The Muslim WORLD

Ibāḍī Discussions on Conversion and Commitment

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1. Introduction

The emergence and development of the Ibāḍī community are among the most unique and interesting events in Islamic history. In the first part of the second century AH, the Ibāḍī in Baṣra dispatched groups of missionaries (*ḥamalat al-ʿilm* or *naqalat al-ʿilm*) in order to gain adherents. Although the Ibāḍī suffered from schism in the course of its history, today we find adherents of the Ibāḍī school of Islam in Libya, Tunisia and Algeria in North Africa, on the East African coast and in Oman in the Arabian Peninsula. By analysing the rich and varied sources of these communities, we gain an understanding of how and why Ibāḍī Islam, a minority branch, survived in Muslim society.

Conversion and commitment are pertinent aspects of such an analysis. The acceptance and retention of an individual as a member is significant for the formation and maintenance of a religious group. Although its uncritical acceptance and application to Islamic studies must be handled with care, sociologists of religion have clarified the nature of religious groups through this aspect. Categorizing religious groups in the Christian world into types such as church, sect, and denomination, Bryan Wilson, for instance, enumerates eight features of a sectarian group, including the following four that concern membership in and adherence to a religious group: (1) sects do not admit dual allegiance; thus, a sectarian is committed to only one body of religious teaching and membership in one group; (2) an individual is normally required to prove his worthiness in order to be accepted as a member; (3) sects are concerned with the maintenance of standards among their members; and (4) they seek the total religious allegiance of members, which is manifested in all areas of life.[1] Moreover, McGuire states that the process of conversion does not end when a recruit joins the group, but it is continued in the

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[1] B. Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 91–92. In a textbook of sociology, the Sunni and Shi'i are introduced as 'established sects'. Established sects are defined as 'Religious organizations, resembling both denominations and sect, composed of renegades from denominations or ecclesiae that have existed long enough to acquire a large

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commitment process.[2] Kanter finds that persons make a commitment to an organization (instrumental commitment), other group members (affective commitment), and group rules, regulations, ideas, and mores (moral commitment).[3]

The proselytization and retention of individuals may not always be successful or bring benefits and advantages to a community. As a matter of fact, the early Ibāḍī Muslims confronted the problem of membership. The following story of a certain Salama, which is reported by the Baṣran Ibāḍī leader Abū Sufyān Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl (lived in the second-third centuries AH/eighth-ninth centuries AD), reminds us that an individual's adherence to a community might sometimes cause trouble and conflict: 'There was a man called Salama who confessed Ibāḍī teaching (*hādhihi l-da'wa*). Then he did [unacceptable] things; he wrote on pieces of paper, defaming and blaming the [Ibāḍī] Muslims, and scattered them at meeting places (*majālis*). The Muslims found some forty pieces of paper with language defaming and blaming them. When this happened, they agreed to make known Salama's behaviour (*amra-hu*) toward [Ibāḍī] Muslims, and they disassociated from him.'[4]

Although the extent to which Salama's case contributed to the formation of rules of membership is obscure, Ibāḍī scholars appear to have been interested in this issue, since we find discussions of it in their writings. Based on the above observations, I shed light on some facets of the Ibāḍī community in the premodern era concerning conversion and commitment through an analysis of the opinions of the Ibāḍī scholars of Baṣra and Oman, mainly from the second/eighth to the fourth/tenth centuries.

2. Rules for Joining the Ibāḍī Community

2.1. The Summary of Islam and Ibāḍī walāya

Ibāḍī scholars regarded assent to and confession of the summary of Islam (*jumlat al-Islām*) as the necessary and sufficient condition for membership in the Islamic and Ibāḍī

following and gain wide-spread respectability' (J. Ferrante, *Sociology: a Global Perspective*. 6th ed. (Belmont: Thomson Higher Education, 2006), 529).

[2] She defines commitment as 'the willingness of members to contribute to the maintenance of the group, which provides for their religious aspirations'. M. McGuire, *Religion: the Social Context* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2002), 84–85.

[3] R. M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspectives* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 65–70; and also K. A. Roberts, *Religion in Sociological Perspective 4th edition* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2004) 100–106.

[4] Abū Ṭāhir 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jayṭālī, *Qanāṭir al-Khayrāt [the Arches of Good Deeds]*, 3 vols. Muscat: Dār al-Nahdha li-l-Nashr wa l-Tawzī', 2008), i, 127. The nouns 'Muslims' (*muslimūn*) and believers (*mu'minūn*) in the pre-modern Ibāḍī literature on *walāya* and *barā'a* refer, in most cases, only to Ibāḍīs and those who are regarded as their rightful predecessors.

