FROM MUSAYLIMA TO THE KHĀRIJITE NAJDĪYYA

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Abstract
This paper tries to reconstruct the following accounts: the defeat of Musaylima and the death of his prominent followers, and the rise of the Khārijite Najdiyya in Yamāma. Moreover, this study seeks the evidence which points to the possible connection between Musaylima’s movement and the Khārijite Najdiyya. This paper highlights that many founders and prominent leaders of the Khārijites, and particularly the Najdiyya sect, came from the tribe of Ḥanīfa, to which Musaylima belonged. This, among other things, seems to have become the main impulse of attraction for the people of Ḥanīfa to join the sect. Additionally, the ‘characteristics’ and the ‘image’ of the Najdiyya reflect those of Musaylima. This leads us to conjecture that the people of Ḥanīfa, having failed to defend their prophet Musaylima and the land of Yamāma against the Medinan caliphate under Abū Bakr in the Battle of ‘Aqraba, later joined the Khārijite Najdiyya.
menyerupai gerakan Musaylima adalah hal lain yang turut menguatkan asumsi tersebut. Pandangan inilah yang kemudian mengantarkan penulis pada kesimpulan bahwa, setelah gagal mempertahankan nabi mereka, Musaylima, dan wilayah mereka, Yamāma, melawan khilafah Islam di Madinah yang dipimpin Abū Bakr, suku Ḥanīfa memilih memberontak dan bergabung dengan sekte Khawārij Najdiyya.

Keywords: Musaylima, Khārijite, Najdiyya

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A. Introduction: the Defeat of a ‘Prophet’

In the last two years of the Prophet Muḥammad’s life, the Muslim community in Medina developed rapidly. At the same time, another prophet in Yamāma, named Musaylima, consolidated his political power.\(^1\) The conquest of Mecca was a turning point for the early Muslim community. After this event, many Arab tribes, as reported by sīra (biography) and tārikh (historiography) literature, sent deputations to Medina to pay allegiance to the Prophet.\(^2\) In Yamāma, Hawdha b. ‘Alī, an influential political leader whose sway expanded from Central to North

\(^1\) Although Musaylima was a prophet contemporary to Muḥammad, only a few have seriously paid sufficient attention to this figure. Besides entries in the *EI1* (Encyclopaedia of Islam, Brill, first edition), *EI2* (Encyclopaedia of Islam, Brill, second edition), and *EQ* (Encyclopaedia of the Qurān, Brill), the following articles have dealt with Musaylima: Dale F. Eickelman, “Musaylima, An Approach to the Social Anthropology of Seventh Century Arabia” *JESHO* (Journal of Economy and Social History of the Orient) 10 (1967); M. J. Kister, “The Struggle against Musaylima and the conquest of Yamāma” *JSAI* (Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam) 27 (2002). See also a review on Kister’s work by Sellheim, “Zu M. J. Kister’s Struggle against Musaylima” in *Die Welt des Orients* 35 (2005): pp. 158-68.

Arabia, died and Musaylima then appeared to control the politics of Yamāma. Thumāma b. ‘Uthāl, on the other hand, stood as an opposition, with the support of Medina from both the Prophet Muḥammad himself during his lifetime and Abū Bakr, the first caliph. However, Musaylima, who was supported by numerous followers consisting of settled and nomad tribes, was stronger than Thumāma, whose followers constituted only a splinter group of the settled people.

Although Musaylima’s political power came later after Hawdha’s death, his claim of prophethood, according to some early Muslim sources, occurred no later than the Prophet Muḥammad’s. Musaylima’s religious

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activities, as *kahin* (soothsayer) and *Nabī* (prophet) or *rasul* (messenger), began when he was in Haddār, the village where he was born. However, he gained no significant number of followers. When he moved to Hajar, the capital of Yamāma, the number of his followers increased considerably. After Hawdhā’s death, Musaylima, perhaps inspired by the success of the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina, seized the opportunity to combine both politics and prophetic mission as a means to achieve his goal of founding an independent Yamāma. He achieved considerable success, but only for two years. It was Khālid b. Walīd’s force --dispatched by Abū Bakr after the failure of ‘Ikrima b. Abī Jahl’s force in facing Musaylima’s troops-- which finally defeated Musaylima. Wahshi, a black slave who had killed Ḥamza, the Prophet Muḥammad’s uncle, claimed to have killed Musaylima in the fierce Battle of ‘Aqraba.

