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Sālimīyah Sect and its Doctrinal Opinions on the Divine Self in the Light of Islamic Doctrine

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Abstract: It is widely known that there are Islamic ideological sects and groups whose doctrinal opinions still exist to date, such as Asha'yrah, Maturidis, and Hanbalis, while we find other ideological groups that do not exist in our modern times. Chief among these ideological sects and groups is Sālimīyah sect, that belongs to its founder, Abul-Hassan Al-Basry Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Salem, who died in (297) AH / (909) AD. Sālimīyah sect is an Islamic ideological group that emerged in the middle of the third century AH / mid-tenth century AD. In fact, one of the most problematic issues of this study is that there are no ideological books for Sālimīyah sect available in our time. Few scholars mentioned the ideological views of Sālimīyah sect and we could hardly find any other academic studies that have considered these views. What really distinguishes this study is its ability to scrutinize for the first time the emergence of Sālimīyah sect from a historical point of view. Moreover, this research studies Sālimīyah sect's ideological views related to the Divine Self in particular. The scientific approaches used in the study are the extrapolative approach, the analytical approach and the comparative approach.

Keywords: Sālimīyah sect, Abul-Hassan Al-Basry, Islamic Doctrine, Divine Self, Embodiment.

فرقة السّالمية وآراؤها العقائدية في الذات الإلهية في ضوء العقيدة الإسلامية

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المستخلص: من المعلوم على نطاق واسع أن هناك فِرَقا وجماعات إسلامية لا تزال آراؤها العقائدية موجودة حتى الآن، مثل الأشاعرة والماتريدية والحنابلة، بينما نجد فرقا أخرى غير موجودة في عصرنا الحديث، ومن أبرزها فرقة السّالمية، التي تنتمي إلى مؤسسها أبي الحسن البصري أحمد بن محمد بن سالم، المتوفى عام (297)ه/ (909)م. تعدّ السالمية فرقة عقائدية ظهرت في منتصف القرن الثالث الهجري/ منتصف القرن العاشر الميلادي. إنّ من أهم الإشكاليات في هذه الدراسة أنه لا توجد كتب عقائدية لفرقة السالمية في عصرنا الحالي، وقد تناول عدد قليل من العلماء المتقدمين آراء السالمية العقائدية في مواضع متفرقة من كتهم، ولم نتمكن من العثور على أيّ دراسات أكاديمية حديثة تناولت هذه الآراء بالبحث والدراسة. إن ما يميز هذه الدراسة أنها جاءت تبحث للمرة الأولى عن نشأة فرقة السالمية من الناحية التاريخية، وتناولها آراء فرقة السّالمية العقائدية المتعلقة بالذات الإلهية على وجه الخصوص. وأما بالنسبة للمناهج العلمية المستخدمة في الدراسة في الاستقرائي والتحليلي والمقارن.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فرقة السالمية، أبو الحسن البصري، العقيدة الإسلامية، الذات الإلهية، التجسيم.

1. The emergence of Sālimīyah sect

Through induction and examination of the books of Islamic ideological sects, Islamic doctrine, 'Ilm al Kalām (i.e., the study of Islamic Theology), and the various historical sources, it is found that the most important topics that can be addressed about the emergence of Sālimīyah is to answer the following

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questions: who is the founder of Sālimīyah? who are the most famous Muslim scholars who belonged thereto? what is its historical expansion in both temporal and spatial terms?

1.1 Who is the founder of Sālimīyah?

Historians have agreed that Sālimīyah as a Muslim ideological sect is attributed to a certain person but they differed in determining his name precisely. The reason lurking behind this difference is that some historians replaced the name of that person's father with the name of his son. This resulted in great confusion among the historians, thus, several views emerged regarding the personality of the founder of that ideological school as follows:

- 1.1.1 Some scholars said that the founder is Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Salem, and his nickname was Abul-Hassan Al-Basri. This was the opinion of a group of historians, namely Abu Naim Al-Asfahani, and Ath-Thahabi in one of his sayings (Ath-Thahabi, 2006) and Ibn Al-Imad Al-Hanbali (Ibn Al-Imad, 1986).
- 1.1.2 While some other historians were of the opinion that the founder of Sālimīyah is Mohammad bin Ahmad bin Salem, and his nickname was Abu Abdullah Al-Basri. As-Sulamy (1998) adopted this opinion, and Ath-Thahabi (2003) in his second viewpoint, As-Safadi (2000), and Ibn Al-Atheer (1997).

1.2 Weighing between the two opinions, and the most important differences between them.

1.2.1 Weighing between the two opinions:

By making a comparison between the first and second opinions, we found out that the first opinion is the correct one, and accordingly the true founder of Sālimīyah is Abul-Hassan Al- Basri, Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Salem. We consider this opinion to be more probable because there are myriad scholars specialized in the knowledge of the names of the founders and leaders of Islamic ideological sects as Ibn Taymiyyah Al-Harrany (dead 728 AH / 1328 AD). Ath-Thahabi conveyed the opinion of his mentor Ibn Taymiyyah when he asked him about the founder of Sālimīyah. Ibn Taymiyyah answered by saying: "Sālimīyah is attributed to Abul-Hasan Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Salem" (Ath-Thahabi, 2003, vol. 9, pp. 677). Ibn Taymiyyah stated in some of his books that the followers of Sālimīyah were the "followers of Sheikh Abul-Hassan bin Salem" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1977, pp. 118).

1.2.2 Main differences between the two opinions:

By tracing back the biography of the personalities of the two Islamic scholars, to whom Sālimīyah is attributed we find out that the most important differences between them were as follows:

The first difference: Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Salem, and his nickname is Abul-Hasan Al-Basri is the father of Mohammad bin Ahmad bin Salem, and his nickname is Abu Abdullah Al-Basri. This is the opinion of many historians such as As-Sulamy, Abu Naim Al-Asfahani, Ath-Thahabi (Ath-Thahabi, 2006), and Ibn Taymiyyah (Ath-Thahabi, 2003). The reason lurking behind some scholars' bafflement about

determining the name of the founder of this Islamic ideological school is the great similarity between the name of the father and his son.

