

The Rise of the Kharijite and Their Influences on the Contemporary Islamist Extremist Groups

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Abstract

Today, several extremist groups in the name of Islam have emerged in the Middle East which seem to be carrying the ideology of an extremist group called 'Kharijite' that grew during the early days of the Muslim societies. This article aims to examine to what extent Kharijite's ideology, despite a time difference of fourteen centuries, is still inspiring the contemporary extremist groups. This article proposes to answer the following questions: How Kharijite emerged and created their characteristics and ideology, how Kharijite ideology survived throughout Muslim generations one after another until now, and to what extent are contemporary Islamist groups implementing the Kharijite's ideology.

Keywords: Kharijites, Classical Kharijites, Modern Kharijites, Modern Islamist Extremists

1. Introduction

The religion of Islam began fourteen centuries ago in the Arab peninsular that promote prosperity not only to the Arab world, but to all humankind. However, from the early days of Muslim societies, ideologies appeared in connections with applying religious texts in their extreme applications i.e. beyond the context of Islam, and fanatic to the radical thoughts of some individuals. Muslim scholars, on the other hand, had categorized the holders of these extreme ideologies under different names and nicknames, and one of them was called 'Kharijite'. Kharijite's ideology had been criticized and condemned by many Muslim scholars, since it undermined the true meaning of Islam throughout the last fourteen centuries. Despite condemnations, this ideology continues to exist but implemented by different groups who have emerged centuries after Kharijite such as the most recent Islamist groups like An Nusra Front¹ and Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (hereinafter the 'ISIL').² Similarly, there are a number of other extreme Islamist organizations in central Asia and Africa, which can all be described as 'contemporary Islamic extremists' who have become sources of confusion to the younger Muslim generation on understanding the religion of Islam. This article proposes to answer the following question: to what extent does the ideology of Kharijites, despite a fourteen-century time gap, continue to influence the approaches and behaviors these contemporary Islamist groups and organizations.

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¹ Al-Nusra Front or Jabhat Al-Nusra was later on using the name "Tanzim Qa'edat Al-Jihad fi Bilad Al-Sham" and now they use the name of Jabhat Fateh al-Sham since 2016. R. Green, "Al-Qaeda Upgrades Its Presence In Syria", *Inquiry & Analysis Series, No. 1037*, November 25, 2013, <https://www.memri.org/reports/al-qaeda-upgrades-its-presence-syria>

² Ishaan Tharoor, "ISIS or ISIL? The debate over what to call Iraq's Terror Group", *The Washington Post*, 18 June 18, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/06/18/isis-or-isil-the-debate-over-what-to-call-iraqs-terror-group/?utm_term=.879761ec525b

The key objective is to examine whether Kharijite's ideology can be controlled or it will continue to exist. The article implements historical, comparative, and analytical approaches relying on the old texts on the history of the Muslim nation. To begin, the article will firstly define the term Kharijite and analyze the source and roots of Kharijite. Secondly, it will examine the Kharijites's ideology, and discusses the subsequent groups who take inspiration from the Kharijites in the last fourteen centuries to the present day.

2. What is Kharijite and when it emerged?

In Arabic language, the term 'Kharijite' is a plural word to mean the 'leavers' or 'outsiders'. They say the person has gone astray from the command of the Imam Al-Haq (True Leader) or has not come under his command.³ In other words, it defines anyone who has gone out of the command of the true leader. What is meant by the leader? It is simply denoting someone who is elected as a leader a group of Muslims unanimously. It has remained the same whether that disobedience is at the time of the Prophet's companions when a Rightly Guided Caliph is present, or after them at any other time.⁴

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions, the term Kharijites refers to the early schismatic group in the Muslim community who protested that 'judgement belongs to God alone', they rejected both 'Alī B. Abi Talib, the fourth Caliph, and his opponent Mu'awiyya Ibn Abi Sufian (hereinafter 'Mu'awiyya'), and began a fierce and often brutal rebellion⁵ against their authorities. At society level, they hold a strict view that if a Muslim commits a serious sin, he becomes apostate. At political level, they reject all Caliphs except Abu Bakr and 'Umar (the first and second Caliphs after Prophet Mohammad), and the first six years of the third Caliph, Uthmān. Their argument is that any Muslim recognized as irreproachable can become Imam, known as Amir al-Mu'minin, 'Leader of the Faithful'.⁶ For them, the first three Caliphs were irreproachable ones. From this strict perspective, one can define the Kharijites as a fanatic and ultraconservative group who are emphasizing the importance of strict adherence to Muslim principles of conduct and promoting the elimination of anyone who seriously violates those principles. In a broader sense, Kharijite promoted a revolutionary mentality for their times, and had both direct and indirect influences on the history of the Islamic empires for the last fourteen centuries. They also continue to influence the actions and thinking of Muslims to present day. Today, the name Kharijite has become the identity of any Muslim individual or group, who judge Muslims as disbelievers based on their conducts, making it permissible to shed their blood for committing serious sins.

Throughout the history of the Islamic empires, Muslim scholars have observed this group, and had their own undertraining of them. For example, during the ninth century, Ibn Abidin stated that the Kharijite is a group of Muslims who stepped out of the command of the true leading because they believed that he is false, a disbeliever or has disobeyed God. He explained they held power and fanatic ethics and consequently, they call to fight against him. Their fanaticism reached the level of authorizing Muslims, 'blood to be shed, taking their women as slaves and call the Prophet's companions "disbelievers"⁷. However, Abu Hasan Ashaari had a different approach, he sufficed to refer to Kharijite only to those who disobeyed the command of Caliph Ali Ibn Abi Talib (hereinafter 'Caliph Ali').⁸

During the tenth century, Ibn Hazm advocated that anyone has the same thinking of the Kharijite (whether he agrees or disagrees) if; he does not accept the truce brokering between the *to be* Caliph Ali and Mu'awiyya, calls those who commit serious sins as disbelievers and will stay in the hellfire for eternity. Furthermore, the Kharijite finds it an obligation to disobey the command of a tyrant leader and believes that their succession is permitted regardless of whether he is from Quraysh tribe⁹ or not.¹⁰

³ Ibn Manzoor al-Ansari al-Ruwaifi. *Lisan Al-Arab* [The Tongue of the Arabs], 3rd Edi (Sadir House, 1414H), 807-808.

⁴ Shahrastānī, M. ibn 'Abd al-Karīm, *Kitāb al-milal wa-al-nihāl* [Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects] edited by Mohammed Sayed Kelani, Vol. 1 (Beirut: 1404H), 113.

⁵ "Kharijites", The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions: Oxford University Press, 1997, last visited March 2, 2018, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/kharijites>.

⁶ Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal wa-al-nihāl*, 113-115

⁷ Zainadin bn Ibrahim bn Muhammed Ibn Nujaim, *Albahr Alraayiq Sharab Kanẓ Aldaqayiq* [The Beautiful Sea, Explanation of the Exact Treasure] 2nd Edi, Vol. 5 (Beirut: Dar Al-Kitab Al-Islami, 2009), 151

⁸ Abu Al-Hasan Ali bn Ismail bn Ishaq bn Salim Al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat Al'iislatiyyin Wakhtilaf Almusaliyyin* [Islamists' Articles and Differences of Worshipers], edited by Na'eem Zarzur, Al-Maktabah Al 'asriyah, Vol. 1 (Cairo: 1426H), 111

⁹ Being from Quraish Tribe as a condition to become the leader of Muslim nation is well disputed among Muslim scholars.

