

A Brief Breakdown of the Seventy-Three Sects in Islam

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The Number of Sects in Islam

عَنْ عَوْفِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " افْتَرَقَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى إِحْدَى وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً فَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ وَافْتَرَقَتِ النَّصَارَى عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً فِإِحْدَى وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ وَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَتَفْتَرِقَنَّ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً فَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَثِنْتَانِ وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ " . قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ هُمْ قَالَ " الْجَمَاعَةُ "

‘Awf bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “The Jews split into seventy-one sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy in Hell. The Christians split into seventy-two sects, seventy-one of which will be in Hell and one in Paradise. I swear by the One Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, my nation will split into seventy-three sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy-two in Hell.” It was said: “O Messenger of Allah, who are they?” He said: “The Jama'ah.” [Saheeh Ibn Majah no. 3241]

How Are the Seventy-Three Sects Divided?

Imam al-Aajjuri (may Allah have mercy upon him) said:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي دَاوُدَ ، قَالَ : حَدَّثَنَا الْمُسَيْبُ بْنُ وَاصِحَ ، قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ يُوسُفَ بْنَ أَسْبَاطَ ، يَقُولُ : " أُصُولُ الْبِدْعِ أَرْبَعٌ : الرَّوَافِضُ ، وَالْخَوَارِجُ ، وَالْقَدْرِيَّةُ ، وَالْمُرْجَنَةُ ، ثُمَّ تَتَشَعَّبُ كُلُّ فِرْقَةٍ ثَمَانِي عَشْرَةَ طَائِفَةً ، فَتِلْكَ اثْنَتَانِ وَسَبْعُونَ فِرْقَةً ، وَالثَّلَاثَةُ وَالسَّبْعُونَ الْجَمَاعَةُ الَّتِي قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : إِنَّهَا النَّاجِيَةُ "

Abu Bakr ibn Abi Dawood narrated to us saying: that al-Musayyib ibn Waadih said: I heard Yusuf ibn Asbaat say: "The origin of innovation [i.e. the sects] is four: the Rawaafid, the Khawaarij, the Qadariyyah, and the Murji'ah. Then each sect branches off into eighteen groups. So that is seventy two sects and the seventy third is the Jama'ah which the Prophet (ﷺ) said is saved"
[Kitab ash-Sharee'ah no. 20 and the chain is **Hasan**]

Imam Abul-Hasan al-'Ashari (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "**The Muslims divided into ten different categories: ash-Shee'ah, al-Khawaarij, al-Murji'ah, al-Mu'tazilah, al-Jahmiyyah, ad-Daraariyyah, al-Hussainiyyah, al-Bakriyyah, al-'Aammah, the People of Hadith, and the Kullaabiyyah, the companions of Abdullah ibn Kullaab al-Qattan**" [Maqaalaat al-Islaamiyyeen (1/65)]

Imam Ibn Hazm (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "**The sects which are established in Islam are five. They are: Ahlul Sunnah, the Mu'tazilah, the Murji'ah, the Shee'ah, and the Khawaarij. Then each sect divides into [more] sects...**" [al-Fasal fil-Milal wal-Ahwaa wan-Nihal (2/88)]

Imam ash-Shaatibi (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "**...The major Islamic sects are eight: al-Mu'tazilah, ash-Shee'ah, al-Khawaarij, al-Murji'ah, an-Najjaariyyah, al-Jabariyyah, al-Mushabbiha, an-Naajiyyah...**" [al-'Itisaam (pg. 718)]

He also (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "**A group of the Scholars said: the origins of innovation are four and the remainder of the seventy two sects divide from these. They are: the Khawaarij, the Rawaafid, the Qadariyyah, and the Murji'ah**" [al-'Itisaam (pg. 720)]

Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "**If it is said: are these sects known? The answer is: we know the sects and the origins of the sects. Every sect from the sects divides into other sects, even if we do not know the names of these sects and their ideologies. It has become apparent to us that the origins of these sects are: al-Haruriyyah, al-Qadariyyah, al-Jahmiyyah, al-Murji'ah, ar-Raafidah, and al-Jabariyyah. Some of the People of Knowledge have said: the origin of the misguided sects are six and each sect divides into twelve sects. So they become seventy two sects**" [Talbees al-Iblees (pg. 162-163)]

