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Qadariyya

The **Qadariyya** was a loosely organised Islamic theological movement promoting the doctrine of human free will. The name Qadariyya, generally applied derogatorily, derives from the movement's assertion that humans possess *qadar*, the capacity to determine their own actions. This use of the term contrasts with Qur'ānic references in which *qadar* is typically associated with God's volition rather than that of humans. The Qadariyya first appeared in about 70/690, were most active during the late Umayyad period (c. 101–32/720–50), and were eventually superseded by the Mu'tazilīs, who adapted some Qadarī doctrines but distanced themselves from the earlier movement and its leaders.

1. SOURCES AND DOCTRINE

Sources for understanding Qadarī doctrines are few. No Qadarī treatises or creeds have survived, if they ever existed. Descriptions of their doctrines appear mostly in refutations of their views and in heresiographical texts. The most famous purported Qadarī text is the *risāla* (treatise) attributed to the noted ascetic al-Ḥasan

al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), which attributes good deeds to God and evil deeds to humans. Its authenticity and al-Ḥasan's relationship to the broader Qadarī movement are debated (Mourad, 161–239.) Early anti-Qadarī texts include a letter attributed to al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya (d. c.100/718), the grandson of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), through whom the early 'Abbāsids claimed legitimacy (Cook, 68–88; van Ess, *Anfänge*, 1–112), and a letter ascribed to the caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 99–101/717–20) (Abū Nu'aym, 5:246–353; van Ess, Umar II). Al-Firyābī (d. 301/913) later refuted the Qadariyya in his *Kitāb al-qadar*, and the standard *ḥadīth* collections include several anti-Qadarī reports. Alleged Qadarīs are identified largely from lists provided in the heresiographical sources.

Based on these limited sources, it is impossible to reconstruct with confidence the details of the Qadariyya's doctrine. Their defining belief was that humans are responsible for their misdeeds and that God does not compel people to sin. Whether they held that good deeds are created by God or are the product of human volition is unclear, and there is no evidence that the Qadariyya grappled