Similarly, in the thirteenth century, Imam Al-Nawawī said that the Kharijites are a type of inventors (invent new laws into Islam), who believe that whoever commits a big sin becomes a disbeliever and will stay in the hellfire for eternity. They criticize the leaders and do not pray after them for the Friday prayers or in the [ordinary] group prayers.¹¹ The above Muslim scholars wrote in the later centuries after the death of Prophet Mohammad. Their discourses on the Kharijite's ideology indicate that the influence of this group continued to exist in the Muslim societies, which is why scholars raised the issue of Kharijites in order to compare them with those groups who held similar ideologies during their generations. Based on their descriptions, it can be concluded that any individual or group, at any time in the past and the future, and anywhere sharing and implementing Kharijites beliefs, will fall under the definition of Kharijites.

Just as the definition of Kharijites provides a basis for discussion, it is important to understand how they emerged. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, a medieval Muslim scholar and jurisconsult, Prophet Mohammed informed his companions about the rise of this group after this death and describing them in some detail. To identify them, one of the tangible descriptions, the Prophet pinpointed that there will be a man among them who has an arm like a woman's breast. Hence, for Ibn Taymiyyah, this is the sign of the Kharijites' early emergence. However, it did not mean that they are the only group and that once they disappeared, they would never rise again. Rather, he depended on another Prophet's speech that this group (Kharijites) will continue to appear at the time of the appearance of Ad Dajjal (the Dark Messiah or the Anti-Christ). In fact, Ibn Taymiyyah agrees with the definitions of Kharijites provided by Ibn Abidin, Ibn Hazm and Imam Al-Nawawī mentioned earlier that Muslims in general agree the Kharijites are not those who have disobeyed the command of Caliph Ali.¹² Hence, Kharijites influence will continue indefinitely.

Muslim scholars have conflicting views on the time when the Kharijites emerged. However, there are two methodologies discussed below used to find about the time of their appearance; looking at their attitudes (at personal level) and groupings. Firstly, in terms of their attitudes at personal level, some Muslim scholars like Shahrastani¹³ Ibn Hazim,¹⁴ and Ibn Jawzi¹⁵ have the opinion that the emergence of Kharijites dates to the time of the Prophet Mohammad himself. They rely on both Bukhari's and Muslim's authentic Hadith collections narrating that an incident took place during the time of Prophet, as will be mentioned later. Based on this incident, these scholars described the Kharijites as those who 'go out' of religion quickly leaving no sense of religion behind them comparable to an arrow which leaves no mark on its arch due to the speed at which it is released. They are markedly recognized by having a man among them whose arm is like breast of woman. They also appear during the time of disputes, skirmish, and partitions among Muslim societies, as reported by Al-Bukhari.¹⁶

¹⁰ Ali bn Saeed bn Hazm Al Andalusi (commonly referred to as Ibn Hazm Al Dhahiri), *Alfasl Fi Almilal Wal'abwa' Walnibl* [Chapter on Religious, Whims and Philosophical Sects], Vol. 2, (Cairo: Al-Khanji Library, 2010), 90

¹¹ 'Abu Zakariaa Yahyaa Bin Sharaf Alhizami Alnawawii Alshshafieii (commonly referred to as Imam Al-Nawawī), *Randat Alitalibayn Waeumdat Almuftin* [Students' Garden and Mayor of Muftis], edited by Zuhair Shawais, Vol.10, (Beirut: Al Maktab Al-Islami, 1991), 51.

¹²Taqī ad-Dīn Ahmad (commonly referred as Ibn Taymiyyah), *Majmu al-Fatwa al-Kubra* [A Great Compilation of Fatwa], Edited by, Abdul Rahman bin Mohammed bin Qasim, Vol. 28, (KFCHQ, 1416 H), 495

¹³ Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal wa-al-nihal*, 20-21

¹⁴ Ibn Hazm, *Alfasl Fi Almilal Wal'abwa' Walnibl*, Vol 4, 22-24

¹⁵ Jamal al-Din Abu al-Faraj 'Abd al-Rahman (commonly referred to as Ibn al-Jawzi), *Talbis Iblees* [The Devil's Deception], Vol. 1, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2001), 81

¹⁶ The incident is narrated by Abu Saeed who said: "While the Prophet was distributing (something), 'Abdullah bin Dhil Khawaisira At-Tamimi came and said, "Be just, O Allah's Apostle!" The Prophet said, "Woe to you! Who would be just if I were not?" Umar bin Al-Khattab said, "Allow me to cut off his neck!" The Prophet said, "Leave him, for he has companions, and if you compare your prayers with their prayers and your fasting with theirs, you will look down upon your prayers and fasting, in comparison to theirs. Yet they will go out of the religion as an arrow darts through the game's body in which case, if the shot of the arrow is examined, nothing will be found on it, and when its blade is examined, nothing will be found on it; and then its rest is examined, nothing will be found on it. The arrow has been too fast to be smeared by dung and blood. The sign by which these people will be recognized will be a man whose one hand (or breast) will be like the breast of a woman (or like a moving piece of flesh). These people will appear when there will be differences among the people (Muslims)." Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl (commonly referred to as Imam al-Bukhārī), *Sahih Al-Bukhari* [Authentic Hadith by collected by Bukhari], 1st Edition, Vol. 9, Book 84, No 67, (2009), 1541. Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Hajar Abu al-Fadl al-Askalani al-Shafi'i (commonly referred as Ibn Hajar), *Fath al-Bari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari* [Victory of the Creator: Commentary on Bukhārī], 1st edition, edited by Muhammad Fuad Abd al-Baqi, Vol. 12, Hadith No. 6933, (Beirut: Dar al-Maarifah, 1379H), 287-291

In another narration, the text of Prophet's words for that occasion read as: "There will be some people coming out from him (At-Tamimi) who recite the Quran, yet it does not pass their throat. It does not enter their hearts and they do not do it with faith as there is none in their hearts. They kill Muslims and leave out the pagans. They go out of Islam like an arrow goes out of a bow if I meet them (i.e. if I live in their time), I will fight them like the people of Aad."¹⁷

However, the opinion of the scholars discussed above cannot fully be relied upon to make those attitudes of At-Tamimi as at the beginning of the appearance of Kharijite, his attitude was an objective in nature which can often happen. Besides that, At-Tamimi did not lead any group of people nor was he encouraged by anyone to behave inappropriately except for his personal and psychological greed. However, it can be argued that the desire to disobey and go out had existed from the time of the Prophet.

Secondly, there are two views which look at Kharijites in terms of groupings or when they first emerged as a group. The first view states that the beginning of Kharijite formation dates to the time of Caliph Osman Ibn Affan, the third Caliph after the death of Prophet Muhammad. This happened when a group of anarchists surrounded the house of the Caliph under the name of the reform revolution. At first, conversations between the Caliph and the anarchists saw the Caliph try to convince them by answering all their questions and criticisms. Yet, as they could not be convinced, they attacked the Caliph and murdered him. This was the first time they appeared in a group and went out in a group. This was the view advocated by Ibn Kathir¹⁸ and Ibn Abi al-Ezz.¹⁹ However, this opinion has not been approved to make those anarchists the start of the appearance of the Kharijite because they only intended to kill the Caliph and loot the House of Treasury.²⁰ Also, they did not hold the characteristics of the Kharijite. In other words, they were not a group of a particular thought or ideology. Immediately after they committed the crime they joined Caliph Ali army. Although their action can be considered a serious violation of the true leader's command, they cannot be thought of as a group of the Kharijite since they were mere looters of the treasury.