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B. The Followers

This section presents the story of Musaylima’s followers briefly, which Muslim sources still preserve. Ibn Sa’d, for instance, reports only the members of the deputation of the tribe of Ḥanīfa who came to Medina and who are said to have converted to Islam. Yet Ibn Sa’d fails to mention the identities of Musaylima’s supporters. So do later authors of many genres of Muslim literature, ranging from ʿtabaqāt (biographies), Ṣira (biography of the Prophet), tārīkh (historiography), Ḥadith (prophetic tradition), ʿiʿjāz (miracle of the Qurʾān), tafsīr (exegesis of the Qurʾān), to rijāl al-Ḥadīth (transmitters of the tradition).

Most of al-Ṭabārī’s stories of the Battle of Yamāma, for instance, focus on the accounts of Muslim troops under the command of Khālid b. al-Walīd. Various reports mention a number of names of Muslim commanders and warriors, whereas only a few names of those who fought on the side of Musaylima are mentioned. Al-Ṭabārī reports that the number of the Ḥanīfa who fought on the side of Musaylima was forty thousand, although it is difficult to accept the reliability of this estimation. However, it would appear that Musaylima was supported by a huge number of followers from various tribes in Yamāma in the Battle of ʿAqraba and that the people of Ḥanīfa were his main supporters. Most of the people of Taʾmīm, a neighbour and competitor to the Ḥanīfa, seemed to support their own prophetess, Sajāḥ.

According to the reports on the battle between the Ḥanīfa and the Medinans, not only were the followers of Musaylima numerous, but they were also well organized, a fact which explains why to the extent that the Ḥanīfa defeated Muslim troops under ʿIkrima b. Abī Jahl.

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11 Ibn Sa’d, ʿTabaqāt al-Kubra vol. 1, p. 316. Wilhelm Hoenerbach also provides a list of those who stood against Musaylima during the Yamāma war; see his Wāṭimaʾs Kitāb ar-Ridda aus Ibn Hāgār’s ʿIṣāba, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Abfalls der Araberstämmen nach Muhammads Tod (Wiesbaden: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1951), pp. 53-65.

12 Al-Ṭabārī, Tārīkh vol. 3, p. 281. Al-Balansī and Ibn Ḥubaysh preserved a testament by Khālid b. al-Walīd on the huge number of the tribe Ḥanīfa; see Ibn Ḥubaysh, Ghazwat Ibn Ḥubaysh vol. 1 79; al-Balansī, Tārīkh al-Ridda, p. 91.


14 Al-Ṭabārī, Tārīkh vol. 3, p. 281.
later battle under Khālid’s command, a significant number of Muslims, ranging from the Medinans (Arāṣ), the Meccans (Muhajirūn) to the Bedouins, fell as martyrs (shuhada’). From the story of the battle, we can only draw three names of Musaylima’s prominent supporters, while the rest of them remain unidentified.

First, al-Rajjāl/al-Raḥḥal/al-Nahhār b. ‘Unfuwa played a critical role in both propagating Musaylima’s prophethood among the Ḥanīfā and acting as a commander of his troops in the Battle of ‘Aqraba. According to some akhbār (reports) found in various genres of Muslim literature, al-Rajjāl came to Medina as a deputation member of the tribe of Ḥanīfā, joining the Companions’ circle where he learned the Qur’ān and the Sunna under the instruction of a known Qur’ānic reader, Ubayy b. Ka‘b. Al-Rajjāl also made acquaintance with a prominent Ḥadith narrator, Abū Hurayra.

According to Muslim literature, al-Rajjāl called upon the people of Ḥanīfā to testify to Musaylima’s prophethood. Having stayed in Medina for a considerable period of time, he was familiar with the Muslim community and Islamic teachings. Upon his return to Yamāma, he informed Musaylima about the successful development of both Islam and the Muslim community. Al-Ṭabarī preserves a long report narrating how Musaylima consulted al-Rajjāl about many vital issues, including how to perform miracles and to imitate the way Mūhammad had done so. From the Muslim perspective, however, Musaylima always failed to imitate

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Ibid.
Muḥammad. In the end, al-Rajjaż was killed in the Battle of ‘Aqraba.

