

THE THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION OF THE KHARIJITES (KHAWĀRIJ) ON THE ISSUES OF TAKFĪR (ACCUSING OF UNBELIEF), AND THE STATUS OF MUSLIMS AND POLYTHEISTS

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Introduction

The concept of *takfīr* has been a controversial concept since 37 A.H./657 C.E.. This has been the case since religio-political movements throughout history, and even today, practiced *takfīr*, i.e. the denunciation of an opponent as being *kāfir*. In the main political trend, after the death of Prophet Muḥammad, the concept of *kufīr* in relation to belief (*īmān*) was a major part of the process of defining the creed (*‘aqīdah*). An important part of the creed in some movements after the events of Siffin in 37 A.H./657 C.E. was the question of political organization. These movements related the political problems to the theological aspects, especially in the case of legitimate leadership. They claimed themselves to be the only true believers and others unbelievers. In the history of Islam, there were two important groups which developed the concept of *takfīr*. They were the Kharijites and the Shi’ites (*Shi’ah*).

The concept of *takfīr* which had been adopted by the Kharijites and Shi’ites contrasted with the *Qur’ān* and *Ḥadīth*. They held this concept as a consequence of misunderstanding the context of the *Qur’ān* and *Ḥadīth*, and because of their frustration in not gaining power, and because of the pressure which had been imposed by the rulers on them, especially, in the case of the violent death of Ali’s son, Husayn at Karbala and other events.

The concept of *takfīr* is related to theological doctrine. It can only be discussed by theologians with authority. However, over the centuries the concept has been adopted and discussed by some Muslims with insufficient knowledge of *al-Qur’ān* and *Ḥadīth*. As a consequence, they have misused the concept and related it to political issues. By finding support in particular verses of the

Qur'ān and *Hadith*, they accuse other Muslims who do not belong to their groups of being unbelievers, *kāfir* pl. *kuffār*. In this way they separate themselves from the community and thus create the danger of splitting the Muslims, similar to what had happened in 37 A.H./657 C.E.

The History of the Concept of *Takfīr*

During the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the concept of *takfīr* had never been used in an attempt to label Muslims as *kāfirūn* (unbelievers) or *murtadd* (infidel). After the Prophet's death, the Muslims followed a single path in the fundamental principles of religion and its deduced details, except in the case of those who agreed in public but in private were hypocrites.¹ At the time of Abū Bakr and 'Umar al-Khaṭṭāb, and during the early years of the Caliphate of 'Uthmān, the differences between Muslims were only over issues pertaining to the application of *fiqh* in matters such as taxation and consanguinity.² These differences did not relate to the issues concerning '*aqīdah* or creed which led to errors of the creed or immoral acts. After this time, the Muslims disagreed with Uthmān concerning certain things he did for which he was blamed and killed. One of the issues raised against him was he had given some of the most important governorships to men of his own clan or those related to him. Although this seemed unfair, Uthmān had considerable justifications for doing this. When he appointed his relatives, it was because they combined administrative competence with reliability. He refused the importunate requests of inefficient relatives. However, though he may have been aiming at the welfare of all, his policy had an appearance of unfairness.³

After the death of Uthmān, 'Alī was appointed as a Caliph by the Medinans. However, he was not universally recognized. At this

1 Abū Maṣṣūr Abd.al-Qāhir Ibn Ṭahir al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms and Sects in al-Fīraq bain al-Fīraq*, Trans. Kate Chambers and Seelye, (New York: Lemecke and Buechner, 1920), vol. 1, 3.

2 *Ibid.* 33.

3 W.Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), 10.

time three major parties with widely opposing opinions emerged. For the Shī'ah, it was 'Alī and 'Alī alone who was fully entitled to be the caliph; Umayyads (Umayyūn) held that it was Mu'āwiyah. A third trend took the slogan 'neither this nor that (*lā hadhā wa-lā-dhāka*)'. They asserted there was no need for a caliph, believing that the Book of God was enough, but they added that if there was no other way, then whoever was best qualified for it should be chosen from among the people, even if he was an Ethiopian slave.⁴

After the civil wars (the Battle of Camel 36 A.H./656 C.E. and the Battle of Siffin (37A.H./657 C.E.) and the following arbitrations (at Dumat al-Jandal 657 C.E. and at Adruh 659 C.E.), the question of political theology became more serious as such questions as 'Who was wrong and who was right in these battles?' and 'What makes the *imām* the head of the community?' arose. This led to the framing of certain opinions and self-justifications in which there was a gradual move towards discussing theological issues and the formation of a large number of sub-sects. For example, when Mu'awiyah alienated some of his army in the war against 'Alī, they protested and rebelled against Mu'awiyah because they regarded 'Alī as the duly elected Caliph, and believed that Mu'awiyah had no right to be considered for the position of Caliph. Therefore, they drifted away and split into sub-sects. They were called Khawārij/Kharijites because they separated themselves from other Muslims, refused to regard others as Muslims.⁵

The political doctrine of the Kharijites held that the Muslim community had to be governed by a head who was the best qualified Muslim. In an attempt to define the true leader, they raised the question defining "a believer" and "an unbeliever" in terms of what made a man a member of the community and what disqualified him. They claimed that they were the only true Muslims and the others were *kāfirūn* (unbelievers). This issue raised the problem of excommunication among the Muslims and became a very important

4 Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology*, (Yokohama: Yurindo Publishing, 1965), vol.6, 3.

5 Duncan B. MacDonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory*, (Beirut: Khayats Oriental Reprints, 1965), 23.

factor leading to the question of *takfīr* at that time.⁶

While the political heresies of the Kharijites were swayed mostly in Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia, these heresies seemed to have arisen in Syria first especially in Damascus, the seat of Umayyads. The raising of the issue of *takfīr* by Kharijites forced the community to define its own position. Murjites were the important group which came to the front, rejecting the concept of *takfīr* which accused a Muslim who committed grave sins of being an unbeliever.⁷

After the great conquest of Islam, there were many people who came into the Muslim community with diverse cultural backgrounds. Some of them interpreted *arkān al-Islām* (the pillars of Islam) willfully and incorrectly. For example, ‘Abdullah b. Sabā’ a convert from Judaism and one of the earliest Shi’ites, is said to have taught that ‘Alī was immortal and would return at the end of time to inherit the earth.⁸ The concepts and issues of Christianity and Greek philosophy, such as the questions of predestination and free-will, were influential in the Muslim community at that time. They used these concepts as a way of explaining the nature of the Qur’ān, the word of God, whether it was created or uncreated. The earlier theological discussion on the fundamental belief (*uṣūl*) during the latter part of the seventh century was vitiated by dialectical elements derived from the books of the (Greek) philosophers and a similar charge of Greek influence is continually levelled by the orthodox writers at those they claim to be heretics.⁹

As a consequence of misunderstanding in interpreting the Qur’ān, Ḥadīth and Islamic principles and adopting foreign concepts without analysing, the problem of *takfīr* was used in the sense of wrong believer, not in the sense of unbeliever. This became a major concern of thinkers among the early Muslim groups, especially the

6 *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960). s.v. “Akida”.