The second difference: The term Sālimīyah denotes and means the following:

Firstly: One of the doctrinal and theological groups is called Sālimīyah, and its founder is the father. Moreover, one of the Sufi groups is called Sālimīyah, and its founder is the son, knowing that the father was also a Sufist, though he was more adept in creed and 'Ilm al Kalām (Islamic Theology). The son was quite the opposite, as he agreed with his father in his doctrinal views, but Sufist aspect was predominant on his views and stances. This distinction was made by As-Sam'aani (As-Sam'aani, 1962).

Secondly: The founder of Salmiyah as an ideological sect and a Sufi group was but one person, the father. As for the son, he was just a student and a follower of his father, in creed and Sufism. This opinion was adopted by As-Sulamy (As-Sulamy, 1998).

1.3 Biography of the Founder of Sālimīyah.

There is little information about the personality of the founder of Sālimīyah, Abul-Hassan Al-Basri Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Salem, and after tracking back the books of Islamic history, we find out some information:

1.3.1 History of birth and demise of the founder of Sālimīyah:

History books did not specify the founder's year of birth (i.e., Abul-Hassan Al-Basri Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Salem), while some historical sources mentioned the exact year of his demise as he died in 297 AH / 909 AD (Ibn Al-Atheer, 1997). This piece of information enables us to say that Abul-Hassan Al-Basri was a scholar of the third century AH, the tenth century AD. This is known as the golden age of the Islamic civilization (Perroy, 1986).

1.3.2 Places where Sālimīyah's founder lived:

The historical books just mentioned one city where Abul-Hassan Al-Basri lived, that is, the city of Basra, which is located in the south of Iraq. This is conspicuous as his name was attributed to the place where he lived, the city of Basra, hence he was known as Abul-Hassan Al-Basri. Moreover, another proof that Sālimīyah founder lived there is the saying of historians and their description to him as: "one of the Shiokh (i.e., great scholars) and worshippers of Basra" (Ath-Thahabi, 2003, Vol. 9, pp. 677).

1.3.3 Teachers and students of Sālimīyah's founder:

Some historical sources mentioned the names of some scholars and students of Abul-Hassan Al-Basri. They are actually very few, and can be summed up as follows:

1.3.3.1 Teachers of the founder of Sālimīyah ideological sect:

Some historians have agreed that the great scholar Sheikh Sahl At-Tustari is one of the teachers of Abul-Hassan Al-Basri who taught him knowledges of Sufism. This is the opinion of Ath-Thahabi (Ath-Thahabi, 2003; Ath-Thahabi 2006). Ibn Taymiyyah believes that Abul-Hassan Al-Basri was a friend of

Sheikh Sahl At-Tustari (Ath-Thahabi, 2003). In fact, it will be most correct opinion to merge the two opinions together, because Abul-Hassan Al-Basri died in 297 AH / 909 AD, whereas Sahl At-Tustari died in 283 AH / 896 AD (As-Safadi, 2000).

The time difference between the two dates is relatively short. Hence, the younger person is often the student of the elder. Yet when the student grows up and becomes an independent scholar, he becomes a friend of his Sheikh and mentor, and also becomes on the same scientific rank. This was the case of many scholars and their students throughout ages.

As for the biography of Sahl At-Tustari, his name is Sahl bin Abdullah bin Yunus bin Eisa bin Rafee' At-Tustari, Abu Mohammad (As-Sulamy, 1998). He is considered one of the most famous Sufis in his age. He was born in 200 AH / 815 AD. He lived in Basra for a long period of his life (As-Safadi, 2000). Many Sufism quotes and wisdom sayings were attributed to him (As-Sulamy, 1998). The founder of Sālimīyah, Abul-Hassan Al-Basri, was taught Sufism by At-Tustari which explains to us how the founder of Sālimīyah was attributed to Sufism by many historians (Ath-Thahabi, 2003). At- Tustari died in 283 AH / 896 AD (As-Sulamy, 1998; As-Safadi, 2000).

1.3.3.2 Students of the founder of Sālimīyah:

Despite Sālimīyah's founder lived in the city of Basra in a time that there were myriad scholars and scientists, the historical sources mentioned just one figure who was educated by the founder of Sālimīyah. This was Mohammad bin Ahmad bin Salem, Abu Abdullah Al-Basri, the son of the founder of Sālimīyah sect. History books did not specify the year of his birth, nor did they specify precisely the exact year of his death. Yet most books of history mentioned that he was alive until 360 AH / 971 AD (Ath-Thahabi, 2003). He settled in Basra, and was attached to his father. He was taught by his father and the great devout scholars and Sufis of Basra. Ath-Thahabi called him "The eminent scholar of Sufist Sālimīyah" (Ath-Thahabi, 2006, Vol. 12, pp. 302). In fact, some historians believe that the son became the "Sheikh of the people of Basra in his time" (As-Safadi, 2000, Vol. 8, pp. 12).

1.4 The most Famous Scholars of Sālimīyah.

Undoubtedly, the followers of Sālimīyah were great in number, especially when the son of its founder became the Great Scholar and Sheikh of the people of Basra in his age. This was roughly in the middle of the fourth century AH / tenth century AD. Nevertheless, a few history sources give information about a few of the followers of this sect, chief among them are:

1.4.1 Abu Talib Al-Makki, whose name is Mohammad bin Ali bin Atiyyah Al-Harithi. He was not an Arab and is considered one of the most famous men of Sufism in his time. The historical sources did not specify the year of his birth, whereas most sources agreed that he died in Baghdad in 386 AH / 996 AD, and lived in Mecca. That is why he was attributed to that great City. He is the author of a book on Sufism titled 'Qut Al-Qulob fi Mo`amalat Al-Mahboub wa Wasf Tareeq Al-Moreed

ila Maqam At-Tawheed', which is one of the most famous books of Sufism at all times. It is indeed one of the books which Abu Hamed Al-Ghazali, who died in 505 AH / 1111 AD, relied on in his prominent book 'Ihya'` `Ulum ad-Deen'. Abu Talib Al-Makki heard the Prophetic traditions from some Muslim scholars of Prophetic traditions, and he has a book on the narration of Prophetic traditions, and was inculcated Sufism by the most eminent Sufi scholars of his time (Ibn Al-Imad, 1986; Ath-Thahabi, 2006; As-Safadi, 2000; Sarkis, 1928; Al-Haj Khalifa, 1941).

