

The Historical Works of al-Thabari, Ibn al-Atsir, and al-Kala'i in Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

Al-Thabari, Ibn al-Atsir, and al-Kala'i were undoubtedly scholarly historians of Islamic history. This paper uses the historical method to analyze the works of al-Thabari, Ibn al-Atsir, and al-Kala'i relating to Hurub al-Riddah and the problem of applying the death penalty to apostates. It is concluded that they didn't provide adequate historical explanations and the causal factors of Hurub al-Riddah, although the political factors primarily drove Hurub al-Riddah. The differences of their works were only in 'small' things, such as differences in the mention of the names of the perpetrators of events and differences in sentences. It is not easy to determine which work is more comprehensive. It may be more appropriate to combine many historical sources to comprehend the history of Hurub al-Riddah. The readers of their works are encouraged to analyze their descriptions critically and seek historical explanations through other references written by critical historians. The meaning of riddah at that time did not refer solely to everyone who renounced the Islam religion but also to those who rebelled against the Islamic government. Therefore, the essence of riddah wars was not in conflict with freedom of faith in Islam.

Keywords: *Al-Thabari, Ibn al-Atsir, al-Kala'i, Abu Bakr, Hurub al-Riddah, Religious Freedom*

Introduction

In classical Islam, there was an Islamic government under the caliph Abu Bakr al-Shiddiq after the death of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Abu Bakr ruled briefly between 11-13 AH (632-634 AD). But although very short, his reign was full of significant achievements for Muslims, such as sending Osama ibn Zayd's army to Balqa' in Palestine (following the orders of the Prophet PBUH), crushing apostates, fighting against refusers of paying zakat (alms), destroying false prophets, collecting the Qur'an (at the suggestion of 'Umar ibn al-Khaththab), and expanding Islamic territory. Studies on Abu Bakr's reign and his contributions during his reign have been numerous. But the following paper will only be limited to the *riddah* wars, emphasizing comparative texts in the historical works of Thabari, Ibn al-Atsir, and al-Kala'i.

The events of *Hurub al-Riddah* are often associated with discussions on the execution of the death penalty in Islam against apostate Muslims from Islam and human rights issues in religious freedom. Then this issue is further highlighted by teaching activities about applying the death penalty for apostates in fiqh books in Islamic educational institutions. The image of Islam is portrayed as a religion that is intolerant of enforcing human rights and religious freedom.

This paper aims to analyze the events of *Hurub al-Riddah* and the problem of applying the death penalty to apostates. But before further discussing the death penalty for apostates, the meaning of apostasy will be explained first. The etymological definition of apostasy is a person returning to his original path. The notion of apostasy terminologically is the return of a Muslim who has a sense and has reached puberty towards infidelity of his own free will without coercion from others. The apostasy of a lunatic or child cannot be acknowledged because they are not burdened by the law

(*mukallaḥ*). The compulsion of a Muslim to profess disbelief cannot exclude a person from Islam as long as his heart remains firm in his faith in his religion.¹

Research Method

This paper uses historical method to analyze the implication of the *Hurub al-Riddah* to freedom of faith in Islam. The meaning of *riddah* is the movement of Arab tribes after the death of Muhammad to end their loyalties to the Medinan government.² The term of *Hurub al-Riddah* (literally, the wars of apostasy) is the name given in Islamic historiography to the series of battles against tribes, both nomadic and sedentary, which began shortly before the death of the Prophet Muhammad and continued throughout Abu Bakr's caliphate.³

Result and Discussion

Comparative analysis of the historical texts of al-Thabari, Ibn al-Atsir, and al-Kala'i

Here is a quick look at the biographies of al-Thabari, Ibn al-Atsir, and al-Kala'i to find out the biographies of the three historians and assess the quality of their historical works.

Al-Thabari (839-923)

His full name was Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir bin Yazid bin Khalid al-Thabari. He was born in Amol, Tabaristan, in late 224 AH or early 225 AH (839 AD).⁴ He had memorized the Qur'an at the age of 7 and wrote hadith at the age of 9. His expertise was very prominent, especially in the fields of history, fiqh, and exegesis of the Qur'an. But he also wrote in the field of hadith, among which are *Ahadits Ghadir Khumm*, *Thuruq al-Hadits*, *Sharih al-Sunnah*, and *al-Musnad al-Mujarrad*. Al-Thabari died on Sunday, 27 Shawwal 310 AH (16 February 923 AD).⁵ The method of writing history applied in *Tarikh al-Thabari*, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, or *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* was *thariq istiḡra'i syamil* (comprehensive inductive method) with a very high level of reliability (*tsiqah*) beyond previous historians. His writing began with an explanation of the beginning of the creation of nature and the history of Islam until 302 AH.⁶ He followed in the footsteps of hadith scholars in writing history by explaining the events he narrated along with a strict *sanad* (transmission) path. He also applied *hawliyat* (year periodization).⁷ After the explanation was completed in one year, he began the discussion by mentioning *tsumma dakhalat sanah ...* (then came the year ...).⁸

¹ Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh Al-Sunnah, Vol. 2* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1992), 381. and Wahbah Al-Zuhayli, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islami Wa Adillatuh, Vol. 6* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1989), 183.