7 Duncan B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology*, 131.

8 Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, (New York: Colombia University, 1970), 55.

9 Ibid. 58.

Kharijites, and some of the extremist Shi'ites groups such as the Ghulāt, the Kaysāniyyah, and the Kāmiliyyah.

Theological Discussion of the Kharijites/Khawārij

Kharijites means 'the one who rebelled against the legitimate *imām* who was accepted by the people whether this rebellion took place at the time of the companions against the rightfully guided leaders, or against the leaders'.¹⁰ They were those who went out or made a secession from the camp of 'Alī. They split themselves from the Muslim community and broke all social ties with Muslims. They went out against 'Alī and rebelled against him and took an active role in the *jihād*.¹¹ They were the first group in the history of Islam who raised the question of *takfīr*. The concept of *takfīr* which had been held by them was most clearly bound up with the contemporary political situation. They talked about the political problems in terms of religious belief. They gave almost exclusive attention to the concept of *takfīr* in a personal form such as 'Who is an unbeliever or apostate?'. They asked the questions 'What is "belief"? and 'What is "unbelief"?'. Not only did they try to define who a real *mu'min* (believer) was, but they also pointed out the people who should be excommunicated from the Muslim community.¹²

The radical Kharijites determined the faith of someone by asking the question, 'Do you share our views or not?' If they found someone who was of a different opinion from them, he would be accused of an unbelief. They killed the person, his wife and children, and seized his wealth. Such a question was often asked at the point of the sword and it gave rise to the *isti'rād* which literally means inviting someone to speak his opinion; in practice, 'killing for the sake of religion'.¹³

10 Muḥd. b. Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, Muslim Sects and Divisions: The Section on Muslim Sects in *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, trans. A.K. Kazi and J.G. Flynn, London: Kegan Paul International, 1984), 98.

11 W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 16-17.

12 Toshihiko Izutsu (1965), *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology*, vol. 6, 11.

13 A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1932), 59.

The basic doctrine of the Kharijites which is related to the concept of *takfīr* can be understood in two aspects. The first is *tahkīm* (judgement). Their ideology was based on the principle of exclusive reference to the Qur'ān in the context of 'no judgement but God's (*lā ḥukm illā lilāh*)'. One of the verses which had been held by them was Chapter 6 (al-An'ām): 57 which says: *Inna al-ḥukm illā Allah* (the judgement is for Allah only). The second is the conception of a righteous community, which knows the divine law and practices it, and which opposes communities and individuals which either do not know or do not practice the law; the doctrine most referred to is that the grave sinner is a man who does not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden. Therefore it becomes a duty to fight against him and exclusion from the community is then presupposed.¹⁴

The Kharijites were split into a number of sub-sects such as the Muḥakkimah, the Azāriqah, the Najdat the Baihasiyyah, the Ajāridah, the Ta'aliba, the Ibādiyyah, and the Sufriyyah. All sects of Kharijites shared the same opinion regarding condemning and labeling 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Mu'āwiyah, the two arbitrators (Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and 'Amr b. al-'Aṣ), all of those who were involved in the Battle of Camel (including 'Aisyah, wife of the Prophet), and all the people who accepted the arbitration as apostates and unbelievers. They also agreed over the necessity of rebelling against an oppressive ruler. They had different points of view in the matter of the status of those who had committed grave sins.¹⁵

a. *Takfīr* in Relation to the Arbitrations and Imamate

The Muḥakkimah was the earliest group of the Kharijites who seriously discussed the issue of the imamate. They were some of 'Alī's followers who regarded all those who admitted the authority of human decision (*ḥukm*) as infidels. They claimed that there was no decision, but God's (*lā ḥukm illā lillāh*).¹⁶ They were the people

14 W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 15.

15 Al-Bḡahdādī, *Moslem Schisms and Sects*, vol.1, 77-78.

16 Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief*, vol.6, 5.

who rebelled against 'Alī at the time of the arbitration and assembled at Harūrā near Kūfa. Their leaders were 'Abdullah b. al-Kawwā, Attāb b. al-A'war, 'Abdullah bin Waḥb al-Rāsibī, 'Urwa b. Jarīr, Yazid b. 'Aṣim al-Muhārībī and Hurqūs al-Bajalī, known as Dhu'l-Thudayya.¹⁷

There were two fundamental points that had been raised by the Muḥakkimah. The first was the innovation regarding the imamate. The appointment of an *imām* was based on their consent, but not specific to the Quraish or certain tribe. Whoever they chose was regarded by them as an *imām* provided he ruled the people according to their ideas of justice and equity. If anyone rebelled against this *imām*, it became a duty to depose him or put him to death. They were strong adherents of the principle of analogy. They considered it permissible to not have an *imām* at all, anywhere. If the need arose for one he could be either a slave or freeman, Nabataen or Quraishite.¹⁸

The second fundamental issues of Muḥakkimah was the innovation that maintained that 'Alī was at fault in permitting arbitration, since he made men judges of the matter, whereas God is the judge. In two ways they calumniated 'Alī. The first was the matter of arbitration, namely that 'Alī appointed men as arbitrators. This, however, was not true because it was they in fact who forced him to accept arbitration. Moreover, the appointment of men as judges was permissible, because only men themselves could be judged in such a matter. It was on this account that 'Alī said, 'What is said is right but not what is intended'. They not only held that 'Alī was wrong, but went further and declared him a *kāfir*. They also cursed him for fighting against all those who broke their allegiance with him, or who acted wrongly, or who actually rebelled against him. They said, 'Alī fought against those who had acted wrongly, but neither confiscated their property nor made them captive. Afterwards he agreed to arbitration'. As for the rebels he not only fought them, but also confiscated their property, and took their children captive.¹⁹

17 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects and Divisions*, 99.

