

I

Ibāḍiyya

The **Ibāḍiyya** are a distinctive Muslim denomination, being neither Sunnī nor Shīʿī, who emerged in Basra in the first half of the second/eighth century. They are the only surviving offshoot of the *shurāt*, a group which other Muslims later classed as Khārijī. Successful missionary activity allowed the Ibāḍiyya to spread to the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, and the East African coast in places such as Zanzibar. Today, Ibāḍī communities maintain a particularly strong presence in Oman but also continue to exist in North Africa.

Ibāḍism can be distinguished from other Muslim communal affiliations mainly by its distinctive imāmate theory and its theological positions but it is also characterised by some unique legal stances as well. In theory, an *imām* leads the group, and enjoys authority over the community as long as he upholds standards of Islamic piety and abides by Ibāḍī principles and law. Ibāḍīs may depose their *imām* if he errs and does not repent. When suppressed by their enemies, the Ibāḍī community can enter a state of secrecy

(*kitmān*) in which they need not have an *imām*. North African Ibāḍīs practised such secrecy when the Fāḍimids destroyed the Rustumid dynasty in the fourth/tenth century. Unlike the militant Khārijīs of the second Muslim civil war (second *fitna*, c. 62–73/680–92) who held non-Khārijīs to be polytheists (*mushrikūn*) or absolute infidels (*kuffār*), Ibāḍīs consider non-Ibāḍī Muslims to be culpable of a lesser form of infidelity (called *kufr niʿma* or *kufr niḥāq*). These distinctions allow Ibāḍīs to maintain their claim as the true inheritors of the Islamic faith, but also to coexist with non-Ibāḍī Muslims.

Many modern Ibāḍīs find it offensive to be considered a branch of the Khārijīs, mainly because this classification too easily lumps them in with militant Khārijīs who adopted stances that the Ibāḍiyya have contested from their outset (Hoffman, *Historical memory*, 185ff; Aṭṭāyish, 1–19; Gaiser, *Shurāt legends*, 2–3). On the other hand, Ibāḍīs do connect their movement to the early *shurāt* and Muḥakkima—groups that most other Muslims (and Western trained scholars) consider “Khārijī.” Thus, while there is some historical continuity between the

early movements later dubbed “Khārījī” and the Ibāḍiyya, it is also fair to point out that the term “Khārījī” is often used sloppily, and that the Ibāḍiyya differed dramatically from the groups that most people associate with the Khārījīs.

1. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Ibāḍī narratives of their origins differ in some respects from how some Western trained scholars articulate the beginnings of the group. Whereas most Western scholars agree that the early Ibāḍiyya maintained some sort of continuity with the movements of the early Muḥakkima and *shurāt*, they diverge on the nature of that continuity. Ibāḍī versions of their origin story trace the genealogy of the *jamāʿat al-muslimān* (the community of Muslims)—as the Ibāḍiyya sometimes called themselves (al-Shammākhī, 1:187)—from the Prophet, Abū Bakr (d. 13/634), and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644) to the Muḥakkima and their first *imām*, ʿAbdallāh b. Wahb al-Rāsībī (d. 40/661) (al-Kindī, 3:270–1). After the Muḥakkima’s defeat at the Battle of Nahrawān (40/661), they mapped their movement through various rebellions of the early *shurāt* groups, including and especially that of Abū Bilāl Mirdās b. Udayya (d. 61/680–1). Ibāḍī sources emphasise the moderate nature of the early Muḥakkima and *shurāt* as a means to distinguish themselves from the militant Khārījīs, whose violence and extreme doctrinal positions they rejected as illegitimate (Ennāmī, 70–2; Gaiser, *Shurāt legends*, 122ff).

Ibāḍī origin narratives posit that the community entered a period of secrecy (*kitmān*) under the leadership of Abū Shaʿthāʾ Jābir b. Zayd (d. before 104/722), a famous Basran *tābiʿ* (Successor), legal scholar, and *ḥadīth* collector.