² Ilyas Syawfani, *Hurub Al-Riddah: Dirasah Naqdiyah Fi Al-Mashadir* (Beirut: Dar al-Kunuz al-Adabiyah, 1995), 101.

³ M. Lecker, "Al-Ridda in Vol. XII," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 692.

⁴ The end of 224 AH was November 10, 839 AD, while the beginning of 225 AH was November 11, 839 AD.

⁵ See publisher's introduction in Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1967).

⁶ If the writing ends on 11 Jumada al-Tsani 302 AH, then the year is 914, but if it ends on 12 Jumada al-Tsani 302 AH, then the year is 915.

⁷ Yusri Abdul Ghani Abdullah, *Historiografi Islam Dari Klasik Hingga Modern*, ed. Budi Sudrajat (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2004), 104.

⁸ See publisher's introduction in Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari*.

Ibn al-Atsir (1160-1233)

His full name was 'Izz al-Din Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Shaybani. He was born in Jumadal Ula 555 AH (May 11, 1160 AD) in Mosul, Iraq. Majd al-Din, his elder brother, was a hadith scholar, while Zhiya' al-Din, his younger brother, was a literary scholar. While 'Izz al-Din (Ibn al-Atsir), besides being an expert in the field of history, he was also an expert in the field of hadith. He returned to Mosul in 628 AH (1230 AD), died in Sha'ban 630 AH (May 1233 AD), and was buried in Mosul.

His monumental work was *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* or *Tarikh Jami' li Akhbar Muluk al-Syarq wa al-Gharb wa Ma Baynahuma*, completed in 628 AH (1230 C.E.). The reason of writing *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* was that after examining previous historical works, he did not come across a work whose discussion could cover completely the affairs of the Islamic world. Therefore, he wanted his work to be easily studied while still containing discussions from the beginning of time to his lifetime. His references included works of al-Thabari, al-Shahrastani, al-Baladzuri, Ibn al-Kalbi, al-Mubarrad, and al-Mas'udi. In referring to these works, he was careful and critical.⁹ He also applied *hawliyat* (periodization of years) but did not mention *sanad* entirely.

Al-Kala'i (1170-1237)

Information about this historian is not abundant. His full name was Abu al-Rabi' Sulayman bin Musa bin Salim al-Kala'i al-Balansi al-Andalusi.¹⁰ Kala' was the name of a region in Valencia, Andalusia (Spain).¹¹ He was born in Ramadan 565 AH (May 1170 AD). He was an expert on history and hadith. He died as a martyr on Thursday, the 20th of Dhul Hijjah 634 AH (August 13, 1237 AD) in the war in Andalusia.¹² His historical work was *al-Iktifa' bi ma Tadhammanahu min Maghazi Rasul Allah wa al-Tsalatsah al-Khulafa'* or *al-Iktifa' fi Maghazi al-Mushthafa wa al-Tsalatsah al-Khulafa'*. The sources of his work included the works of Muhammad bin 'Abd Allah al-Azdi (d. 165 AH / 782 AD), Yahya bin Sa'id al-Umawi (d. 193 AH / 808 AD), al-Waqidi (d. 207 AH / 822 AD), Ya'qub bin Muhammad al-Zuhri (d. 213 AH / 828 AD), Watsimah bin Musa (d. 237 AH / 851 AD), al-Thabari (d. 310 / 923 AD), and also al-Khathib Abu al-Qasim ibn al-Hubaysh (his teacher). He always prioritized thoroughness and reliability when referencing previous works, as done by hadith scholars. His distinctive works included the official letters of Abu Bakr and poems not found in other historical works, such as the works of al-Thabari, al-Baladzuri, Ibn A'tsam al-Kufi, Ibn al-Wadhih al-Ya'qubi, and al-Diyarbakri (d. 1574).¹³ He didn't apply *hawliyat* and did not mention *sanad* in full. His work tended to be thematic in its systematic writing.

The comparison of the works of al-Thabari, Ibn al-Atsir, and al-Kala'i in the section of their works *Hurub al-Riddah* during the reign of Abu Bakr is as follows.

⁹ See publisher's introduction in Ibn Al-Atsir, *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh* (Beirut: Dar Shadir, 1979), 9–15.

¹⁰ See editor's introduction in Abu al-Rabi' Sulayman bin Musa bin Salim Al-Kala'i, *Al-Iktifa' Bi Ma Tadhammanahu Min Maghazi Rasul Allah Wa Al-Tsalatsah Al-Khulafa', Vol. 2, Part 1* (Beirut: 'Alam al-Kutub, 1997), 5.

¹¹ See Khursyid Ahmad Fariq, *Tarikh Al-Riddah* (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Islami, 1961), 1.

¹² Fariq, 3.

¹³ Fariq, 9–11., <https://www.noor-book.com/الكتاب-الاكتفاء-في-مغازي-المصطفى-و-الثلاثة-الخلفاء-v-1-pdf>, and https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/أبو_الربيع_الكلاعي.