18 *Ibid.* 100.

19 *Ibid.* 100.

In order to understand the frustration and anger of the Muḥakkimah regarding the decision of the arbitration of the second meeting between ‘Alī and Mu‘awiyah at Adruh in January 659 C.E, after the Battle of Siffin (37 A.H./657 C.E.), al-Baghdādī in *Moslem Schism and Sects*, pointed out the dialogue between ‘Alī and Muḥakkimah at Nahrawan. They said to ‘Alī, ‘Why did you entrust the arbitration to the two judges when the right was on your side?’. ‘Alī answered, ‘I found that the Prophet of Allah had once entrusted to Sa‘ad Ibn Mu‘adh the arbitration of the case of the Banū-Quraizah, although he wished he did not have to do it. In like manner I chose a judge, but the judge of the Prophet judged justly, whereas my judge was cheated which led to evil results. Have you any complaints besides this?’. Most of them said, ‘By Allah, he spoke the truth’, and they said, ‘We repent’. As a result of this dialogue, al-Baghdādī, also reported that on that day eight thousand of this group put themselves under ‘Alī’s control and four thousand of them joined ‘Abdullah b. al-Kawwā, one of the leaders of the Muḥakkimah.²⁰

The Muḥakkimah was also frustrated with the decision of the first meeting between Mu‘awiyah and ‘Alī at Dūmat al-Jandal after the Battle of Siffin. In this meeting the question which was raised was about the killing of Uthmān, whether he had been justly or unjustly killed. It is to be inferred that the arbiters (‘Anīr Ibn al-‘Āṣ, a whole-hearted supporter of Mu‘awiyah, and Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī who was not a whole-hearted supporter of ‘Alī) decided that the acts with which ‘Alī was charged were not breaches of divine law which would have justified putting him to death.²¹ As a result of the decisions of the arbitrations between ‘Alī and Mu‘awiyah, after the battle of Siffin, the Muḥakkimah rejected the arbitrations and branded the people who agreed with the decision of the arbitrations as *kāfirūn* (unbelievers).

In order to see clearly their understanding regarding the verse *lā ḥukm illā lillāh*, al-Shahrastānī in *Muslim Sects and Divisions* pointed out that all the Kharijites opposed ‘Alī from accepting the

20 Al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 80.

21 W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 13.

arbitration between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyah. ‘Alī decided to appoint ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbās as his arbitrator, the Kharijites refused saying that he was Ali’s relative. They forced him to appoint Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī to judge based on the *Qur’ān*. The arbitration went against ‘Alī. When ‘Alī did not accept it, they rebelled against him. They asked, why did he appoint a man as judge?. Judgement belongs to God alone”.²²

The Muḥakkimah first objected to the arbitration when they realized that the rightness or wrongness of ‘Uthmān death was to be examined. They believed that Ali’s continuation of struggle against Mu‘āwiyah was based on a Qur’ānic principle. In order to support their views they relied on Chapter 49 (al-Ḥujurāt): 9, which says , “And if the two parties of believers fall to fighting then make peace between them. And if one party of them does wrong to the other, fight you that which does wrong till it returns unto the ordinance of Allah; then, if it returns, make peace between them justly, and act equitable””. In relation to this verse , the Muḥakkimah claimed that their party was right and their opponents were wrong. Therefore they judged people who agreed with the arbitration decisions as unbelievers.²³

In order to support their opinion, they cited the last phrase of verse 44 in Chapter 5 (al-Māidah), which says, ‘Whose judges not by that which Allah has revealed; such are unbelievers’. This phrase was understood by them in the sense that there can be no authority for arbitration for any man at all in the religion of God, in which God alone possesses the absolute authority, and in accordance to this principle, they judged that the two arbiters (Mūsā al-‘Ash‘arī and ‘Anūr Ibn al-‘Āṣ) were unbelievers and ‘Alī himself became a *kāfir* (unbeliever) when he accepted arbitration. They said, “the *Qur’ān* admonishes us to fight against that which does wrong till it returns to the command of God, but ‘Alī stopped fighting the wrongdoers when he accepted human arbitration, hence, he abandoned the

22 Al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 99.

23 W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 14.

decision (*hukm*) of God and condemned himself to *kufr* (heresy)".²⁴ The Muḥakkimah also believed that they had the right to capture the non-Kharijites's children and wives and seized their wealth.²⁵

Another group of the Kharijites which discussed the issue of imāmate was Ajāridah. They were the followers of 'Abd al-Karīm Ibn Ajrad. They accused the government who opposed them as *kāfir*. They also believed that they had the responsibility to topple the government and fight those who were against them.²⁶ A sub-group of the Ajāridah, the Maimūniyyah (the followers of Maimūn b. Khālid) said that it was a duty to take up arms against the Ṣultān (King) and punish him according to the law, together with all those who accepted his government. They added that, it was not permissible to fight against those who did not accept the Ṣultān unless they had helped him against the Kharijites, attacked their beliefs, or given him information about them.²⁷ Concerning the possession of the opponent, they did not consider it lawful to seize a booty until after killing the owner.²⁸

b. *Takfīr wa'l-Hijrah* (Accusing of Unbelief and Migration).

The Azāriqah or Azraqites was a sub-group of Kharijites who introduced the concept of *takfīr wa'l-hijrah*. This group were the followers of Nafi' al-Azraq, his surname was Abū Rāshid (d.65A.H/686 C.E). They attempted an ill-informed observance of the Qur'ānic principles as interpreted by them and were in a state of potential war with all other Muslims. They may have thought of themselves as creating a new community of 'believers' in much the same way as the Prophet Muḥammad had done at Medina, and spoke of making *hijrah* to their camp.²⁹

The Azraqites created much innovation in the '*aqidah* (creed) and *shari'ah* (Islamic laws) as a result of interpreting the *Qur'ān* and

24 Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief in the Islamic Theology*, vol.6, 5-6.

25 al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms and Sects*, 78.

26 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 109.

27 *Ibid.*

28 *Ibid.* 108.