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communities. They held it as 'that of which it is not allowed to be ignorant' (*mā lā yasi'u jahlu-hu*).[5] It consists of the affirmation (i) that there is no god but Allāh, and there is nothing similar to Him, (ii) that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger, and (iii) that his message, which comes from God, is evident truth.[6] These statements are based on Qur'anic words and verses (6:163,48:29, 47:2) and express the essence of Islam.

As far as its sufficiency is concerned, Abū Sa'īd Muḥammad b. Sa'īd al-Kudamī, a fourth/tenth century scholar who lived in Oman, states that the summary of Islam encompasses all that God addresses to man and that it is unthinkable for a man not to be counted as a believer until he knew the entire contents of the Qur'an. Rejecting the assertion that faith or the title of God's friend (*walī*) exists only for men of complete knowledge, al-Kudamī concludes that a man becomes a believer (*mu'min*) when he confesses the summary of Islam, believes in Muḥammad, and recognizes him as his friend, even if he does not know all of God's messengers and prophets.[7] On the other hand, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Bisyawī, an Ibāḍī scholar in fourth/tenth-century Oman, explains the necessity of all of the statements. To the question of whether faith is firmly established in a man who assents to and confesses only the first statement, he replies that such a man is not regarded as one who believes in God and His messenger, for his affirmation of Islam is incomplete. He also states that a man who confesses 'There is no god but Allāh, Jesus is His messenger, and may God bless all His messengers' does not have Islamic faith, since such a man does not confess the summary of Islam. Thus, al-Bisyawī concludes that one must suspend judgment on such a man, until he accepts Islam and confesses the summary of the teaching of Muḥammad, for he does not proclaim the faith which makes association with him (*walāya*) necessary, nor does he issue a statement of disbelief that requires enmity (*'adāwa*) for him.[8]

The issue of membership is also discussed from the viewpoint of *walāya*, which means 'association with', 'affiliation with', 'being close to', or 'to have friendship with'.[9] It is sometimes given different classifications in Ibāḍī literature, such as 'the association of God with believers', 'the association of believers with God', and 'the association of believers with each other', and so on. Al-Bisyawī describes 'the association of God with

[5] Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Bisyawī, *Jāmi' Abī l-Ḥasan al-Bisyawī [Compilation of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Bisyawī]*, 4 vols. (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa l-Thaqāfa, 1984), i. 268; Abū Jābir Muḥammad al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmi' li-Ibn Ja'far [The Compilation by Ibn Ja'far]*, ed 'A. 'Āmir, 9 vols. (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa l-Thaqāfa, 1995–2010), i. 67.

[6] Abū l-Mundhir Salama al-'Awtabī, *Kitāb al-Ḍiyā' [Book of Brightness]*, ed N. al-Mandhirī, 21 vols. (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa l-Thaqāfa, 1990), iii. 82; al-Bisyawī, *Jāmi'*, i. 269.

[7] Abū Sa'īd Muḥammad al-Kudamī, *Kitāb al-Istiqāma [Book of Straightness]*, ed M. Abū l-Ḥasan, 3 vols. (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa l-Thaqāfa, 1985), i. 15, 20, 24.

[8] al-Bisyawī, *Jāmi'*, i. 258–259.

[9] Many scholars survey *walāya* in Ibāḍī thought; for example, see P. Cuperly, *Introduction à l'etude de l'Ibādisme et de sa théologie* (Algier: Office des Publications Universitaires, 1984), 54–57: 130–142; and E. Francesca, "Early Ibāḍī Jurisprudence: Sources and Case Law," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 30 (2005), 261–263. *Walāya* is often discussed with its antonym *barā'a* or disassociation.

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believers' (*walāyat Allāh li-l-muslimīn*) as God's guidance to believers in gaining success and His support in moving them from darkness to light and directing them to the straight path.[10] Ibāḍī scholars understand that an individual can obtain this sign of salvation, 'God's *walāya*', through a positive attitude expressed towards the divinity. Al-Bisyawī, for example, defines this attitude as 'the association of believers with God'; it extols Him, declares Him One, and supports His friends (*awliyā'*).[11] In addition to these two *walāya*s, our main concern in the following section is with another type of *walāya*, namely 'the association of believers with each other' (*walāyat al-mu'minīn ba'ḍi-him ba'ḍan*).

2.2. Ibāḍī response to those who wish to join the Islamic community

In considering the issue of membership discussed among the Ibāḍīs, it is suitable to classify their opinions into cases, since Ibāḍī scholars in Oman dealt with it from the various perspectives.