Whereas the Sunnī tradition accepts Ibn Zayd as a legitimate source of *ḥadīth* (Ibn Saʿd, 7:7:181–2; al-Dhahabī, 1:72; Ibn Ḥajar, 2:219), the Ibāḍīs consider him the proximate founder of their movement (Ennāmī, 58ff, 283). Ibāḍī sources claim that he hailed from Firq, near Nizwa, Oman, moved with his family to Basra, and eventually returned to Firq, where he died (al-Shammākhī, 1:182ff; al-Darjīnī, 2:205ff). He was said to have studied under ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās (d. 67/687), and to have heard *ḥadīth* from ʿĀʿisha bt. Abī Bakr (d. 58/678), the Prophet’s youngest wife. He then passed on his knowledge to a group of students in Basra and after his death many of these students attracted students of their own. Ibāḍīs believe that their purported eponym, ʿAbdallāh b. Ibāḍ (d. second/eighth century), was a spokesperson for Ibn Zayd (al-Shammākhī, 1:189; al-Darjīnī, 2:214; Ennāmī, 24–9). To Ibn Ibāḍ is attributed, for example, two letters sent to the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65–86/685–705) arguing the case for Ibāḍism (Kāshif, 2:325ff; Madelung and al-Salimi, *Ibāḍī texts*, 44ff). Another of Ibn Zayd’s students, Abū ʿUbayda Muslim b. Abī Karīma (d. c.150/767), was recognised as an *imām*, probably after the 100s/720s though some authors place his ascension to the *imāmate* as early as 95/714 (al-Shammākhī, 1:196ff; al-Darjīnī, 2:238ff; Ennāmī, 82ff). Ibāḍīs credit Abū ʿUbayda with the institutionalisation of the Ibāḍī treasury (*bayt al-māl*), as well as the missionary organisation that trained and then sent Ibāḍī missionaries—known as the *ḥamalāt al-ʿilm* (carriers of knowledge)—out into the Islamic world to proselytise. These missionaries established Ibāḍism in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula and founded smaller communities in Iran,

Central Asia, and India (al-Salimi, 150ff). The missionaries organised resistance to the Umayyads and later the ‘Abbāsids in both North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula and ultimately launched the Ibāḏī imāmates that flourished there. After Abū ‘Ubayda, the Ibāḏīyya looked to succeeding *imāms* in Basra, notably al-Rabī‘ b. Ḥabīb al-Farāhīdī (d. c.175/791) to whom is credited the main collection of Ibāḏī *ḥadīth*, known as *al-Ḥamī‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ* (“The authentic collection”).

What might be called the revisionist narrative of Ibāḏī origins and early development finds the Ibāḏīyya to be “from a far more amorphous background” (Wilkinson, *Ibāḏism*, 165) than the Ibāḏī version of the story tells. It observes that there is little convincing evidence for Ibāḏism as a distinctive Muslim communal affiliation during the early Basran period. Rather, this era seems dominated by moderate “Khārījīs” who rejected the extreme militancy and doctrinal positions of the Azāriqa and Najdāt, but whose own positions were in the process of forming. Ibn Zayd was probably but a prominent figure among these moderates (or at least a sympathiser)—a religious scholar (*‘ālim*) who gave some direction to this amorphous movement—but he was not its founder, nor even an Ibāḏī proper (Wilkinson, *Ibāḏism*, 154ff). Neither can Abū ‘Ubayda be considered an *imām* in the full sense of this term, but likely played a role as a prominent *‘ālim* alongside others, such as Abū Mawdūd Ḥājib al-Ṭā‘ī (d. second half of the second/eighth century) (Wilkinson, *Ibāḏism*, 175). What might be termed proto-Ibāḏism seems to have coalesced from the scholarly circles of Basra, and it is likely that by the 100s/720s, when moderate Khārījī missionaries began proselytising in North

Africa, these same circles established some sort of *da‘wa* (missionary) apparatus. However, the term “*ḥamalāt al-‘ilm*” does not appear in Ibāḏī texts until the late third/ninth century, suggesting that the highly structured institution that appears in later Ibāḏī sources might have been projected back onto this era (Wilkinson, *Ḥamalāt al-‘ilm*, 93).

Of the group’s eponym, Ibn Ibāḏ, very little is known that is not contradictory or confusing—and it is not altogether clear what role he may or may not have played in the formation of Basran Ibāḏism (Wilkinson, *Ibāḏism*, 150–4). The authenticity of his letters has been debated (Cook, 51ff; Wilkinson, *Ibāḏism*, 202–5; Madelung, *The authenticity*, 37–43), as has his prominence in the early community. As late as the fifth/eleventh century Ibn Ḥazm writes that some Ibāḏīs of al-Andalus did not know of him (Ibn Ḥazm, 3:127). Madelung suggests that he may have been associated with a rival proto-Ibāḏī group in Basra, and that he became the unwitting eponym of this contending Basran contingent after the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75) began calling this group the “Ibāḏīyya” after Ibn Ibāḏ. When Ibn Ibāḏ’s rival group disintegrated, Madelung contends, the main Basran Ibāḏīs accepted this moniker as they absorbed the writings of their now defunct rivals (Madelung, ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ibāḏ, 51–7; Madelung and al-Salimi, *Ibāḏī texts*, 1–3).