29 W.Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 22.

Ḥadīth principles according to their understanding. They were the extremists of the Kharijites, and the most fanatical of all especially in defining the theory of *kufī* (heresy). They accused the Muslims who did not support them of being *musrik* (polytheist). They used such a term as a way of imposing violence on the Muslims who were out of their camp.³⁰ For example, the Azraqites claimed that their camp was the only real Muslim community and so it could be considered as the ‘abode of Islam’ (*dār al-Islām*). Therefore, it was the duty of all Muslims to migrate and join their camp, instead of sitting still in the abode of unbelief (*dār al-kufī*).³¹ Naḥī‘ al-Azraq (the leader of the Azraqites) was very much influenced by the concept of group solidarity. He interpreted the phrase, ‘*la ḥukm illā lil-Allah* (no judgment but God’s)’ based on the political context of the time. According to him, the political body had to be based on the *Qur’ān*. For him, those who ‘sat still’ and did not ‘go out’ or actively associate themselves with the struggle against the unbelievers were regarded as breaking a divine command and hence became *kāfirūn* (unbelievers).³²

The Azraqites practiced *isti‘rād* (examination/survey) based on the particular conception of the true religion. Ibn Ḥazm said that the Azraqites were of the opinion that, ‘Whenever, they came across a Muslim and asked him (at the point of sword) as to his religious conviction, if he said, “I am a Muslim”, they killed him on the spot (because there could be theoretically no Muslim outside their own camp), but they forbade killing anybody who declared that he was a Jew or a Christian or a Magian’.³³ The Azraqites made a test (*miḥnah*) for those who wanted to join their group. This was stated to have consisted of giving the candidate a prisoner to kill; if he complied, he would be more closely bound to Azraqites, especially if the man killed was of his own tribe, he would have broken existing ties, and would be dependent on the Azraqites for ‘protection’. This

30 Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief*, vol.6, 11-12.

31 *Ibid.* 13.

32 W.Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 20-22.

33 Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief*, 13.

test, however, may have been an occasional rather than a regular practice.³⁴

The Najdites a sub-group of the Kharijites also discussed the issue of *takfīr* and *hijrah*. They were the followers of Najda Ibn Anīr al-Ḥanafī, called by some ‘Aṣīm (d.72/693). Most of the Kharijites in Basra after 684 C.E. were influenced by Najda. The Najdites accepted the responsibility for maintaining order over a large area and were not simply concerned with a small body of people in a camp.³⁵ The Najdites rejected the opinion of the Azraqites that ‘those who sit still’ are unbelievers. However, they regarded them as *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites).³⁶ On the other hand, they accepted the principles ascribed by the Azraqites; ‘We bear witness by God that of those professing Islam in the camp of (*dār al-hijrah*) all are approved by God’. In relation to this, the Najdites claimed that whoever disagreed with their religious views would enter hell-fire.³⁷ Furthermore, they stated that the life and property of the people of the covenant and of *dhimmīs* (free non-Muslim subjects living in a Muslim country) are forfeited during the state of dissimulation. Therefore, all their followers had to dissociate themselves from those who forbade this.³⁸

Another group of the Kharijites which held the idea of *takfīr* and *hijrah* was a sub-group of the Baihasiyyah which was called Awriyyah. They emphasized that if an *imām* became an unbeliever, all subjects became unbelievers not only those actually present with him, but those elsewhere also.³⁹ However, in the case of excommunication, this group had different opinions. Some of them agreed to practice excommunication saying, “We shall dissociate ourselves from those who leave the camp to migrate and return to their former state”; others were in favour of living together with

34 W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 22.

35 *Ibid.* 28.

36 *Ibid.* 24.

37 al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms and Sects*, 90.

38 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 104.

39 *Ibid.* 107.

other communities which did not belong to their group. They said, "We shall be friends of such people because they have returned to a state which was lawful to them".⁴⁰

c. The Concept of *Kufr* (Unbelief) and *Shirk* (Polytheism)

Regarding the accusation of being *shirk* or *mushrik* the groups of the Kharijites had different opinions. The Azraqites, the most extreme and radical sub-group of Kharijites claimed that the Muslims who were out of their camp were *mushrik*. There were three characteristics of those who were assumed by the Azraqites to be *mushrik* (polytheists). The first were the Muslims who did not share their opinion in every detail; the second were those who agreed with the Azraqites in theory, but did not make the migration (*hijrah*) to their camp; and the third were the wives and children of the people who were labelled as *mushrik*. Regarding this matter, al-Baghdādī pointed out that the creed of Azraqites asserted that their followers who abstained from fighting with them were polytheists even though they agreed with their creed. If a soldier claimed that he was a member of the group, he had to prove the truth of his claim by killing a captive from the opposite side that they brought to him. If he killed the captive he would be confirmed as a member of the group. If he refused to kill the captive, he would be regarded as a *munāfiq* (hypocrite) and a heretic (*kufī*) and he would be killed. They permitted their members to kill their opponents' wives and children. For them, the children of the opponents were polytheists and would be in the hell forever.⁴¹

The Ibādiyyah was a group of the Kharijites who tried to make a distinction between unbelief (*kufī*) and polytheism (*shirk*). They were the followers of 'Abdullah b. Ibād. They claimed that the other Muslims were 'monotheist' though not believers (*muwahhidūn* or not *mu'min*) and that they were in 'the sphere of monotheism' (*dār al-tawhīd*) not that of 'prudent fear' (*taqiyya*).⁴² They emphasized that those who worshipped in the direction of the

40 *Ibid.* 107.

41 al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms and Sects*, 83-84.

42 Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief*, 30.