Second, Muḥkam b. Ṭufayl or Muḥkam al-Yamāma was also an important supporter of Musaylima, and worked as his wāzīr (adviser). In spite of the fact that Muslim reports say little about him, al-Waqiţī cites a poem denouncing his support of Musaylima’s prophethood.

Third, Mujja’ah b. Murāra adopted a rather ambiguous position between Musaylima’s faction and the Medinans. On the one hand, it is said that after witnessing one of Musaylima’s miracles, he testified to his prophethood. On the other hand, during the Battle, Mujja’ah and his followers were not on the battlefield with their prophet Musaylima. While seeking for the blood revenge from the tribe of Āmir, they were captured by Khālid b. Wālid’s troop on the way to ‘Aqraba. The troop kept Mujja’ah as a hostage and executed his followers. After the Battle of Yamāma, he mediated between the two warring factions and made them sign a treaty. Moreover, his daughter married Khālid and he himself led a deputation to Medina to acknowledge Abū Bakr’s sovereignty over Yamāma.

Apart from this information, the identity of most of Musaylima’s followers remains enigmatic. The Muslim sources report that, having been defeated, some of the Ḥanīfī were executed. Others are said to have converted to Islam. A number of them were also driven out of Yamāma.

Tārīkh literature portrays the Muslim troops as achieving total victory in the Battle of ‘Aqraba and states that the followers of Musaylima who survived after the Battle surrendered to the Medinan authority. However, this story seems to contain a certain degree of simplification.
There is no compelling evidence suggesting that all people of Yamāma surrendered to the Medinan authority upon their defeat. Nor is the story convincing when it states that the survivors among Musaylima’s followers all converted to Islam.

On the contrary, I would like to argue that a certain number of Ḥanīfa continued practicing Musaylima’s cult. According to Ḥadith reports preserved in the collections of Ḥakim, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Kathir, the followers of Musaylima still practiced the rites of his cult during the time of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, the third caliph. The way in which they did so is portrayed differently in the sources. One Ḥadith says that they only testified to Musaylima’s Qur’ān (scripture), which, according to another report, was called ‘mushaf’ (codex). Ibn Kathir even cites the verses which they recited. Ibn Kathir even cites the verses which they recited.30 ʿAbdalla b. Masʿud, according to these sources, ordered the execution of the leader of the cult, ʿAbdalla b. Nawwāḥa, and drove the rest of the followers of Musaylima out of Yamāma.

The story of Musaylima’s followers practicing the ritual cult in a mosque of Yamāma implies that after the Battle of ʿAqraba, Musaylima’s followers continued to practice his cult, especially reciting their own qurʿān or performing certain rites. Moreover, more than a century later, Ibn Ishāq consulted a Sheikh of Ḥanīfa on the story of the deputation of the Ḥanīfa to Medina.31 Two centuries later, al-Jahīz met the people of Ḥanīfa in Basra, whom he consulted about Musaylima’s revelations.32 Surprisingly, later Muslim sources preserve a number of stanzas attributed to Musaylima.33

32 Al-Jahīz, ʾIlayyān vol. 4, p. 89.
The fact that Musaylima’s cult was still practiced at the time of ‘Uthmān leads us to speculate that this was also the case during the reigns of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. However, this only describes the loyal followers of Musaylima. This paper also seeks to explain that those who later converted to Islam joined the faction of ‘Aī. In the later period, as Abdullah al-Askar argues, the people of Musaylima—who failed to obtain the independence of Yamāma from the Medinan authority—later supported the Khārijite Najdiyya movement in their hometown. According to al-Askar, the sentiment of regionalism played a vital role in triggering both religious movements of Musaylima and the Najdiyya. In this regard, I try to present more clues to the connection between the two.

C. The First Clue to the Link between Musaylima and the Najdiyya: Tribal Origin

The following discussion presents the first clue conveying a possible link between the Khārijite movement and Musaylima’s movement. That is, I draw attention to the tribal origins of the early Khārijite’s leaders, particularly those of the Najdiyya sect.