In the early 100s/700s, the proto-Ibāḏīyya of Basra more and more found themselves recruiting from Southern (that is, Yamanī) tribal groupings, especially the Kinda and Azd. The process of recruitment began in earnest after the Umayyad governor al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714) put down the revolt of Muḥammad b.

al-Ash'ath (d. 84/704), a Kindī, and schemed against the al-Muhallab family (especially al-Muhallab b. Abī Šufra (d. 83/702)), who were from the Azd (Wilkinson, *Ibādism*, 157–60). Umayyad mistreatment of these prominent persons pushed the Kinda and Azd to join local anti-Umayyad movements (namely the nascent Ibāḏiyya). Thus, the Ibāḏiyya as a distinct group probably did not emerge until after the solidification of these tribal alignments, and this between the 110s/730s and 140s/760s. Moreover, the Ibāḏiyya relied on tribal groups different to those from which other “Khārijī” movements drew. The Muḥakkima and *shurāt* consisted of Northern (that is, Muḏarī) Arab tribal groups such as the Tamīm, Bakr, Shaybān, and Yashkūr whereas the Ibāḏiyya recruited from the Southern Arab tribal groups of Kinda and Azd. (Wilkinson, *Ibādism*, 160). Thus, whatever continuity existed between these early movements and the Ibāḏiyya resulted from Ibāḏī appropriation of early literary and doctrinal material, not from any continuity in the actual social constitution of the groups (Gaiser, *Shurāt legends*, 122ff).

Likewise, the existence of several splinter groups suggest that early Ibāḏism was far from uniform. For instance, a rival to Abū 'Ubayda, 'Abdallāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī (d. after 179/795), outlined several theological positions in his *Kitāb al-ruḏūd* (“Book of refutations”) that got him expelled from the emerging Ibāḏī assemblies of Basra (Madelung, *Einleitung*, 4–12; van Ess, 1:408–14; Hoffman, *The essentials*, 19). Similarly, the Hārithiyya branch of the Ibāḏiyya were said to have accepted the Mu'tazilī position on free will; so too the 'Umayriyya and the Ḥuṣayniyya were said to have held positions that

made them distinctive (and unacceptable) to the growing mainstream Ibāḏī consensus (Hoffman, *The essentials*, 18; Lewicki, 76–80).

A distinctive Ibāḏī identity, then, seems to have emerged later than what Ibāḏī narratives might suggest. Al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb could be said to be the first *imām* proper of the Ibāḏiyya. However, there is a problem with attributing the Ibāḏī *ḥadīth* collection to him because this work survives only in a sixth/twelfth century arrangement (*tartīb*) by the North African Ibāḏī scholar Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf b. Ibrāhīm al-Warjlānī (d. 570/1174–5), the implication being that the *Ḥāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* was actually compiled much later and far away from Basra (Wilkinson, *Ibāḏī ḥadīth*, 245). Ibāḏism remained a vibrant force in Basra until the latter half of the third/ninth century, when it disappeared there. The last Basran *imām*, Abū Šufyān Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl (or, al-Ruḥayl; d. c.210/825), reportedly travelled to Oman at the end of his life, though it remains unclear whether he died there or in Basra. His children settled in Šuḥār, where his son Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb (d. 260/873) became a famous scholar as well as the *qāḏī* (judge) from 249/863 until his death (al-Sālimī, 1:152ff).

Early Ibāḏī proselytisation in Basra among the Azd and Kinda tribes resulted in two uprisings in the ancestral homes of these groups in the late Umayyad/early 'Abbāsīd period. The first, the revolt of 'Abdallāh b. Yaḥya al-Kindī (also known as Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq; d. 131/748) in the Yemen in 128/745, subdued the Yemen and much of Arabia including Mecca and Medina before the rebels were defeated in 131/748. The second, the uprising of the Omani leader al-Julandā b. Mas'ūd (d. 134/751) in 131/748, who defeated a

rival group of Ṣufīrī Khārījīs before being overwhelmed by an invading ‘Abbāsīd army in 134/751. Although both uprisings failed, these uprisings implanted Ibāḏism in the Yemen and Oman and set the stage for Ibāḏīs to establish an imāmate in Oman a few decades later in 177/793. This, the so-called second Ibāḏī imāmate in Oman, survived for about a century. Internal dissent caused by the unseating of the *imām* al-Ṣalt b. Malik (d. 275/889) in 272/886 weakened the imāmate and led to its defeat at the Battle of Samad in the same year. The downfall of the second Omani imāmate was completed some years later in 280/893 when it was overthrown. The ‘Abbāsīds, who had been called to assist by the opposing tribal group, ruled Oman for the next century until a new *imām*, al-Khalīl b. Shathān al-Kharūṣī (r. c.407–20/1016–29), arose in the interior. His successor, Rashīd b. Sa‘īd al-Yaḥmadī (r. 420–45/1029–53), rid the Omani coast of the Būyīds so that by the middle of the fifth/eleventh century, Ibāḏīs ruled Oman once more.