Historians have stated that Abu Talib Al-Makki belonged to Sālimīyah sect in creed belief when he entered Basra after the death of the Sālimīyah founder, Abul-Hassan Al-Basri (Ibn Al-Imad, 1986). In fact, he was influenced by the son of its founder, Abu Abdullah Al-Basri, when he met him in Basra, not to mention the fact that the son of Sālimīyah's founder had become the "Eminent Scholar (i.e., Sheikh) of the people of Basra in his time" (As-Safadi, 2000, Vol. 8, pp. 12). He was also a famous Sufi and believed in the creed of his father. This shows us clearly why Abu Talib and Abu Abdullah Al-Basri agreed in Sufism as this should immensely be taken into account when considering the influence of Abu Talib on the creed of Sālimīyah sect and the way of their Sufism.

As for Ibn Hajar's claim that Ibn An-Nadim stated that Abu Talib Al-Makki was a follower of Mu'tazilah (Ibn Hajar, 1971), it is unlikely because after carefully studying Ibn An-Nadim's book, 'Al-Fihrest', it can be easily realized that Ibn An-Nadim did not mention Abu Talib's name at all. Rather Ibn Hajar was confused about a name that is similar to Abu Talib Al-Makki which is Muhammad bin Ali bin Attiyah, and that person was mentioned by Ibn An-Nadim in his book, 'Al-Fihrest', as Muhammad bin Attiyah and his nickname was Abu Abdur- Rahman, and he was a follower of Mu'tazlah and was one of the people of Basra (Ibn An-Nadim, 1997).

It is noteworthy that the historians mentioned that Abu Talib Al-Makki said in the Mosque of Baghdad during one of his sermons: "The created people have not been harmed by anyone as the Creator" (Al-Baghdadi, 1996, Vol. 3, pp. 303). This means that, according to him, no one has ever harmed the creations more than Allah, their Creator. Scholars have considered this saying heinous heresy and because of this hideous saying, scholars and people abandoned Abu Talib Al-Makki. Accordingly, this led to a negative impact when Abu Talib Al-Makki abstained from preaching to people (Al-Baghdadi, 1996).

Moreover, it was mentioned that Abu Talib Al-Makki believed in 'Al-Huloul', i.e., incarnation (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1977). 'Al-Huloul' means in the Islamic ideological thought the following: the Divine Self or the Divine Attribute enters into the space of creatures (At-Tahanawi,1996). This saying is considered a heinous heresy on the part of most Muslim scholars. The scholars considered that Abu Talib Al-Makki in his faith was a follower of Sālimīyah in 'Al-Huloul'. This will be further explained later on when we will deal with Sālimīyah's creed.

1.4.2 Abu Ali Al-Ahwazi, whose name is Al-Hassan bin Ali bin Ibrahim bin Yazdad bin Hormuz. It is clear from his name that he is Persian and was brought up in the Arab lands. He was born in 362 AH / 972 AD and died in 446 AH / 1054 AD. He was a specialist in the science of Quranic recitations. He issued several books in this field. He was also known as an eminent scholar in the narration of Prophetic traditions. He finally settled in Damascus in the year 391 AH / 1000 AD and taught many people of that city the science of Quranic recitations (Ibn Asaker, 1995). Yet some historians, such as Ath-Thahabi, considered Al-Ahwazi in his time of the greatest and most knowledgeable scholars in the field of Quranic recitations in the Levant (Ath-Thahabi, 2003).

Ibn Asaker said that Abu Ali Al-Ahwazi followed in his creed the Sālimīyah sect (Ibn Asaker, 1995). Al-Ahwazi was a fanatic and zealot to his ideological doctrine. He responded to his opponents in creed, especially those who disagreed with him from Asha'yrah. He issued a book as a counter-argument to Abul-Hassan Al-Ash'ari, the founder of the Asha'yrah sect, and named his book 'Mathaleb Ibn Abi Bishr Al-Ash'ari' (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004). Ibn Asaker Al-Ash'ari refuted the book of Abu Ali Al-Ahwazi with his book 'Tabieen Kadheb Al-Moftary fima Nosiba ila Abul-Hassan Al-Ash'ari'. This counter-argument is printed (Ibn Asaker, 1928).

Eminent scholars blamed Abu Ali Al-Ahwazi for myriad things, including that he narrated the false and fabricated sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad especially the sayings dealing with the Divine Self and Attributes, as the apparent meaning of the words of these false sayings is explicit in likening the Creator to His creatures. This leads to the belief that Divine Dignity is a body. Due to Al-Ahwazi's narration and mention of these false and fabricated sayings that he attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, a group of Islamic doctrine scholars in the era of Al-Ahwazi said that Al-Ahwazi believed in the embodiment of Allah and making analogy to it (Ibn Asaker, 1928).

Some historians think that Abu Ali Al-Ahwazi narrated the Prophetic sayings that are explicit in the analogy and embodiment of Divine attributes just to prove and support his creed and opinion (Ibn Asaker, 1995). This was confirmed by the historians who said that Al-Ahwazi wrote a book on the Divine Self and Its attributes in which he mentioned false and fabricated sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. Some of these fabricated sayings and their contained doctrinal opinions will be illustrated in point (1.1.2) of this research.

Furthermore, the scholars blamed and rebuked Al-Ahwazi for narrating many narrations on the recitations of the Noble Qur'an, although he was adept at the Quranic recitations. Some scholars said that many of these narrations are false and fabricated lie, and that their accused fabricator is Al-Ahwazi (Ath-Thahabi, 2003). Some scholars, such as Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, accused Al-Ahwazi of lying in his narrations, whether these narrations related to Quranic recitations or related to the Prophetic sayings and traditions (Ath-Thahabi, 2003).

1.4.3 Abu Abdullah An-Nahawi, whose name is Mohammad bin Yahia bin Ali bin Muslim bin Musa bin Omran Al-Hanafi Az-Zubaidi. He was born in 460 AH / 1067 AD, and died in 555 AH / 1160 AD (Ath-Thahabi, 2003). He was born in Yemen, then he traveled to Damascus and Baghdad and settled in his last years in Damascus. Abu Abdullah An-Nahawi is considered by many historians to be one of the most prominent Arabic linguists of his age. He was an expert in the Arabic Grammar. He was also known for his asceticism, piety and devoutness. He preached to people in mosques, and was the author of myriad books on linguistics and jurisprudence.