According to modern scholars, the origin of the Khārijite movement remains puzzling regarding when and how it emerged. Traditional Muslim sources tell us that this political movement can be traced back to the arbitration (muḥakʿīma) that took place in attempt to cease the conflict between the warring factions of ‘Aī and Muʿāwiya. However, the Khārijites (or the Khawārij, those who seceded from the faction of ‘Aī due to their disappointment with the arbitration) called upon the early Muslims to return to the law of God (lā ḥukma ʾillā lillāh). In the theological realm, the Khārijites went further, condemning many early Muslim leaders, including ‘Uthmān, ‘Aī, Muʿāwiya and the rest of the Umayyad caliphs. This sect, however, did acknowledge the leadership

36 The above formula, according to Hawting, was “a summary of the scripturalist position and a protest against the Oral Law rather than a reaction to the arbitration agreement made at Ṣiffin.” See his “The Significance of the Slogan “lā ḥukma ʾillā lillāh” and the References to the “ḥudūd” in the Traditions about the Fitna and the Murder of ‘Uthmān” BSOAS 41 (1978), p. 461.
of Abū Bakr and 'Umar.

In terms of tribal origins, Watt points out that most of the Khārijites came from northern tribes. Madelung also remarks the same pattern that some northern tribes, under the umbrella of the Rabi'a, including the tribes Ḥanīfa and the Tamīm, supported 'Ali's faction during the War of Ṣiffin. However, in the aftermath of the arbitration, these tribes joined the Khārijites. This tribal affiliation is a point of departure for the way in which the Khārijite movement relate to Musaylima’s movement.

From traditional Muslim accounts, one can conclude that tribal sentiment played a vital role in the leadership of the early Muslim community. During the election of Abū Bakr, for example, the Quraysh, a section of the Mudar, enjoyed the privilege in both politics and theology. Their nobility was justified by numerous traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, who was himself a Qurayshite. The four rightly guided caliphs, many prominent Companions, the Umayyads, and the early Abbasid rulers also belonged to the Quraysh. This tribal sentiment also contributed to the politics and tribal alliance of later Muslim community. It is therefore unsurprising that the Tamīm and the Ḥanīfa, sections of Rabi'ah, joined the Khārijites in order to protest against the Mudar who dominated both factions of ‘Alī and Mu'awiya.

Nonetheless, via their tribal affiliation to the Ḥanīfa and the Tamīm, we uncover the likely link between Musaylima’s people and the Khārijites. This can be seen in the origins of some Khārijite leaders. It is true that the early leaders of the Khārijites in terms of their tribal origins, as Wellhausen remarks, were heterogeneous. However, the Tamīm and


40 The following figures were Tamīmites: Mis'ar b. Fadaki (Ṭabarānī, *Ṭarīkh* vol. 5, p. 76), Hurquš b. Zuhayr (Ṭabarānī, *Ṭarīkh* vol. 5, p. 75; Dinawārī, *Akbhār*, p. 204), ‘Urwa b. Udayya, and Abū Bilal (Mirdas b. Udayya, d. 61/680-1) (Ṭabarānī, *Ṭarīkh* vol. 5, p. 55; Mubarrad, *Kāmil* vol. 3, pp. 1098, 1185-86; Levi Della Vida, *EI2*; S. Sears,
the Ḥarīfa later dominated the leadership of this sect.

To begin with, ‘Urwa b. Udayya al-Ḥanṣažī was the leader of the Tamīm who protested the arbitration between ‘Alī’s faction and Muʿawiyah’s. Due to this, a clash occurred between the Tamīm and the Yemenite tribes under Ashʿath b. Qays, the chief of Kinda of Kūfah, who accepted the condition proposed by Muʿawiyah. It is said that ‘Urwa cried that ‘the arbitration belongs only to God.’

The founder and leader of the section Azařiqa of Khārijites, Naʿfī b. Azrāq (d. 65/685) was indentified both as Tamīmite and Hanafite. ‘Abidah b. Hilal, an important supporter of the Azařiqa, belonged to the Yashkur tribe, many of whose members lived in Yamaṣma.


The following figures were Ṭayyī: Zayd b. Ḥusain (Ṭabarī, Tārikh vol. 5, p. 85. Dinawārī, al-Akhbār, p. 203), Muʿadh b. Juwain, and Ṭarafā b. ‘Adi b. Ḥatim (Ṭabarī, Tārikh vol. 5, p. 75; Dinawārī, al-Akhbār, p. 205).


41 Dinawārī, al-Akhbār, p. 211.
42 Montgomery Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, p. 5; Islam and the Integration of Society, pp. 94-103; The Formative Period, pp. 10-11.
44 Wellhausen, The Religio-Political Factors, p. 51. n. 3. Hawdḥā b. ‘Alī was also a Yashkurite. For the sources of his pedigree, see n. 4 above.