(A) With regard to the Ibāḍī understanding of a man who joins or converts to non-Ibāḍī Islamic groups, we have a case in a fragment of an epistle by a North African Ibāḍī preserved in *al-Jāmi' li-Ibn Ja'far*. This epistle seems to be written in the third/ninth century. In this case, when a person hears the teaching of a hypocrite (*munāfiq*)[12] and accepts it, that person would remain an Ibāḍī Muslim if he associates with the hypocrite on the basis of the latter's fair description of Islam; however, he would be an 'infidel' if he sees the hypocrite committing a deed of unbelief and yet continues to associate with him. In addition, the person would become an infidel if something that is regarded as infidelity is mixed in the teaching, even if the error is unknown to the hearer. The epistle concludes that if a Ṣufrī (someone belonging to the Khārijite sect called al-Ṣufriyya) preaches in the true manner of Islam (*ṣifat al-Islām*) and does not mingle his message with infidelity or false teaching, the person who accepts this message would be a Muslim

[10] al-Bisyawī, *Jāmi'*, i. 91–92. Wilkinson introduces the association of God with believers (*walāyat Allāh li-l-muslimīn*) as the fundamental relationship that binds God and His community and members of that community to each other. He also states that *walāya* is 'a collective relationship and corresponds in some measure to the concept of *sanctitas* and the *sancti* of the early Church, existing only at the collective and not the individual level of 'sainthood' (J. C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism: Origins and Early Development in Oman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 219–220). While there are many cases in which the *walāya* of God is directed to plural 'believers', the *walāya* of God is also directed to singular 'man' or 'servant' (*'abd*) (Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad al-Kindī, *Bayān al-Shar' [Exposition of Islamic Law]*, 72 vols. (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa l-Thaqāfa, 1984–2006), 1984, iii. 70. In the Sunnite literature, there is also a usage that reads 'God the Sublime is the believer's friend' (*Allāh ta'ālā walī l-mu'min*). Ibn Fūrak, *Sharḥ al-'Ālim wa l-Muta'allim [Commentary on the Scholar and the Educated]*, eds. A al-Sā'iḥ and 'A al-Wahba (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfat al-Dīniyya, 2008), 254. Thus, it is safe to say that 'the association of God with believers' is first and foremost based on the individual relationship of God and man.

[11] al-Bisyawī, *Jāmi'*, i. 92; al-Kindī, *Bayān*, iii. 75.

[12] In Ibāḍī thought, a *munāfiq* is someone who claims to be a Muslim but is not regarded as a believer, either because of sin or because of erroneous (non-Ibāḍī) doctrine.

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(Ibāḍī) because he associates with the *munāfiq* in the true manner of Islam.[13] Thus this epistle shows the Ibāḍī stance that anyone who joins or converts to a non-Ibāḍī Islamic group might be recognized as an Ibāḍī under certain conditions.

(B) In the middle of the third/ninth century, at least two principal opinions existed concerning one who wished to join the Ibāḍī community. Abū Ja'far Sa'īd b. Muḥriz (lived in the third/ninth century) asserts that he would not immediately accept an applicant to Islam but instead would reject and test him, until he knew the applicant's aspiration (*ḥirṣ*). He would only accept an applicant as a convert who was worthy of *walāya*. If the applicant accepted Ibāḍī doctrine, Sa'īd b. Muḥriz would associate with him at the time of his conversion. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb (d. 260/873–4) states, in comparison, that he would first accept the applicant as a convert, but he would not associate with him until he knew that the neophyte was worthy of *walāya*. While Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl reports that the *ashyākh* practiced what Sa'īd b. Muḥriz asserted, Abū Ziyād al-Waḍāḥ b. 'Uqba (lived in 237/851) supports Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb's opinion, stating that he did not like to turn away an applicant from the Ibāḍī community and that when an applicant was linked to (Ibāḍī) Islam and had performed good deeds, his confession would be accepted after one or two days and he would be recognized as a just person (*'uddila-hu*).[14]

These opinions differ on whether an applicant is considered a *walī* before or after joining the Ibāḍīs. Sa'īd b. Muḥriz's stance is more passive, cautious and severe than that of Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb. His attitude can be summarized by the notion that it is 'not worth pursuing those who run away' or 'there is no need to chase those who leave'. In comparison, Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb's view is more active and tolerant towards applicants, for he permits them to join the Ibāḍīs; they are then required to adapt themselves to Ibāḍī beliefs and practices. His stance can be explained by the adage 'Do not reject the ones who come'.[15] However, it is interesting that while the Ibāḍīs set the summary of Islam as the minimal requirement for membership, both Sa'īd b. Muḥriz and Muḥamad b. Maḥbūb agree that approval for Ibāḍī *walāya* involved more than a mere *shahāda* or confession of Islam. In other words, they sought to maintain the quality of the community by ensuring that an applicant's beliefs and practices accorded to those of the Ibāḍīs.