NO	Text Content	Al-Thabari	Ibn al-Atsir	Al-Kala'i
1	Dissent among the companions of the Prophet	At the beginning of the explanation, the three authors began with the rampant phenomenon of defiance against the government held by Abu Bakr after the Prophet died. They also showed Abu Bakr's firm attitude to the dissidents. However, al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir did not mention the debate between the companions of the Prophet and Abu Bakr regarding the decision to fight the perpetrators of <i>riddah</i> , ¹⁴ while al-Kala'i narrated it clearly, and even he quoted a hadith narrated by 'Aishah and Abu Hurayrah. ¹⁵ Perhaps al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir did not mention the difference of opinion because the most crucial thing was Abu Bakr's firmness in fighting the perpetrators of <i>riddah</i> , not the difference of opinion among the companions of the Prophet. Al-Kala'i mentioned it because it was the actual reality. Moreover, in the books of hadith, the story of the difference of opinion was also clearly mentioned. In this case, it seems that the more appropriate attitude is that taken by al-Kala'i because the difference of opinion is a natural thing that should not be covered up.		
2	The number of <i>riddah</i> perpetrators	Regarding the number of <i>perpetrators of riddah</i> , the three authors explain that most of the Arabs have been apostates or dissidents (al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir mentioned <i>wa irtaddat kullu qabilah 'ammah aw khashshah illa quraysyan wa tsaqifan ...</i> , whereas al-Kala'i mentioned ... <i>wa irtaddat al-'arab ...</i> But their information can be questioned because the hadith mentions: <p>أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ لَمَّا تُوِّفِيَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَاسْتُخْلِفتْ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَكَفَرَ مَنْ كَفَرَ مِنَ الْعَرَبِ ...</p> Abu Hurayrah said, "When the Messenger of Allah died, and Abu Bakr replaced him, and then there were those who disbelieved among the Arabs to declare infidelity ..." ¹⁶ Therefore, if the number of dissidents was not a minority, it would have been difficult for Abu Bakr's government and the Muslim forces to crush it. If the dissidents were classified according to geographical location, the <i>riddah</i> perpetrators were mostly domiciled in Najd (including Ghathafan, Thayyi', Asad, Tamim, and Banu Hanifah) and areas located in coastal areas (<i>al-manathiq al-sawahiliyah</i>) including Bahrain, Oman, and Yemen. As for the areas in the Hijaz region (which included Medina, Mecca, and Thaif), the people still firmly believed in Islam and remained loyal to Abu Bakr's rule in Medina. ¹⁷ The number of <i>riddah</i> tribes was about 12 tribes and far less than the tribes in		

¹⁴Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari*, 242–44; Al-Atsir, *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh*, 201–4.

¹⁵ Al-Kala'i, *Al-Iktifa' Bi Ma Tadhammanahu Min Maghazi Rasul Allah Wa Al-Tsalatsah Al-Khulafa*, Vol. 2, Part 1, 8–10.

¹⁶Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Isma'il Al-Bukhari, *Matn Masykul Al-Bukhari Bi Hasyiyat Al-Sindi*, Vol. 04 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1995), 300.

¹⁷ Syawfani, *Hurub Al-Riddah: Dirasah Naqdiyah Fi Al-Mashadir*, 108–25.

		<p>Arabia that did not participate in <i>riddah</i>. During the time of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) when there was <i>'Am al-Wufud</i> (mission year) in 9 AH / 630 AD, the number of tribes that sent delegations to declare submission and allegiance to the Prophet reached 72 persons. In addition, the number of <i>riddah</i> troops is about 50,000 people. This number was tiny compared to the number of Muslims, whose companions of the Prophet then reached more than 114,000 people.¹⁸ The population in the Hejaz region was far greater than in the <i>riddah</i> areas.¹⁹ The proportional information was the explanation of al-Waqidi who wrote <i>wa irtadda man irtadda 'an al-islam</i> or al-Ya'qubi who wrote <i>wa tanabba'a jama'ah min al-'arab, wa irtadda jama'ah, wa wadha'u al-tijan 'ala ru'usihim, wa imtana'a qawm min dafi' al-zakah ila abi bakr</i>.²⁰ The explanation of both historians was in line with the information stated in the hadith.</p>
3	A warning letter from Abu Bakr	<p>Al-Thabari and al-Kala'i mentioned Abu Bakr's warning letter to the rebels in full text, but Ibn al-Atsir did not. Then al-Kala'i mentioned Abu Bakr's message to Khalid ibn al-Walid in full text, but al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir did not mention it.²¹ In this aspect, al-Kala'i's explanation was more complete than that of al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir. The mention of Abu Bakr's warning letter and testament made the readers of history know the wise attitude of Abu Bakr toward his warlord and those who disobeyed him. Abu Bakr was not an emotional leader in making important decisions.</p>
4	Abu Bakr's message to Khalid	<p>Regarding the description of the number of Muslim troops prepared to face the rebels, al-Kala'i did not mention eleven troops at all. In contrast, al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir mentioned that they numbered eleven troops with their warlord. Regarding the mention of the eleven armies formed by Abu Bakr, al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir were more detailed in explaining the war strategy pursued by Abu Bakr when facing the perpetrators of <i>riddah</i>. Perhaps al-Kala'i did not mention it because he thought the identities of the army's leaders would also be clearly known when explaining the chronology of the wars.</p>
5	Assassination of Malik ibn Nuwayrah	<p>In describing the assassination of Malik ibn Nuwayrah and the words of Khalid ibn al-Walid uttered to his troops, al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir mentioned <i>adfi'u</i> (keep warm),²² but al-Kala'i did not mention it. The horrific incident when Malik's head was</p>

