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Āyāt al-aḥkām in early Ibadi thought

This paper examines the engagement with Qur'anic regulative and legal verses in early Ibadi thought. In particular, it focusses on the orations of the Ibadi Abū Ḥamza (Yaḥyā ibn al-Mukhtār, or al-Mukhtār ibn 'Awf, d. 130/748), and on reports about him in historical works in which such regulative and legal verses are quoted or referred to through allusions. Abū Ḥamza was a military commander who occupied Mecca and Medina at the end of the Umayyad period, and he was a renowned orator. In surviving fragmentary sermons and in historical reports, Abū Ḥamza and his proto-Ibadi followers appear as literal interpreters of Qur'anic āyāt al-aḥkām. The authority of the Quran (*ḥukm al-qur'ān*) is frequently invoked in such contexts, and Scripture alone becomes the measure for judging others, especially in terms of proper behaviour and righteousness (e.g., Caliphs and rulers). I show that the concept of scriptural enactment (*'amal bi-l-kitāb*, lit. "acting in accordance with scripture") can be traced back to the emergence of Kharijism, and that the evidence from proto-Ibadi oration parallels ideas expressed in the epistle of the Ibadi Sālim ibn Dhakwān (fl. late first/seventh century or second/eighth century). Such ideas later also imprinted themselves on Ibadi exegesis.



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