

A Theological Miscellany

By A. S. TRITTON

AL-MUṬARRIFĪYA

MANUSCRIPTS from the Yemen mention this sect. The following account of it is taken from works in the British Museum; possibly further details could be found in manuscripts in Berlin. It is said that these heretics are to be found in most countries. One writer declares tantalizingly that their errors are too many for him to mention them all. By their show of devotion to the family of the prophet they spread error in Islam, making men think that it was the teaching of the family. They studied their creed in their conventicles.¹ They are called *ṭabīʿīya*, which D. B. Macdonald translates as deistic naturalists.

They taught² that God has forty names; they are he and he is they and they are eternal as he is. Therefore they are worse than the Christians in the proportion of forty to three. Nature is outside the power of God though living beings are within it. Such phenomena as creation, the means of livelihood (*rizk*), death, life, growth, and decrease do not come from God but are due to changes of bodies and the effects of natures. Therefore sickness and pain do not come from God (one account makes them come from the devil), while storms and hail are the result of chance. God has no grace, no power to give good things to men; the believer gets the means of livelihood as a reward, the unbeliever takes them by force.

Towards living creatures they were strict determinists, for God does all their acts. "They ascribed to God the acts of men and many shameful things," and again, "they denied the acts of God and ascribed the acts of men to him." They made a distinction between men and animals. The acts of animals are determined, being done by him who controls them. The act of a man does not go beyond himself and does not affect another. Hitting and being hit is the example given. Hitting is the act of a man, a movement of his hand, and does

¹ Or. 3786, f. 190.

² Or. 3976, ff. 140 to 167.

not pass beyond him. Being hit is the stopping of a body and is the act of God in that he stops it.

The *Ḳur'ān* is an attribute necessary to the heart of the most exalted king and is named *Mikhāil*. It is neither created nor eternal though it is an accident. An accident cannot be revealed. The book which men hold is not the *Ḳur'ān*; what men hear is only the reader. They did not accept the hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets nor the revealed books. The office of prophet is the work of the prophet; God did not choose them, they chose the office and it is their doing. This sect think it lawful to tell a lie to save life. The *Zaidiyya* do not permit this but say that a man must speak in innuendo.

The *Zaidi* says that this sect is to be treated as the enemy of Islam. It is not lawful to eat animals which they have killed, to intermarry with them, inherit from them, nor to bury them in a Muslim cemetery.

Some of these doctrines had been taught by earlier theologians. 'Abbād b. Sulaimān taught that sickness and pain did not come from God and that a man might become a prophet as a reward for good works. *Al-Nazzām* had taught that a man's acts did not pass beyond himself. *Abu'l-Hudhail* said that the *Ḳur'ān* was an accident and *Hishām b. al-Ḥakam* said that it was neither created nor creator. *Ja'far b. Ḥarb* used the expression *ḥikāya* of the *Ḳur'ān* which is in the hands of men. *Hikāya*, which usually means story, might perhaps be translated here echo, or possibly likeness. At any rate, it makes a difference between the earthly *Ḳur'ān* and the heavenly. The *Muṭarrifiyya* also used this word of the earthly book, whether in the hands or the hearts of men.

All but one of the theologians named above were *Mu'tazilis*; their determinism shows that the *Muṭarrifiyya* did not belong to this school.

AL-ḤARBĪYA

The historians of religion mention two sects, the *Ḥarbīya* and the *Ḥārithīya*; but the doctrines of the two are so much alike that the double name seems to be a mistake. In a text without diacritics the name is ambiguous; it is *حربه*. The textual evidence is given in full by *Friedländer*¹ and need not be repeated. The name must be derived either from *Ḥarb* or *Ḥārith*; other forms, *Ḥizb*, *Ḥazan*, and *Kharb* are only freaks.

¹ *Heterodoxies of the Shiites*, 2, 124.

The Ḥarbīya

They followed Bayān b. Sim‘ān in thinking that the spirit of God was in the prophets and passed to Abū Hāshim, the son of Ibn al-Ḥanafīya, from whom it passed to ‘Abdullah, the founder of the sect, who was a prophet (*Mukhtaṣar al-Farq*, 151).

They accepted Abū Hāshim as imām and after him ‘Abdullah as his successor. Then they found out that ‘Abdullah was a fraud and accepted ‘Abdullah b. Mu‘āwiya as imām. (Al-Ash‘ari, *Maḳālāt*, 22.)