¹⁸ Rajab Muhammad 'Abd Al-Halim, *Al-Riddah Fi Maqhum Jadid* (Cairo: Dar al-Nahdhah al-'Arabiyah, 1985), 13–14.

¹⁹ Al-Halim, 128.

²⁰ Al-Waqidi, "Al-Maghazi," in *Al-Maktabah Al-Syamilah*, n.d.

²¹ Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari*, 249–52; Al-Atsir, *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh*, 201.

²² Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari*, 278; Al-Atsir, *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh*, 213. Haykal wrote *dafi'u*. See Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Al-Shiddiq Abu Bakr* (Cairo: Mathabi' al-Hay'ah al-Mishriyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitab, 1982), 72.

		burned was not mentioned by Ibn al-Atsir, although al-Thabari and al-Kala'i did mention it. ²³ Al-Thabari went into more detail about the murder of Malik ibn Nuwayrah, although the event shocked the Muslims, especially for Abu Bakr and 'Umar. On the contrary, the attitudes of Ibn al-Atsir and al-Kala'i were similar. Al-Kala'i did not tell the terrible story, perhaps he wanted to maintain a positive image of Khalid, who had played a significant role in leading the army to defeat the dissidents during the <i>riddah</i> wars. A proportionate attitude was to mention the story of the murder and explain it by understanding the context of the event. Everyone certainly cannot accept the murder of Malik, who surrendered and professed his faith. This protest was what 'Umar and other companions did to Abu Bakr. But Abu Bakr did not dismiss Khalid, as 'Umar wanted. He only severely reprimanded Khalid and paid the murder <i>diyat</i> (ransom) to Malik's brother. He ordered Khalid to leave for Yamamah to fight Musaylimah.
6	Name of Malik bin Nuwayrah's wife	Regarding the name of Malik ibn Nuwayrah's wife, al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir mentioned the name Ummu Tamim, ²⁴ while al-Kala'i mentioned Ummu Mutammim. ²⁵ In addition, the three historians did not differ regarding the name of Malik's brother, Mutammim. However, al-Thabari did not mention Mutammim's lamentations, whereas Ibn al-Atsir and al-Kala'i mentioned them. ²⁶ Many writers mentioned the name Ummu Tamim, but the name Ummu Mutammim was not only mentioned by al-Kala'i. Other historians mentioned this name were Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) in <i>Tarikh Ibn Khaldun</i> , al-Ya'fi'i (1298-1367) in <i>Mir'at al-Jinan wa 'Ibrat al-Yaqdhan fi Ma'rifat Hawadits al-Zaman</i> , and Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyari (d. 1326) in <i>al-Rawdh al-Mi'thar fi Khabar al-Aqthar</i> , as found in <i>al-Maktabah al-Syamilah</i> . The difference in the name of Malik bin Nuwayrah's wife did not reduce the essence of the story's message that after Malik died, Khalid immediately married Malik's wife, whose beauty was very famous among Arabs at that time.
7	Poetry of Malik ibn Nuwayrah's brother	Regarding Malik's poem, perhaps al-Thabari did not feel the need to mention it. For him, his meager explanation has made it clear that Mutammim dared to protest the death of his brother while reciting lamentations. On the contrary, Ibn al-Atsir and al-

²³ Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari*, 278–79; dan Al-Kala'i, *Al-Iktifa' Bi Ma Tadhammanahu Min Maghazi Rasul Allah Wa Al-Tsalatsah Al-Khulafa*, Vol. 2, Part 1, 36–37.

²⁴ Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari*, 278; dan Al-Atsir, *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh*, 213.

²⁵ Al-Kala'i, *Al-Iktifa' Bi Ma Tadhammanahu Min Maghazi Rasul Allah Wa Al-Tsalatsah Al-Khulafa*, Vol. 2, Part 1, 38 48, 50.

²⁶ Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari*, 279; Al-Atsir, *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh*, 213–14; dan Al-Kala'i, *Al-Iktifa' Bi Ma Tadhammanahu Min Maghazi Rasul Allah Wa Al-Tsalatsah Al-Khulafa*, Vol. 2, Part 1, 37.