Some historians have stated that Abu Abdullah An-Nahawi was a follower of Sālimīyah sect (As-Suyuti, 1964). One of the drawbacks that the scholars of his age have attributed to him in some of his doctrinal opinions which were concluded from his positions and sayings was his opinion about the sinner, as he claimed that the sinner who disobeyed his Lord should not be blamed for his disobedience; because his disobedience occurred as per Allah's free will and His destiny (As-Safadi, 2000). This was the core of the opinion of Jabriyah sect, i.e., fatalism sect, which denied man's freedom of choice and believed that all their actions were predetermined. They said that men are compelled to do their acts and that they are forced by Allah to commit acts of obedience or sins; as they were committed as per Allah's destiny (At-Tahanawi,1996). Scholars also attributed to Abdullah An-Nahawi a strange doctrine that the dead are alive in their graves, where they eat, drink and mate (As-Safadi, 2000).

1.5 The historical and geographical extension of Sālimīyah sect.

Sālimīyah sect had a historical extension and a geographical dimension through the emergence of its founder and his followers of Muslim scholars. This can be summarized as follows:

1.5.1 The historical extension of Sālimīyah sect.

Knowing that Sālimīyah's founder died in 297 AH / 909 AD (Ibn Al-Atheer, 1997), we can easily deduce that the beginning of the emergence of the call to Sālimīyah sect took place in the middle of the third century AH / mid-tenth century AD. This era was characterized by a large number of doctrinal opinions in all Islamic cities and countries, including the city of Basra, to which belonged the founder of Sālimīyah sect, as it is one of the cities where differing doctrinal viewpoints were spread. Abul-Hassan Al-Ash'ari stated clearly in his book 'Maqalat Al-Islamyyen',i.e., 'The Articles of Muslim Scholars, many types of doctrinal sects that emerged in Basra during the second and third centuries AH / ninth and tenth centuries AD. Chief among these sects were 'Zaidiyyah', the 'Khawarej', and 'Mu'tazilah' (Al-Ash'ari, 1980). Abul-Hassan Al-Basri Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Salem, the leader of Sālimīyah sect in Basra emerged as an eminent scholar who explained his opinion on the issues on which many widely-disseminating doctrinal sects differed then. He had a new opinion in it, hence some scholars agreed with him and followed him. He had myriad followers in Basra. His son, Abu Abdullah Al-Basri, was the most prominent of his followers as he settled in Basra, spreading the doctrine of his father there until he became the "The

eminent Sheikh of the people of Basra in his time" (As-Safadi, 2000, Vol. 8, pp. 12). This demonstrated the great impact of his son on people and the great influence of Sālimīyah sect in Basra, though this was for a limited period of time. Nevertheless, the doctrinal views of Sālimīyah sect spread to a period that was not long. Perhaps the last appearance of Sālimīyah sect was in the middle of the sixth century AH / midtwelfth century AD. It was previously known that one of the followers of Sālimīyah sect was Abu Abdullah An-Nahawi, who died in 555 AH / 1160 AD. As the historical sources did not mention to us the names of many scholars who adopted the doctrine of Sālimīyah sect thereafter, it is more likely that Sālimīyah sect extended from the middle of the third century AH / mid-tenth century AD to the middle of the sixth century AH / mid-twelfth century AD. This means that it spanned around three centuries.

1.5.2 The geographical extension of Sālimīyah sect.

We can trace back the geographical extension of Sālimīyah sect through its place of origin at the hands of its founder and the cities where its followers and great eminent scholars emerged. This sect's founder appeared in the city of Basra (Ibn Al-Atheer, 1997). Moreover, the son of Sālimīyah's founder settled in the city of Basra (Ath-Thahabi, 2003). Many scholars were followers of this sect. Chief among these scholars were some eminent figures who settled in Baghdad as Abu Talib Al-Makki (Al-Baghdadi, 1996), and others who settled in Damascus as Abu Ali Al-Ahwazi (Ath-Thahabi, 2003) and Abu Abdullah An-Nahawi (Ath-Thahabi, 2003).

From the sections above, we can easily deduce that Sālimīyah was extended between Iraq and the Levant, and we could not rule out the spread of its ideological thought outside these borders. However, historical sources do not mention what could confirm this.

2. Sālimīyah's doctrinal views.

When Sālimīyah emerged as a doctrinal sect, it had an intellectual position on the doctrinal issues on which there was disagreement and debate, whether these issues appeared before the emergence of Sālimīyah or after its inception. It is really regrettable that the books of history have not preserved for us any of Sālimīyah's doctrinal books that we badly need to follow the scientific methodology that leads us to know the viewpoints of Sālimīyah's creed. This made the researcher of this study resort to the ancient Islamic sources of knowledge such as some books written by some followers of Sālimīyah sect, which were very few. Nevertheless, these books were not specialized in creed. The researcher also referred to books on Islamic Kalam (i.e., Islamic Theology) and books of Islamic groups and sects, in addition to books on Islamic history. Hence, this led to the second move, that is, to extrapolate and probe these sources of ideological opinions attributed to Sālimīyah sect. After extracting these issues, they have been divided according to the topics that contained them as follows:

In their doctrinal views, Sālimīyah sect dealt with controversial and debatable issues related to the Divine Self. This was divided into two issues: firstly, the issue of embodiment and analogy, that is, whether Allah's Self and Divine Attributes could be likened and identical to the nature of the bodies of the created objects or not. Scholars called those who believed in such analogy and likeness 'Al-Mushabbihah', that is, the believers in analogy (At-Tahanawi,1996). Moreover, if there was a similarity or analogy between the Divine Self and the creatures, does this analogy make the Lord a body like creatures? Scholars called those who believed in such embodiment 'Al-Mujassimah', that is, the believers in divine embodiment (At-Tahanawi,1996). Secondly, the issue of 'Al-Huloul' that means: does the Divine Self enter into the space of creatures or not? (At-Tahanawi,1996).