The second view states that the first formation of the Kharijite dates to the time of Caliph Ali Ibn Abu Talib, after the battle of Siffin in 657 AD (37 AH) occurring during the Muslim civil war between the armies of the Caliph Ali and Mu'awiyya. The battle ended with both parties having to appoint a judge (truce broker), with the Quran to find common ground for the agreement. Hence, two judges were appointed, Abu Musa Al Aashariby Caliph Ali, and Amir Ibn Aas by Mu'awiyya. An agreement was reached, and the battle ended. As a result, a group from the Caliph's army did not approve the deal, declared their disobedience to the Caliph, gathered in Qurra and made their military camp. This was the first time the Kharijites appeared in group.²¹

Most scholars support this opinion because the term Kharijite, in its literal meaning, can only be put upon those who left Caliph Ali's army because they could not accept the judges' decisions in the battle of Siffin. Furthermore, they appeared to be a group of political people with their own beliefs which subsequently had considerable effects in terms of beliefs and ideology in the religion of Islam.²² That is why from time to time throughout Islamic history they have resurfaced under various names every time the scholars challenged them in thought and opposed their beliefs and views. Besides that, whenever Kharijites' aggressions reached the point of killing and terror, the moderate Muslim scholars have issued a Fatwa to fight against them, stopping them from killing and terrorizing people.

¹⁷ Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj Abu al-Hasan al-Qusheiri al-Nisaburi (commonly referred to as Imam Muslim), *Almasnad Alsabih Almukhtasar Min Alsunna Binaql Aleadl Ean Aleadl 'Iilaa Rasul Allah Salaa Allah Ealayh Wasalam* [the correct Sunan to transfer justice from justice of the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him], Edited by Mohamed Fouad Abdel Baqi, Hadith No. 1064, (Beirut: Dar 'Ihya' Alturath Alearabi), 74.

¹⁸ Abu al-Fidaa Isma'il ibn 'Umar ibn Qatheer al-Qurashi (commonly referred to as Ibn Katheer), *Al bidayat Wal nihaya* [The Beginning and The End], Vol. 7, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1986), 189

¹⁹ Sadr al-Din Muhammad ibn Ala al-Din Ali bin Muhammad (commonly referred to as Ibn Abi al-Ezz Al Hanafi), *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tabawiyah* [Explanation of the doctrine of Tahawi], Edited by Ahmad Shaker, Vol. 1, (Saudi Arabia, 1418 H), 493.

²⁰ The Khawarijs came and the Baitul Mal (house of treasury), which had lots of things in it. Ibid, 211

²¹ Hussam S. Timani, *Modern Intellectual Readings of the Kharijites*, about the writings of M. A. Shahban, In his Islamic History A.D. 600–750 (A.H. 132): A new Interpretation (1971), 58.

²² Ibn Abi al-Ezz, *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tabawiyah*, 19

An example was during the time of Caliph Ali when first talks were held with the Kharijites: he saw that several of them still insisted on their ideology and would not return to the true path of Islam. Subsequently, he declared war against them and fighting in Nahrawan by the end of his Caliphate in 658 AD (38 Hijri).²³ In fact, Caliph Ali held a strong opposition against Kharijites. In his book *Nahjul Balagha*, Al-Sharif Al-Radi mentioned under Sermon 59 that Caliph Ali was told all Kharijites were killed in Nahrawan, he replied: "By Allah! No, not yet. They still exist in the loins of men and wombs of women. Whenever a chief would appear from among them, he would be cut down till the last of them would turn thieves and robbers."²⁴

3. Indications of Kharijites in the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad

Apart from the above Hadith on 'Abdullah bin Dhil Khawaisira At-Tamimi, there are several narrations in the Hadith books which talk about the Kharijites working outside the boundaries of Islam, their characteristics, and how the Prophet denounced them.

Firstly, it was narrated by Caliph Ali that "Whenever I tell you a narration from Allah's Messenger, by Allah, I would rather fall down from the sky than ascribe a false statement to him, but if I tell you something between me and you (not a Hadith) then it was indeed a trick. No doubt I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "During the last days there will appear some young foolish people who will say the best words, but their faith will not go beyond their throats (i.e. they will have no faith) and will go out from (leave) their religion as an arrow goes out of the game. So, wherever you find them, kill them, for whoever kills them shall have reward on the Day of Resurrection."²⁵ In this context, Ibn Hajar was in the opinion that the meaning of the 'last days' is the last days of the Rightly Guided Caliphate because the Prophet says in a Hadith that "Caliphate after me will be for 30 years and after that it becomes a monarchy." The fighting between Kharijite and Caliph Ali took place around 28 years after the death of the Prophet.

Moreover, Abu Dharr reported Prophet Mohammad as saying: "Verily there would arise from my Ummah after me or soon after me a group (of people) who would recite the Qur'an, but it would not go beyond their throats, and they would pass clean through their religion just as the arrow passes through the prey, and they would never come back to it. They would be the worst among the creation and the creatures."²⁶

In these authentic Hadiths, after the Prophet mentioned about the appearance of Kharijite, he condemned them to have faith only in their words, but faith has not entered their hearts. For them, this can be regarded as a terrifying denunciation since the Prophet directly stated it himself, not any other companion or subsequent Muslim scholars and writers. He also called them the worst of God's creatures. Another condemnation from the Prophet was that he said, "they kill the Muslims and leave the idol worshippers". Furthermore, the Prophet encouraged Muslims to fight, saying: "If I meet them I will kill them like the people of Aad ... Kill them wherever you meet them as their killing gains great rewards to the killer in the Day of Judgment." Hence, one can understand the dangerous nature of Kharijites for Muslims, which explains why the Prophet encouraged Muslims to fight against those people carrying this mentality. Once Caliph Ali became sure that the Kharijites fall within the details of how Prophet Mohammad had described them, following speaking to them he found himself forced to fight against them to revert them to the right way of practicing the religion of Islam. However, when he fought them, they started terrorizing and shedding the blood of innocent people and unlawfully assaulting the wealth and properties of the Muslims.

4. The Kharijite's names and nicknames

For many reasons, scholars are not agreed about dividing the Kharijite's groups into a particular number. Firstly, as aggressive, and unpredictable groups who appear from time to time and location to location, scholars have not been able to gather them under one name. Secondly, their groups are easily dissolved due to lack of loyalty to their leaders. Individuals are easily fragmented from their groups for minor reasons proving problematic. Finally, Kharijites hid their books and texts from the public since the latter could have caused doubt and challenged them making who they were and their ideology impossible to study. Yet, throughout the last fourteen centuries, different groups have emerged that Muslim scholars categorized them under the description of Kharijites, as follows.

²³ H U Rahman, *A Chronology of Islamic History 570-1000 CE*, (TA-Ha: 1999), 59.

²⁴ Abul-Hasan Muhammad ibn Al-Husayn Al-Musawi (commonly known as Al-Sharif Al-Radi), *Nahj ul Balagha*, [Path of Eloquence], translated by Yasin T. Al-jibouri, (Createspace Independent Pub: 2014), Sermon 59.

²⁵ Bukhari, *Sabih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 6930

²⁶ Muslim, *Sabih al-Muslim*, Hadith No. 1067

Firstly, the Al-Mahkamah group, who represented those who did not accept the arbitration by Abu Musa Al Ashary and Amr Ibn Aas to settle the conflict between Caliph Ali and Mu'awiyya. They disobeyed Caliph Ali and broke their allegiance treaty with him choosing Abdula Ibn Wahabi Al Rasbi as their leader. Both Aldhahabi (died in 749 Hijri- 1348 AD) and Ibn Hajar (died in 853 Hijri- 1449 AD) indicated that they also declared war on Caliph Ali in Nahrawan in that battle one of their leaders was killed.²⁷

Secondly, the Azariqa, group was the followers of Nafie Ibn Al-Azraq Al-Hanafi who was known as Father of Rashid. Scholars considered this group as large in number, the most extreme and terrifying, and satisfied the strongest description of Kharijites. Their extremism reached a level that if anyone disagreed with them in their thinking they were viewed as an idol worshipper. Not only that, even if anyone supporting their ideology, but who could not migrate to live with them was thought of as an idol worshipper too. Generally, anyone who joined was tested for his commitment. For example, they would be ordered to execute a prisoner who did not accept their ideology. If he murdered the prisoner, they would believe in him, otherwise they would accuse him of hypocrisy and they would become the subject of execution instead. Finally, for them it was permissible to kill the wife and children of those who did not agree with them, and committing any sins, whether big or small, the sinner becomes infidel.²⁸