		Kala'i felt inadequate and wanted to reinforce the impression of Mutammim's sadness by mentioning the poem in full text in their works.
8	The real name of Thulayhah	In describing the war against Thulayhah ibn Khuwaylid, only al-Kala'i mentioned Thulayhah's real name, Thalhah, so his followers were outraged when Khalid called him Thulayhah. ²⁷ For al-Kala'i, mentioning Thulayhah's real name could explain that Thulayhah's position among the Muslims was very low, even though he was held in high esteem by his people and even claimed to be a prophet. In contrast, al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir did not mention the real name because the call "Thulayhah", which was a form of <i>tasghir</i> (small regard) of Talhah had automatically shown an element of insult.
9	Thayyi's insult to Abu Bakr with the call of <i>Abu al-Fashil</i>	In describing the conversation of 'Adi ibn Hatim and his people, only al-Thabari mentioned the utterances of the Thayyi' who insulted Abu Bakr as <i>Abu al-Fashil</i> . In contrast, Ibn al-Atsir and al-Kala'i did not mention it. But the three of them agreed on the merits of 'Adi bin Hatim who succeeded in re-Islamizing his people and bringing in an army of 1000 men. ²⁸ The meaning of <i>al-Fashil</i> was a camel calf, a weaned cow, or a short wall. ²⁹ By mentioning the call " <i>Abu al-Fashil</i> " perhaps al-Thabari wanted to show how vicious the Thayyi' people were in welcoming Abu Bakr's call. Ibn al-Atsir and al-Kala'i did not mention it because it was more important the role of 'Adi ibn Hatim in returning his people to Islam.
10	The 'extraordinary' story about al-'Ala' bin al-Hadhrami	Regarding the 'strange' events that occurred during the <i>riddah</i> wars, the three historians did not mind it. They mentioned clearly the 'miracles' surrounding the story of al-'Ala' bin al-Hadhrami while fighting against the Bahrainis. At that time, he and his army got lost in Dahna' because the camels he was driving left them without supplies at night. But miraculously, they found an oasis after al-'Ala' prayed to Allah in the midst of the anxiety of his troops. However, he and Abu Hurayrah returned to the place but found no water. The camels also returned to them in the morning. When they pursued the remnants of the enemy who had fled to Darin, they could cross the strait with their camels after praying to Allah, whereas it usually took a day and a night by boat to cross it. ³⁰ The three historians mentioned the miraculous event to show the merits of believers who always received help from God wherever and under any circumstances, even though

²⁷ Al-Kala'i, *Al-Iktifa' Bi Ma Tadhammanahu Min Maghazi Rasul Allah Wa Al-Tsalatsah Al-Khulafa*, Vol. 2, Part 1, 72.

²⁸ Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari*, 253; Al-Atsir, *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh*, 203–5; and Al-Kala'i, *Al-Iktifa' Bi Ma Tadhammanahu Min Maghazi Rasul Allah Wa Al-Tsalatsah Al-Khulafa*, Vol. 2, Part 1, 23–24.

²⁹ See Louis Ma'luf, *Al-Munjid Fi Al-Lughah* (Beirut: Dar al-Masyriq, 1996), 585.

³⁰ Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari*, 306–8; Al-Atsir, *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh*, 222–23; and Al-Kala'i, *Al-Iktifa' Bi Ma Tadhammanahu Min Maghazi Rasul Allah Wa Al-Tsalatsah Al-Khulafa*, Vol. 2, Part 1, 89.

		some historical readers may not believe it. The essence of the story is that the fighting spirit possessed by the Muslim forces was finally able to bring victory in defeating the rebel forces.
11	'Strange helper' of Musaylimah	Regarding Musaylimah's helper (who always advised Musaylimah), only al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir mentioned it, but al-Kala'i did not. Al-Thabari said <i>wa kana rasulullah shalla Allah 'alayh wa sallam qala: inna ma'a Musaylimah syaythanan la ya'shihi</i> and <i>idza hamma bi jawabih a'radha bi wajhihi mustasyiran fayanhahu syaythanh an yaqbala</i> , Ibn al-Atsir says <i>idza hamma bi jawabihi a'radha bi wajhihi liyastasyira syaythanh fayanhahu an yaqbala</i> , while al-Kala'i did not mention it. ³¹ It seems that al-Kala'i put forward his rationality over al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir, so he did not mention the helper of Musaylimah who always accompanied and gave advice to the Musaylimah. Al-Thabari and Ibn al-Atsir, on the other hand, thought differently because such an event may happen. Moreover, the Prophet spoke about it, as told by al-Thabari.

Most fiqh books explain that the death penalty for apostate Muslims has been an agreement among Islamic scholars (*ijma'*). The hadith that is used as an argument in favor of the death penalty is the hadith narrated by 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas that Abu Nu'man ibn Muhammad ibn al-Fadhl said to us, Hammad ibn Zayd told us from Ayyub of 'Ikrimah that in fact 'Ali ibn Abi Talib received a people who were *zindiq* (apostates) and burned them. Then it was conveyed to Ibn 'Abbas, and he said, "If I had responded to it, then I would not have burned them because of the prohibition of the Prophet who said, "Do not punish with the punishment of Allah!" I will kill him as the Prophet said, "Whoever changes his religion, kill him."³² According to Muhammad Nashir al-Din al-Albani, this hadith has undoubted authenticity.³³ Although this hadith is considered *shahih*, is the execution of the death penalty for apostates following Allah's guidance in the Qur'an, and how was the execution of the death penalty in early Islam when the Prophet or the Shahabat lived?