The most successful movement of the Khārijites in terms of political endeavours was the Najdiyya faction led by Najda b. ‘Āmir al-Ḥanāfi, 46 which had separated from Nāfi’ b. Azrāq’s section, 47 and whose main supporters --Abū Ṭalāt Salīm b. Matar, Abū Fudayk ‘Abdalla b. Thawr, 48 and ‘Atiyya b. al-Āswad 49-- came from the Ḥanīfīa. Another important leader of the early Khārijites, Ḥassan b. Bahdāj, was also a Ḥanafite. 50

Early Khārijites concentrated in Kūfā, where they survived into the Abassid era. Baṣra then also became a base of this sect, where the Najdiyya split from the Azārīqa in the second civil strife. 51 From Baṣra the Azārīqa went eastward, reaching Iran. 52 The Najdiyya, having moved to and ruled Yamāma, conquered many surrounding areas, including Bahrain, Oman, parts of Yemen, and Hadramawt in the south and south-west. 53

As a leader of the Khārijites, Najda, whom they called amīr al-mu’minīn (the commander of the faithful), 54 was of course hostile to the

47 R. Rubinacci, EI2.
49 Wellhasuen, The Religio-Political Factors, p. 45.
50 Ibid., p. 51.
52 Crone, God’s Rule, p. 55.
54 Shahrastānī, Kitāb al-Milal, p. 212.
Umayyads, the original nemesis of ‘Ali’s faction. It was not surprising that he supported Zubayrid faction, which, however, he finally left. This moment was also marked by the fact that he and his men moved from Basra to Yamama. This sect was known for its instability. It is not surprising that these Kharijite leaders—Najda, Abū Talūt, Abū Fudayk, and ‘Atiyya—were also involved in the serious quarrels over religious and political matters. Najda was finally killed by his own companion, Abū Fudayk.55

Thus, the fact that the founder of the Najdiyya, Najda b. ʿAmir, and its main leaders—e.g. Abū Fudayk, Abū Ṭalūt, and Ibn al-Aswad—were Hanafites may have become the main impulse of attraction for the people of Ḥanīfa. Abū Ṭalūt, whom Najda appointed as a governor of Yamama, centered his activities in Khadhārim, where four thousand slaves of Ḥanīfa were employed by the Umayyads to cultivate land.56 Thus, in a certain way, the emergence of the Khārijites in Yamama served as a new hope for the people of Ḥanīfa, a movement which might liberate them from the power of the Umayyads, whom they detested. In fact, Musaylima had previously failed to liberate them from the Medinan caliphate.

D. The Second Clue: ‘Characteristics’ and ‘Images’

Early ‘Kharijitism’ was a movement of ‘puritanism,’ or at least a movement that emphasized religious piety.57 Some also argue that this

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55 Najda was accused of committing sins in the eyes of the Khārijites, e.g. his unacceptable independent judgement (ijtiḥād), his protection of ‘Uthmān’s family, and his compromise with the caliph ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Marwan. Additionally, Najda failed to build a stable relation with the tribe of Ḥanīfa. When he moved his center to Bahrain, some of them withdrew their support. See, for instance, Abdullah al-Askar, al-Yamama, pp. 68-74. Ref. cited.


57 In this regard, J. Wellhausen argues that this sect, whose main teaching consisted of returning to the Qurʾān and the Sunna, had strong roots in the teachings of Islam itself. See his The Religio-Political Factors, pp. 17-18. Elie Adib Salem also underlines the religious sentiment which triggered the birth of the Khārijites, rather than the political motivation; see his Political Theory and Institutions of the Khawārij (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956). Micheal G. Morony subscribes to the same opinion, adding the positive side of the early Khārijites in maintaining the equal status among the Arab Muslims and respecting the non-Muslims; see his Iraq after the Muslim Conquest (Princeton:
sect had a strong bond with the spirit of Arab tribalism. The two characteristics can also be found in the accounts of Musaylima. From certain stanzas attributed to him, we may draw the conclusion that this prophet also endorsed his followers to practice a certain form of piety and asceticism, e.g. restricting certain sexual activities, prohibiting wine drinking, intoxicated drinks or mixed drinks. However, many Muslim