Thirdly, in the late of seventh century, there was the appearance of the Al-Najdat group followers of Najdat Ibn Aamir Hanafi who defected from Al Azariqa. He declared his differences from him and stood against some of his thoughts. For instance, Al Azariqa called disbelievers those who did not go with them to Jihad. He also disagreed with killing the children of those who opposed their way of thinking. They also argued that a big sin per se does not make a person an infidel if not persistent. However, he legalized shedding the blood and theft of the wealth of Ahl Al Thimma. Moreover, he thought people did not need a leader. The gap of disagreement between Al-Najdat and Al Azariqa gradually increased until it reached a point that they termed Azraq as the leader and whoever believed in his leadership a disbeliever.²⁹

Finally, Al-Ibaziya group were the followers of Abdulla ibn Yahya ibn Ibaz who was one of the Tabi'un "followers". In other words, he met the Prophets' companions. According to Ibn Hanbal (died 855 AD), Abdulla lived in the time of Mu'awiyya and Abdulla Ibn Zuber, had some of his own beliefs, and stood against the authorities.³⁰

The above-mentioned groups had emerged during the early days of the Islamic history, and scholars focused more on them than any other group who appeared subsequently. One of the reasons for that is these groups appeared during the first and second Muslim generations after the death of Prophet. Since these two generations were close to the Prophet, they had better and fresher knowledge taken from him about the nature of Kharijites. Next, the first Muslim civil war began in the time of these two generations, so the appearance of Kharijites was the first appearance making it very easy for them to identify Kharijites through their behaviors and attitudes. Furthermore, the scholars of the later centuries began to make comparisons between the religious practice of these two generations directly learnt from Prophet Mohammad on one hand, and the conducts of these Kharijites on the other. After analyzing and comparing between the two, they finally came up with specific criteria of Kharijites. Upon the process of analogy, whoever behaved like Kharijites were considered as Kharijites no matter under what name, time, or location. Hence, in the later centuries many groups emerged under different names, but all were regarded as Kharijites based on analogy.

²⁷ Shams Aldiyn 'Abu Eabd Allah Muhamad Bin 'Ahmad bin Euthman bin Qaymaz adh-Dhahabi (commonly referred to as Imam adh-Dhahabi), *Syr l'elam Alnubla'* [the Lives of Noble Figures], 3rd Edi, Vol 3, (Beirut: Al-Resalah Foundation, 1985), 144. Ibn Hajar, *Al'isabat Fi Tamyiz Alsababa*, [the goal in distinguishing the companions], 1st Edi, edited by Adel Ahmed Abdul Muqawad and Ali Mohamed Moawad, Vol. 5, (Beirut: Dar al-Kuttab al-Sulti, 1415AH), 78.

²⁸ Al-'Asfarayiniu, Eabd Alqahir Bin Tahir Bin Muhamad Bin Eabd Allh Albighdadiu Altamimiu Al'asfarayiniu, (commonly referred to Abu Mnsur), *Alfarq Bayn Alfarq Wabayan Alfarqat Alnnajiat*, 2nd Edi, Vol. 1, (Beirut: Dar Al-afaq Al-jadidat, 1997), 63.

²⁹ Ibn Hazm, *Alfasl Fi Almilal Wal'ahwa' Walnibl*, Vol 4, 72

³⁰ Abu Abdullah bin Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Hanbal bin Hilal bin Asad al-Shaibani (commonly referred to as Ibn Hanbal), *Musnad Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal*, [Musnad of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal], 1st Edi, edited by Shuaib Arnaout, Adel Murshed, and others, (Beirut: 2001), Hadith No: 24036

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi in his famous book, titled in the English translation as ‘The Beliefs of Muslim and Polytheist Sects’, referred to these groups considered as Kharijites, some of them were mentioned without details by Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (died 607 Hijri- 1210 AD), who were namely; Al-Asfariya, Al-Yaziyya, Al-Maymoonya, Al-Bayhiya, Al-Ajaridiya, Al-Silliya, Al-Hamziya, Al-Khalafiya, Al-Shaebiya, Al-Hazmiya, Al-Thaelabiya, Al-Akhnasiya,

Al-Maebadiya, Al-Rashidiya, Al-Makramiya, Al-Maeloumiya, Al-Majhouliya, and Al-Hafsiya.³¹ All of these groups were very similar in thinking except for few minor details, and most of them were named after their leaders. Again, due to lack of written scripts by group leaders and scholars, it is difficult for modern researchers to investigate specific behaviors and actions, except from what the Muslim scholars of their times had seen then, thus judging them based on what they had seen from them, and later on passed the information briefly to us.

When talking about the nicknames of the Kharijite, historians mentioned some nicknames that belongs to the Kharijites. Firstly, Al-Kharijite otherwise known by the nickname, “The Outsiders “who are known for how they like and accept in one interpretation and hate in another. They recognize the verse from the Quran which states, "And if anyone who comes out of his house emigrates to Allah and His Messenger, then he is aware of death, His reward is rewarded to Allah. Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." ³² They thought leaving their homes and going out was for Jihad for the sake of Allah and they named the place they go to as Dar Al Islam (House of Islam). However, they do not like to be called Kharijite in the sense that they left their allegiance to Caliph Ali, Islam or the Muslim society. In other words, they do not like to be called ‘rebellious to the Muslim society’, as this interpretation means their departure is illegal and disgraceful. They see their departure from the command of the Caliph Ali a legal step, and even in their understanding, the Caliph is a rebel, not the Kharijites.

Secondly, Al-Harurriyah is the name referring to a place located near the city of Kufa in Iraq, where the Kharijites’ forefathers went and settled there during the time of Caliph Ali. In this place, the Caliph held talks with them where a number repented and left the Kharijites, whilst others went to Nahrawan and fought the Caliph. It was one of the wives of the Prophet, Aisha, who used the name for the first time. This was when a woman asked her, “Why women are not asked to redo their prayers when they stop during the menstruation time. However, if it occurs during the month of Ramadan, they have to redo their fasting afterwards? Aisha replied, “are you a Harrouri [Kharijites]? Because during the time of the Prophet when we were in the menstruation period we did not redo our prayers and he did not order us to do so either.”³³

Thirdly, Al-Shurrat who are recognized by the nickname, “The Buyers” because of its pure religious perspective which mentioned in the Quran, “Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties in exchange for Paradise. They fight in Allah’s way, and they kill and get killed. It is a promise binding on Him in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Quran. And who is truer to his promise than Allah? So, rejoice in making such an exchange—that is the supreme triumph.”³⁴ In fact, the Kharijite preferred this nickname over the rest because they believed that they had sold their lives and properties to Allah and purchased Paradise in return.

Fourthly, Al-Mariqa or “Rouge” was formed by their opponent which came from the Hadith of the Prophet, which says, “... They go out of religion like an arrow goes out of a bow.” Finally, Al Nawasib or “The Plotters” nicknamed because of their extreme opposition of Caliph Ali.

5. Chronology of Kharijites’ renowned Leaders

In modern times, we see groups and organizations have recognizable leaders surrounded by supporters whose objective is to protect the leaders from harm and serve their groups’ ideology. On the other hand, the leaders guide them in accordance with their groups’ policies and ideologies. Religious organizations are not exempt from this general principle. Similarly, the Kharijites had their own leaders throughout the history of the Muslim nation, and many named their groups after them or replied to the name of their leader. However, the lifespan of these Kharijites’ groups strongly bound to the life of their leaders and once they died, their followers could not sustain the group, but it was likely the same ideologies of deceased leaders were passed to later generations. This could arguably be one of the reasons how we still hear more about Kharijites by word of mouth rather than historical books.

