



## CERTAIN RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL FACTORS IN THE EMERGENCE OF MOVEMENTS IN ISLAM

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### Abstract:

This article examines the emergence of the first disagreements within the Muslim Ummah following the revival of Islam, and the subsequent development of the first religious movements as a result of the "first conspiracy" in the Islamic world. In particular, it presents views on the emergence of several movements, such as the Kharijites, Azraqites, and Qarmatians, which arose from the internecine struggle of various groups for political power. The article also discusses how these movements differ in essence and ideological roots from orthodox (traditional) Islamic teachings. Additionally, it offers judgments about the role of these movements in Islamic society during the 8th-9th centuries, their distinctive features and negative actions, and the consequences of their activities carried out under the guise of religion. Furthermore, the author provides recommendations and conclusions on specific issues related to religious and political factors in the emergence of various movements in Islam.

**Key words:** Religion of Islam, Righteous Caliphs, disagreements in Islam, power struggle, Kharijites, Azraqites and Qarmatians, early Islamic sects, Sunnis, Shiites, Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, orthodox Islam, religious extremist movements, religious-political factors, ideological roots of extremism.

It is well known that in the present era, as in the distant past, some illegal terrorist and religious organizations are trying to sow discord and disagreement among Muslims. To have a sound and correct faith, it is necessary to understand misguided factions and movements and the nature of their erroneous views. If we examine the history of extremist movements that emerged under the guise of Islam, we can see that their roots go back to the distant past. This can be seen in the example of the Islamic sect known as the

### Kharijites.

The Kharijites separated from Caliph Ali's (RA) soldiers in 657 and declared themselves true Muslims, while those who did not join their ranks were declared "apostates." "Kharijites" (foreigners) comes from the Arabic language and means "separatists" or "rebels." Kharijites (Arabic: الخوارج - those who went out, rebelled, or revolted; in scientific literature, Khawarij is used, which is a more precise pronunciation of the original Arabic word) self-designation - ash-Shurat (Arabic: الشرة - those who sell themselves) - an Islamic religious-political movement that emerged during the First Fitna (656-661).

*Fitna* (Arabic: فتنة) is an Arabic word meaning turmoil, chaos, temptation, or trial. Depending on the context, the term can refer to: Temptation from the truth - an action that distracts a Muslim from the true path and faith. Civil war - large-scale conflicts and divisions within Muslim society, where faith is severely tested. There are other meanings of the term fitna. The First Fitna refers to the first civil war in the Arab Caliphate that began after the assassination of Caliph Uthman (RA).



During the reign of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan (RA) (644-656), conspiracies (fitnas) emerged in the Islamic community. As a result, in 656, Uthman ibn Affan RA became a victim of fitna. After his assassination, Ali ibn Abu Talib (RA) (656-661) was elected as caliph.

Initially, the name "Kharijites" was adopted by the former supporters of the righteous caliph Ali (RA), who rebelled in 657 due to dissatisfaction with his decision to conduct arbitration after the inconclusive battle of Siffin against the main contender for the caliphate, Muawiya. According to the Kharijites, only God is allowed to judge mortals. This statement later became their battle cry. Ali (RA) defeated the rebels in the Battle of Nahrawan a year later, but the movement continued to exist, and in 661, the righteous caliph Ali (RA) was killed by Abdurrahman ibn Muljam, who is considered to be one of the followers of the movement.

For reference: Kharijites are followers of the earliest religious-political group in the history of Islam. This group formed during the power struggle in the Caliphate between supporters of the fourth righteous caliph Ali ibn Abu Talib (RA) and Muawiya. The movement began in July 657 at a place called Siffin (on the banks of the Euphrates River near the city of Aleppo), where the army of the righteous caliph encountered the opposing Syrian-Arab army of Muawiya. On the second day of the battle, the right wing of Ali's (RA) army under Malik al-Ashtar's command and the center of the army led by Ali (RA) himself defeated and pushed back Muawiya's forces. In Caliph Ali's (RA) army, there was a detachment of warriors who had memorized the Quran (hafiz - guardians of the sacred Quran). Muawiya was saved from total defeat by the cunning of one of his commanders, Amr ibn al-As. He ordered Quran scrolls to be attached to the spears of Muawiya's warriors and called for a resolution based on "the book of Allah." As a result, Ali (RA) halted the battle and, under pressure from his advisors, agreed to arbitration, thereby "calling into question his indisputable right to the caliphate."