2.1 The issue of Divine Self Embodiment and Its likeness to the selves and attributes of the created bodies.

In other words, are Allah's Self, Attributes, or actions similar to those of His creatures? None of the scholars of Sālimīyah stated that they said explicitly that Allah's Self is similar to that of His creatures, or what this leads accordingly to, that is, the Divine Self is a body like other creatures. The same applies to the attributes and actions of Allah, and whether they are similar to the attributes and actions of creatures or not. Scholars attributed to followers of Sālimīyah sect their belief in analogy and embodiment of the Divine Self because they believed in some sayings that they falsely alleged that they were said by Allah's Messenger, that assumed that Allah is like His creatures explicitly in terms of the Divine Self, attributes and actions, and that Allah is a body like other creations. Chief among those explicit sayings was what Abu Ali Al-Ahwazi As-Salimi narrated and stated in his book 'As-Sifaat' (i.e., The Attributes by which he meant the Divine Attributes), that the Prophet Mohammad said: "I saw my Lord at Mina on a silver camel, and He was putting on a loose outer garment!" (Ath-Thahabi, 2003, Vol. 9, pp. 677). He also narrated in the same book another fabricated saying that he attributed to Allah's Messenger and claimed that he said: "On the eve of 'Arafah, it happened that Allah descended to the lower heaven and led people to Muzdalifah, and He did not ascend to heaven that night. Then at daybreak He would forgive them even all grievances, then ascended to heaven!" (Ath-Thahabi, 2003, Vol. 9, pp. 680). By reflecting on the words of these two Prophetic traditions, we find out that there are doctrinal provisions related to Allah. Allah's Divine Self, according to him, as any human being mounted a camel, wearing the clothes of human beings, and even moved down from heaven to earth, and ascended up from the earth to heaven, and that Divine Self has also led pilgrims in Arafat. From all this it was concluded that Allah's Divine Self, and Attributes are like the self and attributes of human beings.

Eminent scholars, specialized in the Prophetic sayings and traditions, have agreed that all of these words mentioned in the above mentioned sayings are falsehoods and have been fabricated and falsely attributed to Allah's Messenger by liars who deliberately told lies about the Prophet Muhammad. As for the first Hadith, As-Suyuti ruled that it is fabricated and false (As-Suyuti, 2010). As for the second Hadith,

Ibn Al-Jawzi asserted that it is one of the invented sayings that could not be attributed to the Prophet Mohammed (Ibn Al-Jawzi, 1996).

The title of the book of Abu Ali Al-Ahwazi indicates the assertion of this type of Divine attributes knowing that the Islamic doctrinal sects vary immensely in the proof or negation of this type of attributes $^{(1)}$. The scholars of the Islamic creed who deny this type of attributes believe that whosoever narrates the afore-mentioned two Prophetic sayings and any other similar narrations are considered an explicit statement that Allah's Divine Self and Attributes are like those of man as we have demonstrated in the previously mentioned analysis of these Prophetic sayings. There is a strong problematic debate that the followers of Sālimīyah face. This can be formulated and summed up in the following question: why do the followers of Sālimīyah sect narrate false narrations and attribute them to the Prophet Mohammad, where these sayings ascribe to the Divine Self all attributes, practices and epithets of the human beings? The narration of such Prophetic sayings in the books of Islamic creed is a strong indication that Sālimīyah has a tendency to analogy and embodiment, even if they did not declare it explicitly. Therefore, some Muslim scholars, as Ibn Asaker, attribute to some of the Sālimīyah followers the doctrine of embodiment and analogy; because of their opinion that it must take the apparent meaning mentioned in the Prophetic traditions. Moreover, they use these false fabricated sayings as a pretext to support their creed, although Sālimīyah scholars know very well that these Prophetic traditions are refutable. It goes without saying that the refutable false Ahadeeth (i.e., Prophetic traditions) could not be used as an argument by scholars of Islamic creed and law (Ibn Asaker, 1995; Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004). Some contemporary scholars of Islamic creed said that Sālimīyah has a tendency to believe in Divine analogy. This was stated by Dr. Mohammad Rashad Salem (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1986).

2.2 The issue of Divine huloul (i.e., incarnation) in creatures.

We have previously dealt in this research with the definition of huloul which means that the Divine Self or the Divine Attribute enters into the space of creatures (At-Tahanawi,1996). Huloul is

⁽¹⁾ Looking at the meanings of some words of the Holy Quran and Prophetic traditions, these words seem to be similar to the parts of creatures' selves, such as the hand in Allah saying in the Holy Quran: "God's Hand is over their hands" (Hammad, 2014, pp 873/48:10), and the face in Allah saying: "So wherever you turn, there is the Face of God" (Hammad, 2014, pp 29/2:115). Islamic Doctrine scholars strongly disagreed in the interpretation of such verses, for are these words real or metaphorical? Muslim scholars who proved them as real Divine Attributes named them 'As-Sifat Al-Khabariyah', which means the Divine Attributes that Allah told about in the Holy Quran, as well as the Prophet Muhammad told about in his Hadith. This leads that the faith in such Attributes is an imperative, and therefore the mind should believe in without any discussion. Sālimīyah was of this opinion (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004). Yet many Muslim Theologians like Asha'yrah and Mu'tazilah see that these words are metaphorical and of meanings that can be attributed to Allah without any Divine embodiment or analogy (Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi, 2011). This opinion will be illustrated in the point 2.4 the third issue.

divided in the Islamic doctrinal thought into two kinds, general and special. The general dimension means the Divine Self could be incarnated in any of Its creations. As for the special aspect, it means that Allah is incarnated in the human being who is a gnostic of Allah and the true worshipper thereof (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1977).