³¹Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Umar ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Hussein al-Taymi al-Razi, Khatib al-Rai (commonly referred to as Fakhr al-Din al-Razi), *Aietiqadat Firaq Almuslimin Walmushrikeena* [Beliefs of Muslim sects and polytheists], 1st Edi, edited by Ali Sami Alnashar, Vol. 1, (Beirut: Dar Alkutub Aleilmia, 46-51.

³² The Noble Quran, Chapter 4, Verse: 100

³³ Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal*, Vol. 39, Hadith No2403, 40

³⁴ The Noble Quran, Chapter 9, Verse: 111

In fact, there are three important bases to argue why Kharijites' leaders and their ideologies were less known. All that is known to us is that they are practicing the religion of Islam in its strictest sense, that none of Prophet's companions had practiced like them. Not only that, but even if we read the history, it can be clearly seen that after the first century of the Muslim nation, the Kharijites did not appear publicly despite evidence that they existed.

The first one is that most of the narrators, historians and scholars specialized with writing biographies that did not mention a substantial number of them, but rather sufficed to mention the most popular ones during the first century of the Muslim nation. Also, most of them were not exciting or interesting enough to gain popularity within Muslim societies or were killed by Caliphs before they had the opportunity to obtain a considerable popularity. Secondly, successive Caliphs during the Umayyad and Abbasid Empires held a strict policy against the Kharijites' ideology in order to minimize internal social disorders. Moreover, during these two periods, the two Islamic Empires were still expanding and conquering more lands. Thus, most of these Kharijites' weaker followers were encouraged to go to jihad in the front line. By this step, the Kharijites' leaders inside the Empire were surrounded by less and lesser people and eventually, their names and ideologies disappeared while new ones could not appear to the public. Thirdly, it is appropriate to argue that Muslim scholars and historians of that time had avoided mentioning Kharijites leaders and ideologies in a broader context, since they considered them to be seditious to the society. Furthermore, the scholars willed to keep the new generations away from them so that they could not pick on their ideologies, and thus create a new form of Kharijite.

Finally, there is one more possible point to bear in mind in addition to the points mentioned. When the Mongol army invaded Baghdad in 656 Hijri- 1258 AD, they brought a great destruction to the city including the Grand Library of Baghdad, destroying countless historical documents and books on subjects ranging from medicine to astronomy.³⁵ Thus, one can argue that a great amount important evidence and information about Kharijites and their leaders were lost. That said, it is important to mention the most popular ones after the death of Prophet Mohammed until around the middle of the second century of the Muslim nation; *Abdullah bn Wabb Al-Rasibi* (55 Hijri-674 AD) from Al-Azd and Bani Rasib who witnessed the conquering of Iraq with Saad Bn Abi Waqqas. When Caliph Ali sent Abu Musa to them to tell them that Ali had become the new Caliph, the Kharijites gathered in Abdullah bin Wahb's house. He preached strength and asked them to abide by asceticism for the sake of God while he renounced sedition. In other words, he did not want to be under the command of the new Caliph but wanted to choose his own pattern even by leaving temporal means, as he was a pious man, and had followers. He died in 54 Hijri-674 AD.³⁶

Abu Bilal Mrdas bin Hadir (61 Hijri-680 AD), who was from Bani Rabiah and Bani Tamim. He was a normal pious person, but later became a recluse glorified by Kharijites as he was assiduous in his thoughts and opinions. He was one of the important followers (Taabi) and was praying and crying a lot of fearing God,³⁷ which caused Kharijites to gather around him.

Urwah bin Hadir, the brother of Abu Bilal Mrdas bin Hadir was one of the early followers of Kharijites. It is suggested that he is the first one who said, "There is no ruling except for Allaah", and when he passed by al-Ash'ath ibn Qais who was reading a book of arbitration to the people, he said, "You refer to a man as a judge in the existence God's command?, [verily] no rule except for God". Then he tightens his sword and made light blow to his animal which made it run away. This incident, skirmished the life of the surrounding people, and as a result, sedition was almost happened. He attended the Battle of Nahrawan, and was one of those who survived it, and lived during the succession of Muawiya, even after him until the time of Ziad.³⁸

Nafie' ibn al-Azraq al-Hanafî [65 Hijri-685 AD], who is from Bakr ibn Wael was one of the heads of the Kharijites, and the named Azarqa Group, who were Kharijites as mentioned earlier, was attributed to his name.

³⁵ Hal Fattah, *A Brief History of Iraq*, (Checkmark Books), 101.

³⁶ Ibn Hajar, *Al'usabat Fi Tamyiz Al-Sahaba*, Vol. 5, 100.

³⁷ Ibn Abi Hadad, *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah* [Commentary on Nahj al-balagha], Vol. 4, 124. Ibn Hajar, *Lisan Almiẓan* [Language of Balance], Vol. 6, (Dar Ihya Turath Al-Arabi, 2010), 14.

³⁸ Ibn Katheer, *Al bidayat Wal nihaya*, Vol. 9, 297. Abi al-'Abbas al-Mubarrad, *Akbbar Al-Khawarij Min Kitab Al-Kamil: Fi Luġhatil Adab Wan Nabu Wat Tasrif* [The Kharijites from the comprehensive Book: From the aspect of Literary and grammar], (Dar al-Fikr. 'Akhbar Alkhawarij), 16.

He had advanced jurisprudence knowledge about the Kharijites.³⁹ Nafie' was a corrupted man who with his companions in Ahwaz, judging people and killing children. He also took money, and levied tax unnecessarily. Consequently, the people of Basra were afraid of him, and thus asked Hanaf to protect them from the Kharijites, and he ordered Muslim bin Abis bin Kariz to take this task for him, resulting in heavy fighting with Nafi and his companions in the "Dulab". In the end, both Nafie bin Azraq and Muslim Bin Abis were killed.⁴⁰

Najdah ibn 'Amer [72 Hijri-691 AD], was from Bakr ibn Wael. It is said that his full name was Nujdah bin Awaimer al-Hanafī, a senior Kharijite leader who participated in the defense of the Kaaba with Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr in the year 64 AH. He was glorified, and even held power over many places. He was paid homage as a Caliph, and even was called the Commander of the Believers.⁴¹

Abu al-Dabbak Shabib ibn Yazid al-Shaibani [77 Hijri-696 AD] was the son of Yazid bin Naim bin Qais bin Amr bin al-Salat bin Qais bin Sharail al-Shaibani.⁴² Historians portrayed him as an unrivalled knight as his body was well built up. Likewise, his wife Ghazali was as brave as him. He fought against Hajjaj, and after a heavy battle, Shabib's brother and wife Ghazala were killed, which made him run away and settle in Ahwaz. However, before he arrived there, he died.⁴³

Qitri bin Al-Faja'ah [77 Hijri-696AD] was Abu Naamah Qitir bin al-Faja'ah al-Tamimi al-Mazni.⁴⁴ He was one of the brave celebrities and was known for eloquent poetry and speeches. He was given the responsibilities of leading Al Azariqa sect after the murder of Zubayr bin Ali. He fought for ten years, and Caliph always considered him as a threat until he died in 77 Hijri (696 AD).⁴⁵

Imran bin Hatan al-Sadousi al-Shaibani al-Wa'ili [84 Hijri-703 AD] or sometimes referred to as Abu Dalan, Abu Simak or Abu Shihab. At first, he was not a Kharijite, but rather followed the doctrine of the Muslim community. However, his departure was caused by his female cousin who supported the opinions of the Kharijite. He married her with the aim to bring her back to the Muslim community, but she successfully convinced him to join the Kharijite. Subsequently, he became a senior Kharijite, a glorious poet, praised by his followers. He has famous poems on praising ibin Malgam, the murderer of Caliph Ali.⁴⁶