The Kharijites waged an armed struggle against the righteous caliph Ali (RA) until he was killed in 661. They fought with equal ferocity against Muawiyah. Kharijism quickly transformed into a powerful political force, and for the following decades, its adherents were the main destabilizing factor in the Caliphate. Any means were used in the fight against opponents, including political terror and guerrilla warfare.

In the 7th century, the Kharijites split into competing sects of Ibadis, Sufris, Najdites, Azraqites, and others. The earliest group that laid the foundation for the Kharijite movement was the Muhakkimites. In the central regions of the Caliphate, the Kharijites waged a fierce struggle against the central authority, however, constant persecution forced many of them to flee to remote regions (Kerman, Fars, Yamama, Hadramaut, Taif, and Yemen). In the middle of the 8th century, followers of the Kharijite groups of Ibadis and Sufris managed to establish two states in North Africa. However, despite the Kharijite concept of power, the rulers of these states founded dynasties (Midrarids, Rustamids), which existed for a relatively short time. At various periods, moderate groups of Kharijites came to power in other Muslim countries as well. By the 13th century, under the rule of the Abbasids (749-1258), the Kharijites had completely disappeared from the political scene.

#### Interesting fact

*The sources contain many references to disputes between the Sahabah (companions and associates of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)) and the Kharijites. In particular, the most famous of these is the meeting of Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) (known in history as "the interpreter of the Quran") with the leaders of the Kharijites, after which he managed to bring 2000 Kharijites back to the true path of religion.*

Below are the distinguishing features of the Kharijites:

**Excessive devotion (Ghuluw) to religion.** Extreme views and exaggeration in observing religious rules. This process leads to a departure from the fundamentals and pillars of the Islamic religion. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: Whoever goes to extremes in religion will perish. This is because Islam is considered an easy and tolerant religion.

**Lack of religious knowledge.** The main error of the Kharijites was their ignorance of Islamic teachings. They did not know or understand the canons of the Holy Quran and Hadith. They interpreted the Quran and Hadith in their own way, and as a result, straying from the main objectives, they chose the wrong path.

**Disobedience.** According to the Kharijites, if an imam (leader) committed a major sin (gunah-i kabira - a great sin), then one had to renounce him. This factor was decisive in their departure from Ahl al-Sunnah (or Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah). In this process, a split occurred within the Muslim community, and the Kharijites themselves divided into several sects.

**Declaring someone who has committed a sinful act as a kafir (disbeliever).** A distinctive feature of the Kharijite teachings is that if a Muslim committed a sin, they were immediately accused of kufr (disbelief), and their life and property were considered halal (permissible to take). The places where the Kharijites lived were called Darul-iman (abode of faith), and all other regions were considered Darul-harb (abode of war, where fighting was necessary). This allowed them to carry out deimos (instill fear and terror) in other countries.

**Considering the blood and property of Muslims as halal.** The Kharijites showed aggression towards Muslims but were lenient towards non-Muslims. There is abundant historical evidence of this.

**Murder of women and children.** In particular, Ibn Kathir (RA) mentioned in his book "Al-Bidaya wan Nihaya": The Kharijites killed women and children, and slaughtered pregnant women. These actions continue to be cursed to this day by those who adhere to the true beliefs of Islam.

**Reprimands and criticism towards Islamic scholars and righteous individuals.**

If we consider the first to renounce and separate, it was the Kharijites, who interpreted "true" Islam "in their own way." They declared jihad through terror against those who disagreed with their rules, accusing them of disbelief. Their ultimate goal was to seize power by shedding innocent people's blood.

**The movements and doctrines of the Azraqites and Qarmatians**

In the middle of the 7th century, sects began to appear among the Kharijites, which were named after their leaders. One of these radical movements was the Azraqites.

Azraqites (from Arabic أزارقة) were followers of an offshoot of the Kharijite movement that emerged at the end of the 7th century. The founder of the sect was Abu Rashid Nafi ibn al-Azraq. In the 680s, Nafi ibn al-Azraq and his military commanders (Atiya ibn al-Aswad, Abdullah ibn al-Mahuz, and Uthman and az-Zubayr with their brothers) led a 30,000-strong army and began a powerful uprising in Iraq, aimed at both the Umayyads and the Shiites. The Kharijites of Oman and Yamama joined the rebels. Nafi ibn al-Azraq, with a 20,000-strong army, marched from Basra (Iraq) to Ahvaz and took control of it along with Fars and Kerman.