Yet significant religious and tribal divisions plagued the third imāmate in Oman. Two doctrinal “schools” of thought developed around the issue of al-Ṣalt b. Mālik’s removal. On the one hand the Rustāq group viewed those who supported his ousting as renegades, outside the fold of belief, and they required dissociation (*barā’a*) from the offenders. On the other hand the Nizwā group argued for a compromise position by calling for a suspension of judgment (*wuqūf*) on the issue. In 443/1052, the Rustāq school, with the support of Imām Rāshīd, issued a decree condemning the deposition of al-Ṣalt b. Mālik that complicated the possibility of reconciliation between the parties. This intractability led the Ibāḏī community

of the Ḥaḍramawt (in the Yemen), who had traditionally recognised the authority of the Omani *imāms*, to break from them and establish their own imāmate under Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Qays al-Ḥaḍramī (d. c.475/1082–3). Abū Ishāq’s community lasted for a time, but the split eventually resulted in the disappearance of Ibāḏism from the Yemen (Gaiser, *Shurāt legends*, 117–18).

Also underlying the doctrinal wrangling of the Rustāq and Nizwā schools lay tribal rivalries. The Yaḥmad tribal group that had traditionally controlled the imāmate was initially opposed by the *‘ulamā’* of the Nizwā party, who attempted to establish their own line of *imāms*, and later by the moderate wing of the Rustāq party. By the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century, moderate Rustāqī scholars began to install their own candidates for the imāmate in the Jawf region of Oman, further exacerbating the splits within the Ibāḏī community. The strain of this fragmentation proved too great, and the third imāmate collapsed at the end of the sixth/twelfth century. Leadership then passed to the Nabāhina of Azd, a tribal group that made little attempt to rule in the name of Ibāḏism (Wilkinson, *Ibāḏism*, 395ff; Gaiser, *Shurāt legends*, 118). In this interim period, Ibāḏī scholarship more and more began incorporating Sunnī norms, especially those involving legal principles (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and *ḥadīth*—a process that Wilkinson has called alternately “normalization” and “*madhhabization*” (Wilkinson, *Ibāḏī ḥadīth*, 255; Wilkinson, *Ibāḏism*, 413ff).

The early fifteenth century saw new imāmates arise in Oman, but it was Nāṣir b. Murshīd al-Ya‘rubī (r. c.1024–59/1615–49) who reunited Oman under Ibāḏism in 1024/1615 (Hoffman, *The essentials*, 14). Under the Ya‘rubīds

Ibāḏism enjoyed something of a renaissance in religious scholarship. This dynasty lasted until Aḥmad b. Saʿīd Āl Bū Saʿīdī (d. 1197/1783), the founder of the present ruling family of Oman, the Āl Bū Saʿīdīs, replaced it sometime between 1154/1741 and 1167/1753. Succeeding Āl Bū Saʿīdī rulers eschewed the title of *imām*, preferring to rule as *sayyids* (an honorific title) and later as sultans. The Āl Bū Saʿīdīs extended the influence of Ibāḏism along the East African coast, with one of their number, Sayyid Saʿīd b. Sulṭān (r. 1806–56), even moving the capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1832. On his death, Ibāḏī rule split between the Omani branch of the family, represented by his son Thuwaynī (d. 1871), and the Zanzibari branch, under his son Majīd (d. 1870). Several Āl Bū Saʿīdī sultans ruled Zanzibar from 1832 until the anti-Arab revolution in 1384/1964, when the city became part of Tanzania (Hoffman, *The essentials*, 15).

In Oman, the desire to re-establish an Ibāḏī imāmate led to a revolution in 1868 that installed a member of a rival branch of the Āl Bū Saʿīdī family, ʿAzzān b. Qays (d. 1871), as *imām*. However, in 1870 the British allowed an exiled brother of Thuwaynī, Turkī b. Saʿīd (d. 1888), to return to Oman and, with the help of Sulṭān Majīd of Zanzibar, to defeat the rebels in 1871. In 1913, another rebellion began under the leadership of the blind and highly influential religious scholar Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥumayd al-Sālimī (d. 1914). He established Sālim b. Rāshid al-Kharūsī (r. 1913–20) as the *imām* in the interior of Oman. The British formally recognised the split between interior (“Oman”) and coast (“Muscat”) in the 1920 Treaty of Sīb, which held until 1955 when the (British-backed) Sulṭān Saʿīd b.