Indeed, the Islamic law in the Qur'an relating to human life is complete. For example, the law to cut off hands for thieves in QS. al-Maidah: 38. So is the punishment of caning for adulterers in QS. al-Nur: 2. Even the law of *qishash* is explained in QS. al-Maidah: 45. In the application of *qishash*, Allah explains it in the Qur'an in great detail to the point of wounds, so it is impossible if Allah neglects to explain the obligation to carry out the death penalty. Does the explanation that God does not mention the death penalty against apostates mean that God does not intend it to be applied? In the Qur'an, Allah explains that the apostates' punishment becomes Allah's authority on the day of judgment. God says: "*Whosoever apostates among you from his religion, then he dies in disbelief, it is they who are in vain in this world and in the Hereafter, and they are the inhabitants of the Fire. They remain in it.*" (QS. al-Baqarah: 217) The above verse explains that the punishment for apostasy is not imposed by God directly on the earth, so God allows apostasy to repent. The abolition of the death penalty against apostates is

³¹ Al-Thabari, *Tarikh Al-Thabari*, 293; and Al-Atsir, *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh*, 217.

³² Al-Bukhari, *Matn Masykul Al-Bukhari Bi Hasyiyat Al-Sindi*, Vol. 04.

³³ Muhammad Nashir al-Din Al-Albani, "Al-Silsilah Al-Shahihah," in *Al-Maktabah Al-Syamilah*, n.d.

also hinted at by the verse: "Those who believe then disbelieve, then believe, and then disbelieve, and then disbelieve, and then Allah will not forgive them, nor will He guide them to a straight path." (QS. al-Nisa: 137).

In addition, the events of the Hudaibiyah agreement during the time of the Prophet have shown that the Prophet once gave freedom to Muslims who wanted to return to the Quraysh in Mecca without having to be told to rejoin the Muslims. The following is a hadith that explains this information. Musa ibn Mas'ud said, Sufyan ibn Sa'id told us, from Abu Ishaq from al-Barra' ibn 'Azib. He said: The Prophet, on the occasion of Hudaibiyah, made peace with the polytheists in three respects, namely, the polytheists who came to the Muslims would be returned, the Muslims who came to the polytheists would not be returned, and the Muslims would visit Mecca the following year and then stay there for three days while still sheathing swords and other weapons."³⁴ Islamic history also explains, "Whoever of the Quraish crosses to Muhammad (without the permission of his guardian) must be returned to them, and whoever of the followers of Muhammad crosses to the Quraish will not be returned."³⁵

The Prophet also forgave and did not kill apostates who repented and returned to Islam. 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi al-Sarh was the secretary who recorded the revelations for the Messenger of Allah. However, Satan led him astray and made him an apostate, so he joined the infidels. Then the Messenger of Allah, on the occasion of the conquest of Mecca, ordered that 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'd be killed. Uthman ibn 'Affan then asked the Prophet for protection and forgiveness for that person, and then he was forgiven by the Prophet.³⁶ The forgiveness given by the Prophet to 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'd for his apostasy was not followed by actions that endangered or threatened the stability of Islamic society, for example, by destruction or murder.

Regarding the hadith of the Prophet that "Whoever changes his religion, kill him.", it should be understood that the imposition of the death penalty seems to be solely related to the context of the problem of wars and evil deeds against Islam whose perpetrators are hostile to Islam or Muslims. This context was the basis of the Prophet when he ordered the assassination of 'Abd Allah ibn Khathal and Miqyas ibn Shubabah.³⁷

Al-Nasa'i wrote that "Al-Qasim ibn Zakariyya ibn Dinar said to us, Ahmad ibn Mufadhhal said, Asbath said to us, al-Siddi said from Mush'ab ibn Sa'd from his father, he said that during the conquest of Mecca, the Messenger of Allah guaranteed the safety of everyone, except four men and two women. The Prophet said, kill them, even though you find them taking refuge in the curtain of the ka'bah, which was 'Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl, 'Abd Allah ibn Khathal, Miqyas ibn Shubabah, and 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi al-Sarh. 'Abd Allah ibn Khathal was then found taking refuge in the curtain of the ka'bah by Sa'id ibn Hurayts and 'Ammar ibn Yasir. The younger Sa'id preceded 'Ammar in killing Ibn Khathal. Miqyas ibn Shubabah was found in the market and was later killed by the Muslims. 'Ikrimah fled by sea and then was hit by a storm, so the ship's passengers said, give yourselves because surely your gods cannot benefit you here. 'Ikrimah then said, by Allah, if this sincerity had not saved me from drowning,

³⁴ See Al-Bukhari, "Shahih Al-Bukhari," in *Al-Maktabah Al-Syamilah*, n.d.

