

ibaziyye (090081)

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Abdulrahman al-Salimi, Early Islamic Law in Basra in the 2nd/8th  
Century: Aqwāl Qatāde b. Dī'āme al-Sadūsī, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2018.

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## Introduction

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The Ibāḍī movement owes its name to 'Abd Allāh b. Ibād al-Murri at-Tamimi, an almost unknown early Muḥakkima figure who participated in the siege to Mecca under the leadership of Nāfi' b. al-Azraq in 64/683, but later broke away from the Khārījī extremists and looked for an understanding with the Umayyad rulers. According to the Ibāḍī biographies he belonged to the second generation (*ṭabaqah*) of scholars and died probably during the reign of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65–86/685–705). With the latter 'Abd Allāh b. Ibād succeeded in entering into correspondence and he is credited with two letters to him whose authenticity is almost controversial.<sup>1</sup>

The real founding father of the school was 'Abd Allāh b. Ibād's successor, Abū l-Sha'thā' Jābir b. Zayd al-Azdī (born in 18 or 21/639 or 641 and died around 100/718), who came from Nazwā in Oman and was one of the best friends and a disciple of the celebrated companion of the Prophet 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās.

At Baṣra he enjoyed enormous prestige as a man of learning, and even Sunni Muslims acknowledge his importance as a transmitter. His teaching was crucial in the formation of the Ibāḍī school: not only did he train the first scholars of the movement, Abū Nūḥ Ṣāliḥ al-Dahhān, Ḥayyān al-A'raj, Ḍumām b. al-Sā'ib, Ja'far b. al-Sammāk, and Abū 'Ubaydah al-Tamimī, but also several Sunni traditionists, such as Qatāda b. Dī'āma, 'Amr b. Harim, 'Amr b. Dīnār, Tamīm b. Khuwayṣ and 'Umārah b. Ḥayyān, were among his friends and disciples.

He carried on 'Abd Allāh b. Ibād's policy of maintaining friendly relations with the Umayyads and kept on good terms with the powerful governor, al-Hajjāj, through whom he even succeeded in obtaining regular payments from the state coffers. But their relationship soon deteriorated mainly due to Jābir's close connections with the family of the former governor of Khurāsān, Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, who had been deposed and arrested in 86/705 by al-Hajjāj. Jābir corresponded with Yazīd's brother, 'Abd al-Malik b. al-Muhallab (d. 102/721), who was first governor of Khurāsān, then of Iraq (see Jawābāt Jābir

<sup>1</sup> R. Rubinacci, "Il califfo 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān e gli Ibāditi," in *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale*, N. S. 5 (1954): 99–121; Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 53; see also Abdulrahman al-Salimi and Wilferd Madelung (eds.), *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century* (Brill, 2017).

given to religion in the study of Islamic civilization is connected to the story I have told above: that its emergence in a historically rare period of the reification of religion is what contributed to its distinctively religious character, and that this may possibly help us in understanding what unites this broad chunk of human civilization across time and space under a specifically religious label in the minds of those in and outside of it.

This is not to say that premodern Islamic life was exceptionally religious, since as I have shown elsewhere,<sup>310</sup> there was a clearly distinguishable secular domain of life which was produced precisely by the very widespread acknowledgement of a distinct realm of religion in Islam. What it does mean, however, is that the relationship between religion and other non-religious domains of life would have been understood in the Islamic past in ways quite different to that of other civilizations, though this is simply to state the obvious fact that human societies are exceedingly diverse. Nevertheless, despite this apparent variety, they still all remain united by their fundamental humanity, and it is in light of this commonality that we should not be surprised when we encounter spaces in which some semblance of a shared conceptual language emerges, especially with respect to an issue as universal as how we are to make sense of that ineffable connection to the transcendent (or to put it in more secular terms, an immaterial sense of meaning), a seemingly universal intuition which incessantly resurfaces throughout the story of humankind, whether under the guise of "religion" or *dīn*.

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<sup>310</sup> See note nine and my forthcoming dissertation, *Beyond the Divine Command: Aspects of the Secular in Premodern Islam*.



## Reconstructing Early Ibādī Theology in North Africa: The influence of ‘Abdallāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī

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#### Abstract

This paper seeks to re-examine previous comparative work done on one of North Africa's most important Ibādī theological texts, *al-Radd ‘alā al-Jahālāt*, through the wider lens of the development of Ibādī theology and Ibādī creedal literature in North Africa. More specifically, this paper will look at the influence of the key text *Kitāb al-Tawhīd* by the Ibādī theologian ‘Abdallāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī on a wide range of theological discussions that took place in the process of the formation of Ibādī creeds, and specifically on *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*'s influence on the text of *al-Radd ‘alā al-Jahālāt*. That work will enable us to draw firmer conclusions on al-Fazārī's place in the different debates between opposing Ibādī camps in North Africa during the period of Ibadi formation, and from there on through the centuries.

#### Keywords

Early Ibādī theology – Tibgūrīn b. ‘Isā – ‘Abdallāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī – early Islamic North African theology – Mu‘tazila – Rubinacci – Motylinski – Cuperly

#### Résumé

Cet article vise à réexaminer les travaux comparatifs antérieurs effectués sur l'un des textes théologiques ibadites les plus importants d'Afrique du Nord, *al-Radd ‘alā al-Jahālāt*, à travers le spectre du développement de la théologie ibadite et de la littérature sur les croyances ibadites en Afrique du Nord. Plus spécifiquement, cet article examinera l'influence du texte clé du *Kitāb al-Tawhīd* du théologien ibadite ‘Abdallāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī sur un large éventail de discussions théologiques qui ont eu lieu

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## Ibāḍiyya

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

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

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

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