As well as the above mentioned leaders, there are several other Kharijites' leaders whose names were only mentioned without any further details; they are namely: Abdullah bin Yahya [130 Hijri-748 AD], al-Kandi, Huthrah ibn Wada 'ibn Mas'ud [41 Hijri-661 AD] who was from Asad Tribe, Al-Mustawrid Ben Olfa [43 Hijri-663 AD] who was from Tim Al-Rabab, Zahaf al-Ta'i [50 Hijri-670 AD], Qarib bin Marrah [50 Hijri-670 AD] was one of the Azzad, Hayyan bin Zibian al-Samy [59 Hijri-678 AD], Obaidullah bin Bashir bin al-Makhour [68 Hijri-687 AD] and Zubayr ibn Ali al-Sulaiti [68 Hijri-687 AD] who were from Tamim, Abd Rabbo al-Saghir, who separated from Qitri, one of the followers of Qays ibn Tha'labah, Thabit al-Tammar: A loyalty was given to him after the death of Najdah ibn 'Amer [72 Hijri-691 AD], as was mentioned before, and finally, Abu Fadik [73 Hijri-692 AD].⁴⁷

6. Characteristics and Ideology of Kharijites

After the Kharijites' groups were formed, they first appeared as political groups that had power and their own ideology.

³⁹ Ibn Abi Hadad, *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, Vol. 4, 136

⁴⁰ Al- Mubarrad, *Akhhbar Al-Khawarij Min Kitab Al-Kamil*, 90 – 91

⁴¹ Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (commonly referred to as al-Tabri, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, (commonly called *Tarikh al-Tabari*) [History of the Prophets and Kings], Vol. 6 (Dar Al Maarif, 2006), p. 138. Ibn Katheer, *Al bidayat Wal nihaya*, Vol. 8, 292.

⁴² Ibn Katheer, *Al bidayat Wal nihaya*, Vol. 9, 21

⁴³ Ahmad bn Muhammad bin Ibrahim Abu 'l-'Abbās Shams al-Dīn al-Barmakī al-Irbilī al-Shāfi'ī (commonly referred to as Ibn Kahalkan), *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' aẓ-ẓamān* [Deaths of Eminent Men and History of the Sons of the Epoch], Edited by Ihasn Abbas, (Beirut: Dar Althaqafat, 1968), 455. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol. 6, 218. Ibn Katheer, *Al bidayat Wal nihaya*, Vol. 9, 20.

⁴⁴ Adh-Dhahabi, *Syr Felam Anubla'*, Vol. 4, 152

⁴⁵ Ibid. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol. 6, 309, Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ash-Shaybani (commonly referred to as Ibn Al-Athir), *Al-Kamil fi al-tarikh* [The Complete History], Vol. 4, (Beirut: Dar Al Kutub Al-Ilmiyah), 441. Ibn Katheer, *Al bidayat Wal nihaya*, Vol. 9, 31

⁴⁶ Imam Abi al-Hajjaj Yusuf bn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mizzi, *Tabdhib Al-Kamal*

Fi Asma' Al-Rijal, [Perfect Refinement to the names of men], Vol. 22, (Beirut: al-Risalah al-'Alamiyyah, 2015), 322. Ibn Hajar, *Al'usabat Fi Tamyiz Alsababa*, 302.

⁴⁷ Ibn Katheer, *Al bidayat Wal nihaya*, Vol. 9, 20

This appearance continued throughout the history of Islam in various territories of Islamic world, but each time under a different name. It is notable that they have three characteristics in common regardless of their times, national and geographical differences which can be discussed as follows extremism in religion, ignoring the practice of prophet, and fragmentation.

Extremism in Religion

In the past and present, Kharijites viewed those disagree with them as infidels, and it was deemed acceptable to fight and kill them. They consider the authorities, anyone who accompanies, obeys, or even lives under their control also to be disbelievers. The reason for holding this ideology comes from their extremist approach in everything, there is only one opinion and way: all others are deemed wrong and sinful. Anyone who makes a mistake without repents or penance has deviated from the path of Allah, and therefore they are sinners, sinners are disbelievers, and disbelievers must be killed. In this light, they consider people, the authorities, scholars, and other groups to be disbelievers so much so that they are the only Muslims who exist. In other words, they generally consider people as disbelievers who have committed sins, and that on judgment day they will remain in hellfire forever. However, is not always obvious from the understanding of the people of the Quran and Hadith, and Muslim scholars' community from the time of the Prophet until modern day. It is unanimously agreed by Muslim scholars that a Muslim does not become a disbeliever by committing a sin until they make the sin permissible (Halal). In this context, Ibn Taymiyyah was in the strong opinion that the Kharijites were the first people ever who without hesitation called Muslims disbelievers for sinning. Alternatively, whoever is against their newly invented matters would be called disbelievers and claim their blood and properties legal for them to take. This is the condition of the people of innovation (who diverge from in the religion of Islam, which is not allowed). By bringing about any invention and forcing people to accept and practice it, they will also be labelled disbelievers. However, ordinary Muslims follow their scholars who understand and practice Quran and Hadith in the correct way. In other words, they obey God and the Prophet, and follow the right path which has mercy on human beings."⁴⁸

Ignoring the Practice of Prophet

Ibn Taymiyyah despised the Kharijites for being ignorant and lacking proper knowledge about religion. For Ibn Taymiyyah, the problem begins with their scholars since they have a bias point of view: they have information only regarding topics which are able to strengthen their ideologies. They have information and are only interested in religious texts that can be used to call people disbelievers or sinners, i.e. they focus and interpret the texts in the way suits their objectives and conclusions. The Prophet described them as "...They are immature in age and understanding." Ibn Taymiyyah continues saying, "The Kharijite worship a lot but they do not know that it is contrary to what the Prophet did, and how the ordinary Muslim community practicing the religion based on what the Prophet taught them."⁴⁹

Hence, one can conclude that although the Kharijite pretend to be so committed to the practice of the Prophet, they ignore most of it, because most of their deeds do not align with the practice. There are many Hadiths who condemn the Kharijites and describe their characteristics, yet they pretend not to be that way while they have ignored those Hadiths.

Fragmentation

Partition and disintegration among Kharijites is well known. Due to the extreme nature of their ideology, they see their path as the only right one. Therefore, any individual or group that differentiates from their point of view will be condemned as disbelievers or hypocrites. This leads to fragmenting and those who think their views are right will step away and consequently call the original group disbelievers. This has been a reoccurring pattern throughout the history of Islam. It explains why whenever there was a suitable situation for Kharijites to appear, they worked under one group, but when they do not agree with each other, they leave, establish their own group claiming that it is the righteous one. Thus, nowadays there are various names of organizations claiming that they are fighting for the sake of Islam, but in reality, all of them are mere Kharijites using different inherited names.