³⁵ See Shafi al-Rahman Al-Mubarakfuri, "Al-Rahiq Al-Makhtum," in *Al-Maktabah Al-Syamilah*, n.d.

³⁶ See Abu Dawud, "Sunan Abi Dawud," in *Al-Maktabah Al-Syamilah*, n.d.

³⁷ Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, "Malamih Al-Mujtama' Al-Muslim Al-Ladzi Nansyuduh," in [Http://Qaradawi.Net/](http://Qaradawi.Net/), n.d.

then nothing else could have saved me on land. O, my Lord, I promise that if You save me from this danger, then I will go to Muhammad (peace be upon him) so that I can lay down my hand to ask him for forgiveness because he is very noble and forgiving. 'Ikrimah then met the Prophet and converted to Islam again. While Ibn al-Sarh hid in the house of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan. When the Prophet asked the people for allegiance, 'Uthman went to the Prophet saying, O Messenger of Allah, forgive 'Abd Allah. Then the Prophet forgave him after three supplications and then went to the companions saying, Is there not one of you wise who has seen me refuse forgiveness? They replied, O Messenger of Allah, we do not witness to you unless you forgive him. Indeed, it was not worthy of the Prophet to adopt an attitude of treason."³⁸

Discussion

Based on the biographies of al-Thabari, Ibn al-Atsir, and al-Kala'i, it is very noteworthy that these three historians were undoubtedly scholarly in the field of Islamic history, and they even had qualified capabilities in the field of hadith. The study of hadith is a science that places aspects of the accuracy and trust in a high position in efforts to collect hadith, both related to *sanad* and *matn* of hadith. The *isnad* method in the study of hadith was also adopted by historical science. Their difference was that al-Thabari mentioned the *sanad* path in a complete transmission, while Ibn al-Atsir and al-Kala'i did not mention it completely. Therefore, it can be argued that their historical work was very worthy of reference for historians today. However, the reading of their works must also be accompanied by critical thinking, especially regarding their statements which were very difficult for reasoning to understand and accept because of the strangeness and peculiarities in their description.

In addition, the motive for making history easier for the reader is so prominent in the works of Ibn al-Atsir and al-Kala'i that they did not mention the complete *sanad* path. The readers of their work are certainly not too worried about the absence of *sanad* because both have capabilities in the field of hadith. In addition, the three authors did not provide optimal historical explanations, and instead tended to act as chroniclers. In their explanation of the *riddah* wars there is no fundamental difference regarding the discussion of the *riddah* wars. The flow of writing events looks no different. However, historical writing should answer the question "why" and explain the causal factors of historical events.³⁹

The differences in the works of the three historians were only in 'small' things, such as differences in the mention of the names of the perpetrators of events and differences in sentences. It is not easy to determine which work is more comprehensive. Therefore, to comprehend the history of *riddah* wars it may be more appropriate to combine many historical sources. In addition, readers of their historical works are strongly encouraged to analyze their descriptions critically and perhaps seek historical explanations through other references written by critical historians, both Islamic and non-Islamic writers, for example, an explanation of the cause of *Hurub al-Riddah*.

Many European scholars, especially J. Wellhausen and L. Caetani, argued that *Hurub al-Riddah* was essentially political. At that time, Medina had become the center of a social and political system to which religion was integral. Consequently, it was

³⁸ see Al-Nasa'i, "Sunan Al-Nasa'i," in *Al-Maktabah Al-Syamilah*, n.d.

³⁹ Helius Sjamsudin, *Metodologi Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2007), 191–93.

inevitable that any reaction against this system should have a religious aspect.⁴⁰ Although the apostasy wars acquired a particular religious character, this movement was mainly political⁴¹ because the Arab tribes outside the Hijaz dissolved the treaties they had entered with Muhammad.⁴² But Haykal argues that Abu Bakr's reasons for pursuing military policy toward *riddah* tended to be influenced by religious aspects that he said did not require separation between zakat and other Islamic religious teachings. In Abu Bakr's view, the separation of zakat from other Islamic teachings could not be justified by religion. The separation was like separating prayer from other pillars of Islam because the Prophet once affirmed that the religion of Islam must be total and fully comprehensive. A person who declares himself to be a follower of Islam will not be recognized as a Muslim if he does not perform the prayers.”⁴³

For Abu Bakr, there was no bargaining or compromise to fulfill religious desires and pleasures. In this regard, Abu Bakr followed the attitude of the Prophet, who did not want to compromise when the Meccan polytheists wanted to offer a tempting offer on the condition that the Prophet was willing to abandon his da'wah activities that invited the people of Mecca to embrace Islam. At that time, the Prophet expressly stated in his famous saying, "By Allah, if they put the sun in my right hand and put the moon in my left, with the intention that I will not abandon this task, I will not abandon it, let Allah prove the victory in my hands, or I will perish for it." This policy was also what Abu Bakr did when his companions asked him to change his order in sending Osama's troops and his policy when the Arabs asked to be exempted in terms of the obligation to pay zakat. It was his faith that could not be defeated by death and the glitter of world life that could maintain the purity and integrity of Islam at a very crucial time. Anyone could imagine the great danger that would arise if Abu Bakr accepted the request of the tribes who did not want to pay zakat.⁴⁴

Other reasons prompted Abu Bakr to reject the exemption from zakat payments firmly. The reason was related to the financial significance of zakat for running the Islamic government in Medina. Zakat was not merely a religious command obligated to Muslims, but it was also essential to support the continuity of government.⁴⁵ Zakat was one of the pillars supporting the administration of the Islamic government,⁴⁶ so Abu Bakr was forceful on those who did not want to carry out the duty of zakat.