The Muslim scholars totally refuse the doctrine of huloul. Many eminent scholars of Islamic creed consider it a reason for charging with disbelief and to take one of the Muslims out the circle of Islam (Al-Baghdadi, 1977). This is because huloul or incarnation means that the Creator is converted to a creature, or the creature is converted to a creator. As for the first possibility, if the Creator becomes a creature, then he will be governed by the rules and laws that apply to creatures as he will be subject to nihility and annihilation. Of course this contradicts with the most important issue that the Noble Quran and Prophet Mohammed called for, that is, there should be a clear distinction between the Creator and the creature. Then as for the second possibility, that is, the transformation of the creatures to creators, this means the existence of multiple god, and this is the core of polytheism which Allah has negated in the Holy Quran (Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi, 2015). Nevertheless, some Islamic sects believed in the concept of divine incarnation in the creatures as real incarnation, such as some Sufis and some radical Shiites (Al-Ash'ari, 1980), and some scholars who believed in the divine embodiment (Al-Ash'ari, 1980). Some scholars of Islamic creed attributed to Sālimīyah the concept of general incarnation (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1977), while others were of the opinion that Sālimīyah believed in special incarnation (Ath-Thahabi' 2006). Ibn Taymiyyah considered it more probable that the incarnation that was attributed to Sālimīyah is one of the kinds of general incarnation (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1977).

The most important reasons why scholars attributed to Sālimīyah the concept of incarnation is as follows:

Firstly: Sālimīyah thinkers have generally mentioned in their books sayings that they allegedly attributed to the Prophet Mohammed. The apparent meaning of these Prophetic sayings denoted that Allah is with his creatures and he is incarnated in them essentially. This has been previously described in point (1.1.2).

Secondly: Some scholars attributed to Sālimīyah that they believe in the apparent meanings of the words of the texts mentioned in the Prophetic sayings that deal with incarnation (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004).

Thirdly: Adopting the apparent meaning of the sayings of some of the followers of Sālimīyah, as Abu Talib Al-Makki which these sayings purported the creed of incarnation (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1977).

What should be noted here is what Ibn Taymiyyah said that the opponents of Sālimīyah did not refer to the other texts in which Abu Talib Al-Makki denied the concept of incarnation. This made Ibn Taymiyyah outweigh the opinion that Abu Talib Al-Makki did not adopt the concept of incarnation (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1977). Yet it is most probable that Sālimīyah followers in general believed in divine

incarnation in case they alleged the authenticity of the Ahadeeth that they transmitted. Also it is concluded that they believe in divine incarnation if they professed that the meaning of the words of these Ahadeeth are true without being subject to interpretation or allegory, except for their scholars who negated the incarnation creed as Abu Talib Al-Makki who declared the falsehood of incarnation doctrine in his saying: "And that He, that is Allah, is not incarnated in things, and that things are not incarnated in Him" (Abu Talib Al-Makki, 2005, Vol. 2, pp. 136). Hence, he see that Allah is with His creatures in terms of His knowledge of them, not He is really incarnated in them. Abu Talib said in his illustration of this: "no place can be void of Allah's knowledge and power; He cannot be limited in a place; He is not missed from any place and He cannot be in any place." (Abu Talib Al-Makki, 2005, Vol. 2, pp. 140). That is why all the ancient sources and books on the interpretation of the Noble Quran agree one meaning of the accompaniment mentioned in Allah's saying: "He is with you wherever you are." (Hammad, 2014, pp. 926/57:4). It means that Allah is with His creatures with His knowledge not with His Divine Self (At-Tabari, 2000; Al-Maturidi, 2005).

2.3 The issue of the existence of the Divine Self in place.

The divine incarnation in the creatures has another matter that is closely related to it, that is, does Allah exist in the place or is this existence without place? Sālimīyah sect believed that Allah existed in the place. Sālimīyah determined Allah's place as being existing everywhere. For the majority of the adherents of Sālimīyah sect, Allah exists above the throne and in all places in heaven or even on earth (Al-Jilani, 1997; Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004).

Sālimīyah has, in their proof of their belief that the Divine Self exists in a place, used the same argument used by all the doctrinal sects that believe that Allah exists in the place (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004). One of their famous evidence that they used to prove this is their call to adopt the apparent meaning of the word 'Istawaa' mentioned in the Quranic verse "The All-Merciful (i.e., Allah) Istawaa (i.e., has settled Himself over, rose over) the Throne." (Hammad, 2014, pp. 512/20:5). For those who proved that Allah exists in a place, the meaning of 'Istawaa' or rising over the throne is as follows: that Allah is high on the throne, sitting on it, and established over it (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1977). For Sālimīyah, this Quranic verse is a direct statement from Allah that He is above the throne, then He is established in a place.

The question raised here is as follows: does proving Allah's existence in the place necessitate that Allah is incarnated in the creatures? The scholars who believed in Allah's existence in the place differed on this issue and had two viewpoints:

The first viewpoint: This is the opinion of Sālimīyah sect, that Allah is on the throne and He also exists in a place. Ibn Taymiyyah believes according to this viewpoint that Sālimīyah has proved to Allah that He is rising above, and is incarnated (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1991). This means that Allah exists in a place where He rises high with His Divine Self above all His creatures. This place is the throne, because the

throne is the highest place at all, nevertheless Allah is Able, for Sālimīyah, to be incarnated in the creatures and the places. Ibn Taymiyyah considered this viewpoint weak, because it is a proof of Allah's incarnation and it is impossible that Allah is incarnated in the creatures (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1991).

The second viewpoint: The belief that Allah exits in the place, on the throne, and without being incarnated in the creatures. Ibn Taymiyyah thought that this opinion is most probable and attributed it to the early scholars who lived after the time of Allah's Messenger and the Righteous companions (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1991). Although these scholars believed that Allah is on the throne, but they see that He is Able to descend from the throne to the lower heaven and then he is Able to ascend to the throne, all of without being incarnated in the creatures (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1977).

Many objections were darted at those who proved that Allah exists in the place. These objections were raised by the scholars of Islamic Kalam (i.e., Islamic Theology), such as the Mu'tazilah and Asha'yrah, as well as the Muslim philosophers. All those deny Allah's existence in the place. They believe that Allah exists without place, and that it does not require to prove the existence of a thing to exist in place. This thing that exists in place should be a body, and Allah is not a body, then His existence is not in place (Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi, 2011). If Allah exists in a place then this means that He is a body, and as all bodies are created and not ancient, this meant that Allah is a body and is created, and this cannot be attributed to Allah (Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi, 2011). Some scholars directed this objection explicitly at Sālimīyah sect and those who adopted their doctrine (As-Suyuti, 2010).