⁴⁸Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmu al-Fatwa al-Kubra*, Vol. 3, 279

⁴⁹ Ibid, Vol. 7, 482

Ibn Hazim Al Zahiri who said “...indeed, God has not brought any good to the Muslims at the hands of any deviated groups, and villages of the disbelievers were not conquered except by those who raised the flag of [true] Muslims at their hands. They [Kharijites] had always wanted to change the Islamic regime and caused partitions in Muslim lines and pulled swords against believers and spread evil and mischief to the people.⁵⁰

It is notable that all three characteristics are genuine extensions from their ideology. One can start by discussing the rationale behind the survival of their ideology despite most Muslim nations being moderate and peaceful. Phenomenon or events are triggered by a reason or several reasons, although they may not necessarily justify them. Although scholars have different views with regard to specifying the most reliable explanations, the appearance of Kharijites was a result of a number of circumstances, for example, as mentioned earlier there is a view that when the dispute over the Caliph's position took place between Caliph Ali and Mu'awiyya, the initial rise of Kharijites was triggered. The Kharijites thought the dispute over the murdering of Caliph Osman Ibn Affan was for power, i.e. who is to claim the position of Caliphate. However, then they claimed that neither Ali nor Mu'awiyya were worthy of Caliphate as they thought they did not have the right qualifications. Hence, they justified for themselves to disobey both of them. Whichever view is correct, the Kharijites who appeared in this first Muslim generation can be named as 'classical' Kharijites, whose influences are continuously felt today. In general, it is believed that the ideology of Kharijites, whether classic or contemporary and under any name, comprises of three angles; ruler, ruling and economy.

In terms of the ruler element, Kharijites have problems with the qualification of the 'ruler', i.e. who must rule? This can be seen from the battle of Siffin where the Kharijite forced Ali to accept the rulings of judges. After Ali accepted their requests, they turned back, stood against him, and demanded he repent and reclaim his faith (become a Muslim again). Although this issue is controversial, it is yet to be considered as one of the main causes for the appearance of the Kharijite because they appeared in a political and a military group having power and position. Accordingly, the ruler must be qualified enough to endorse and defend the group's ideology precisely. Similarly, the contemporary Kharijites struggle with this issue. For example, al-Qaeda in the Levant which later on became Jabhat Fateh al-Sham in 2016, did not accept Abubaker Al Baghdadi, the leader of ISIL, as their leader or ruler for lack of qualification to be the right ruler.⁵¹ Not only that, but both groups even detached themselves from the main branch of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan through for different reasoning.⁵² One should bear in mind that this issue of 'qualification of ruler' is only among themselves and not for anyone outside their ideologies. Rulers outside their ideologies are considered as infidels or hypocrites no matter how fair and pious. In other words, contemporary Muslim rulers who are internationally recognized as the head of states are not recognized by contemporary Kharijites groups.

When it comes to the matter of 'ruling', the Kharijites uphold the unquestionable concept of 'the tyranny of the rulers'. For them, whenever a Kharijite appeared, they persistently claimed that the rulers are tyrants, oppressing the people and did not complied with God's law instead doing evil things/ Thus, they urged people to disobey them. However, by disobeying rulers, Kharijites committed more wrong doings.⁵³ This is also true for the contemporary Kharijites like ISIL and Buku Haram of Nigeria who commit crimes, unlike no other ruler such as murdering civilians, prisoners, and non-Muslims in the name of Islam.

Finally, economic reasons underpin why Kharijites to remain active. For this matter, scholars have relied on the event when At-Tamimi expressed his critiques to the Prophet while he was dividing the spoils of war, and said "Oh Muhammad be just," as mentioned earlier. Another event dates back to the time of the assassination of Caliph Osman Ibn Affan, in which they looted Bait w Al Mal (house of treasury).

⁵⁰ Ibn Hazim, *Alfasl Fi Almilal Wal'abwa' Walnibl*, Vol 4, 171

⁵¹ Mona Mohammed and Ian Black, "Free Syrian Army rebels defect to Islamist group Jabhat al-Nusra", *The Guardian*, 8 May 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/08/free-syrian-army-rebels-defect-islamist-group>. Tracey Shelton, "Syria: One on one with the leader of Jabhat al-Nusra", *Global Post*, 04 March 2013, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2013-03-04/syria-one-one-leader-jabhat-al-nusra>. "Syria's Islamist Fighters, Competition among Islamists", *The Economist*, 20 July 2013, <https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21582037-one-islamist-rebel-group-seems-have-overtaken-all-others-competition-among>.

⁵² "Iraqi al-Qaeda chief rejects Zawahiri orders". *Al Jazeera*. 15 June 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/06/2013615172217827810.html>. "Syrian Nusra Front announces split from al-Qaeda", *BBC News*, 29 July 2016, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-36916606>.

⁵³ Ghaleb bin Ali Awaji, *Firaq Mu'asirat Tantasib 'Ilaa Al'iislam Wabian Manqif Al'iislam Minba, Almutabat Aleisriat Aldhababiat* [Islamic Groups Affiliated with Islam, and the explaining the stand of Islam to them], 4th Edi, Jeddah-Riyadh: 2001), 239.

Moreover, when the battle of Al Jammal (the Camel) ended, they criticized Caliph Ali for not allowing them to claim their possessions of the army of Aisha, the Prophet's wife. These events show that the economic factors can drive the reasons for the appearance of the Kharijite and repeat occurrences. Finally, this type of Kharijite is called 'classical' Kharijite, and now for the purpose of this research, it is important to next examine the contemporary Kharijite.

7. How to recognize contemporary Kharijites?

If the three characteristics of Kharijites mentioned earlier are literally implemented, any contemporary extremist group could be classified as being inspired by the ideology of the classic Kharijite.

As far as their extremism in practicing the religion of Islam is concerned, the Kharijites first went out under the banner of Jihad (struggle in the cause of Islam), commanding good deeds and rejecting evil, and achieving monotheism and justice following the willful judgement of Caliph Ali and his followers to have had sought partners beside God and done evil things. The Kharijites conceived that Caliph Ali and his followers had changed the rule of Allah to that of manmade one. This is exemplified in a speech by one of their leaders, when the Kharijites gathered at Abdullah bin Wahab al-Rasabi's house, they addressed their eloquent sermons about temporal life and their desire for the Hereafter and Paradise, urging them to enjoin good and forbid evil.⁵⁴

The contemporary Kharijites isolate themselves from the ordinary Muslim societies, and hold extreme claims of Jihad, commanding good deeds, rejecting evil, achieving monotheism and establishing God's rule like what we saw in Mosul and Raqqa under the control of ISIL. They also call their territory "the abode or house of faith" and demand Muslims move there from other Muslim countries thought of as "the abode or house of disbelief" where (to them) God's law is not practiced and the people are infidels as they have agreed to the rule of man.

Moreover, both classic and contemporary Kharijites claim dead members are martyrs who will go to the Heaven for being on the true path. In the battle of Nahrawan, Caliph Ali fought them they shouted at the top of their lungs "...prepare yourselves to meet your Lord, the Almighty, move, move to Heaven... none has the right of ruling except Allah... move, move to heaven."⁵⁵ Today, this phenomenon is clearly widespread among those extremists who tempt their followers into going to heaven like ISIL and Buku Haram suicide bombers talking on the media. Apart from that, they also legalized theft, blood, and privacy of the (Ahl Al Thimma) non-Muslims living among Muslim communities. This step was very hard for Caliph Ali to accept and is why he waged war against them for becoming far more extremist, straying, shedding blood, and legalized transgression on Ahl Al Thimma. Ibn Katheer said:

"...[Caliph] Ali Ibn Abu Talib sent a messenger to those who did not return after their talks and told them that their conditions would be: not to shed blood, not to trespass on people, and do not do wrong with non-Muslims (Ahl Al Thimma). If any of these conditions is violated it will nullify any pact or truce [between Caliph Ali and Kharijites]. He clearly told them he will fight them. Aisha asked Ibn Shadad whether Ali fought them. He replied I swear to God he did not send the army on them until they trespassed on people, shed blood and harmed Ahl Al Thimma or made such actions legal."⁵⁶ When talking about the ignorance of the Kharijites, it is important to look at the age of the majority of those contemporary extremist groups. Most of them are teenagers with an immature mentality. This characteristic was mentioned by the Prophet as mentioned earlier. That same feature is seen in those outcasts of today as the majority of their leaders are teenagers and in through the lens of Sharia law comprehension and religion they are not mature enough to carry out the role of leadership.