Ka'bah, but opposed them were unbelievers, not polytheists.⁴³ They countenanced intermarriage with them as well as inheritance from them because such persons were regarded as fighting for Allah and His Prophet, but not true believers (*mu'min*).⁴⁴ They also argued that it was unlawful to kill and capture them by a surprise attack; capturing them was only permitted after war had been declared and proof of their unbelief had been established. Moreover, they were forbidden from seizing their possession except what was allowed as booty, such as horses and weapons, other things were not allowed.⁴⁵ As far as gold and silver were concerned, they were encouraged to return them to the owners.⁴⁶

The Sufriyyah (the followers of Ziyād b. Asfar) was one of the group of the Kharijites. Ziyād was more lenient with his followers even when they refused to accept his orders. For example, he did not regard as unbelievers those who abstained from fighting, provided they agreed with him in their religious belief.⁴⁷ The Sufriyyah also appeared to have experienced doubt in recognizing themselves as believers. This was clearly shown by the statement of Ziyād. He said that in their eyes they were believers, but they did not know. Perhaps in the eyes of God they had lost faith.⁴⁸

Ziyād drew a distinction between polytheism and unbelief. According to him, polytheism was of two kinds: the first was obedience to Satan, the other worship of idols. Unbelief also is of two kinds: one is not acknowledging God's favours, the other is denying his Lordship. Dissociation, too, is of two kinds: one is dissociation from those who have merited the prescribed punishment and is *Sunna* (of the Prophet), and the other is dissociation from those who deny God- this is obligatory.⁴⁹

43 al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 105; and see also al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, pp.114-115.

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*

46 *Ibid.*

47 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 116.

48 *Ibid.* 117.

49 *Ibid.* 117.

d. Punishment of the *Kāfirūn* (Unbeliever) and *Mushrikūn* (Polytheists)

All groups of Kharijites held the views that those who were accused of being *kāfirūn* (unbelievers) or *mushrikūn* (polytheists) would be punished in this world. For them, killing the unbelievers or polytheists was regarded as *jihād*. They also praised those who were involved in killing the people who were regarded as unbelievers. For example, the most peculiar thing of the Azraqites was the way they praised someone who killed the person who was assumed to be an unbeliever. Al-Shahrastānī pointed out that Nafi' al-Azraq declared that 'Alī was an unbeliever. He said, Allah revealed the verse of the *Qur'ān*, "And of mankind there is one whose conversation on the life of this world pleases you (Muḥammad), and he calls God to be witness as to that which is in his heart; yet he is the most rigid of opponents". In relation to this verse, Nafi' held that 'Abd Raḥman b. Muljim was right in what he did (killed 'Alī) and God instructed him, "And there is the kind of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of God".⁵⁰

In order to show high respect to 'Abd Raḥman b. Muljim in killing 'Alī, 'Imrān b. Hiṭṭān, the most pious muftī of Kharijites and their greatest poet composed the poem : "O blow from a repentant one, who sought by it only the pleasure of the Lord of the throne. When I think of him I look upon him as the one of all mankind who is most perfect in the sight of God".⁵¹

Hafsiyyah, one of the sub-group of the sects of Ibādiyyah of the Kharijites, held the concept of *takfīr*. They were the followers of Ḥafs b. Abu'l-Miqdām. They indirectly tried to show 'Alī to be a polytheist and 'Abd Raḥman Ibn Muljim to be a believer by referring to certain verses of the *Qur'ān*. They stated that 'Alī was the one to whom Allah referred when He revealed Chapter 2: 204: "And of mankind there is he whose conversation on the life of this world please you (Muḥammad) and he calls Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart; yet he is the most rigid opponent". They

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 103.

⁵¹ quoted from al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 103.

also claimed that ‘Abd.Rahman b. Muljim was the one to whom Allah referred when He said in Chapter 2: 207; “ And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah has compassion on (His) bondmen”.⁵²

Some of the Kharijites regarded their opponents as enemies and that they should be killed. For example, the Azraqites allowed their members to kill their opponents, their wives and children, and seize their wealth on account of unbelief. They held the view that all other persons, with the exception of Jews, Christian etc., who had officially received ‘protection’ (*dhimma*) from the Islamic community as a whole, might lawfully be robbed or killed. This was the religious justification of their terrorism. Moreover it applied also to the wives and children of non-Azraqites Muslims, since according to their conception of group solidarity, the families of unbelievers were also unbelievers.⁵³

The Aknasiyyah (the followers of Aknas b.Qais), a sub-group of the Ta‘alibah of the Kharijites, reserved judgement on whether someone who worshipped in the direction of Mecca was a believer or unbeliever before they knew his faith. If he was clearly known to have refused to accept their faith he would be considered as an unbeliever. Thus, they believed that it was right to excommunicate and attack him. They were also not allowed to attack, kill and steal in secret, except one who was clearly opposed to their views. Aknas said that they had to oppose all those living in a land where dissembling was sanctioned. Only when the faith of the man in question was known to them should they definitely accept him. Likewise only when his heresy was definitely known to them were they to rid themselves of him.⁵⁴ (The Aknasiyyah also claimed that Muslim women were allowed to marry the polytheists among them, that is, to those who have committed sin). However , this view was opposed by Ma‘badiyyah, another sub-group of Ta‘alibah.⁵⁵

52 al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 106.

53 W.Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 22.

54 al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 103.

55 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 113.

The Status of Sinners

Regarding the issue of grave sin, the sub-groups of the Kharijites had different opinions. For the Azraqites, all of them agreed that whoever committed a grave sin was a *kāfir* (unbeliever) and outside the fold of Islam; such a one would be eternally in hell with other *kāfirūn* (unbelievers). They supported this view by using the example of the disbelief of Iblis. They said that Iblis only committed a grave sin when he was ordered to prostrate himself before Adam, but refused, even though he had acknowledged the oneness of God.⁵⁶

Najdāt (Najdites) or ‘Adhiriyyah were more moderate than that of Azraqites concerning the sinners. The Najdites drew a general rule of the concept of polytheism (*shirk*) although in some cases, they still used the label of *mushrik* (polytheist). For example, whoever commits a sin, whether major or minor, and persists in it (*muṣīrr*) is a *kāfir mushrik* (polytheist), but even a grave sinner, if he does not persist in it, is still a Muslim.⁵⁷

The concept of kufr which was introduced by the Najdites had two categories, *kufr al-dīn* (unbelief of religion) and *kufr ni‘mah* (unbelief of Divine favour). For them *kāfir al-dīn* (an unbeliever in religion) is considered to be far more serious than *kāfir ni‘mah* (an unbeliever in Divine Favour). *Kāfir ni‘mah*, on the other hand, is nothing but a particular case of committing a sin (*kāfir fī kadhā*) (a *kāfir* in such and a such a matter) as they said, ‘to call somebody a *kāfir* in this sense is, in reality, not to exercise excommunication (*takfīr*); such a man is certainly a grave sinner, but he is not to be excluded from the community’.⁵⁸

The Najdites regarded the case of committing the common sins like theft and adultery not as serious as persistence in sin. According to Najda, thieves and adulterers need not be excluded from the community because single acts did not relegate them to the people of Hell. On the other hand, persistence in sin even lesser sins than theft and adultery made a man *mushrik* (idolater), and this

⁵⁶ *Ibid*,103.