The statement in al-Shahrastāni¹ that they believed in transmigration may be right or it may be a deduction from their doctrine of the imām. He adds the natural corollary that reward and punishment were given in this life.

The Ḥārithīya

They accepted Abū Hāshim as imām. He appointed ‘Abdullah b. Mu‘āwiya but deposited the appointment with Ṣāliḥ b. Mudrak because ‘Abdullah was young. God is light and is in ‘Abdullah, who knows everything. Whoever knows the imām may do as he pleases.

It is obvious that the doctrines of these two sects are not inconsistent and the statements may well be complimentary. The practice of cursing Fāṭima and her sons and of praising ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḷjam, which Ibn Ḥazm² ascribes to the Ḥizbiya, is also not inconsistent with these doctrines. The suggestion of Professor Hitti³ that the Ḥarbīya are the Karbīya is untenable for these held that Ibn al-Ḥanafīya himself was the imām. (Al-Ash‘ari, *Maḳālāt*, 19 ; al-Nawbakhti, 25 ; *Mukhtaṣar*, 36 ; Maḳrīzi, *Khīṭāt*, 2, 352.)

Al-Shahrastāni is the only writer to mention both the sects and he says that the founder of the Ḥārithīya was Ishāḳ b. Zaid b. al-Ḥārith, a name which I cannot find anywhere else. The only thing he says about them is that their teaching was antinomian. The evidence for the two names is about equal but the fact that someone had to invent an eponym for the Ḥārithīya suggests that Ḥarbīya is the right name.

DEPOSIT

In the preceding article reference is made to a deposit given by an imām to be kept for his successor who was at the time too young to receive it. This story occurs four times ; it would seem that the Shi‘a was wanting in imagination.

Ḥusain deposited with Umm Salama his books, will, the weapons

¹ *Al-Mīlāl wal-Nīḥāl*, 113. ² *Al-Fiṣal*, 4, 188. ³ *Mukhtaṣar al-Farq*, 151, n. 1.

which he had, and other things to be given to 'Alī Zain al-'Ābidīn. In addition to the story told above, Abū Hāshim is said to have given his will to 'Alī, the father of Muḥammad the 'Abbāsīd, to keep till his son grew up.

Then Muḥammad, the son of 'Alī al-Hādi, who died in the lifetime of his father, gave his will to a young and trusty servant of his father, Nafis by name, to give to his brother Ja'far. As 'Alī al-Hādi had been appointed by his father, his son Muḥammad could not again appoint him. The trust consisted of books, knowledge, arms, and what the Muslim community needed.¹

AL-ṢAMAD (SŪRA, 112)

The *Lisān al-'Arab* gives the meaning of the root as "aim at", "turn to for help"; then the noun means "chief", he on whom one can rely or from whom one asks help. It also means "solid", though the dictionary does not suffer this meaning to be applied to God. In his commentary (30, 222-4), al-Ṭabari gives many explanations; not hollow, what does not eat and drink, solid, what does not take food, without bowels, that from which nothing comes out, what begets not and is not begotten, supreme chief, what abides and does not pass away. This variety shows that the commentators did not know the meaning of the word. Some extremists of the Shi'a taught that God was solid or was hollow from the breast upwards; they evidently took this word in a material sense. So did the Greeks; we find *σφυρόπηκτος* (Migne, *P.G.*, 97, 1545), *ὀλόσφυρος* and *ὀλόβολος* (104, 1385).² "Chief" would fit the context and al-Ṭabari quotes a verse where it occurs as an epithet of *sayyid*. A better meaning would be welcome.

The root occurs in divine names. One of the gods of 'Ād was Ṣamūd (Ṭab., *commentary*, 8, 153), or Ṣamūda (*Murūj al-Dhahab*, 3, 295). It also occurs in a south Arabian proper name ṢMDN'MR, where the first part may be a divine name or epithet. In the north at Zenjirli B'L ṢMD is found (Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris*, 3, 223, 236). ṢMD need not be a place name, cf. Baal Zephon, BDSFN and 'BDSFN. (Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, 104.)

I should suggest that ṢMD is a divine name, which Muḥammad used once and then dropped.

¹ Al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shi'a*, 29, 88, 89.

² It is interesting, though hardly important, to note that *P.G.*, 104, 1385, gives the forms *σαμέτ* and *Τσαμέτ* as names of God along with *ἀλάχ*.