By freeing slaves and acting as defenders of the oppressed, the Azraqites found support among the rural population of the Caliphate, mainly among the Persians. However, their unrestrained intolerance towards those who did not share their views and their cruelty narrowed

the movement's social base. Moreover, enmity flared up between the Persians and the Arabs within the Azraqite camp itself.

Adherents of Azraqism compelled participation in armed struggle against illegitimate rulers, and those who evaded this duty were declared infidels (kafirs) and their killing was permitted. Nafi ibn al-Azraq even allowed the killing of children and women of his opponents. At the same time, the Azraqites did not extend the principle of killing "apostates" to Christians and Jews, as they believed they had not altered the teachings of the prophets Isa (A) (Jesus) and Musa (A) (Moses).

Like all Kharijites, they declared Muslims who committed major sins (al-kabair) as non-believers and claimed that they would eternally abide in the hellfire. The Azraqites unconditionally rejected the principle of "prudent concealment of faith" (taqiya). They recognized the imamate of "the most worthy" (afdal), that is, the candidate who would come forward with weapons in hand and call people to fight against "infidels," and did not allow the imamate of "the less excellent" (mafdul). Based on this, they declared Caliph Ali ibn Abu Talib (RA), Uthman ibn Affan (RA), and their followers as disbelievers.

The Azraqites, like the Kharijites, considered territories not under their control as "land of war" (dar al-harb), and its population was subject to extermination. The Azraqites tested those who migrated to them by proposing to kill a slave. Those who refused were killed by the Azraqites themselves as "hypocrites" and "polytheists." In the 8th-9th centuries, Azraqite uprisings continued in Iran (869-883), where their center from the 8th century was Sistan. In Lower Iraq and Khuzestan, for 14 years, the uprising of black slaves - Zanj, led by the Azraqite Ali ibn Muhammad, continued. To date, this movement has no followers and is considered extinct.

### **Qarmatians.**

At the end of the 9th century, the Qarmatian movement revived in southern Iraq. They did not consider it obligatory (fard) to perform prayers (namaz), fasting (uraza), pay zakat, or make the Hajj pilgrimage. Furthermore, since the construction of mosques and assemblies was not specified in the Quranic verses, it reached the point where visiting mosques was forbidden.

The Qarmatian movement originated from the pen name "Qarmat" ("short leg," "red eye") of Hamdan ibn al-Ash'ath. As a result of a complete misinterpretation of the pillars of the Quran, the Qarmatians, considering the Hajj pilgrimage an act of apostasy, attacked Mecca in 930. They plundered all the possessions of Mecca's faithful, killed some of the pilgrims, and took the rest captive as slaves. Furthermore, they destroyed and desecrated the Kaaba, splitting it into two parts, and took the sacred Black Stone, carrying it off to Bahrain. Only after 20 years, for a large ransom, was the stone returned to the Kaaba. This left an indelible mark of sin by the Qarmatians in the history of the Islamic world.

As a result of endless disagreements and internecine wars, bloody battles and conflicts occurred within radical movements, during which sects disintegrated. Moreover, theologians and Islamic jurists have always condemned the actions of these sects.

As a conclusion, it can be emphasized that history provides numerous examples of various sects and movements in Islam being exploited to achieve selfish goals, other objectives, and political dominance, which fundamentally contradicts the foundations of traditional Islam. History demonstrates that when someone attempted to use religion for their political and worldly purposes, chaos would arise in society. Sectarianism, which emerged as a result of the activities of people seeking power, caused enormous harm to the Islamic community. Often, members of communities whose potential was exploited for specific purposes would, over time, attribute to

their brotherhood the characteristics of a sect with its own teachings. Leaders of various destructive extremist groups, in order to achieve their goals, exert pressure on people's religious beliefs. There are many pseudo-Islamic movements and sects in the world whose teachings directly contradict the Quran and Sunnah.

A truly faithful Muslim must exercise caution. The modern world, abundant with diverse information, resembles a boundless ocean concealing numerous dangers. If a person lacks a reliable ship on which they can feel safe, along with a trustworthy crew and a wise captain, they risk being cast into a raging storm, which may lead to their spiritual demise. The reliable lifeboat is the true teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SA), and this crew is called Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, with the captains of this crew being scholars and righteous individuals who guide towards the correct path and warn against misguidance.