



The Impact of Al-Murabbithun Movement Arrival on Islamic Education in Al-Andalus

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Abstract. Al-Andalus is a Muslim name for the Iberian Peninsula, which Muslims ruled for over seven hundred years. Al-Murabbithun is a dakwa, education and Jihad movement that ruled Al-Andalus and brought its people back to Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah with proper understanding. This research aims to know how Islamic Education was in Al-Andalus before the arrival of Al-Murabbithun, how Islamic Education of Al-Murabbithun, the impact of Al-Murabbithun in Al-Andalus and the wisdom which can be taken from Al-Murabbithun government. The Method in this research is literature study, whose data is taken by studying literature. Many changes include Islamic Education, which successfully repairs the Andalusian people's decadency so we can apply wisdom now.

Keywords: Al-Andalus · Al-Murabbithun · Al-Qur'an · As-Sunnah · Islamic Education

1 Introduction

Al-Andalus or Andalusia is the Arabic term used by the Islamic community to refer to the region of the Iberian Peninsula. The name originated from the word “Vandal” or “Wandal.” This word is the name of an ancient Germanic tribe that originated from the northern parts of Scandinavia and later migrated through the territories of present-day Poland, the Balkans, and Italy, before settling in the Iberian Peninsula and establishing a kingdom in what is now Tunisia. Currently, the region of the Iberian Peninsula is divided into the countries of Portugal and Spain [1].

Al-Andalus was under the rule of the Islamic community for over seven centuries. Muslims first arrived in Al-Andalus in 711 AD, led by a Berber (Amazigh) military leader named Tariq ibn Ziyad, under the orders of the governor of Ifriqiya, Musa ibn Nusayr. The history of Muslims in this land eventually came to a close with the expulsion of Sultan Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn al-Ahmar al-Saghir from Al-Andalus in 1492 AD by the Christian ruler's King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, after various Muslim dynasties, generations, and rulers had governed there. Among the dynasties that once ruled in Al-Andalus was the Al-Murabitun dynasty [1, 2].

The Almoravid dynasty, known as Dinasti Al-Murabbithun in Arabic, emerged as a movement of Islamic preaching and education to teach Muslims about their religion. The central figure of this Sunni da'wah movement was a scholar named Abdullah ibn

Yasin. He was a renowned jurist from the Maliki school of thought and belonged to the Jazula tribe, one of the Sanhaja Berber tribes. Ibn Yasin's preaching initially faced strong opposition from the inland Berber communities of the Sahara desert. They had a limited understanding of Islam and considered it only as a profession of faith (shahada). He was even expelled and threatened with death by the Judala Berber tribe, as his teachings contradicted the beliefs of their ancestors [3].

He then moved his da'wah activities to the Lamtuna Berber tribe, where their leader accepted his preaching. This tribe provided him with protection and support to spread his message further. The acceptance and support of the Lamtuna tribe gave him the strength to continue propagating his da'wah [3]. The Almoravid movement eventually spread throughout the Maghreb region, including the Sudanese territories. In this context, "Sudan" refers to the regions inhabited by black Africans, such as the Ghana Empire. The influence of the Almoravids reached these regions, and their teachings and cultural impact were felt among the populations residing there [4] or now the modern countries of Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, Senegal, and Mali [5]. That is correct. The Almoravid movement also spread across the European continent, entering the region of Al-Andalus. At that time, the Muslim community in Al-Andalus was politically fragmented and militarily weakened, and they were facing challenges such as the influence of music, female singers, and intoxicants. Despite these challenges, Al-Andalus was still considered one of the world's most advanced centers of knowledge. The Almoravids played a significant role in revitalizing and strengthening the Islamic presence in Al-Andalus during this period [6]. The article aims to explore the educational system in Al-Andalus prior to the arrival of the Almoravids, the Islamic educational system taught by the Almoravids, the impact of the Almoravid movement on the Islamic educational system in Al-Andalus, and the wisdom that can be drawn from the educational system of the Almoravids in Al-Andalus to be applied in the present time.