Sects Which the Prophet (ﷺ) Mentioned by Name

- **The Khawaarij**

Ibn Abi Awfa (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

الْخَوَارِجُ كِلَابُ النَّارِ

The Khawaarij are the dogs of the Hell-fire [Saheeh Ibn Majah no. 143]

- **The Qadariyyah and the Murji'ah**

Abu Layla al-Ansaari (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

صِنْفَانِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي لَا يَرِدَانِ عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ : الْقَدْرِيَّةُ ، وَ الْمُرْجِنَةُ

Two groups of my Ummah will not be given [water to] drink by me at the Hawd: al-Qadariyyah and al-Murji'ah [as-Saheeha no. 2748]

On the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

الْقَدْرِيَّةُ مَجُوسٌ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ إِنْ مَرِضُوا فَلَا تَعُودُوهُمْ وَإِنْ مَاتُوا فَلَا تَشْهَدُوهُمْ

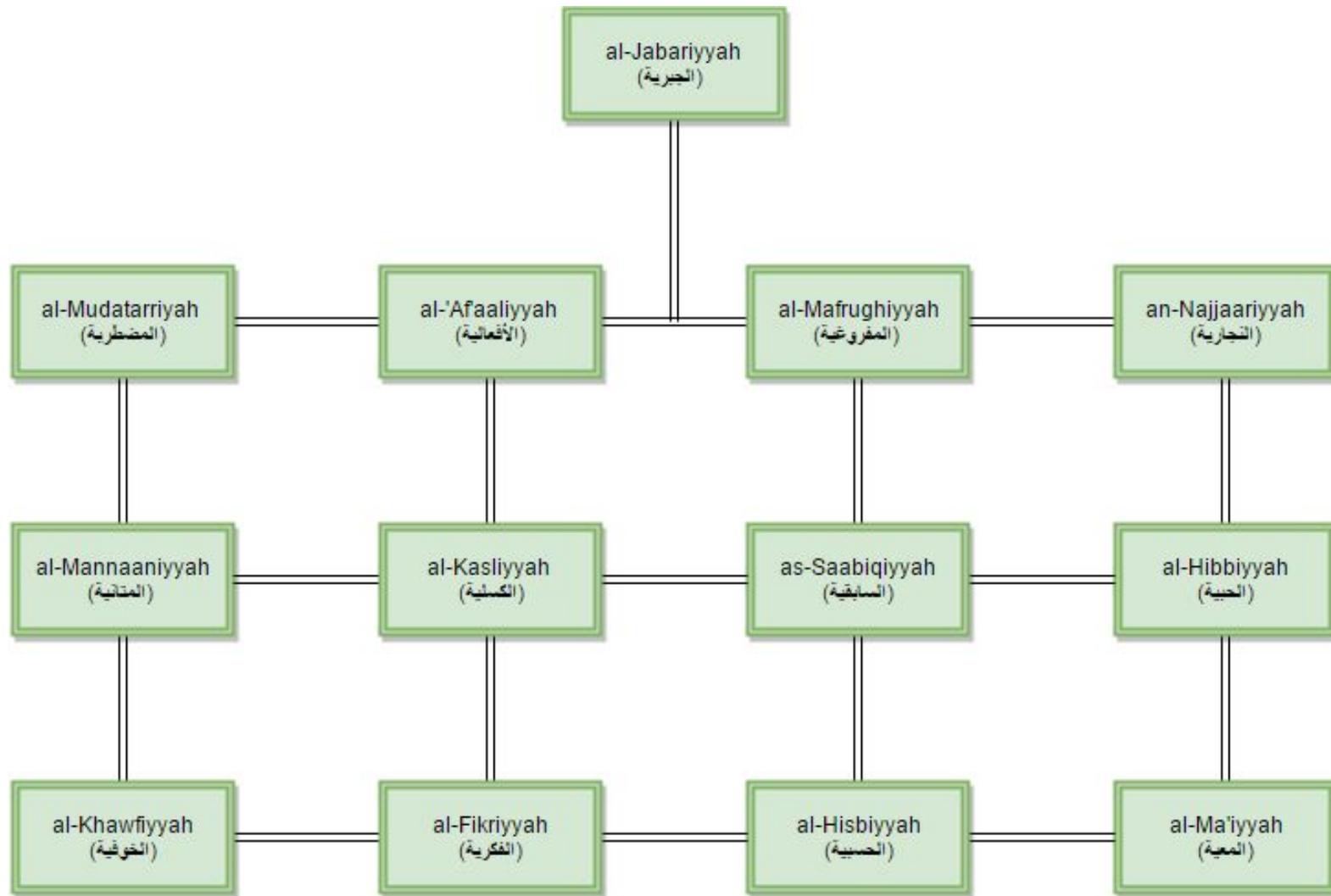
The Qadariyyah are the Magians of this community. If they are ill, do not pay a sick visit to them, and if they die, do not attend their funerals [Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood no. 4691]