Taymūr (d. 1972) reunited Oman. He put down a 1957 rebellion by former imāmate leaders with the help of the British army, forcing the *imām* in the interior, Ghālib b. ʿAlī (d. 2009), into exile in 1959. Sulṭān Saʿīd b. Taymūr’s son, Qābūs b. Saʿīd (d. 2020) assumed leadership of Oman in a bloodless coup in 1970.

In North Africa, moderate Khārījī missionaries began arriving in the 100s/720s, spreading quietist Khārījism amongst the local Berber tribes. These efforts, combined with the general ill treatment of the Berbers at the hands of the Umayyad governors, resulted in widespread uprisings across North Africa (known as the “Berber Revolt”)—revolts that would spill over even into the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily—throughout the 120s/740s (Gaiser, *Shurāt legends*, 118–19).

As with the Ibāḏiyya of Iraq, it is hard at first to find the difference between those who would later be understood as Ṣufī Khārījīs and those who would later be identified as Ibāḏīs, and this difficulty is reflected in the sources. For example, a collection of historical reports on early Islamic Iberia, the *Akḥbār majmūʿa* (“Collected reports”), conflates the two when it notes that the rebellions in North Africa were started by “Berbers of the Ṣufriyya and Ibāḏiyya sects” (Lafuente y Alcantara, 28; James, 61). Likewise, a report in the Latin *Chronica Muzarabica* identifies the perpetrators of the revolt as “Arures,” a term that is likely a corruption of Ḥarūriyya, a generic Arabic name for the Khārījīs (Gil, 1:45). Nevertheless, by the late 120s/740s the nascent Ibāḏīs appear aligned with the Hawwāra, Nafūsa, and some elements of the Zanāta tribal groupings while the Ṣufriyya became associated primarily with the Mīknāsa but also the Barghawāta, Maṭghara, Maghīla, and

Ifrān. As in Iraq, the solidification of Ibāḏī identity appears connected, in part, to its acceptance by recognised tribal groupings.

Nascent “Šufīrī” Khārījī rebels scored the initial successes in the North African revolt, resisting the Umayyads in the far Maghrib (present day Morocco) and in Tunis. They eventually established the Midrārid dynasty at Sijilmāsa. Those later identified as “Ibāḏīs” established footholds in Tunis and Libya (in the Fezzan and Jabal Nafūsa regions), and they were able to hold the city of Qayrawān for some time (Prevost, *L’aventure ibādīte*). After the ‘Abbāsīd revolution, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustum (the son of a Persian client (*mawla*); r. 161–71/778–88) together with an Ibāḏī missionary (Ibāḏī sources name him as one of the *ḥamalāt al-‘ilm*; al-Darjīnī, 1:19) moved a portion of the community to Tāhart in 161/778 (near Tiaret in present day Algeria). The two established a dynasty that would last until the Fāṭimīds destroyed it in 296/909 (Prevost, *Une tentative de biographie*, 44ff; Ibn Sallām al-Ibāḏī). This, the Rustumid dynasty, consolidated trade in gold and slaves with West Africa, and enjoyed exemplary political and economic cooperation with the Umayyads in Iberia, Šufīrī Midrārids, and even the Muhallabid governors of Qayrawān (Gaiser, *Slaves and silver*, 57).

The Rustumids became a hereditary imāmate and gave rise to two of the main North African Ibāḏī offshoots. One offshoot was the Nukkār (“deniers,” also called the Nakkara or the Nakkariyya) who denied the legitimacy of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s son ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (r. 168–208/784–823) and demanded that he submit his decisions to a council of notables and to abdicate if a more suitable *imām* could be found. The Nukkār followed

their own leaders and were influenced the theology of Abū Yazīd al-Fazārī (Lewicki, 78–9). Nukkārī communities still survive in North Africa, notably on the Tunisian island of Djerba (Jirba). Another offshoot, the Khalafiyya, split from the main body of Ibāḏīs (who, after the Nukkārī schism, became known as “Wahbī” Ibāḏīs, allegedly after ‘Abdallāh b. Wahb al-Rāsībī, the first *imām* of the Muḥakkima). The split occurred in the 200s/820s under the leadership of Khalaf b. al-Samḥ (d. after 221/836) and his son, Ibn Khalaf (d. after 282/896) (Lewicki, 79–80). The Khalafiyya controlled parts of Jabal Nafūsa and all of Tripolitania up to 282/896 when the Wahbī Ibāḏiyya re-asserted control over these areas. Splinter Khalafiyya groups survived in Tripolitania and the Jabal Nafūsa region through the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries and the French Islamologist Louis Massignon (d. 1962) even claimed to have found some of them there as late as the 1920s (Massignon, 132).