According to Mukhlis (2021), the educational system implemented in Al-Andalus and Sicily was based on the kuttab system, which focused on teaching fundamental and intermediate knowledge such as the Qur'an, fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), language, arts, and other subjects. In addition to the kuttab system, higher education institutions also existed, where specialized disciplines such as religion, science, and technology were taught.

The arrival of the Almoravids had a significant impact on the educational system in Al-Andalus. They brought with them a strong emphasis on the teaching of orthodox Islam and revitalized Islamic educational institutions. The Almoravids emphasized the study of the Qur'an, fiqh, and other Islamic sciences. They promoted a stricter adherence to Islamic principles. Their presence contributed to reforming and enhancing the Islamic educational system in Al-Andalus.

From the educational system of the Almoravids in Al-Andalus, we can draw wisdom that can be applied now. It includes the importance of a balanced curriculum encompassing religious and secular knowledge, promoting Islamic values and ethics in education, emphasizing the study of the Qur'an and Islamic sciences, and encouraging critical thinking and inquiry-based learning. These principles can be valuable in developing a comprehensive and holistic Islamic education system in contemporary times [7].

Indeed, the parties that will benefit from this research include the author, the author's family, readers, the community, and the entire Muslim ummah. This research can benefit the present-day Muslim ummah, as they face different challenges than Muslims in Al-Andalus during that time. However, nonetheless, they face their struggles and fitnah (trials and tribulations).

2 Research Methods

This research is classified as a literature review, which involves gathering data through bibliographic exploration or literature sources. The approach used in this research is qualitative. The validity of the data is ensured through various tests, including credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity). The data analysis technique employed is the literature study method. There are four stages of data analysis: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and data verification.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 The Condition of Muslims and the Islamic Education System in Al-Andalus Before the Arrival of the Al-Murabbithun Movement

After the almost complete conquest, Thariq bin Ziyad and Musa bin Nushair left Al-Andalus upon the order of the Caliph Amirul Mukminin Al-Walid bin Abdul Malik. It marked the beginning of the period of governors in Al-Andalus. This period was filled with conflicts, rebellions, and expeditions to France. Unfortunately, the conquest of Al-Andalus was not fully accomplished, as remnants of the Visigothic Christian kingdom sought refuge in the Cantabrian Mountains in the north. It started with only 30 people, and eventually, they established the Kingdom of Asturias. This period ended in 756 CE when the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyad Caliphate, and an Umayyad prince managed to escape to Al-Andalus, where he initiated the Umayyad rule in Al-Andalus. The fortunes of the Muslim community in Al-Andalus fluctuated during this period, with the peak of prosperity occurring under the rule of the Umayyad Amirs with the same name, namely Abdurrahman Ad-Dakhil (First Amir), Abdurrahman Al-Wustho, and Abdurrahman An-Nashir (Last Amir, who later became the Caliph) [1].

The Umayyad rule ended in 1031 CE, as numerous territories declared independence. Al-Andalus entered a period known as Al-Muluk At-Tawaif or the period of small kingdoms commonly referred to as Taifas. During this time, the Muslim community in Al-Andalus was divided into 22 tiny states that often engaged in hostility and even warfare against each other. This internal conflict severely disadvantaged and weakened the Muslim community, allowing the Christian kingdoms in the north to attack the fragmented Muslim states. During this period, Muslim rulers were not hesitant to seek assistance from Christian rulers in fighting against their fellow Muslims, and in some cases, even against their siblings [1, 3].

During this period, one of the phenomena was the rise of Christian kingdoms. At the beginning of the division among the Muslims, three Christian kingdoms were formed

by different ethnic groups. The largest was the Kingdom of León, with its capital in León. It was a direct continuation of the Kingdom of Asturias, and the descendants of the Visigothic people ruled over this kingdom. The second kingdom was the Kingdom of Navarre, ruled by the Basque ethnic group, the oldest ethnic group in the Iberian Peninsula, with its capital in Pamplona. The last Christian state was the Duchy of Barcelona, with its capital in Barcelona. It was a duchy ruled by the Catalan ethnic group, similar to the Occitan people in France [1].