(C) Regarding the conversion of members of other Islamic groups to the Ibāḍī sect, al-Kudamī introduces the opinions of Abū 'Uthmān Ramshaqī b. Rāshid (d. in the fourth/

[13] al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmi'*, i. 186–187.

[14] al-'Awtabī, *al-Ḍiyā'*, iii. 61–62; al-Kindī, *Bayān*, iii. 65, 154–155; Khamīs b. Sa'īd al-Shaqaṣī, *Manhaj al-Ṭālibīn wa Balāgh al-Rāghibīn [Method of Seekers and Massage of Desiring People]*, 10 vols. (Muscat: Maktaba Masqaṭ, 2006), i. 535.

[15] As mentioned above, Wilson explains that while sectarian groups tend to request that an applicant show some merit (such as an understanding of religious teaching or a valid experience of conversion) and be recommended by other members, sects allowed admittance by formal procedures. This term indicates that Sa'īd b. Muḥriz's stance is somewhat sectarian and that of Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb denominational.

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tenth century). He refers to the case of a man who had previously adhered to non-Ibāḍī teaching but responds to the Ibāḍī message by repenting, affirming the justness and rightness of the Ibāḍī message, and declaring his previous beliefs wrong. Ramshaqī b. Rāshid holds that in that case the man can obtain *walāya* when he joins the Ibāḍī community.[16] His conclusion stems from the Ibāḍī doctrine that those who do not follow their teaching commit a grave sin;[17] thus, they must repent in order to join the Ibāḍī community.

(D) Ibāḍī scholars discussed the issue not only from the standpoint of the religious attributes of an individual but also of the territories (*dār*) where he or she converted. Regarding the acceptance of polytheists into the Ibāḍī community, Ramshaqī b. Rāshid explains that the summary of Islam erases polytheism (*shirk*); if a respondent (*mustajīb*) to the Ibāḍī message manifests his acceptance of it in territory of justice (*dār ʿadl*, namely where Islamic Law is followed in accordance with Ibāḍī doctrines), he has Ibāḍī *walāya* when he confesses (the summary of) Islam.[18] His opinion, that *walāya* is approved at the time of the confession, is based on the principle discussed in section 2.1.

(E) Ibāḍī scholars regarded a man who confesses only the summary of Islam in a territory of error (*dār ḍalāl*, namely outside Ibāḍī territory) as a monotheist (*muwaḥḥid*, i.e. a non-Ibāḍī member of the *umma* of Muḥammad) who just assents and confesses that God is One.[19] Although this case is not explained clearly, Ibāḍīs seemed to have two opinions on such an individual; some recognized him as a *walī* and others suspended judgment (*wuqūf*) on him until he manifests concrete words and deeds by which they could judge him worthy of *walāya* or *barāʾa* .[20]

An Ibāḍī Imām in Ḥaḍramawt, Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Qays al-Hamdānī al-Ḥaḍramī (d. between 475-500/1082-1106), argues that while the summary of Islam normally confers *walāya* on a man who confesses it and bans suspending judgment concerning him, an individual who confesses it in a territory where error is manifested has to show the following three additional requirements: (a) recognition that those who regard what is illicit as lawful are unbelievers, (b) association with Muslims (Ibāḍī) who dissociate themselves from such unbelievers, and (c) disassociation from those who reject disassociation from such unbelievers.[21] Thus, al-Ḥaḍramī demands more than the summary of Islam for those outside Ibāḍī territory to be recognized as having *walāya*. The principles

[16] al-Kindī, *Bayān*, iii. 152–153.
[17] al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, i. 147; al-Kudamī, *al-Muʿtabar [The Consideration]*, ed M. Abū l-Ḥasan, 4 vols. (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa l-Thaqāfa, 1985), ii. 189.
[18] al-Kindī, *Bayān*, iii. 153–154.
[19] al-Kudamī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Mufīd min Aḥkām Abī Saʿīd [The Useful Compilation from Opinions of Abū Saʿīd]*, ed H. al-Shādhilī, 5 vols. (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa l-Thaqāfa, 1985), i. 13–14; Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Ḥaḍramī, *Mukhtaṣar al-Khiṣāl [Compendium of Characteristics]*, ed ʿA. M. al-Kharūṣī, (Cairo and Muscat: Maktaba Masqaṭ, 2011), 123.
[20] cf. al-Kindī, *Bayān*, iii. 152–153.
[21] al-Ḥaḍramī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 142.