The suitable solution for the scholars who negated that Allah exists in a place was to make a metaphorical interpretation of all the Quranic verses and the Prophetic sayings and traditions, whose words denoted that Allah exists in the place. Those scholars believed that the metaphorical denotation was meant from the meaning of these words, as they are meanings that can be attributed to Allah. The meaning of the words is not meant in their real meaning as these apparent meanings suit the created bodies, but are not eligible for Allah (Recoeur, 1976) ⁽²⁾. That is why for these scholars the 'istawaa' mentioned in Allah's saying in the Noble Quran, "The All-Merciful (i.e., Allah) Istawaa (i.e., has settled Himself over, rose over) the Throne." (Hammad, 2014, pp. 512/20:5), has a totally different meaning. 'Istawaa' for them has a meaning other than that the Sālimīyah sect believed in, as 'istawaa' has a metaphorical interpretation, that is, the sovereignty; because the throne in the Arabic language means the king's bed, hence Allah's istawaa on His throne has a metaphorical meaning as it denotes that Allah is the Great Sovereign who owns sovereignty and control over all His creatures. This meaning is known in the

⁽²⁾ Modern language scholars see that the Literary sentence which contains repulsion between its words is a strong evidence that what is meant from that sentence is metaphor and allegory (Recoeur, 1976). Yet Muslim scholars consider the Holy Quran a Divine revelation and a Literary text at the same time. Therefore, the repulsion that proves the metaphor applies to the verses of the Holy Quran which their apparent meanings assign creatures' attributes to Allah, although He is not a body, which confirms that these Attributes are metaphors for non-physical meanings.

Arabic language, as the establishment of human kings on their thrones symbolizes their sovereignty and control (Az-Zamakhshari, 1986).

2.4 The issue of seeing Allah on the Day of Judgment.

Here are several issues related to seeing Allah for Sālimīyah:

The first issue: The scholars quoted that Sālimīyah sect prove that believers will see Allah on the Day of Judgment (Ibn Hajar, 1959). Taking into consideration that Sālimīyah agrees with the Hanbalis in the majority of matters of Islamic doctrine (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1986), this means that seeing Allah on the Day of Judgment was proved by the Hanbalis in the same way as Sālimīyah, that the believers will really see their Lord on the Day of Judgment by virtue of the human eye. Consequently, Sālimīyah's viewpoint agrees with the followers of Islamic ideological sects who prove this sort of Allah's saying such as the Hanbalis, the scholars of Prophetic sayings (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1986), the Asha'yrah (Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi, 1986), and the Maturidi (Al-Maturidi, 2001). They used the Hadith of the Prophet Mohammad to prove this, as he said: "You people will see your Lord as you see this full moon." (Muslim, 2000, pp. 255, Hadith no. 1434). Yet they differed on answering the following question: shall they see Allah in a certain place? or will this take place in no place? Sālimīyah as the Hanbalis and the scholars of Prophetic traditions believe that Allah will be seen in a spatial direction, that is, paradise, and that the Day of Judgment is the time fixed for seeing Allah (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1986). As for the Asha'yrah and Maturidi, they believe that Allah will be seen in no place; because whoever is seen in a certain place should be a body, and Allah is not a body, then He will be seen in no place (Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi, 1986; Al-Maturidi, 2001).

While another viewpoint has emerged negating that Allah will be visually seen but proves that the worshippers will see Him metaphorically. The adherents of this viewpoint were Al Mu'tazilah; because the real visual vision takes place for those who are bodies. It has been proven by them that Allah is not a body; therefore, Allah is not seen by virtue of people's eyesight (Ahmad, 1996). Thus seeing Allah has a metaphoric meaning that seeks more information about Allah, that were not known before to the believers when they were alive in the life of this world. Consequently, this makes seeing Allah in the hereafter similar to what happens when a blind person recovers and has his eyesight restored. The information of the blind person increases when he sees objects in a way that he has never experienced before when he was blind. The same applies to the believers' ability to see their Lord, that is, the increase of the believers' information about Allah (Ahmad, 1996).

The second issue: The scholars attributed to Sālimīyah sect and others their claim that the believers, hypocrites and infidels will see Allah on the Day of Judgement (Ibn Hajar, 1959; Al-Jilani, 1997). Sālimīyah argued and used as a pretext the Prophetic traditions that demonstrate that Allah will appear to people more than once on the Day of Resurrection, and that each time he will appear to people this will be in a certain form, thus all of believers, hypocrites and infidels will see Allah. Chief among these Ahadeeth is

a Prophetic tradition that narrated that the Prophet Muhammad said: "Then Allah, the Great Compeller will come in a form other than His form that they have seen in the first time, so He says: 'I am your Lord!' So they say: 'You are our Lord'." (Bukhari, 2015, pp. 1187, Hadith no. 7439).

As for the position of other ideological sects, they limited seeing Allah on the Day of Resurrection, to the believers only. As for the hypocrites and the disbelievers, they will not see their Lord; because scholars of other ideological sects understood that seeing Allah in the texts of the divine revelation is but one of the kinds of bliss and reward, and only the believers deserve bliss and reward (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004). Moreover, the vision referred to in the previous Prophetic tradition is divided into two kinds, seeing Allah and seeing the angel. Seeing Allah is a blessing bestowed only to the believers. As for seeing the angel, it is enabled to the believer, hypocrite and infidel (Ibn Hajar, 1959).

The third issue: Al-Jilani attributed to Sālimīyah the saying that Allah is seen on the Day of Resurrection in the image of a human being, and that this image is the same as the image of the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Jilani attributed to Sālimīyah also that Allah is revealed to all his creatures on the Day of Judgment in multiple forms, and that each form suits a meaning special to the creature (Al-Jilani, 1997). Ibn Al-Jawzi has explained what Sālimīyah meant by the special form that Allah will appear in to His creatures, that is the angels see Allah in the image of angels and that man sees Allah in the image of man. This same applies to every creature that sees Allah in his/her image (Ibn Al-Jawzi, 2001). Al-Jilani and Ibn Al-Jawzi did not mention the argument which Sālimīyah used to prove this.