In addition to the political divisions and weakened military strength resulting from internal conflicts among Muslims, the Muslim community in Al-Andalus during that period also experienced a decline in the application of Islamic teachings and laws. Several factors contributed to this decline and eventual downfall, including the spread of luxurious and excessive lifestyles, the delegation of affairs to those who were not qualified, the emergence of fanaticism and racism, and the phenomenon of Ziryab, where music, female singers, and intoxicants proliferated [1].

Ziryab was a singer from Baghdad who introduced non-beneficial music and songs to the people of Al-Andalus, diverting their attention from the Quran. The music brought by Ziryab later became the foundation of distinctive music in the Western Islamic world, such as in countries like Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, that continues to this day [8, 9].

Ziryab arrived in Al-Andalus during the reign of the Umayyad dynasty, specifically during the time of Amir Abdurrahman Al-Wustho. The teachings brought by Ziryab gradually developed and had a significant impact. Music truly flourished in Al-Andalus after that. It can be seen in the endorsement of music by prominent scholars from Al-Andalus, such as Imam Ibn Hazm, as discussed in his book *Al-Muhalla bi Al-Asyar*. He considered every evidence that prohibits music, especially from the Hadith, as weak or unreliable. This viewpoint contradicted most scholars who deemed music prohibited, as stated by Imam Ash-Shafi'i in his book *Al-Umm*. However, this difference of opinion does not imply that individuals are free to choose whichever opinion they prefer. It is because particular pieces of evidence invalidate Imam Ibn Hazm's viewpoint, as some of the Hadiths he considered weak are authentic. The majority of scholars agree with their rulings [8, 10].

Imam Malik is among the scholars who prohibited music; he even prohibited songs enjoyed for their melodies alone. During that time, the Maliki school of thought was prominent in Al-Andalus and the western part of the Islamic world (Al-Maghrib). However, the jurists of the Maliki school reevaluated their traditions due to internal pressures (such as social and political changes) and external influences (such as the influence of other legal schools). An example of a legal ruling within the Maliki school is that people can gift their family members to avoid the strict inheritance laws. However, gifting requires an offer and acceptance (*ijab qabul*) and witnesses to transfer a property's ownership. It is important to note that Islamic jurisprudence is a dynamic field, and scholars may reexamine and reinterpret specific issues based on changing circumstances and different perspectives [11, 12].

The system of Islamic education in Al-Andalus revolved around educational institutions called *Kuttab*. These *Kuttab* institutions taught various fields of knowledge, such as *fiqh* (jurisprudence), language and literature, music, and arts. As mentioned earlier, the Muslims in Al-Andalus followed the Maliki school of thought in *fiqh*. Arabic, as

the official language of Muslims, was spoken for everyday conversations in language and literature. In terms of music and arts, the influence of Ziryab, known for his skilled musical arrangements and adaptations of lyrics, had a significant impact. People from all walks of life and ages enjoyed his musical arrangements. However, this influence also could diminish interest in studying Islamic religious knowledge. It is important to note that the educational landscape of Al-Andalus was diverse. While the Kuttab played a significant role in providing various study subjects, the emphasis on religious education may have varied among different individuals and institutions [7].

3.2 Da'wah, Jihad and the Islamic Education System from the Al-Murabbithun Movement

The leading preacher of the Al-Murabitun movement was Abdullah ibn Yasin. He carried out his preaching mission by penetrating the southern region of Algeria, the northern region of Mauritania, and eventually reaching the southern part of the territory inhabited by the Judalah tribe. The religious knowledge among those in that region was minimal, as many still exhibited behaviors of the pre-Islamic era (jahiliyyah). Some were only familiar with the two testimonies of faith (shahadah), which was the extent of their knowledge of religious teachings. However, specific individuals and influential figures within the Judalah tribe, who had their interests, dared to obstruct his noble mission. They threatened to expel or even kill him. Unfortunately, Abdullah ibn Yasin's only protector, the tribal leader Amir Yahya ibn Ibrahim Al-Judali, could not provide him with adequate protection [1].