After the Fāṭimīds ended the Rustumid dynasty in 296/909 they faced a significant Ibāḏī backlash during the reign of the second Fāṭimid caliph, al-Qā’im bi-Amr Allāh (r. 322–34/934–46) in the form of a revolt led by the Nukkārī Abū Yazīd Makhlad b. Kaydād (d. 336/947). The revolt failed, and North African Ibāḏīs entered a state of *kitmān* whereby they ruled themselves through local councils (*ḥalā’iq/‘azzāba*) that consisted of learned individuals and a presiding head (*shaykh*). In principle, these councils were intended to provide a temporary government in the absence of the imāmate, however, they remain in operation up to the present time. Similarly, newer (or expanded older) centres of Ibāḏism, such as the oasis city of Sadrata (Ouargla, Algeria) replaced

Tāhart as the focal points of Ibāḍī activity in North Africa (Aillet, Cressier, and Gilotte, 29ff).

North African Ibāḍī communities have been active in the “renaissance” (*nahḍa*) of Ibāḍism that began in the twelfth/eighteenth century, and they have since grown closer to their Omani and Zanzibari co-religionists (Ghazal, 37ff). The Algerian Ibāḍī scholar, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Aṭfayyish (d. 1914), for example, advocated a more pan-Islamic form of Ibāḍism, and became known among both eastern and western Ibāḍīs as “the pole of the *imāms*” (*quṭb al-aʿimma*) (Wilkinson, *The imamate tradition*, 243; Hoffman, *Historical memory*, 188–9). North African Ibāḍī communities can be found in the Djerid, that is, the Mزاب region of Algeria, the southern region of Tunis (as well as on Djerba island), and in the Fezzan region of Libya (as well as in the Jabal Nafūsa area).

2. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF IBĀḌISM

In assessing the intellectual origins of the Ibāḍiyya it is important to appreciate the extent to which the Muḥakkima and *shurāt* movements established broadly defined precedents for later groups (such as the Ibāḍiyya) who traced themselves to them. Three key issues concerned these movements, namely, legitimate Islamic leadership, the nature of sin, and the nature of belief. In rejecting ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān (d. 35/656), ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), and most of the succeeding Umayyad caliphs as having sinned in some way, and in selecting and following their own leaders, the first Muḥakkima and *shurāt* determined that true Muslims should follow pious and righteous *imāms*, and that those who rejected virtuous leaders in preference for the unjust—or those

who engaged in comparable sinful behaviour—were the equivalent of unbelievers of some kind. Specific responses to these questions would define the various subgroups of those later collectively dubbed the “Khārijīs.”

The Ibāḍī response to the question of unbelief (*kufr*) and sin involves distinguishing between two types of *kufr*: (1) *kufr shirk* (literally, the infidelity of polytheism, indicating unbelief proper) and (2) *kufr niḥāq* (the infidelity of hypocrisy) or *kufr niʿma* (variations include *kuffār bi-l-niʿam/lil-niʿam/al-niʿam*; i.e., ingratitude for [God’s] blessings). Many Muslim historians attribute the notion of *kufr niʿma* to Ibn Ibāḍ (al-Ṭabarī, 2:519; al-Balādhurī, 7:147; al-Mubarrad, 3:204; al-Sharastānī, 134–5), and modern Ibāḍīs have embraced this association (Muʿammar, *al-Ibāḍiyya fī mawkab*, 1:89ff; Muʿammar, *al-Ibāḍiyya bayn al-firaq*, 2:286–9). Early Ibāḍīs, however, did not often use the term *kufr niʿma*, preferring on the whole the language of hypocrisy (*niḥāq*) as the means to distinguish between polytheists and non-Ibāḍī Muslims (Crone and Zimmerman, 200; Gaiser, *Shurāt legends*, 160ff; Madelung and al-Salimi, *Early Ibāḍī theology*, 211).

Whereas the militant Khārijīs were said to have treated grave sinners as unbelievers, possibly the equivalent of polytheists, and therefore as legitimate targets of violence, the Ibāḍiyya hold that only *kufr shirk* constitutes unbelief of this kind. Those who profess monotheism and bear witness to the prophethood of Muḥammad, yet do not follow the tenets of Ibāḍism, along with sinning Ibāḍīs, were guilty only of *kufr niḥāq* or *kufr niʿma*. They could not be considered full Muslims until they repent their sins and profess Ibāḍism. Nonetheless, they are monotheists (*muwahḥidūn*) who share the Muslims’

direction of prayer (*qibla*), along with the other ritual and ethical responsibilities of full Muslims. They therefore retain all of the rights owed to a monotheist; intermarriage with them is permissible, they can inherit from Ibāḏīs, and they should be protected from attack on their persons, families, and property. Only an unjust tyrant who refuses to repent or relinquish power, along with those who defend him, could be killed (Hoffman, *Historical memory*, 193–4; Crone and Zimmerman, 132–3). Against the militant Khārījīs, Ibāḏīs rejected indiscriminate slaughter (*isti'rād*), along with the requirement to emigrate (that is, to make the *hijra*) from among non-Ibāḏīs; they embraced *taqiyya* (prudent dissimulation), and held it proper to associate with those who chose to remain behind (*al-qu'ūd*) during fighting (Crone and Zimmerman, 134–41). This ability to co-exist with non-Ibāḏī Muslims undoubtedly contributed to the long-term survival of the Ibāḏiyya.