However, Shaban proposes that social factors and economical interests which likely triggered the emergence of this movement. That is, a particular group of Muslim community called qurra (lit. villagers/Bedouins), who were entrusted in the early Muslim community as an army to conquer new lands, blamed ‘Uthmān for injustices he committed, and then seceded from ‘Ali’s faction due to economical and social dissatisfaction. This group was likely the proto-Khārijites. See M. A. Shaban, Islamic History, A.D. 600-750 (A.H. 132): A New Interpretation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 50-76. See also the meaning of qurra’ as Qur’a>n readers in n. 35 below. For more discussion on some views of modern Muslim and Western scholars on the Khārijites, see for instance, Hussam S. Timani who reviews each of these views in his Modern Intellectual Readings of the Khārijites (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2008).

58 R.E Brünnov, Die Charidschiten unter den ersten Omayyaden (Leiden: n.p., 1884), e.g. 8 and elsewhere. Crone highlights the ‘libertinism’ of the Khārijite in terms of character (see her God’s Rule 63), whereas Watt their ‘egalitarianism’ (see his The Formative Period, pp. 24-25).


The spirit of puritanism can also be seen in certain proponents of the ḥanīf, such as Abū Āmir who accused the Prophet Mūḥammad of mixing his version with extra-ḥanīf elements. See Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā vol. 2, p. 321; al-‘Asqalānī, Iṣāba vol. 1, p. 250; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidāya vol. 2, p. 221.
scholars convey a ‘negative’ image of Musaylimah, according to which he allowed his people drink wine and commit adultery.\(^{60}\) Musaylima also performed certain forms of prayers and fasting.\(^{61}\) However, Muslim authors accuse him of reducing the number of prayers originally ordered by the Prophet Muḥammad.\(^{62}\) He also taught his people loyalty to tribal alliance, and due to this he praised the Tāmīm for their tribal loyalty.\(^{63}\)

As in the case of Musaylima, the image of the Najdiyya is also related to wine and adultery. That is, Najda is reported to have tolerated wine drinking, or at least did not order the execution of big sinners, e.g. thieves, wine drinkers and adulterers (whom he regards as ghayr mushrikin/non-polytheists).\(^{64}\) The main teachings of the Najdiyya, as reported by later sources, was knowing God and His Messengers.\(^{65}\) Interestingly, the two main teachings can also be found in the accounts of Musaylima. In one of his stanzas, Musaylima explains the attributes of

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\(^{61}\) See one of Musaylima’s stanzas preserved by al-Ṭabarānī, *Ṭarīkh* vol. 3, pp. 283-4; trans. Donner, *The History*, p. 93; al-Nuwayri, *Nihāyat al-Arāb* vol. 19, p. 78. (Inna bani Tāmīmin qawm tahr laqāb/ The tribe Tāmīm is a people of purity and [quite] responsible. Lā makruha ‘alayhim wa la itāwa/Nothing can force them and nothing can influence them. Nujawirūhum ma bāyina bi iḥsān/Let us form allies with them (the Tāmīm) to stand. Numnī‘ūhum min kullī Insān/Let us protect every person of them).


God and his great role in human life.\textsuperscript{66} Thus, the seeds of monotheism were present in Yamāma before the people there converted to Islam.

\textsuperscript{66} See al-Ṭabarī, \textit{Tārīkh} vol. 3, p. 272; mod. trans. Donner, \textit{History}, p. 93; al-Nuwayri, \textit{Nihāyat al-Arāb}, vol. 19, p. 78. (\textit{Sami'a Allah li man sama'}/God listened to whomever He listened to. \textit{Wa atma'ub bi al-khayri idh tama'}/And made him yearn for good when he yearned. \textit{Wa là zala amrub fi kull ma sarra nafsub yajtami'}/And His cause is still arranged in everything that delights him. \textit{Ra'akum rabbukum fahayyakum}/Your Lord saw you and gave you life. \textit{Wa min wahsbat khallakum}/And preserved you from loneliness. \textit{Wa yawm dini anjakum}/And saved you and gave you life on the day of His religion). From this stanza, we can perhaps draw the attributes of God as follows: the Listener, the Generous one, the Arranger of detailed things, the Watcher, the life Giver, the salvation Giver, and the ‘Friend’ of man in loneliness.
or joined the Najdiyya movement. So far, it is beyond our knowledge whether Musaylima knew the Biblical prophets, some of whose names are preserved in the Qurʾān. What is certain is that he himself claimed prophethood.