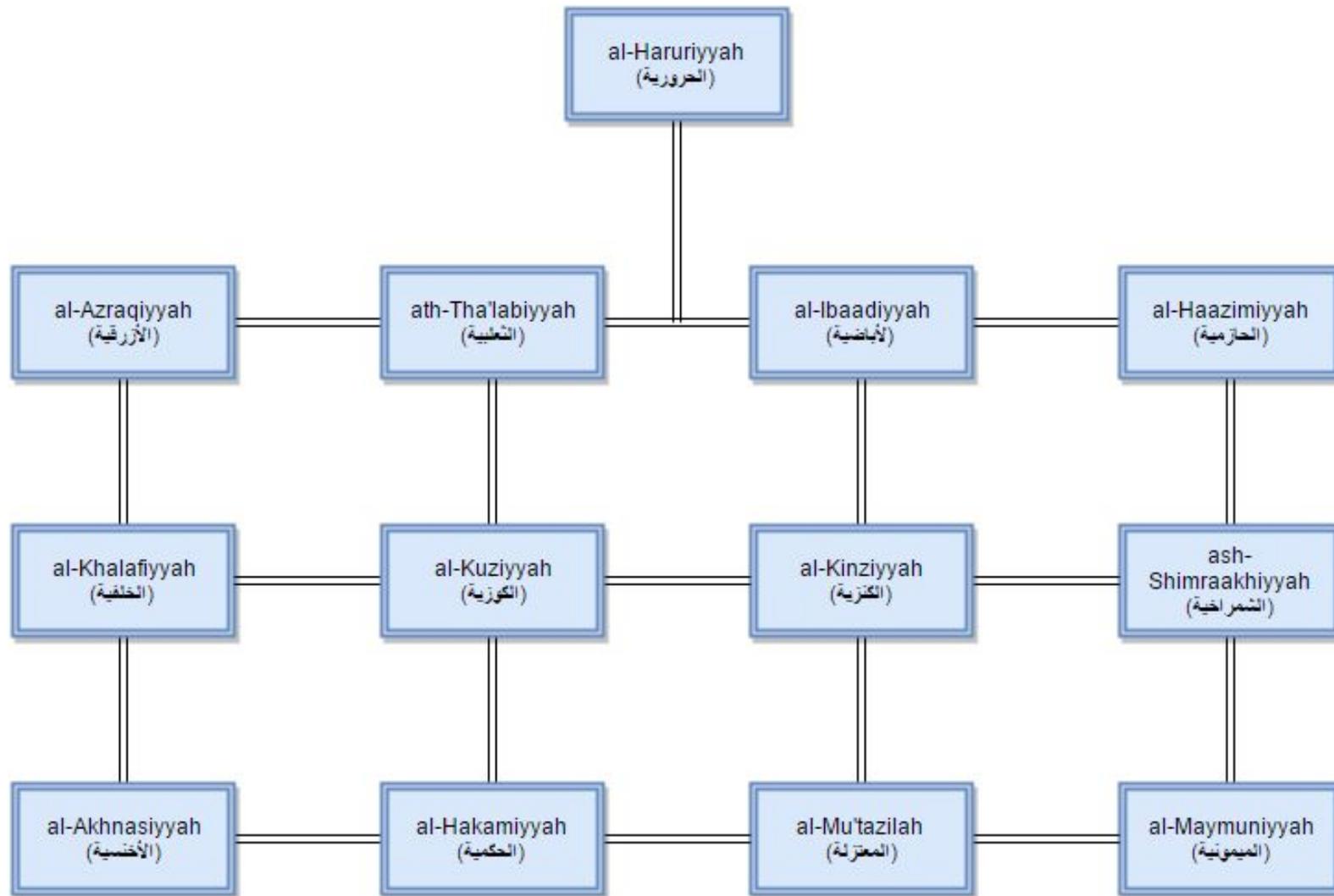
A Visual Breakdown of the Various Sects

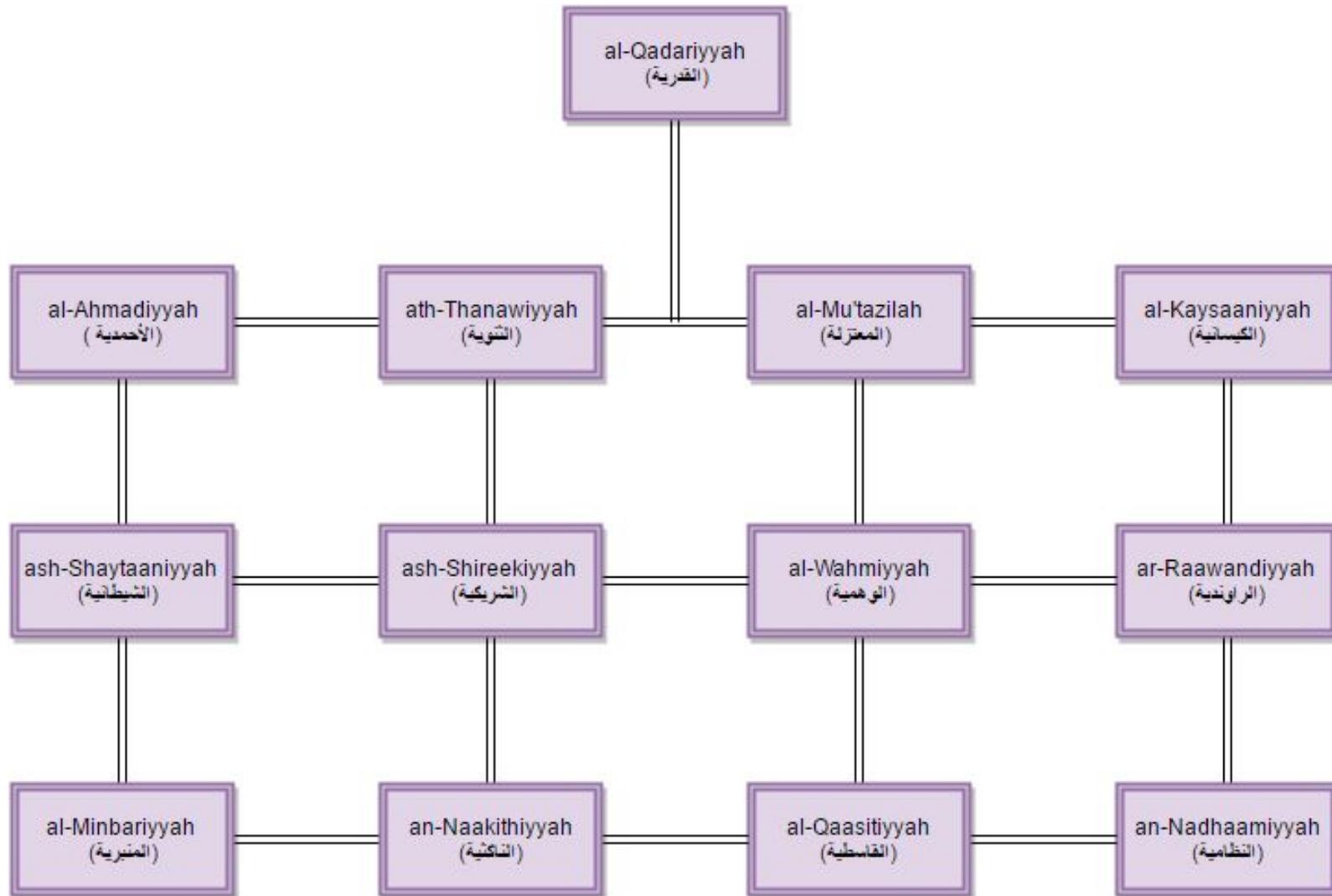
The following is a visual breakdown of the seventy-three sects mentioned in the above Hadith. Some of the Scholars of Islam have mentioned all seventy-three sects. A list of the seventy-three sects can be found in the following sources:

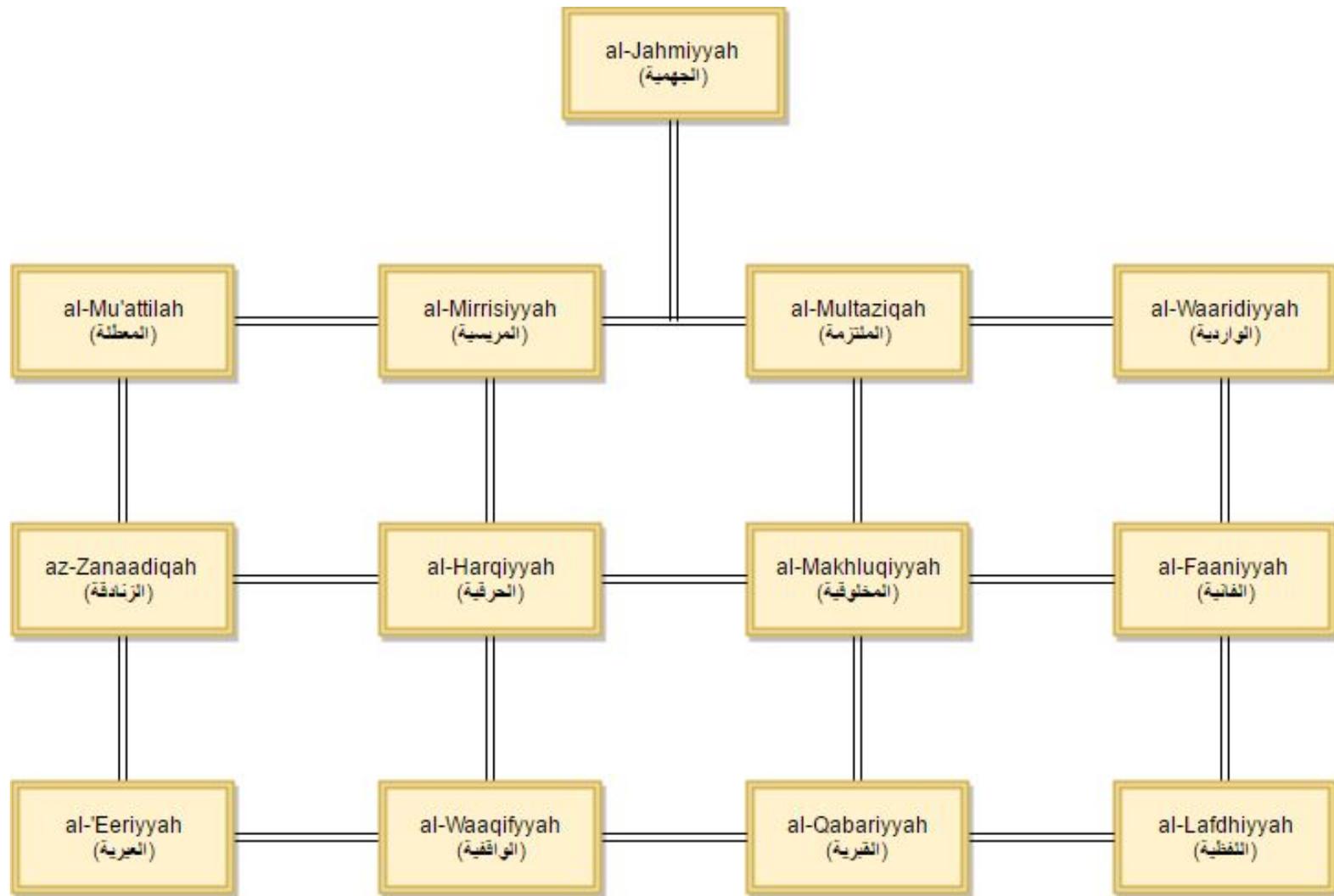
- *Talbees al-Iblees* by Imam Ibn al-Jawzi. Verification and Study by: Doctor Ahmad ibn Uthmaan al-Mazeed. Print: Dar al-Watan (pgs. 157-202)
- *al-Farq Bayn al-Firaq* by Imam Abdul-Qadir al-Baghdadi. Verified by: Muhammad Uthmaan al-Khust. Print: Maktabah Ibn Sinaa. (pgs. 32-39)
- *Maqaalaat al-Islaamiyyah wa Ikhhtilaaf al-Mussaleen* by Imam Abul-Hasan al-'Ashari. Verified by: Muhammad Muhyiddeen Abdul Hameed. Print: Maktabah al-'Asriyyah
- *Jami' Ahkam al-Quran* by Imam al-Qurtubi. Verified by: Shaikh Abdullah ibn Abdul Muhsin at-Turki. Print: Mu'assas ar-Risaalah (5/243-250)
- *al-'Itisaam* by Imam ash-Shaatibi. Verified by: Shaikh Saleem ibn 'Eid al-Hilaali. Print: Dar Ibn 'Affan (pgs. 718-720)