⁵⁷ Toshihiko, *The Concept of Belief*, 14.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*,15.

excluded him from the community and implied that he would go to Hell. The occasional sinner who did not persist in sin might be punished by God in accordance with the extent of his sin, but the punishment would not be in Hell and would not be eternal, so he would finally enter Paradise.⁵⁹

The most peculiar thing with regard to Najda's views of sin was the idea of polytheist. He regarded anyone who cast a glance (at a woman) or told a lie, small or great, and persisted in it, as a polytheist. In the case of drinking wine he was not strict, for example, he annulled the punishment (*hadd*) for drinking wine and stated that whoever takes a drink without making a habit of it is a Muslim.⁶⁰ The Najdites were very scrupulous about their observance of religion. If someone made a mistake he would be forced to repent, even if he was their leader. Regarding this matter, it was reported that Najda had sent an army to attack Medina and had seized a daughter of 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affan. 'Abd al-Mālik b. Marwan had written to him about her and Najda replied to Abd. Mālik expressing his satisfaction with him and gave her back to him. Najda's followers disapproved of what he had done and called upon him to repent. They said to him, "Verily you have returned to our enemies a maiden who belongs to us". Concerning this matter, he openly repented. One section of them was ashamed of the demand made on him, saying, 'We have made a mistake, we had no right to ask an *imām* to repent nor had he any right to repent on our demand that he does so!'. They then repented to him, "You must now repent of your repentance, otherwise, we shall forsake you". Accordingly he repented of his repentance.⁶¹

Another group of the Kharijites which discussed the status of the sinners was the Ajāridah. They were the followers of 'Abd al-Karīm Ibn Ajrad. They held the view that grave sins make one an unbeliever.⁶² This view was also shared by the Ibādiyyah. The

59 W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative*, 24.

60 al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 90; and see also Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 105.

61 al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 88 and see also al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 105.

Ibādiyyah stressed that whoever committed a grave sin became an unbeliever, but only in the sense of one who did not acknowledge God's favour, not in the sense of being cut off from the community. As a way of supporting their opinion, they said that the hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*) in days of the Prophet were monotheists, but having committed grave sins they became unbelievers on account of those grave sins, not on account of polytheism.⁶³

The Yazīdiyyah (the followers of Yazīd b. Unaisa), a sub group of Ibādiyyah of the Kharijites appeared to be tolerant of the people who did not belong to their group. They encouraged their people to be friends with the people of the Book who accepted the Prophethood of Muḥammad, although they did not embrace their religion. In labelling someone as an unbeliever and polytheist, they appeared to be strict. They said that those who deserved the prescribed penalty were considered to be unbelievers and polytheists and sinners; those committing both venial and grave sins were also regarded as polytheists.⁶⁴

The Sufriyyah regarded all sinners as polytheists. Some of them held a very peculiar view concerning the problem of *takfīr* which is related to sin. According to them, the word *kufīr* was connected with the sin for which there is no particular and explicit penalty in the *Qur'ān*, such as omitting performance of prayer and breaking of the Ramadhan fast. Those who committed such sins were considered to be unbelievers and their acts were kufr. In the case of sins or crime like adultery and theft for which a penalty was prescribed in the *Qur'ān*, the sinners were regarded as unbelievers or polytheists.⁶⁵ Regarding the sin for which there is a fixed penalty in the *Qur'ān*, they said that one who committed adultery were explicitly named '*zānī*' (adulterer), he who stole '*sārīq*' (thief) and he who accused

62 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 109.

63 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 114-115.

64 *Ibid.*, 116.

65 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 117; al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 91; Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief*, 14; W.Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 26.

anybody unjustly, ‘*qādhif*’ (wrongful accuser). A *zānī* was a *zānī*, he was punished solely in the capacity of a *zānī*, not as *kāfir* nor a *mushrik*. Such a man certainly went out of the sphere of *imān* (belief), but not into that of *kufir shirk* (polytheism).⁶⁶

Some of the Suffiyyah claimed that only the legal authorities had the authority to declare someone who had committed a grave sin for which a penalty is prescribed in the *Qur’ān* as an unbeliever. Regarding this matter they said that a man who committed a grave sin for which the Divine Law provided explicitly a definite punishment, should not be declared a *kāfir* immediately. His case should be brought up to the ruler and only after the latter had openly punished him for his sin was he to be condemned as a *kāfir* (unbeliever).⁶⁷

The Status of Children

Some groups of the Kharijites discussed the status of children of their opponents. The Ajāridah paid more attention on defining the status of the children. For example, there was the question of when children could be labelled as believers. In relation to this, Ibn Ajārad held the view that it was an obligation not to associate with a child until he was called to Islam, a call that must be made at the age of puberty, and the children of a polytheist would be in Hell with their parents.⁶⁸ The Ṣaltiyyah, the sub-group of the Ajāridah, followers of ‘Uthmān b. Abu’l-Ṣalt b. Abu’l Ṣalt, seemed to be more strict in labelling children as unbelievers. They said that when a man becomes a Muslim they should associate with him, but not with his children till they reached adulthood and accepted Islam. They had neither friendship for nor enmity against the children either of polytheists or Muslims till they reached adulthood, when they would receive a call to Islam and could either accept or reject it.⁶⁹ Other sub-groups of the Ajāridah, Hamziyyah (the followers of Hamza b. Adrak) the Khalifiyyah (the followers of Khalaf Khārijī) and Maimūniyyah (the

66 Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief*, 14.

67 *Ibid.*, 14.

68 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 108.

