Ibadhi army led by Abu Hamza Shari Al Umany, another student of the Abu Ubeida, captured Mecca, Taif and Medina. But an Umayyad Khalifa, Marwan II sent a large army and managed to restore the captured cities from the Ibadhis and Abu Hamza was killed in a battle in the year 748 CE (130H).
750 CE 132 H	Thereafter Imam Abdullah b. Yahya al-Kindy led a large army to fight the Umayyad forces and in a decisive battle near Mecca, the Ibadhi army was again defeated and Abdullah b. Yahya was killed, and the Ibadhi Imamate destroyed. In the same year, the ruling Umayyad dynasty was overthrown by the Abbasids, and Abdul Abbas Assafah became the first Khalifa of the Abbasid dynasty.
752 CE 134 H	Ibadhi Imamate was established in Oman, and Julanda b. Masoud, the ruler of Oman who had already embraced Ibadhism became the first Ibadhi Imam of his country. But in the same year two battles were fought between the Abbasid army and the Omanis. In the first battle, the outcome was in favour of the Ibadhis but in the second they were defeated and Julanda b. Masoud was killed in the fighting.
758–762 CE 140 – 144 H	A third Ibadhi Imamate was established, this time in Tripoli, North Africa under Imam Abdul Khattab, a Yemeni and student of Abu Ubeida. In 144 H fighting broke out between the Abbasid army and the Ibadhis, and the Imam was killed.
760–775 CE 142 – 158 H	Abu Ubeida died during the reign of the Abbasid Khalifa/Abu Jaafar Mansur 754 – 775 CE and was succeeded by Rabii b. Habib, an Omani and third Ibadhi Imam of Basra. Imam Rabii is well known for his collection of Hadiths which Ibadhis rely on until today for verifying the Holy Prophet's Sunnas. It is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, collection of Hadiths. Imam Rabii later returned to Oman and died there.
777–909 CE 160 – 296 H	Sixteen years after the collapse of the Ibadhi Imamate in Tripoli, a second Imamate was established in North Africa, this time in Tahert, Algeria under Imam Abdul Rahman Rustom, a Persian by origin, who had fled after fighting with the Abbasid army in Tripoli in 144 H. The Imamate lasted for about 140 years. He was a student of Abu Ubaida.



Reproduced from the book, 'Islam in the World' by Malise Ruthven

There has never been a time when the Islamic world has been so weak and divided as at present while their opponents are getting more and more powerful. The people who have contributed to this unfortunate state are regrettably Muslims themselves led by their sectarian fanatics. These self-appointed leaders spend money lavishly to propogate dissension and discord within the Islamic community. They revive old historical conflicts to perpatuate division within different Islamic sects. They are intolerant of others who disagree with them and call them apostates or heretics, when theological differences exist among all sects and even within each sect. They are ambitious to dominate the Islamic world or the major part of it. As long as we are all agreed on the fundamental principles of Islam, differences on subsidiary issues should not be allowed to cause division. We should always remember what Allah has said,

And in whatsoever you differ,
the dicision thereof is with Allah

(S.42 V.10)

But sectarian fanatics have usurped Allah's role, have made themselves judges and have passed decisions before the Day of Judgement!!

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