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mentioned in 2.1 were supplemented and modified according to the territory in which the conversion took place. Usually those who confessed only the summary of Islam in a territory of injustice or unbelief were seen as persons who had joined non-Ibāḍī Muslim groups and hence who followed their teachings. In this manner, they became alien to the Ibāḍī requirements and were not recognized as holders of Ibāḍī *walāya*. The explanation of al-Ḥaḍramī expresses well the reason why no one living in non-Ibāḍī territory has Ibāḍī *walāya*.

3. The Role of Missionaries in Proselytizing

As seen in the previous section, the early Ibāḍī community made *walāya* the key to individual membership in their community; therefore, it functioned as a bonding agent for community members. For example, al-Rabīʿ b. Yazīd al-Kindī (lived in the third/ninth century) presents the three types of *walī*s (associates) introduced by his colleague: (a) when someone invited an individual to Islam and the respondent accepted Islam, the person who presented Islam to the respondent became his *walī*; (b) when someone was invited to Islam and accepted it, that person became a *walī* of the person who invited him; and (c) when an Ibāḍī who had authority to judge an individual's worthiness for *walāya* or *barāʾa* testified that an individual was an Ibāḍī Muslim, that individual became a *walī* for members of the Ibāḍī community.[22] Al-Rabīʿ's associate explains that the relationship of *walāya* creates an interactive bond between the person who invites someone to accept Islam and the one who accepts it, as well as between those who do not know each other. In this context, the *walāya* of an individual is given a double certification: the direct certification of the deliverer of the message and the respondent, and the indirect certification of those who have the authority to judge worthiness for *walāya*. Definition (c) makes it possible for an Ibāḍī to connect to another Ibāḍī from the past or from far away without any direct interaction. Thus al-Rabīʿ's associate shows that the nature of *walāya* transcends time and space and gives members an identity as Ibāḍī Muslims.

Direct approval of *walāya* implies the importance of the missionary (*dāʿī*) in inviting someone to join the Ibāḍī community. This function seems to vary in accordance with the religious status of the respondent. As we have already seen, Ibāḍī scholars established a somewhat easy entry for polytheists. Based on this attitude, the missionary was expected to assist converts from polytheism to learn Islamic rites rather than to teach them the detailed tenets of Islam. Abū l-Muʾthir al-Ṣalt b. Khamīs al-Kharūṣī (d. after 278/891–2) reports the method of proselytizing practiced by his teacher, Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, who first let polytheists confess the summary and some tenets of Islam. When they converted, he gave them Muslim names, such as Ṣāliḥ or Sulaymān, and then

[22] al-ʿAwtabī, *al-Ḍiyāʾ*, iii. 61; al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, i. 182; al-Kindī, *Bayān*, iii. 21, 156. Regarding people who do not fall into these three categories, al-Rabīʿ's associate mentions that keeping silent (*sukūṭ*) or suspending judgment (*wuqūf*) is permitted.

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ordered them to go to a mosque to learn the manner of worship and purification.[23] Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb did not offer a detailed explanation of Islam to polytheists; he gave priority to learning proper ritual rather than to doctrine.

When preaching to non-Ibāḍī Muslims, the focus shifts from religious rites to explanation of Ibāḍī doctrine, that is, to the presentation of 'true' knowledge. Al-Bisyawī explains this function as follows: (1) The person presenting the Ibāḍī message must explain the summary of Islam in order to enable the recipient of the message to distinguish Ibāḍī doctrine from that of those who have gone astray. (2) The missionary must sincerely follow God and His teaching and explain that other Islamic groups (*al-mukhālifūn*) have different opinions. If he is asked to interpret the Oneness of God (*tawḥīd*), he must advise the hearer concerning what is allowed and what is not allowed. (3) The missionary does not have to recount what the hearer already knows. He should just indicate that there are different opinions among the Christians, Jews, and other Muslim groups.[24] While describing a flexible and efficient missionary activity, al-Bisyawī requests a higher level of knowledge from the person who is invited to accept Ibāḍī Islam. Or, from a different perspective, al-Bisyawī's opinion had the function of helping the person who accepts the message rather easily to find a place in the community before becoming a true member, in order to prevent tensions between newcomers and senior members.