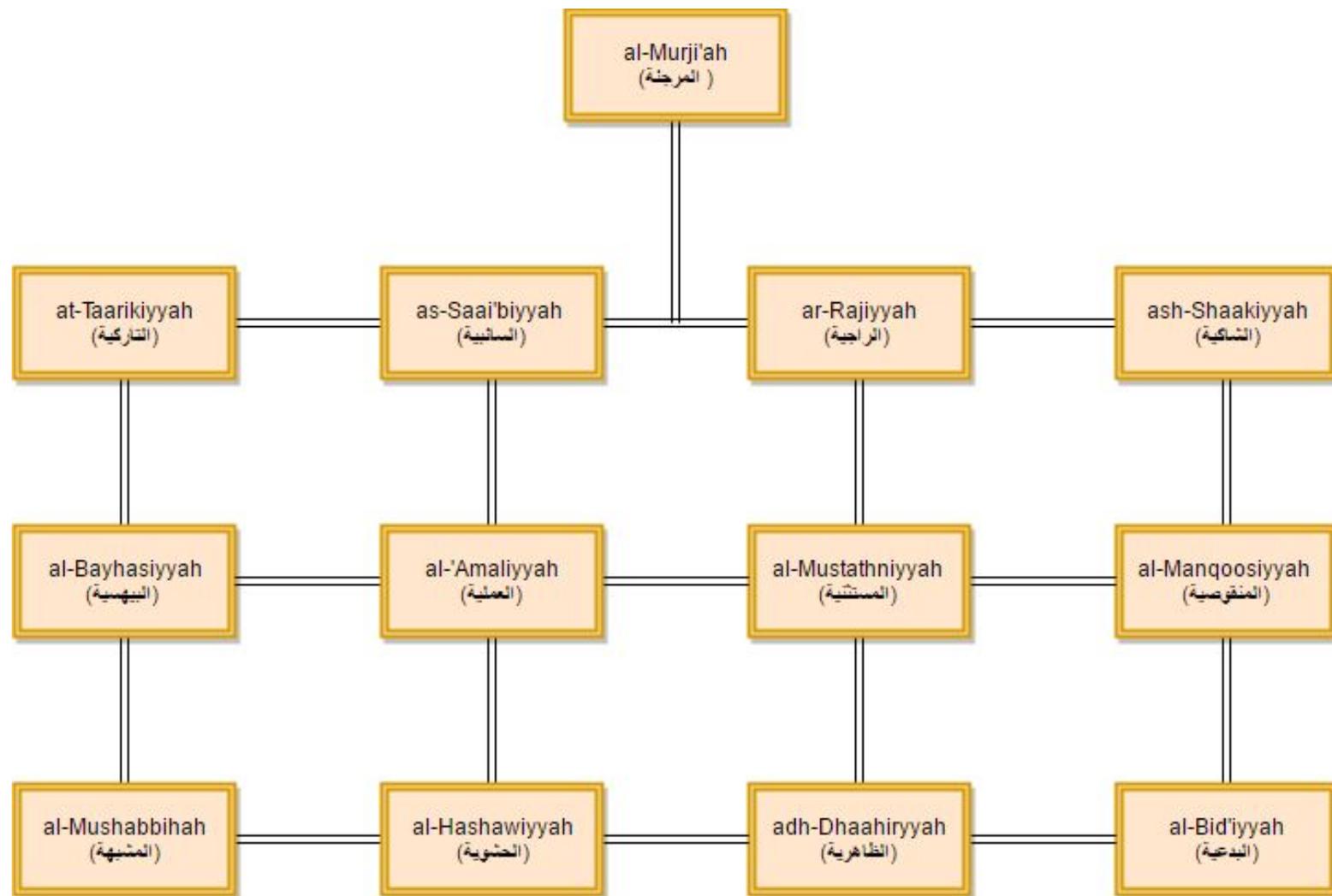
The diagrams below are primarily based on Imam Ibn al-Jawzi's breakdown of the various sects taken from his book *Talbees al-Iblees* (pgs. 157-202)