Finally, to save his life after years of patience and resilience, Abdullah ibn Yasin decided to move further south into the remote regions of the African continent. In a secluded area on the banks of a river, he began teaching the religion of Islam to those willing to learn. Among those who were willing to learn were some individuals, especially the youth, from the Judalah tribe, including their leader Amir Yahya ibn Ibrahim Al-Judali, who was willing to leave his position. Additionally, the Lamtunah tribe, led by Yahya ibn Umar and his brother Abu Bakar ibn Umar, embraced his call to return to the actual teachings of Islam. As time passed, his followers increased, and more and more people acquired a comprehensive knowledge of Islamic teachings that guided all aspects of life [1, 3].

The Islamic education system adopted by Abdullah ibn Yasin followed the methodology of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). As his followers increased, Abdullah ibn Yasin encountered difficulties delivering his knowledge to all of them. Therefore, he divided them into small groups, each with a chosen leader. This approach mirrors the way Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) established study circles with his companions in Makkah to teach them, Islam. After the second pledge of Al-Aqabah, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) divided the 72 residents of Madinah into 12 groups. Each group consisted of five individuals, with one person appointed as the leader. He then sent them back to Madinah until the Muslim community was able to establish a government [1].

After the number of followers of Al-Murabithun reached a thousand people, Abdullah ibn Yasin instructed them to reach out to their respective communities, warning them against innovations and deviations and urging them to follow the correct religious laws.

When some defenders of falsehood dared to confront them, the Al-Murabithun openly declared war against those who opposed them. In addition to spreading the message of Islam and providing religious education, the Al-Murabithun engaged in Jihad by fighting against various countries and tribes in their vicinity. It was done to uphold the truth, defend the Muslim community, and combat those who stood against the teachings of Islam. Jihad, in this context, refers to the struggle or effort made by the Al-Murabithun to establish and protect the principles of Islam. It involved defensive actions in protecting themselves and offensive actions to spread the message of Islam and remove obstacles that hindered its acceptance. It is important to note that the concept of Jihad in Islam encompasses a range of meanings and includes striving for self-improvement, defending one's faith and community, and spreading the message of Islam through peaceful means. It should not be misunderstood as solely referring to armed conflict or violence, as the primary goal of Jihad is to establish justice, promote peace, and uphold the principles of Islam [1].

Maksum (2018) states that Islam cannot be separated from Jihad, where there are three stages that Muslims must go through to achieve victory: faith, migration, and Jihad [13]. Abdullah ibn Yasin and the Al-Murabithun Movement have undertaken all of these stages. The preaching and Jihad carried out by the Al-Murabithun succeeded in uniting all the Berber Sanhaja tribes, such as Lamtunah, Judalah, and Matunah, and freeing them from oppressive rulers [1]. In a short period, the Al-Murabithun Movement successfully took control of Sijilmasa on the northern border and Awdaghust on the southern border, as well as the Sahara desert and the regions south of it. It enabled them to control the trade routes in the desert fully [14].

The Sahara desert trade routes are indeed crucial. Goods from the southern Sahara, such as gold, ivory, and others, are transported through this desert to the northern Mediterranean coast, and vice versa. Controlling these prosperous trade routes gives the Al-Murabithun Movement economic power to spread goodness and truth [15].

In 1057, Yahya bin Umar fell in battle. Abdullah bin Yasin appointed his brother, Abu Bakar bin Umar, the leader. Under Abu Bakar's leadership, the Al-Murabithun movement began to spread beyond the desert. It included the mountain tribes of the Atlas in their struggle. In 1058, they captured the trading city of Aghmat and made it the temporary capital of the Al-Murabithun movement. They also established connections with the Barghawata Berber tribe. This tribe had followed the deviant teachings of Shalih bin Tharif three centuries earlier. In the war between the two Berber nations, Abdullah bin Yasin was martyred, and Abu Bakar bin Umar assumed the top leadership of the Al-Murabithun movement. The Barghawata tribe eventually repented and returned to the path of the true religion, joining the Al-Murabithun movement [14, 15].