Ibāḏīs employ the doctrines of *walāya* and *barā'a* to delineate who is formally considered a member of the Muslim community and who is not. They hold that religious association (*walāya*) is permissible only with true Muslims (that is, Ibāḏīs) who observe and obey the commands of the *sharī'a* (Islamic law). They practise religious dissociation (*barā'a*) from those who commit great sins (*kabā'ir*), or who are not considered full Muslims (Francesca, *Self-defining*, 29ff). In ambiguous cases, some Ibāḏī scholars allowed for a suspension of judgment (*wuqūf*) (Hoffman, *The essentials*, 205ff), though the legal parameters of this option have proven difficult to define, with some Ibāḏī scholars noting that it too closely resembles the (to the Ibāḏīs, unacceptable) Murji'ī doctrine of “postponing” judgment (*ijā'*) (Wilkinson, *Ibāḏism*, 232). It is important to note that the actual

practice of *barā'a* need not imply a severance of all contact or cordiality with non-Ibāḏīs. As the famous Ibāḏī scholar Nāṣir al-Ruwāḥī (d. 1339/1920) explains that *barā'a* is an internal attitude of dissonance from an individual's doctrines or behaviour. It does not necessarily involve social avoidance or ostracism, nor does it preclude genuine affection (Hoffman, *Historical memory*, 194; Hoffman, *The essentials*, 204).

Ibāḏīs regard the imāmate as mandatory in most situations, but unlike the Sunnīs they do not stipulate that the *imām* be from the Prophet's tribe, the Quraysh; nor, as the Shī'a hold, does he need to be a member of the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*). Ibāḏī religious scholars (*ulamā'*), who are held in high esteem by their community, advise and guide the faithful on the process of selecting *imāms*. Under ideal conditions, Ibāḏīs establish the imāmate as a contract (*'aqd*) between the *imām* and the Ibāḏī community, whereby the *imām* maintains order and establishes justice, and the community shows him obedience. The *imām* maintains this authority through his demonstrated piety and his adherence to the *sharī'a*; an *imām* who becomes tyrannical or sinful must be resisted and removed (Wilkinson, *The Ibāḏī imāma*, 535–6).

Ibāḏīs recognise that the community might find itself in different situations, and thereby might require different types of leaders. This was formalised around the sixth/twelfth century in the theory of the *masālik al-dīn* (the “stages” or “states of religion”). This theory outlined the various types of *imāms* that were required to rule at different times with the ideal type of *imām* becoming known as the *imām al-zuhūr* (the *imām* of [the condition of] openness) (Gaiser, *The Ibāḏī*, 212ff). When the conditions for the imāmate were not optimal,

the imāmate could go into abeyance (as is the case in North Africa since the early fourth/tenth century), or—alternatively—Ibādīs could choose to elect one of several types of provisional *imām*, such as the *mudāfiʿ/difāʿ imām* (sometimes given as *al-imām ʿalā l-difāʿ*), that is, the “defensive” *imām*, who was charged with defending the community (Wilkinson, *The Ibādī imāma*, 538). Omani Ibādī literature also speaks of “weak” (*daʿīf*) *imāms* who rule in conjunction with the religious scholars (Wilkinson, *The imamate tradition*, 160–1). Another option is for Ibādīs to establish an *imām*—known as the *imām al-shārī* (the *imām* of “exchange”)—whose purpose was to lead the Ibādī *shurāt* (in Oman, this came to denote volunteer soldiers) in instituting an Ibādī polity (Gaiser, *The Ibādī*, 214). During conditions of *kitmān* when the imāmate ceased to exist, Omani literature allowed for a provisional (*muhtasib*) *imām*, who was to be a religious scholar who advised the community until a proper *imām* could be established (Wilkinson, *The imamate tradition*, 162). North African imāmate theory postulates the idea of an *imām al-kitmān* (*imām* [during the condition of] concealment), but this feature of the imāmate tradition seems directed at rationalising a continuous imāmate tradition from the prophet Muḥammad to the Rustumids (Gaiser, *The Ibādī*, 215). Modern iterations of Ibādī imāmate theory harmonise the various types of *imāms* that could be found in mediaeval North African and Omani literature into four *imām*-types: the *imām al-zuhūr*, *imām al-kitmān*, *imām al-difāʿ*, and the *imām al-shārī* (Ennāmī, 229–38).