Furthermore, Ibāḍī scholars sometimes requested those who wished to join the Ibāḍī community to preach Ibāḍī ideals among their former religious companions. Ibāḍī literature in Oman contains the story of Hilāl b. 'Aṭiyya al-'Umānī, who lived in the second half of the second/eighth century and was a Ṣufrī before converting to Ibāḍī Islam; he was ordered by the Ibāḍīs to persuade the Ṣufrīs to convert to the Ibāḍī school.[25] Similarly, Abū 'Īsā Ibrāhīm b. Ismā'īl al-Khurāsānī, an Ibāḍī scholar who lived in the first part of third/ninth century, discusses the case of someone who breaks with and speaks against Ibāḍī Islam but then wishes to repent. Such a person, Abū 'Īsā says, must publically affirm the falsity of his deviation, saying, 'I called you to what is not correct; all that I said about the Ibāḍī Muslims is a lie and something that I fabricated. They are the best people, and no one is better than they; I ask God's pardon and repent of what I said about them'.[26] In this case the convert, who had a certain relationship of trust with the adherents of another sect, could have persuaded the latter to join the Ibāḍī community more easily than the Ibāḍīs themselves could. This measure was efficient and economic, from the Ibāḍī point of view, for they did not have to dispatch their own members on such risky missions.

[23] al-'Awtabī, *al-Ḍiyā'*, iii. 82; al-Kudamī, *al-Jāmi' al-Mufīd*, i. 17–18; al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmi'*, v. 294–295.
[24] al-Bisyawī, *Jāmi'*, i. 246–247. After the explanation, al-Bisyawī comments on the summary of Islam and then introduces the opinions of other Islamic groups and their refutation.
[25] al-Kindī, *Bayān*, v. 92; S. Kāshif (ed), *al-Siyar wa l-Jawābāt li-'Ulamā' wa A'imma 'Umān [The Epistles and Responses by Scholars and Leaders of Oman]*, 2 vols. (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa l-Thaqāfa, 1986), ii. 25.
[26] al-Kindī, *Bayān*, v. 92.

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4. Commitment to the Ibāḍī Community

4.1. Withdrawal from competing allegiances

McGuire states that a group sometimes requires that its members renounce any competing relationships that they may have, especially those of their former way of life. She also explains that many sectarian groups thus discourage members from interacting with the 'outside world' and may adopt special social arrangements to insulate them from 'outside influence'.[27] The words 'outside world' or 'outside influence' here include not only deviant persons and groups but also behaviours that the group regards as inappropriate. In withdrawing from what is seen as alien, the individual, who makes a personal sacrifice, gains in his commitment to the group. For instance, Islam forbids the eating of pork and the drinking of wine. This proscription gives Muslims the consciousness of belonging to the Islamic community, which offers them social security and the reward of the Hereafter in compensation for their sacrifice and commitment.

This idea also ruled Ibāḍī thought. Other than the practice of Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, who, as mentioned above, gave newcomers from polytheism new names, the Ibāḍīs requested recruits to wash their entire bodies (*ghusl*) when they converted to Islam.[28] Those activities made polytheists conscious of their renunciation of their former beliefs and of their entrance into a new religious life. Furthermore, the Ibāḍīs requested newcomers from other Islamic groups to eschew their former beliefs. An illustrative case concerns the attitude that one must have towards the third and fourth caliphs, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (r. 23–35/644–656) and 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (r. 35–40/656–661). Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl reports that the Baṣran Ibāḍī leader, Abū 'Ubayda Muslim b. Abī Karīma al-Tamīmī (d. ca. 158/775), demonstrated a severe attitude towards two men who were reluctant to dissociate from them and did not recognize them as members of the Ibāḍī community.[29]

Ibāḍī scholars also restricted members to limited communication with non-Ibāḍīs. There is a statement by Abū 'Amr al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb al-Farāhīdī (d. ca. 170/786) or Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl, which reads, 'There are two Ibāḍī positions on other Islamic groups (*qawmi-nā*). One of them is for Ibāḍīs to dissociate from them when they commit an act of disobedience to God, and to avoid them because of their errors and the sins they commit, and to deem it permissible to kill them if they commit acts of injustice after they have been called to the truth and its practice. The second position states that the things God has commanded remain, such as intermarriage, inheritance from each other, eating the meat they have slaughtered, retaliation (*qiṣāṣ*), accepting their testimony if they are not accused of wrongdoing, and praying with them, as a religious requirement

[27] McGuire, *Religion*, 86–87. She also states that the withdrawal of individual members from competing activities is motivated by group controls and especially by the wish to identify with the in-group and to avoid negative outside influences (McGuire, *Religion*, 87).

[28] al-'Awtabī, *al-Ḍiyā'*, iii. 80.

[29] S. Kāshif (ed), *al-Siyar*, i. 281–282; al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmi'*, i. 173; al-'Awtabī, *al-Ḍiyā'*, iii. 68.

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(*bi-dīn*)'.[30] The second part of the passage made members conscious of Islamic unity, and the sentence 'marriage … [is] performed between Ibāḍīs and non-Ibāḍīs as a religious creed' seems, at first glance, to reflect the accommodating attitude of Ibāḍīs towards other Muslims.