69 *Ibid.*, 110.

followers of Maimūn b. Khālid) also discussed the status of children. The Hamziyyah regarded children of their adversaries and of polytheists as those who would be in Hell; and the Khalifiyyah also noted that the children of polytheists would be in Hell, even though their children had done no misdeeds nor committed any.⁷⁰ On the other hand, the Maimūniyyah appeared lenient in assuming the children to be unbelievers. They stated that the children of a polytheist would be in Paradise.⁷¹ However, all of the Ajāridah agreed that a child was to be called to Islam when he had attained maturity and could speak for himself.⁷²

Ta'alibah was one of the groups of the Kharijites who discussed the status of the children of those who did not belong to their group. They were the followers of Ta'laba b. 'Amir. Ta'laba did not judge children as believers or unbelievers before they knew whether they accepted the faith or rejected it. If they refused the faith, they were labeled unbelievers. Relating to this case, Ta'laba said, "We shall associate with children both the younger and the older, till we observe whether or not they deny truth and approve of justice".⁷³ Concerning this matter, it was reported that a man of Ajāridah asked Ta'laba for his daughter's hand, whereupon Ta'laba said to him, "Show her dowry". The suitor then sent a woman to the mother of the daughter to ask her if the daughter was of age, for if she was of age and had embraced Islam according to the stipulations which the Ajāridah required, it did not matter what her dowry was. Her mother said, "Whether she be of age or not, since her guardian is a Muslim she is one". Ta'laba said, "We remain their guardians whether they be young or mature until they make clear to us that they are going to turn away from the truth".⁷⁴

The Sufriyyah (Sufrite) was another group of the Kharijites which discussed of the status of children. They were the followers of Ziyād b. al-Asfar. They did not consider the children of the polytheists

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 110.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 109.

⁷² al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 94.

⁷³ al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 111.

⁷⁴ al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 102.

to be unbelievers, and forbade the killing of the women and the children of those who opposed their faith.⁷⁵ They also showed their leniency to the follower who dissimulated in the case of adopting their regulations. For example, Daḥḥak, who was a member of Sufriyyah allowed the marriage of Muslim women to non-Kharijites amongst them when they were in the territory of dissimulation, but not in the territory where they could openly declare their belief.⁷⁶

Abolishing and Altering the *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law)

All groups of the Kharijites made a lot of innovation in the Islamic creed, and abolished and altered the *shari'ah*. For example, the Azraqites, abolished the punishment of stoning to death for adultery because this was not mentioned in the *Qur'ān*, and also abolished the punishment for defamation imposed on those who slandered innocent women.⁷⁷ They altered the punishment for theft such as the cutting of hands from the shoulders whether the amount stolen was big or little because this punishment was not prescribed in the *Qur'ān*.⁷⁸

***Takfir* in Relation to Ignorance of the Knowledge of God's Revelation, and Dissimulating**

Wrong Deeds

The Najdites held the concepts of *kāfir al-dīn* and *kāfir al-ni'mah* that could be understood by analyzing two important points which had been drawn by Najda. The first was the fundamentals in religion, namely, the knowledge of God and of His Messenger, acceptance of the revealed Scriptures, and acknowledgement that the life and property of every Muslim was sacrosanct.⁷⁹ Concerning this matter, it seems that the Najdites regarded ignorance as grounds for acquittal

75 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 117; and see also al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 92; and Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief*, 13.

76 al-Shahrastānī, *The Muslim Sects*, 117.

77 *Ibid.*, 102.

78 al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 85, and see also Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1960), vol.8, 288.

79 W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative*, 23.

in judgment based on *ijtihād* (personal endeavour). They said that religion consisted of two things, the first comprises knowledge of God and His Prophet, the inviolability of the blood of Muslims, (by this they meant those who agreed with them), and acceptance of all that has been revealed by God. This was obligatory to all men and ignorance of it could not be excused. The second comprises everything else. In this matter people are excused until they know lawful and unlawful matters. Whoever in his (misdirected) zeal considers a thing which is forbidden permissible, he shall be forgiven. Whoever allows punishment of a *mujtahīd* for making an error in matters of law, before the law is certainly established, is a believer.⁸⁰

The Najdites were also called 'Adhiriyyah' or 'excusers' as a result of excusing their followers who were regarded as ignorant from wrong deeds.⁸¹ It was reported that Najda had sent an army against the people of al-Qatif under the command of his son, al-Muṭṭariḥ, who put to death their men, and captured their women and children. Then they took possession of the women and married them before the fifth of the booty had been taken out for the state. They said that the women were part of their share. If their value fell in their share, there was no problem, but if not they should give back whatever was in excess. However, they cohabited with them before the division took place, and also appropriated the booty before it was divided. When they returned to Najda and told him about it, he said, 'It was wrong to do what you did'. They replied, 'We did not know what was not right', so he excused them on account of their ignorance.⁸²

Najda took under his protection those of his followers who held to the punishment fixed by laws and did not excommunicate them from his group. He said that there was hope that God would forgive his followers who accepted the laws. If He punished them, it would be elsewhere than in hell, and subsequently they would be

80 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 104; and al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 89.

81 W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative*, 24.

82 al-Shahrastānī, *The Muslim Sects*, 104; and see also al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schism*, 89.

admitted to heaven; therefore, it would not be lawful to dissociate them.⁸³

The Najdites permitted dissimulation in everything said and done even in matters of homicide. They unanimously asserted that men have no need for an *imām* (leader); all that was required of them was to show mutual justice and fairness. If they should find that this could not be achieved without the authority of an *imām*, and accordingly, appoint one, this would be lawful.⁸⁴

Another group of the Kharijites who discussed the issue of knowledge of God was Baihasiyyah. They were the followers of Abū Baihas al- Haisam b. Jabir who belonged to the Banū Sa'd b. Dubai'a. Abū Baihas recognized someone as a believer if he acknowledged God and His Apostles, accepted the Revelation of God and professed friendship for the friends of God and dissociated from the enemies of God, and he also had to observe the *sharī'ah* which has been prescribed in the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. Abū Baihas also stressed that every Muslim should seek knowledge in order to guide him to the right way. Most of the Baihasiyyah held the view that knowledge, confession and deeds all constitute faith.⁸⁵

One of the sub-groups of Baihasiyyah held the view that a person became a Muslim by bearing witness to the two testimonies by dissociating himself from the enemies of God and associating with friends of God and by believing in a general way what had been revealed by God. If he did not know what obligation God had commanded him, he should enquire. There was no harm in not knowing of the obligation until the situation demanded a knowledge of it, then he should ask. If he did that which was unlawful, not knowing it was unlawful, and this would make him a *kāfir* (unbeliever). They added that the children of Muslims were Muslims and the children of non-Muslims were non-Muslims.⁸⁶

83 al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 89-90; and see also al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 104-105.