Ibādīs maintain several other distinctive theological doctrines and legal practises; they hold, for example, that God will punish evildoers in hell eternally and they, consequently, reject the possibility of intercession (*shafāʿa*) (al-Khalili, 22ff;

Hoffman, *The essentials*, 30). Additionally, they reject the notion that believers will be granted a vision (*ruʿya*) of God in the afterlife (al-Khalili, 156ff). Despite initial interest in the notion of limited free will (*qadar*), Ibādīs adopted the Ashʿarī position on God’s ability to pre-determine human action (Hoffman, *The essentials*, 30ff). However, unlike Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935–6) himself, they argue for the unity of God’s essence (*dhāt*) and attributes (*ṣifāt*), as well as the createdness of the Qurʾān (al-Khalili, 86ff; Hoffman, *The essentials*, 37ff). Also in contrast to the position of al-Ashʿarī is the Ibādī commitment to interpreting anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the Qurʾān metaphorically and the use of reason as a supplement to revelation (Hoffman, *The essentials*, 35–7).

In the realm of jurisprudence Ibādīs also hold some distinctive views (Francesca, *The formation*, 267ff). For example, unlike Sunnīs they never considered the “gate” of *ijtihād* (independent legal reasoning) closed, nor did they accept *taqlīd* (the obligation to follow the legal opinions of earlier scholars) as valid. True belief requires an effort to discern the correct position (and there is only one correct position), though God does not punish those who made this attempt in good faith and reached the wrong conclusion (Hoffman, *The essentials*, 41–2). Other examples of distinctive Ibādī legal positions include considering the *ḥudūd* (Qurʾān-derived punishments) as well as the duties of *walāya* and *barāʿa* suspended during a state of *kitmān*; that Friday prayers (*ṣalāt al-jumʿa*) should be performed only in cities in which justice prevails (though other opinions exist on this question); and that *zakāt* should only go to those who they hold in association (that is, those in *walāya*). In addition, Ibādīs undertake a major ablution (*ghusl*) before fasting during the month

of Ramaḍān, and believe that committing a serious sin (*kabūra*) breaks the fast. They hold that missed fast days must be made up consecutively. In their ablutions before prayer (*ṣalāt*), Ibādīs reject washing over the socks (*mash' alā l-khuffayn*). They recite only the opening chapter of the Qur'ān (that is, Sūrat al-Fātiḥa) in the noon (*ẓuhr*) and afternoon (*ʿaṣr*) prayers, and, like the Shī'a and some Mālikī Sunnīs, they pray with their arms at their sides. They do not recite “*āmīn*” (amen) after the Fātiḥa; nor do they recite *qunūt* (invocation) in the pre-dawn prayer; they also require the shortened prayer during journeys (Hoffman, *The essentials*, 42ff).

Contemporary Ibādī leaders, such as the Grand Mufti of Oman, Shaykh Aḥmad b. Ḥamad al-Khalīlī, consider the differences between Ibādī and other kinds of Muslims to be minor issues that should not hinder Muslim unity (al-Khalīlī, 13–17). Moreover, Ibādīs have long been noted—even in the pre-modern periods—for their religious tolerance (al-Hajīrī, 82ff). The promotion of religious tolerance continues to animate Ibādīs from all levels of society, from the *madrasa* student to the government official. Indeed, a recent publication by the Omani Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad al-Sālimī, collects his speeches on the topic of tolerance and presents them in five different languages (Al Salmi, 11ff).

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Ibn ʿAbdūs, Abū ʿĀmir Aḥmad

Abū ʿĀmir Aḥmad Ibn ʿAbdūs (d. late fifth/early twelfth century?) was an *adīb* (man of letters) and a secretary (*kātib*) in service to the Jahwarid rulers of Córdoba (422–61/1031–69) during the period of the *ṭāʾifa* kingdoms in Spain (fifth/eleventh century). The titles of *wazīr* and *dhū l-wizāratayn*, commonly added to his name, do not necessarily mean that he exercised a governmental function. Nonetheless he probably played a political role, especially in the scandal associated with Ibn Zaydūn (d. 463/1070), which is outlined below.

There is scant evidence regarding the details of his life. Several brief references suggest that he was born of humble origins. It is also known that he studied poetry with the *qādī* (judge) Yūnus b. ʿAbdallāh Ibn al-Ṣaffār (d. 429/1038), that he attended the funeral of the secretary