In addition, political factors were undoubtedly the primary consideration of Abu Bakr in making decisions. Abu Bakr's firm stance should have been implemented so that the newly formed Islamic government would not be destroyed and the spread of Islamic da'wah would not stop.⁴⁷ The situation at that time was very threatening to the continuity of Muslim government. Many people were self-proclaimed prophets. Some areas in the Islamic territories that resisted the authority of Medina refused to obey the

⁴⁰ W. Montgomery Watt, "Abu Bakr," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam . Vol. I* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 110.

⁴¹ P. M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, *The Cambridge History of Islam, Vol. 1A* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 58.

⁴² Chase F. Robinson, ed., *The New Cambridge History of Islam, Vol. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 194.

⁴³ Haykal, *Al-Shiddiq Abu Bakr*, 50.

⁴⁴ Haykal, 52.

⁴⁵ Abdullah Saeed and Hassan Saeed, *Freedom of Religion, Apostasy, and Islam* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 66.

⁴⁶ Jurji Zaydan, *Tarikh Al-Tamaddun Al-Islami, Vol. 1* (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, n.d.), 68.

⁴⁷ Saeed and Saeed, *Freedom of Religion, Apostasy, and Islam*, 66.

provisions laid down by the central government and no longer carried out the duties they had⁴⁸ performed at the time of the Prophet. Therefore, in his letter addressed to the perpetrators of *riddah*, Abu Bakr reminded them to re-implement their loyalty agreement with the Prophet, whose position was continued by his successor caliph.⁴⁹

Because of this political context, Abu Bakr pursued a military strategy against those who had resisted and revolted against the legitimate government, as in the time of the Prophet who was firm with the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa', Banu Nazhir, and Banu Qurayzah who lived in Medina and were clearly hostile to Islam. Therefore, Abu Bakr's policy applied to the perpetrators of *riddah* was closely related to their blatant acts against Islamic rule, not simply because they had apostatized (left Islam) by faith.⁵⁰ Based on the political arguments of Abu Bakr above, it can be stated that the events of *the riddah* wars could not be used as a basis for applying the death penalty for apostates who are solely due to changes in their religious beliefs. In addition, *Hurub al-Riddah* did not contradict Islam's religious freedom teachings. As an Islamic figure, Abu Bakr realized that one's faith and Islam were the freedom of every individual guaranteed by the Qur'an, and no one should impose his religious beliefs on others. This policy was in line with the principle of religious freedom desired by the spirit of the Qur'an, so it did not contradict human rights values.

Conclusion

Based on the in-depth analysis above, it can be argued that Islam vigorously protects religious freedom. No definite information in the Qur'an states that an apostatized Muslim should be sentenced to death. At the same time, the information in the hadith on the subject should be understood more carefully because the application of the death penalty seems to be aimed at apostates who accompany their actions with acts of violence and crimes to the religion of Islam or its adherents. Regarding the *riddah* wars, there were at least two reasons behind Abu Bakr's policy of implementing military action against the perpetrators of *riddah*, namely religious and political reasons. Religious reasons departed from the transgressions of the perpetrators of *riddah* who did not fulfill the obligation of zakat and the statements of those who proclaim themselves prophets. The political reason was due to the magnitude of interference and threats from the *riddah* perpetrators directed at the stability of Abu Bakr's government. This reason was the most dominant in Abu Bakr's political policy determination, so *Hurub al-Riddah* was not appropriate if used as a basis and justification for imposing the death penalty for apostates who converted and left Islam solely because of faith factors.

Finally, we must disseminate the correct information that Islam is a religion that consistently gives freedom of religion to everyone and strongly recommends that everyone be religious according to the most profound conscience. This library research only uses relevant historical works. Therefore the author encourages other researchers to conduct field research relating to the Indonesian Islamic scholars' perspectives on religious freedom and apostasy in Islam.

⁴⁸ Holt, Lambton, and Lewis, *The Cambridge History of Islam, Vol. 1A*, 58.

⁴⁹ See Muhammad Dhahir Watr, *Al-Riyadah Fi Hurub Wa Futuhat Abi Bakr Al-Shiddiq* (Damascus: Ittihad al-Kuttab al-'Arab, 1999), 100–102; and Ma'mun Gharib, *Khilafah Abi Bakr Al-Shiddiq* (Cairo: Markaz al-Kitab, 1997), 83–84.

⁵⁰ Zahid Aziz, *Islam, Peace, and Tolerance* (U.K.: Ahmadiya Anjuman Lahore Publications, 2007), 19.

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