However, it is difficult to conclude that marriages occurred between Ibāḍīs and other Muslims. Concerning the marriage of a daughter or a sister to a hypocrite (*munāfiq*), Abū l-Mu'arrij 'Amr b. Muḥammad al-Sadūsī states that although God permits such a marriage, Ibāḍī fathers or brothers should detest it. He refers to a case in which Abū 'Ubayda refrained from contact with an Ibāḍī who had married his daughter to someone sinful (*rajlan min al-fussāq*), that is, a man who was not regarded as a believer because of a grave sin. Abū l-Mu'arrij explains that Abū 'Ubayda also held that marriage between an Ibāḍī woman and a non-Ibāḍī Muslim man was reprehensible.[31] Although the term 'reprehensible' (*makrūh*) does not mean that those who engaged in such unions were disassociated from the community, it indicates strong disapproval of them. As a result, Ibāḍī men chose Ibāḍī women as their spouses. Since the verdict of 'reprehensible' on such marriages is also recorded in later Ibāḍī sources, the difference of opinion of Abū 'Ubayda and al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb or Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl should be interpreted as a reflection of the split between the theory and practice of the Ibāḍīs on such marriages in the premodern age.[32] In another story, a man who confessed Ibāḍī Islam (*al-Islām*) asked God's pardon for a hypocrite (*munāfiq*) and received voluntary alms (*ṣadaqa*); he then called on the Ibāḍīs to give alms to non-Ibāḍī Muslims. The response given to him indicates that the Ibāḍīs refused such acts of charity to those outside their community.[33]

All these cases reflect the sectarian character of the Ibāḍī school of Islam. They are characteristic of sectarian groups that restrict social transactions between their members and the outside world. Thus, the Ibāḍīs practiced the moral and instrumental commitment suggested by Kanter; they did not allow members to maintain close connections beyond the community or to have double commitments within and outside the community, but rather required full commitment to the Ibāḍī community as much as possible.

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[30] al-Kindī, *Bayān*, iii. 20; al-Shaqaṣī, *Manhaj*, i. 519.

[31] Abū Ghānim Bishr al-Khurāsānī, *al-Mudawwanat al-Kubrā li-Abī Ghānim al-Khurāsānī bi-Ta'ālīq Quṭb al-A'imma al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Aṭfayyish [The Greater Record of Abū Ghānim al-Khurāsānī with Commentary by Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Aṭfayyish]*, ed M. Bājū, 3 vols. (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth wa l-Thaqāfa, 2007), ii. 183–184.

[32] Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb also argues that the marriage of an Ibāḍī woman with a non-Ibāḍī man (*mukhālif*) was detested. In the later sources, the same opinion is found (Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb al-Raḥīlī, *Abwāb min al-Sunna Mukhtaṣaratan [Recapitulative Chapters from the Habitual Practice]*, ed S. al-Warjilānī in his *Imām Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb al-Raḥīlī: Ḥayātu-hu wa Āthāru-hu* (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth wa l-Thaqāfa, 2009), 243; also al-Kindī, *Bayān*, xlvii. 33, 58).

[33] al-Kindī, *Bayān*, iii. 157. As its proof, the following verse is cited: 'O believers take not My enemy and your enemy for friends …' (Q. 60: 1). In *the Manner of Islam* (*Ṣifat al-Islām*), ascribed to Basran Ibāḍī leader Abū Ayyūb Wā'il b. Ayyūb al-Ḥaḍramī, asking God for pardon for those who are dissociated from the Ibāḍī community is forbidden (al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmi'*, i. 105).

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4.2. The community of love

As for commitment mechanisms, McGuire writes that while groups encourage members to withdraw from other allegiances, they also urge members to become more and more involved in the group itself. She also writes that the activities that draw members into the fellowship and consciousness of the larger group promote both the cohesion of the group and the commitment of individual members, and commitment mechanisms make belonging to the group an emotionally satisfying experience; groups that expect the intense commitment of members use stronger measures to promote attachment to the group.[34]

These observations by McGuire apply to Ibāḍī teachings. Ibāḍī scholars tried to strengthen the bond of members not only through visible acts but also through the creation of positive emotions. As far as the former is concerned, *The Manner of Islam* (*Ṣifat al-Islām*), which is ascribed to the Baṣran Ibāḍī leader Wā'il b. Ayyūb, lists the physical and verbal behaviours of the group, such as asking God to pardon other Ibāḍī Muslims, offering them sincere advice, and so on.[35] Since *walāya* is paraphrased as support (*nuṣra*),[36] Ibāḍīs were required to offer each other social sustenance.