Musaylima and the Khārijites shared the same fate, being depicted negatively in most of the sources by their adversaries. The stories of Musaylima and his followers have been preserved by his nemesis, the Muslim community. Similarly, the accounts of the Khārijites, which come down to us, were recorded by later Muʿtazilite and Sunnite authors. It is therefore not surprising that their narration often shows a hostile attitude to the subject. Unfortunately, we have no original record written by the followers of the two movements.

Musaylima’s cult and the Khārijites also shared a common dislike of the Quraysh. Musaylima’s proposal to Muḥammad to divide the land of Arabia into two, half for the former and the other half for the latter,

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68 See his declaration, Musaylima rasul allah (Musaylima, the messenger of God), in his letter to Muḥammad, n. 71 below. Given this, one may also speculate that Musaylima realized the existence of some previous prophets serving as models for his claim of prophethood, as did Muḥammad.

69 Patricia Crone, “A Statement by the Najdiyya Khārijites on the Dispensability of the Imamate,” SI 88 (1998), p. 55; Keith Lewinstein, “The Azāriqa in Islamic Heresiography” BSOAS 54 (1991): p. 251. In this regard, Jeffrey T. Kenney argues that the Khārijites also served as a symbol employed by later Sunnite authors representing any form of extremism in Islam. See his “Heterodoxy and Culture: The Legacy of the Khārijites in Islamic History”, Ph.D Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1991, p. 78 and elsewhere. Additionally, later Sunnite authors attributed a tradition—that a ‘black slave’ acting as a leader of ummah must be obeyed—to the Khārijites. However, Crone finds that this mere attribution has no convincing evidence. See her, “Even an Ethiopian Slave: The Transformation of a Sunnī Tradition,” BSOAS 57 (1994) 59-67. As such, later Sunnite authors played a certain role in shaping the image of the Khārijites.
was rejected. In a letter to Muḥammad, Musaylima also protested against the political domination of the Quraysh. He described the tribe as qawm yaʿādūn (the people who transgressed). The Khārijites continued to rebel against the Umayyads, who were part of the Quraysh. Similarly, the Umayyads also showed hatred towards the Ḥanīfa. Caliph ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Marwan claimed that it was Muʿāwiya, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, who killed Musaylima. Likewise, the Ḥanīfa also transmitted a tradition, according to which the Prophet said ‘wayl banu umayya/woe to the faction of Umayyads.’ The Umayyads, in turn, oppressed the Ḥanīfa, making them as slaves to cultivate their lands (as mentioned above).

We can further relate Musaylima’s movement to Najdiyya. It is reported that, having been defeated in Yamāma and Bahrain, the remaining followers of Najda escaped to Başra. It seems not to be a sheer coincidence that al-Jaḥīz once came to Başra to consult the people there about the revelation of Musaylima (as indicated earlier). Thus, connecting the two events leads us to speculate that the Ḥanīfa, who had joined the Khārijites, still preserved Musaylima’s story when they settled in Başra.

We can perhaps reconstruct the chronological narrative of the people of Ḥanīfa from the defeat of Musaylima to the rise of Najdiyya as follows. Although certain leaders of the Ḥanīfa, e.g. Mujjaʿah b. Mūrāra, paid allegiance to the Medinans’ sovereignty, not all of Musaylima’s followers entirely abandoned his cult. They still practiced it down to the time of ʿUthmān, as indicated earlier. Later, the people of Ḥanīfa

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71 Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā vol. 1, p. 316; Wilhelm Hoenerbach Wašīna’s Kitāb, pp. 53-65.


73 al-Balāḏūrī, al-Farg, p. 90.
who converted to Islam joined ‘Alī’s faction in the Șīffin war to integrate themselves in the Muslim community. Consequently, Mu‘āwiyā and most of the Umayyads became their enemies. In addition, the alliance of the Ḥanīfa with ‘Alī’s faction was also supported by the fact that ‘Alī married a women from the tribe of Ḥanīfa, Khawla bt. Ja‘far, who was captured during the Yamāma war. Khawla gave birth to Muḥammad b. Ḥanāfiyya, whom the Shi‘ite faction led by Mukhtar b. Abī ‘Ubayd’s later venerated. Thus, the presence of Khawlah and his son on the side of ‘Alī may have also played a role in attracting the people of Ḥanīfa to join this faction. In the aftermath of the muḥaqqima—when the Khārijite materialized in the form of political movement led by the Tamīm and the Ḥanīfa figures—some people of Ḥanīfa joined this movement. When Yamāma became the center of the Najdiyya, more people of Ḥanīfa must have joined this sect.