84 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 105.

85 *Ibid*, 107.

86 *Ibid*, 107.

The Mukarramiyyah (the followers of Mukram b. Abdullah al-‘Ijli) was a sub-group of the Ta‘alibah of the Kharijites who held the concept of *takfīr* by connecting it with the knowledge of God. They believed that ignorance of God constituted unbelief. Therefore, they claimed that someone who neglected prayer and committed grave sins became an unbeliever because of his ignorance of God. In order to support their views they pointed out the saying of the Prophet, “An adulterer in committing adultery while he is still a believer; and a thief in stealing does not do so while still a believer”.⁸⁷ The Ma‘lūmiyyah and Majhūliyyah was another sub-group of Ta‘alibah who held the same opinion as the Mukarramiyyah regarding the knowledge of God. They said that if anyone did not know God with all His names and attributes, he was ignorant of Him. It was only when he attained all this knowledge did he become a believer.⁸⁸

The Bid‘iyyah (the followers of Yahya b. Aṣḍam), a sub-group of the Ta‘alibah claimed that they were true believers because they had strong conviction of Allah. According to them, they should not say, “I am a believer if God wills”; to do so meant to be a doubter, and to have a doubt in their belief. Therefore, they should be convinced without any doubt that they were the only people to go to Paradise.⁸⁹ The Hafsiyyah (the followers of Hafṣ b. Abu’l-Miqdām), a sub-group of the Ibādiyyah of the Kharijites tried to make a distinction between polytheism (*shirk*) and unbelief (*kufr*) using knowledge of Allah as a criterion. They believed that those who were ignorant of Allah and denied Him were polytheists. On the other hand, those who knew Allah and disbelieved in the other things such as the Prophet, the Fire, the Book, the Garden, and committed grave sins, as well as those who declared all the forbidden (*harām*) things permissible (*halāl*), were unbelievers instead of polytheists because they knew Allah.⁹⁰

87 *Ibid*, 113.

88 *Ibid*, 114.

89 *Ibid*, 114.

90 al-Shahrastānī, *Muslim Sects*, 116; al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms*, 105; and Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief*, 15.

Denying the *ʿIṣma* (Infallibility) of the Prophets

The Azraqites was one of the most heretic group of the Kharijites. They denied the infallibility of the Prophets. They claimed that as the Prophets were human beings, they could not avoid committing sins or becoming unbelievers. They said that God may send a Prophet who He knows will fall into unbelief after becoming a Prophet or who was an unbeliever before being a Prophet. Since grave and venial sins are the same in their eyes and constitute unbelief, and since there are some in the community who consider it possible for the Prophets to commit grave and venial sins, it would follow that there a Prophet could perform possible acts of unbelief.⁹¹

Practising *Taqiyya* (Prudent Fear)

The Kharijites practiced *taqiyya* or 'prudent fear'. That is the concealment of their true beliefs when among enemies who might kill them if they knew. This concept was adopted by the Najdites. This presumably referred to Kharijites who were living among Azraqites or it may merely have been a mark of opposition to Ibn al-Azraq, the leader of the Azraqites.⁹²

Conclusion

The Kharijites had created peculiar ideologies and *fatāwā* (edicts) in dealing with religious teaching. They adopted their political ideologies as a doctrine of the group. They not only politicized Islam, but they were also involved in crimes. They abused the articles of the Islamic Creed especially, the Pillars of *Islām* and the Pillars of *Imān*. The concept of *takfīr* which was adopted by the Kharijites created more heretics and innovations in the teaching of Islam. They accused Muslims who did not belong to their group of being unbelievers, and they permitted the members to kill them. For example, the Muḥakkimah, the most violent group of the Kharijites, would kill anybody that they assumed as a *kāfir* although he was innocent. They misinterpreted the passages of the *Qurʿān* to support

91 al-Saharatānī, *Muslim Sects*, 102.

92 W.Montgomery Watt, *The Formative*, 24.

their ideologies and actions. For example, they cried out the verse *lā ḥukm illā lillāh* (no decision but Allah's) at the time they killed Muslims in the market-places. On the other hand, Islam prohibited the blood of Muslims and innocent people. For them, killing Muslims who disagreed and opposed them was part of *jihād*.

Despite the fact that they claimed themselves to be true Muslims, they accused the companions of the Prophets and those who agreed with the arbitrations (the arbitrations between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah at Dūmat al-Jandal 657 C.E, and at Adruh, 659 C.E.) of being unbelievers. For them, the companions and people who agreed with the arbitrations did not judge according to the teaching of the *Qur'ān* and opposed Allah. They quoted the passage of the the *Qur'ān*, Chapter 5:44, 'Whoever judges not by which Allah has revealed, such are unbelievers'. They tried to relate the issues of politics to the articles of the '*aqīdah*' as a way of accusing those who did not agree with them. This contradicts the teachings of Islam in which the issues of politics are related to the aspect of *sharī'ah* but not that of '*aqīdah*'. The passage of the *Qur'ān* that had been quoted by the Kharijites is related to the people who cover the truth which they must expose and explain to the people in order to get illegal possessions such as the Jews who condoned adultery and fornication by not carrying out the stoning (*al-rajm*). The passage of the *Qur'ān* is also related to unjust punishment for a murderer.⁹³ However, the Kharijites interpreted the passage differently.

Another innovation which had been adopted by the Kharijites was excommunicating those who disagreed and opposed them. For example, the Azraqites claimed that their group was the only real Muslim community so it could be considered as the 'abode of Islam' (*dār al-Islām*). Therefore, it was a duty for them to migrate and form their own society, instead of sitting still in the 'abode of unbelief' (*dār al-kufr*). These allegations and actions are against the basic teaching of Islam regarding the unity of the Muslim society. Islam calls Muslims to be together and love each other.

93 Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl āyy al-Qur'ān*, (Cairo: Matba'at al-Ḥalabī, 1954), vol.6, 252.

The Kharijites held radical views in dealing with the Muslims who were out of their camp just because they failed to obtain power. They used many passages of the *Qur'ān* in order to strengthen their ideologies and hide their criminal acts. Islam encourages Muslims to be friends with Muslims and non-Muslims because Islam concerns itself with peace and humanity.