In 1061, Abu Bakar ibn Umar divided the power of the Al-Andalus movement into two parts. With its larger population, the northern region was entrusted to his cousin Yusuf bin Tashfin to spread the message and engage in Jihad in the northern territories. Meanwhile, Abu Bakar focused on the southern direction, where the people with dark skin, known as the Sudanese in Arabic literature, resided [4]. In every territory they controlled, the Al-Murabithun movement implemented an Islamic education system taught by Abdullah bin Yasin, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ [1]. The Al-Murabithun movement established new cities like Marrakesh. It implemented Islamic

laws following the Quran and Sunnah in every territory it controlled. As a result, those who opposed Islam gave derogatory labels such as radical and Puritan to this noble movement [14].

3.3 Arrival of the Al-Murabbithun Movement in Al-Andalus and Its Impact on the Islamic Education System in Al-Andalus

Yusuf bin Tashfin, the leader of the northern region of the Al-Murabbithun movement, as mentioned by Imam Adh-Dhahabi in his book “*Siyar A’lam An-Nubala’*,” was known to be forgiving, close to the scholars, of dark and pleasant complexion, with a soft voice, and firm in character. He even delivered a speech before the Abbasid Caliph in Iraq. Yusuf bin Tashfin is also known for leading the Al-Murabbithun movement to the land of Al-Andalus [1].

A significant event greatly saddened the Muslim community in Al-Andalus. The city of Thulaythulah (Toledo), which was once the capital of the Visigothic kingdom before the arrival of Islam, fell back into the hands of the unbelievers. Toledo was one of the largest and strongest Taifa kingdoms of the Muslim community in Al-Andalus. This tragedy occurred in the year 1085 CE. King Alfonso VI of the Kingdom of Leon (along with Galicia and Castile) was a person who did not show gratitude. The kindness shown by the Muslim king of Thulaythulah when he helped Alfonso VI during his exile by his brother, King Sancho, was met with betrayal. When Alfonso VI came to power, he expelled his benefactor, King Al-Qadir Billah Yahya bin Ismail bin Yahya bin Dzun-Nun, from Thulaythulah, causing him to seek refuge in the city of Balansiyah (Valencia) and become a ruler there, which was part of his realm [1].

In addition to Balansiyah (Valencia), there were ten other remaining Muslim kingdoms at that time, namely Bathaliwas (Badajoz), Ishbilliyah (Seville), Gharnathah (Granada), Malaqoh (Malaga), Al-Mariyah (Almeria), Laridah (Leida), Saraqusthah (Zaragoza), Al-Bunt (Alpuente), Santa (Albarracin), and Mayurqah (Majorca). The fall of the city of Thulaythulah (Toledo) made all the Muslim kingdoms vulnerable. It threatened to be wiped out by King Alfonso VI. Al-Mu’tamid ‘alallah Abu Al-Qasim Muhammad bin Abbad, the ruler of Ishbilliyah (Seville), invited the Al-Murabbithun to aid them. Ishbilliyah was the largest kingdom, ruling over the city of Qurthubah (Cordoba), the capital of Al-Andalus. However, Ishbilliyah was also a prime target for King Alfonso VI, who intended to conquer the entire Iberian Peninsula. He even bestowed upon himself the title of “Emperor of all Hispania.” Hispania, or in Arabic, Ishbaniyyah, was the Roman term for the Iberian Peninsula [1].

The idea to invite the Al-Murabbithun movement originated from the minds of the ulama guided by Allah. However, it did not receive much attention from the rulers whom worldly matters had influenced until the fall of the kingdom of Thulaythulah (Toledo). Eventually, the rulers, realizing the dire situation, sent an invitation letter to Yusuf bin Tashfin to seek protection from King Alfonso VI [1].

Yusuf bin Tashfin eventually led the Al-Murabbithun forces to cross the narrow sea and enter the land of Al-Andalus. The jihad forces of Al-Murabbithun finally arrived in Ishbilliyah (Seville) before continuing their journey to Bathaliwas (Badajoz), as the forces of King Alfonso had already besieged that kingdom. Muslims from various regions in Al-Andalus also gathered to join the Al-Murabbithun to assist in the fight against

King Alfonso collectively. The two forces met at a place known as Zallaqoh in Islamic literature or Sagrajas in Western literature [1].