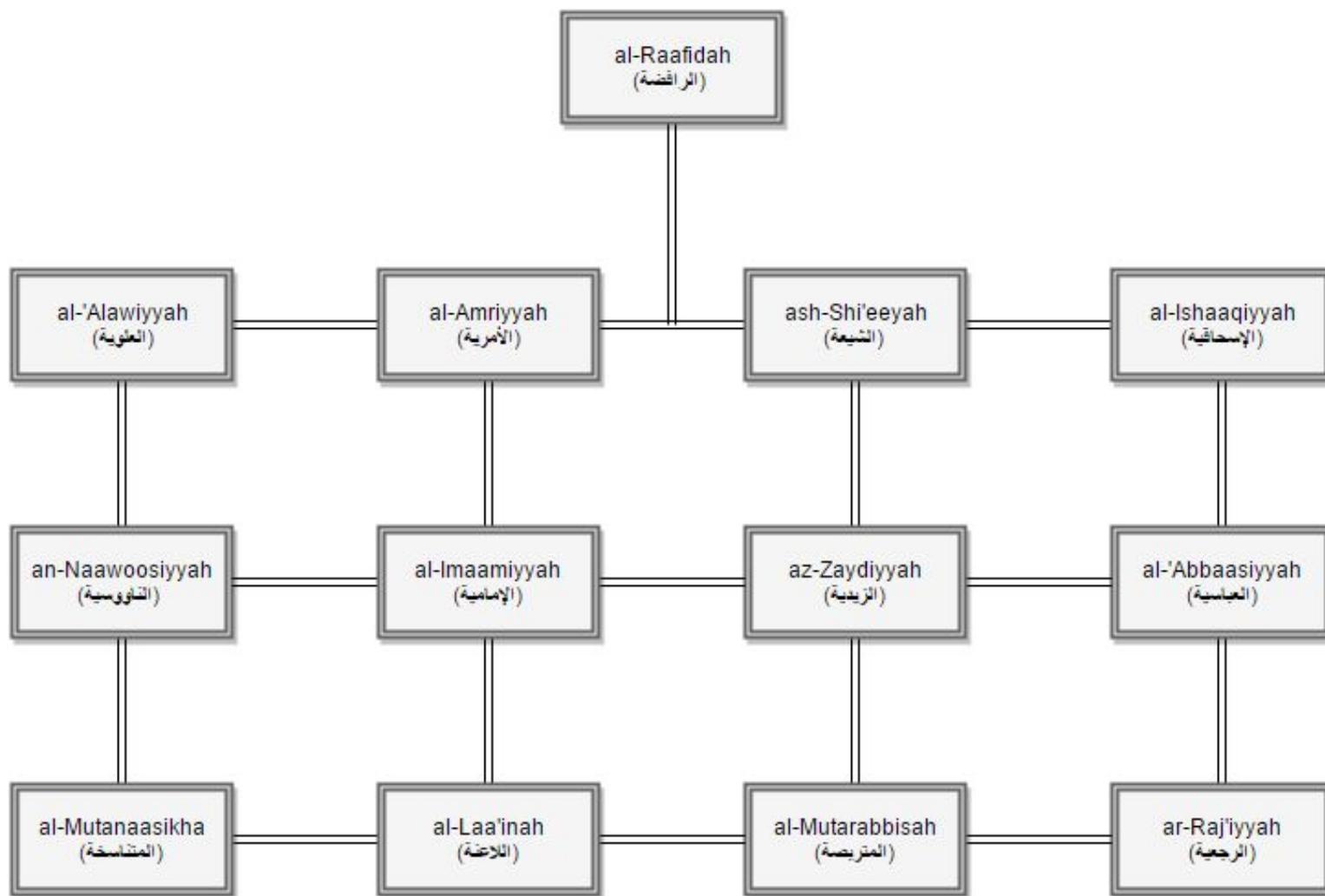












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