E. Concluding Remarks

Having presented the above picture, we can conclude with the following remarks. There is no name belonging to Musaylimah’s movement which survived until the emergence of the Khārijites. Nor was there any name which belonged to both Musaylimah’s movement and the sect Najdiyya. The numerous followers of Musaylima, including al-Rajjāl b. ‘Unfuwwa and Muḥkam b. Țufayl, were killed together with their prophet in the war of Yamāma. The last followers of Musaylima who still practiced his cult were led by Ibn Nawwāha at the time of ‘Uthmān. The leader was executed, and his followers were driven out of Yamāma. The Khārijite movement emerged later at the time of ‘Alī. The sect Najdiyya materialized at the later civil strife between the Marwanids and the Zubayrids. Given these facts, it is difficult to pinpoint the direct link between Musaylima’s movement and the Khārijites.

However, in view of the fact that some leaders of the Khārijites, particularly the sect Najdiyya, came from the Ḥanīfa, we may hypothesize that this gave impetus to the people of Ḥanīfa to join the movement.

74 Ibn Abī al-Hadīd, Sharh Nahj vol. 1, p. 201.
Particularly, the activities of the sect Najdiyya were centered in Yamāma, the town of Musaylima. This further strengthens al-Askar’s finding that both Musaylima and the Khārijite Najdiyya shared the same regional sentiment against the political domination of the Prophet and later caliphs. It is also true that the Khārijites employed this sentiment against the Quraysh, represented by both factions of ‘Alī and Muʿawiyah in the aftermath of the muḥākkaṃa. In the later Muslim politics, the Quraysh were represented by the Umayyads, against whom the Khārijites continued to rebel. Thus, Musaylima and the Khārijites have been perceived as nothing but rebellious factions. The former was against the Prophet, whereas the latter against the caliphs. The image of the two was unsurprisingly blackened, e.g., the Najdiyya was depicted as allowing adultery and wine drinking, as was Musaylima.

It is also worth noting that Ibn Ishāq and al-Jāḥiz met the people of Ḥanīfa who had preserved some accounts of Musaylima. Thus, the former followers of Musaylimah seem to have spread in many Muslim cities, including Basrah and Baghdād in the aftermath of the execution of their last leader, Ibn Nawwāḥa. Interestingly, Basrah also became one of the centers of the Khārijites.

From reading Musaylima’s stanzas, the link may be extended not only to Musaylima and the Khārijite Najdiyya, but also to Musaylima and Islam itself. The similarities between Musaylimah’s teachings and early Islam are not surprising, given the fact that the two were siblings, born in more or less the same place and time, i.e., the Arabian peninsula in the seventh century. Both prophets, Muḥammad and Musaylima, delivered their revelations using the same style of sajī (rhyme prose), and they

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77 A few of stanzas attributed to Musaylima feature repetitive oaths, which are also commonly found in some early Meccan revelations of the Qurʾān. See, for instance, al-Ṭabārī, Tārikh vol. 3, p. 283; trans. Donner, History, p. 108; al-Baqqillānī, Iḥāz al-Qurʾān, pp. 238-9; al-Harūnī, Iḥbāt Nubwawt, p. 38. See also the discussion on
conveyed Qur‘āns (readings),78 whose content, diction, and style bear substantial similarities.79 What is also clear is that the two figures served as prophets and tribal leaders who propagated monotheism.80 However, Islam survives until today, whereas Musaylima’s cult disappeared a long time ago.

78 It is worth recalling that the former followers of Musaylima read his Qur‘ān or mushaf. According to Richard Bell, the Qur‘ān refers to broader readings, which may include any readings other than the Qur‘ān. References to the specific standard Qur‘ān must have occurred at the later period of Islam. See Richard Bell, A Commentary on the Qur‘ān, Edmund Bosworth and M.E.J. Richardson (ed.) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991) vol. 2, p. 329.

79 See fn. 34 above. Maxime Rodinson has already pointed out some basic similarities between Musaylima and Islam; see his Mohammed (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 272.

80 See fn. 67 above.
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