⁵⁴ Then al-Rasabi said: Our brothers from this village, which oppressed its people, took us out, along with this blackness to some of the mountains, or some of these cities, denying these unjust rulings. And then and after them unjust oppressors and then said: I testify to the people of our call from the people of our acceptance that they have followed the passion, and renounced the rule of the book, and lived in the sayings and actions, and that their jihad right on the believers, cried a man of them is called Sakhbara Al Sullami, Then he incited those to go out on the people, and said in his words: "Strike their faces and their faces with swords until the Most Gracious, Most Merciful, obeys, for you have obeyed and obeyed Allah as you have desired. I said: This is the beating of people from the strangest forms of the sons of Adam, Glory of the type of creation as he wanted, and already in great power. Ibn Katheer, *Al bidayat Wal nihaya*, Vol. 9, 284-285

⁵⁵ Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol. 3, 121

⁵⁶ Ibn Katheer, *Al bidayat Wal nihaya*, Vol. 9, 288

They look at Quran and Hadith at their basic literal meanings and quickly issue Fatwas (decree) without careful consideration. Moreover, they read these verses of Quran and Hadith that support their existence. That is why the Prophet described them for reciting Quran and Hadith but do not go down from their throats,⁵⁷ or "...their faiths do not enter their hearts",⁵⁸ i.e. they cannot realize the true meaning of the religion of Islam notwithstanding that they appear to be strong Muslims. That is why when they issue Fatwas, they cause problems and disasters for people since they are not careful.

This ignorance also distracts them from the true practice of the Prophet. The Prophet said, "That which is lawful is clear and that which is unlawful is clear, and between the two of them are doubtful matters about which many people do not know. Thus, he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honor, but he who falls into doubtful matters [eventually] falls into that which is unlawful."⁵⁹ In Islam, bloodshed is unlawful for non-Muslims who are not in the battle with Muslims according to the verses of Quran, meaning killing Muslims by Muslims is prohibited from the beginning. However, the Kharijites do not follow this practice as it is written. To reach their goals they decide what is Halal (permissible) and what is Haram (forbidden) as they wish. As was mentioned earlier, the Kharijite who murdered Caliph Osman Ibn Affan looted his house and declared that who made his blood Halal to be shed and made his wealth Halal for to be taken. Ibn Katheer mentioned that "...they took whatever was in his house. One of the men went past him and saw that his head was by the Quran. He kicked his head and took it away from the Quran and said: '...To this day I have not seen the head of a disbeliever so beautiful and the position of a disbeliever so nice.'" ⁶⁰ The narrator said, "I swear to Allah they did not leave anything in his house: they took it all even the cookery. Then those criminal murderers walked in his house taking everything. One of them shouted '...Isn't permissible for us to take his belongings while his blood was permissible for us?' then they took everything closing the door on Caliph Osman along with two other corpses."⁶¹ Similarly, the contemporary Kharijites groups flip Haram matters into Halal, and vice-versa, according to their needs through calling others disbelievers, killing people without justifications, the use of drugs, suicide bombings, looting, occupying other people's houses, amongst other things. This behavior proves that the ignorance of the contemporary Kharijites is rooted from the classic Kharijites.

Finally, when referring to the fragmentation of the Kharijites' groups, it can be seen from the history and modern time that new extremist groups were born out of the ideas of the original ones. For example, those individuals who were fighting for Al-Qaeda before 2006 in Iraq left the group and established ISIL, in which the former one denounces the activities of the latter one.⁶² This ascertains they can without difficulty detach themselves for insignificant differences in opinion and stand against one another, despite their extremist ideology remaining the same. Like the classic Kharijites, the contemporary ones also avoid documenting and collecting their current thoughts and ideologies apart from what has been written on the social media or broadcasted by their leaders. In this context, Ibn Taymiyyah centuries ago conceptualized his thoughts about Kharijites by saying, "We became acquainted with sayings of the Kharijite through those people who narrated things about them and we have not received any books like those of Al Muetazilas, Rafizas, Zaidys, Asharis, Karamiyas, Salimiyas, and the four main sects (religious groups), the sects of the scholars of Hadiths, the philosophers, the Sufis, and others like them."⁶³ Thus, understanding their views from their own sources is not easy since they come from intricate network or roots and canals, whilst simultaneously there are no books written by their leaders or scholars to be seen.⁶⁴ Yet, somehow they are still on the grip of an extremist ideology inspired by the Kharijites of the first Muslim generation.

Furthermore, one of the reasons why there is scarcity of writings about them, or presuming there is a loss of information, is due to their extremist and revolutionary nature. As they spend most of their lives fighting, there is little time to write or evidence.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ Muslim, *Sabih al-Muslim*, Hadith No. 2516

⁵⁸ Bukhari, *Sabih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 6930

⁵⁹ Al-Nawawī, *Rawdat Alttalibayn Waeumdat Almuftin*.

⁶⁰ Ibn Katheer, *Al bidayat Wal nibaya*, Vol. 9, 185-189

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Lizzie Dearden, "Al-Qaeda leader denounces ISIL: 'madness and lies' as two terrorist groups compete for dominance", *The Independent*, 13 January 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/al-qaeda-leader-ayman-al-zawahiri-ISIL-madness-lies-extremism-islamic-state-terrorist-groups-compete-a7526271.html>.

⁶³ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmu al-Fatwa al-Kubra*, Vol. 13, 49

⁶⁴ Muhamad Mustafa, *Usul Watarikh Aljiraq Al'iislamit* [Origins and the History of Islamic Sects], (2003), 88.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

However, because of the influence that underpins their actions in the different times of history, most history books, especially those concerned with the various groups, have written full and detailed information about them. This is because they have always had their followers in most stages of history. Even today there are groups of people under the influence of their views in various parts of the world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stressed that if scientific and impartial research about the Kharijites is carried out, it will be realized that the phenomenon of extremism (Kharijites') behavior started from the beginning of Islam, the Prophet mentioned and condemned them, and Caliph Ali fought them to the last degree. This article concludes that, firstly, the concepts of ruler, ruling and economy are the only known pillars of the Kharijites ideology to us, which were not conclusive for the first Muslim generation per se, but rather continued influence on and shape the extremist groups throughout the last fourteen centuries until today whilst not always being necessary to be called 'Kharijite'. Both classic and modern Kharijites uphold practicing these three concepts in their strictest meaning. Secondly, the above three concepts are not inclusive as there might be other factors beyond that but not known to us yet. Thus, this article concludes that there is a lack of information about other substantial foundations of the ideology of the classic Kharijite groups who appeared at the different stages of the Muslim history. One of the main supports to this point is that Muslim scholars during the first two centuries of the Islamic Empire considered Kharijites' ideology as dangerous, subversive and seditious thoughts to the society. That is why they avoided mentioning them or referring to them in a broad context with the hope that their ideology would die eventually. However, the cotemporary Muslim scholars are still working on identifying the characteristics of classic Kharijites so that the moderate Muslims be careful about ideologies associated with the classic ones.

Nowadays, the petrifying actions of the contemporary extremist groups like Buku Haram, ISIL and other unknown groups that call themselves to be linked with Al-Qaeda, and their advocacy the only ruler they chose without Muslims' acceptance in general, their strict application and practice of Islam, and their obtaining wealth through illegal means, shedding blood in the name of religion are mere repetition of the actions of classic Kharijites. This is a good indication that the ideology of the classic Kharijites still has both a direct and indirect influence on modern Kharijites groups. This will continue as long as the causes for their existence remain, in particular, ignorance about religion. Finally, future research calls for studies to be carried out on all the contemporary extremist groups in order to reveal more on their hidden history make comparisons with classic Kharijite and generate public awareness about contemporary Kharijite's ideology.