

was an Ibādīte; but we do know that he did not wish to study theology under him but grammar and lexicography.

I do not know what Khalīl's doctrine of *wahm qadīm* entailed (Jāhīz, *Tarbī* 78, -4). We must consider that the term *wahm* still had positive connotations at that time, meaning simply "imagination" rather than "conceit" (thus frequently in Shī'ite texts; cf. Ibn Bābōya, *Tawhīd* 38, apu. f.; 42, -8 etc.). Interestingly the closest parallels with Khalīl's abovementioned description of transcendence are found in the same Shī'ite environment; they, too, undoubtedly of quite an early date (see ch. D 1.3, beginning, below).

2.2.5.7 The Relation between Sin and Faith

One central point of Ibādīte doctrine has so far been mentioned only in passing: the concept of sin. Here, the heresiographers become more relevant, as this concept was always regarded as distinctive by the non-Ibādīte surroundings, while it was not controversial within the community. It was pure chance that preserved an old document on the subject among Darjīnī's writings, a missive briefly mentioned above, from Abū Sufyān Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl to, probably, the community in Yemen during the second half of the second century.¹ His main concern was to protect the community he addressed from the Khārijites' ancient error of alienating followers through excessive rigour. He called for leniency towards sinners and advocated accepting their penitence rather than speculating on their hidden intentions. Whoever wishes to deceive God will have to deal with God alone.² A venial sin becomes a mortal sin only through obduracy on the part of the sinner, in which case it is necessary to cease supporting him (*walāya*).³ Islam is not damaged every time a work of obedience is neglected, and not every infringement of a prohibition leads to unbelief. While there are certain fundamental principles that are indispensable to a Muslim, such as those listed in the "piety verse" of the Quran (sura 2:177): belief in God, in the Day of Judgment, in the angels, the scripture, and the prophets, as well as some practical points such as fasting in Ramadan, the pilgrimage, abiding by contracts, returning entrusted property etc.,⁴ there

1 See p. 232, n. 100 above; also regarding dating difficulties.

2 After sura 2:9. Cf. Darjīnī 281, 12ff.; transl. in Cuperly, *Professions de foi* II 135f. (cf. also *Introduction* 29f.).

3 Ibid. 281, 5ff. = Cuperly 134.

4 In more detail in ch. D 0 below.