Seeing Allah on the Day of Resurrection in the form of a man is a doctrine that requires the belief in Divine analogy. This made Al-Jilani rush to charge Sālimīyah with disbelief and getting out of Islam; as Al-Jilani believed that the doctrine of Divine analogy explicitly contradicts with Allah's saying in the Holy Qur'an: "There is nothing that is anything like Him" (Hammad, 2014, pp. 818/42:11). This verse explicitly mentions a ruling special to Allah which is the denial of the similarity between Allah and all his creatures, and that the claim of Divine similarity totally contradicts with the explicit meaning of the verse that negates the Divine analogy (Al-Jilani, 1997).

What is noticed in the previous issue is its close association with the issue of likening Allah to the creatures, which was discussed previously in point (1.1.2). Hence evidence augments that Sālimīyah is influenced by the ideological ideas that adopt Divine analogy increase; because the claim that Allah will be seen in the image of man has been professed by many ideological sects that emerged on the Islamic intellectual arena, as Al-Bayaniyah, Al-Khattabiyah, Al-Hishamiyah, etc. (Al-Ash'ari, 1980).

However, we should be fair and just to say that Sālimīyah adherents might be believers in seeing Allah as a human being out of divine manifestation, that is, the Divine Self is manifested in the form of a human being or any other form of creatures, and that this image is not similar to the Divine Self. Rather it is the image created by Allah Who makes it a metaphoric expression of His Divine Self, then there is no similarity between the Divine Self and the creatures, but the divine analogy exists in the manifestation,

that is, the divine analogy takes place between the image created by Allah and the images of creatures. This doctrine is professed by many Sufist scholars (Ibn Arabi, 2001). The question raised in this respect is: does Sālimīyah sect believe in this kind of interpretation in order to be spared the charge of divine analogy? There is no explicit and direct answer that attributes this type of interpretation to Sālimīyah so it is more likely that Sālimīyah in general is the closest sect to the doctrine of divine analogy.

Research Results

The main results of the research are as follows:

- 1- It is most likely that the founder of the Sālimīyah sect from the ideological viewpoint is Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Salem, whose nickname is Abul-Hassan Al-Basry. He died in (297) AH / (909) AD. While the founder of the Sālimīyah sect from the Sufist viewpoint is Mohammad bin Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Salem, and his nickname was Abu Abdullah Al-Basry. He died in (360) AH / (971) AD. He was the son of the founder of ideological Sālimīyah sect.
- 2- Sahl At-Tustari was the teacher of Abul-Hassan Al-Basry. In fact the most famous student of Abul-Hassan Al-Basry was his son Abu Abdullah Al-Basri. Chief among the most famous scholars who belong to Sālimīyah sect from the ideological point of view are: Abu Talib Al-Makki, Abu Ali Al-Ahwazi and Abu Abdullah An-Nahawi.
- 3- Sālimīyah sect extended chronologically from the middle of the third century AH / the middle of the tenth century AD to the middle of the sixth century AH / the middle of the twelfth century AD. Sālimīyah sect extended geographically in Baghdad, Damascus, and most prominently in the city of Basra.
- 4- There are no many doctrinal issues related to the Divine Self that were attributed to Sālimīyah sect, but they had a great significance in the Islamic ideological research. The results of the research on these issues are as follows:
 - a. Most likely, the scholars of Sālimīyah sect believe that the Divine Self has a physical nature and that it is similar to the human self. They believed so because they believed in the apparent meaning of the fake sayings that were erroneously attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. Such fabricated sayings have mentioned that Allah has a human form and does human deeds. Although these fake sayings were proved by scholars of Prophetic traditions to be fabricated and may not be attributed to Prophet Mohammed. Sālimīyah scholars used them as an argument to prove their views.
 - b. Many scholars attributed to Sālimīyah scholars their belief in Allah's incarnation in the creatures to the same reason mentioned in point (a), but it should be noted and underscored here that Abu Talib Al-Makki rejected concepts of embodiment, analogy and divine incarnation.

- c. Sālimīyah scholars believe that Allah exists in a place. Their evidence that they used to prove their viewpoint was the same as the evidence of the doctrinal sects that believed in the existence of Allah in a place. Most of these proofs lied in the texts of the Divine revelation of the Holy Quran as the Sālimīyah scholars and their followers dealt with these texts in a literal manner. They did not deal with this issue metaphorically as the majority of other doctrinal sects that said that Allah exists without a place.
- d. Sālimīyah scholars believe that Allah will be seen on the day of Judgment in the true sense of the word. In other words, the human beings will see Allah by virtue of their human sight. They agree on this opinion with some other ideological groups. Sālimīyah scholars mentioned that this ability will be endowed to the believers, hypocrites and disbelievers. All other ideological sects disagreed with them on this as they limited this endowment to the believers only. Eventually, some scholars attributed to the Sālimīyah sect their allegation that on the day of judgment Allah will be seen by the human beings in a form that suits the image of the seer, that is a human being will see Allah in the form of a human being and the angels will see Allah in the form of angels.
- 5- Sālimīyah scholars followed a deductive approach in proving their beliefs related to the Divine Self, which is the absolute belief in the apparent and literal meaning of the legal texts of the Holy Quran and the Prophetic sayings, without using metaphors in interpreting these texts. This has been the approach that made them believe in and call for the embodiment of the Divine Self, its resemblance to and incarnation in the creatures.
- 6- Sālimīyah sect is an ideological group independent of all other groups. Ibn Taymiyah's saying that Sālimīyah scholars agreed in most of their doctrinal opinions with the views of the Hanbalis is right to some extent. Although they agree in the deductive approach and some doctrinal issues, they differed on the most important doctrinal issues. The vast majority of Hanbalis deny the divine embodiment, analogy and incarnation.

Research Recommendations

In order to complete the academic research about Sālimīyah sect, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1. Researchers should study the doctrinal views of the Sālimīyah sect that have not been discussed in this research, that is, the doctrinal views related to the Divine Attributes and Actions, as well as the doctrinal opinions related to the Prophets and the unseen.
- 2. Sālimīyah should be studied as a sufist group as it is one of the most famous Islamic sufist groups in its time. Its impact is still existing to date. This impact can be best represented in Abu Talib Al-

Makki's book, 'Qut Al-Qulob fi Mo`amalat Al-Mahboub wa Wasf Tareeq Al-Moreed ila Maqam At-Tawheed'.

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