Regarding positive emotions, the Ibāḍī scholars also spoke of mutual support by referring to love and *walāya*, which can be understood as the affective commitment suggested by Kanter. For instance, it is reported that al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb regarded love for those who obey God and hate for those who disobey Him as one of the principles of religion (*da'ā'im al-dīn*).[37] *The Lineage of Islam* (*Nasab al-Islām*), ascribed to Wā'il b. Ayyūb, states that God connects Muslims and unites their hearts by their fulfilment of the duties of believers; he takes the love of other Ibāḍī Muslims as an example of these duties, along with the physical duties mentioned in *The Manner of Islam*.[38] In this manner, the Ibāḍī scholars asked members to form positive relationships with each other, just as they wholeheartedly gave themselves to God.

Finally, Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb argues that loving God implies associating with those who obey Him.[39] Similarly, al-Bisyawī states that loving believers is a duty and hating them is a disobedience to God.[40] As we already mentioned in the classification of *walāya*, al-Bisyawī includes the support of His friends (*awliyā'*) in 'the association of

[34] McGuire, *Religion*, 88.
[35] al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmi'*, i. 105.
[36] al-Bisyawī, *Jāmi'*, i. 91; al-'Awtabī, *Kitāb al-Ibāna fī l-Lughat al-'Arabiyya [Book of Exposition of Arabic Language]*, eds. 'A Khalīfa, N. Abdulraḥmān, Ṣ. Jarrār, Ḥ. 'Awwād and J. Abū Ṣūfiyya, 4 vols. (Muscat: Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wa l-Thaqāfa, 1999), iv. 546–548.
[37] al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmi'*, i. 126.
[38] Kāshif (ed), *al-Siyar*, ii. 53.
[39] al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmi'*, i. 181.
[40] al-Bisyawī, *Jāmi'*, iv. 229. Furthermore, it is said that 'among the things which Muslims believe, it is obligatory for them to associate with God's friends and love them, and to hate God's enemies and disassociate from them. Those who love God's servants are just like those who love God. It is one of the most eminent and supreme deeds of devoutness' (al-Izkawī, *al-Jāmi'*, i. 147; al-Bisyawī, *Jāmi'*, iv. 229).

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believers with God'.[41] Ibāḍīs often define faith as word, deed, and intention (*qawl wa-fi'l wa-niyya*).[42] By telling members that the positive behaviours performed among Muslims in their daily life, even if not apparently directed toward God, constitute belief in and love of God, Mūḥammad b. Maḥbūb and al-Bisyawī try to increase members' willingness to contribute to the maintenance of the group, which provides for their religious aspiration, namely, salvation in the afterlife.

5. Conclusion

Referring to studies by Ennami and Wilkinson, Kohlberg argues in his work on *barā'a* in Shī'ī doctrine that the 'twin attitudes of *barā'a* from outsiders and *walāya* (allegiance) towards members of one's own religious community became a principal tenet of all Khārijī sects, including the Ibāḍīs'.[43] Ibāḍī *walāya* was, in principle, directed toward anyone who professed the summary of Islam, and hence provided all Muslims with the opportunity to be recognized as Ibāḍīs under some conditions. In this regard, the Ibāḍī attitude toward conversion was, to some extent, open and universal. However, the Ibāḍī community also handled the issue of membership in accordance with the situations of applicants; newcomers had to pass through a period of adjustment to Ibāḍī beliefs and practices. In later times, the status of converts was understood through the concept of territory. They understood Muslims who had lived in accordance with non-Ibāḍī beliefs as those who fail to meet the requirements of Ibāḍī *walāya*.

Ibāḍī scholars requested members to withdraw from the outside world and increase their commitment to the Ibāḍī community. They did not permit members to have double commitments or to belong to other groups but asked them to devote themselves to God and other Ibāḍīs. Thus, the bonds of the Ibāḍī community, sustained by the feeling of love and *walāya*, sharpened community boundaries and gave members consciousness of their uniqueness. It is said that religious groups with sectarian attitudes generally require high levels of attachment from their members. Seen in this light, the Ibāḍīs in the pre-modern era had a somewhat sectarian and exclusive attitude and practiced religious particularism (i.e. the viewing of one's own religious group as the only legitimate one). With its strong bonds, this form of commitment may, along with geography, be one of the reasons why the Ibāḍīs have survived in Muslim society up to the present time.

[41] al-Bisyawī, *Jāmi'*, i. 92; al-Kindī, *Bayān*, iii. 75.
[42] al-Kudamī, *al-Mu'tabar*, i. 124; al-Kindī, *Bayān*, v. 62; al-'Awtabī, *al-Ḍiyā'*, 1990, iii. 33.
[43] E. Kohlberg, "Barā'a in Shī'ī Doctrine," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7 (1986), 139–144.

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