The Battle of Zallaqoh was the most bitter defeat for King Alfonso VI and the northern Christian forces. However, unfortunately, this victory was not followed by the reconquest of Toledo. It was due to the death of Amir Abu Bakar bin Umar Al-Lamtuni in 1087 during the Jihad, which forced Yusuf bin Tashfin to return to Marrakesh, where he became the overall leader of Al-Murabbithun. The assistance provided by Al-Murabbithun under the leadership of Yusuf bin Tashfin did not lead to the repentance of the Muslims in Al-Andalus. They continued to commit sins, engage in conflicts, and fight against each other. It was this situation that led Amir Yusuf ibn Tashfin to decide to unite all the Muslim territories in Al-Andalus under the leadership of Al-Murabbithun, starting in 1090 until he died in 1106 at the age of over 100 years. Thus began the Period of Al-Murabbithun in Al-Andalus [1].

The Al-Murabbithun movement brought changes in various fields in Al-Andalus, starting from the re-enforcement of Sharia law, such as the prohibition of unlawful things that the people of Al-Andalus have long practiced. Many *ahlul bid'ah* communities opposed the Al-Murabbithun government but did not have enough strength to rebel. Qadis/judges uphold justice in Al-Andalus, who now follow the Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah with the correct understanding [16, 17].

Because Islam only prohibits music, not poetry, poetic arts became a choice for the people, especially those previously captivated by the music and useless songs. The government of Al-Murabbithun even utilized poetry (*sya'ir*) for preaching and Islamic education in Al-Andalus [18, 19]. In line with the example of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Islamic education was once again encouraged during the era of Al-Murabbithun. Lessons that did not follow Islam, such as music, were abolished and replaced with poetry (*sya'ir*) [20]. The Islamic art and culture brought by Al-Murabbithun would later be widely adopted by the subsequent government, namely the Al-Muwahhidun [21].

3.4 Lessons to Be Taken from the Islamic Education System During the Rule of the Al-Murabbithun Dynasty in Al-Andalus

During the era of Al-Murabbithun, the development of religion and education can be seen in the authority given to jurists to handle judicial matters and elevate the status of the people. For the Al-Murabbithun, the mosque served as a place to teach Islam and as a means to nurture their character. This policy was implemented by Yusuf ibn Tashfin and continued by his son. Thus, for the Al-Murabbithun, "There is no Islam without a mosque. If you want to acquire extensive knowledge of Islam, establish mosques." With the presence of mosques among the Al-Murabbithun, the ignorance of *jahiliyyah* began to fade away. The Al-Murabbithun focused on the interpretation of the Quran and paid attention to the practical jurisprudence of Islam. With their presence, intellectual development in Al-Andalus flourished rapidly and was directed following the Quran and Sunnah. Various tribes, races, and cultures came together in Al-Andalus, leading to the widespread dissemination of books in various fields such as science, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, literature, and more. Renowned scholars also emerged during this period, including Ibn Bajjah from Zaragoza, Ibu Thufail from Granada, Abu

Marwan Abdul Al-Malik Ibn Zuhr, Ibn Rushd, and Abdullah Idris. Islamic education based on a sound and proper system, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, will produce capable leaders who bring justice to the Muslim ummah. From this, we learn that if the Muslim ummah is governed by a government that adheres to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah with correct understanding, then the Muslim ummah will once again prosper as it did in the past.

4 Conclusion

From research, it can be concluded that Islamic education must be based on the Quran and Sunnah with correct understanding. Any deviation from this will only lead to harm and destruction, as was seen in Al-Andalus. The presence of scholars who allowed music resulted in society being distracted by unbeneficial and indulgent things. A distracted society becomes divided, weak, and easily susceptible to the enemies of Islam who constantly target them. Throughout history, there have been movements striving to restore pure Islam as taught by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. An example of such a noble movement is the Al-Murabbithun movement, which began with the da'wah of a scholar named Abdullah bin Yasin, followed by migration to a more receptive place, and then engaging in Jihad to uphold the religion, just as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his companions, may Allah be pleased with them. From this, we learn that if the Muslim ummah is governed by a government that adheres to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah with correct understanding, then the Muslim ummah will once again prosper as it did in the past.

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